

# Gen Z prefers Instagram over TikTok for DMs

## Article

More than half of respondents said they use social platforms for messaging, making it one of the most popular activities. When it comes to Instagram and TikTok, however, the former has a more mature offering that's been around longer, giving it a firm lead for now.

**Instagram is the clear winner.** Nearly three-quarters of respondents who've sent DMs in the past month did so on Instagram. Over a third said it is their go-to platform for DMs.

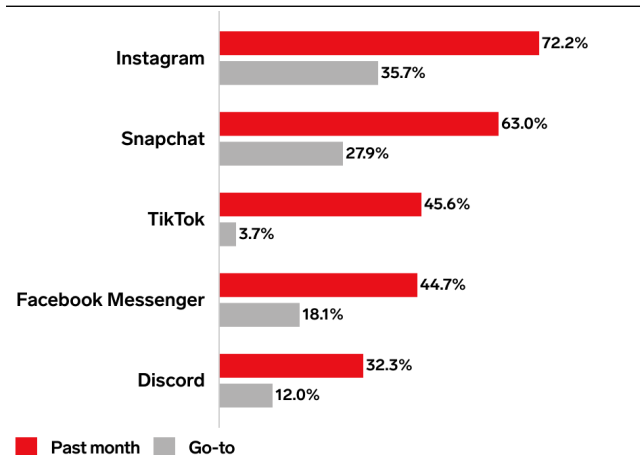
**Few consider TikTok a go-to for DMs.** Only 3.7% described TikTok as their go-to, though almost half have used it to send DMs in the past month. Respondents were more likely to

choose Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, or Discord as their go-to.

**There are age disparities.** Snapchat is the No. 2 most popular platform for DMs among Gen Z. Compared with almost 25% of adults (ages 18 to 26), more than 40% of teens (ages 15 to 17) said Snapchat is their go-to for DMs, according to our survey. Meanwhile, Gen Z adults (22.5%) are more likely to say Facebook Messenger is their go-to compared with teens (2.6%).

### Gen Z Prefers Instagram for DMs

% of US Gen Z social media users who use direct messaging, July 2023



Note: among monthly social media users ages 15-26; Q: "Which of the following social media platforms have you sent direct messaging on in the past month, as far as you recall?" and "Which social media platform is your 'go-to' for Direct Messaging?"; excludes "other" responses  
Source: Insider Intelligence | eMarketer Survey, "US Gen Z Social Media," July 2023

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Insider Intelligence | eMarketer

**DMs are getting more attention from platforms.** Instagram and TikTok don't run ads within DMs, though brands can use this feature organically. Still, both platforms seem to be focused on messaging. Over the past few years, Instagram has rolled out a slew of DM-specific features, like Notes, and TikTok recently posted several messaging-focused job positions.

**Meta is bullish on messaging.** It has signaled that messaging, specifically on WhatsApp, will become a crucial part of its business moving forward. Meta's click-to-message ads that send users into conversations with brands on Instagram, Messenger, and WhatsApp reached a \$10 billion revenue run rate in 2023, per Meta.

### Key Takeaway

- **Continued investments across platforms could lead even more Gen Zers to use social for DMs.** A recent survey conducted by Instagram found that DMs are one of Gen Z’s top ways to get closer to someone on the platform. And as for brands, aside from click-to-message ads, they can use DMs organically to answer customer service questions or engage with users.

Report by Minda Smiley Jan 08, 2024

## Gen Z Social Media Preferences

