

The kids are online: Gen Z is poised to become the most connected generation—for now

Article

The forecast: Gen Z is getting older and steadily moving toward becoming the most digitally connected generation. In 2024, US Gen Zers will surpass millennials in regular internet use, and

they'll do the same with smartphone penetration in 2026.

Dive deeper:

- Internet use and smartphone adoption among Gen Z in the US is practically ubiquitous. This means penetration rates don't reflect *if* Gen Z will get online so much as *when* individuals will be old enough to do so with regularity.
- In 2024, when US Gen Z internet penetration will jump to **99.1%**, Gen Zers will be between 12 and 27 years old. Millennials, who will be fully into adulthood (ages 28 to 43), will stagnate at **97.4%** penetration.
- Even the youngest Gen Zers will be teenagers by 2026, and penetration of those who own smartphones will reach **96.9%** as younger kids who may be using tablets or borrowing smartphones mature.
- Generation Alpha will adopt smartphones even earlier than Gen Z. And while **71%** of parents with children under 12 are concerned about their kids spending too much time in front of screens, per a March 2020 Pew Research Center survey, smartphone penetration is not slowing down.

Looking ahead: By 2026, **99.6%** of Gen Zers will be regular internet users. Meanwhile, as digital literacy increases and data plans become more affordable, the average age of digital connectivity will likely decrease in the coming years.