



Coming of Age on Screens

An in-depth look at teens and young adults around the world

Most young people are inseparable from their friends. They ache to stand out and fit in. They just want to be understood. To find their voice. To them, it often feels like they can't grow up fast enough. And they can't wait to leave their mark on the world.

So much of growing up is timeless. But what's it like to come of age with a mobile phone in hand, a laptop at arm's reach, and the ability to stay constantly connected with family and friends—near and far?

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Teens and young adults around the world reveal that the universal truths of growing up remain the same, but the process of coming of age has changed.

Growing up today happens online and happens everywhere.

Before the Internet and mobile technology were widespread, young people passed notes in class. Now they text. Teenagers used to tape up photos they liked. Now they post those images to Facebook and Instagram. Moments once written in diaries are now shared on blogs and messaging apps.

Before, your first-day-of-school outfit defined your style. Now image is carefully crafted online. Before, the landline was the lifeline. Today, it is the mobile phone, with conversations mainly happening in messages.

To come of age today means to be constantly connected, to move seamlessly across platforms and devices.

Universally, young people still want to explore everything that's new, to express themselves in ways their parents never thought possible, to be independent, to create and to say "This is me!" And most of all, they want to connect with an ever-expanding world.

But the way they communicate, the places they hang out and their perception of their lives and the world around them, have been reshaped by technology.

“This research also demonstrates how connected young people are, not just to each other, but to the news and to the condition of the country. They’re very much coded into the economic conditions — by no means blasé or unaware.”

Andy Crysell
Managing Director,
Crowd DNA

I. Executive Summary

So much of growing up is timeless. But what’s it like to come of age today, with a mobile phone in hand, a laptop at arm’s reach, and the ability to stay constantly connected with family and friends—both near and far. To better understand, Facebook commissioned culture experts Crowd DNA to conduct research into the lives of 13- to 24-year-olds across 13 markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Sweden, UK and US) between April and May 2014. The research included an online survey of approximately 1,000 people per market measured, as well as interviews with, and mobile diaries from, select research participants.

In “Coming of Age on Screens,” we set out to understand this generation by finding out what’s important to teens and young adults now and what will be important to them in the future. We wanted to learn how do young people spend their time? What brings them together? How do they connect?

In a world that’s moving faster than ever before, our goal is to help marketers better understand, reach, and communicate with the consumers of tomorrow.

What we found was that the universal truths of growing up are the same, but the process of coming of age has changed. To come of age today is to be constantly connected, to move seamlessly across platforms and devices. In the past, people growing up defined their style by how they looked on the first day of school. Today, teens and young adults carefully craft their image online.

Young people still want to explore everything that’s new, to express themselves in ways their parents never thought possible, to be independent, to create and to say “This is me!” And most of all, they want to connect with an ever-expanding world.

But the way they communicate, the places they hang out, and their perception of their lives and the world around them, have been reshaped by technology.

Despite growing up in a world marked by unprecedented competition and unemployment (in many countries), people coming of age today are defined by their optimism and their willingness to work hard to achieve their goals. In the next 4 years, the International Labor Organization projects around 40 million net new jobs will be created every year, less than the 42.6 million people who are expected to enter the labor market every year. Yet some 72% of survey respondents agree they try to see the positives in every situation — and 84% of them on average say they’re ready to work hard for their future.

The 13- to 24-year-olds who participated in our survey are often viewed as making up one big, homogeneous group belonging to the Millennial Generation. But in fact, our research revealed there are 3 distinct phases of growing up within this generation defined by age, attitudes and behaviors. In many countries, the phases are as follows:

Optimists



Age: 13-15

These respondents are hugely positive and happy in their social lives.

Explorers



Age: 16-19

These respondents are forward-looking and globally curious.

Realists



Age: 20-24

These young adults are more focused with their time, taking part in fewer activities and frequenting fewer hangout spots.

These phases vary slightly country to country. In Brazil, for example, the phases are slightly different, with respondents 13-15 dubbed **Sociables**, as they're highly social but more worried about the future than their counterparts in other countries. And in Indonesia, people enter the **Explorer** phase when they're 20-24, as that's when they're most globally curious, and want to learn about other countries and cultures.

"Identity moves fast between the age of 13 and 24," says Andy Crysell, Managing Director at Crowd DNA. "You are expected to change and you want to change. But now the phases are more apparent, with social media creating a powerful opportunity for young people to display personal change: wishing to fit in, followed by a move towards exploration, culminating in starting to set out your own identity. This work has shone a vivid light on these distinct phases."

People growing up today are inherently optimistic and value happiness above all.

Other key findings:

- **The mobile phone is the lifeline:** 72% of the 13- to 24-year-old survey respondents agree that they can't leave their house without their mobile. Another 60% agree that they would prefer to give up their TV rather than their mobile phone.
- **Online has surpassed the mall:** After friends' houses (70%), hanging out online is a key place to socialize for 13- to 24-year-olds (54%). Malls (50%) are third.
- **They suffer from FOBO (Fear of Being Offline):** 70% agree they like to be connected to the Internet wherever they are. Nearly half (46%) agree they would feel lost if they couldn't access social media.
- **Share first online, then F2F:** When the survey respondents have had a "really good day," the first place they'd share it is on social media (30%), followed by face-to-face (22%) and text (11%).
- **Teens and young adults want to hear from brands in social media:** 53% of survey respondents agree they like it when brands speak to them via social media. But the bar for content is high. Some 72% of young people say they expect what brands share to be entertaining.

Here are the report's key takeaways for marketers:

- Coming of age is a period of growth, change, possibility and at times, difficulty, with much of the process now playing out online. **To resonate with teens and young adults, brands should consider developing content and campaigns that position them as a source of information, inspiration or validation.**
- People growing up today are inherently optimistic and value happiness above all. **Consider sharing stories of teens and young adults who have defied the odds with their talent, innovation and entrepreneurship, and consider how the brand's mission and products may align with encouraging this incredible optimism.**
- Online is where people growing up hang out and connect with their friends, second only to their friends' houses. **To find a welcome way into this space and conversation, focus on showing the brand's human side and on personalizing messaging as much as possible.**

People coming of age today use an average of 5 devices and often use multiple screens in the evening, especially while watching TV.

- While people often view 13- to 24-year-olds as one big, homogeneous group belonging to the Millennial Generation, there are nuanced phases as they inch towards adulthood. Think about contributing to the conversation in an authentic way based on the age bracket of the people you want to reach. For example, for Explorers (16-19), consider marketing initiatives that can help fuel the passion for discovery and learning.
- Mobile devices are the main way this generation connects. Brands should pursue mobile-first strategies to reach people growing up today, including creating bite-sized, image-heavy content and catchy videos designed for minds on the move.
- People coming of age today use an average of 5 devices and often use multiple screens in the evening, especially while watching TV. Focus on strong content coupled with an integrated media approach to create “surround sound” where a brand’s message, voice and identity are clear, consistent and recognizable across devices and screens.
- Most people coming of age today say they would share interesting brand content received on their mobiles. Focus on content that reflects the image young people want to share online and appeals to their values.
- Teens and young adults today express themselves via photos, videos, emoticons and emojis. It’s important that content be in a language that young people speak. That language is increasingly visual, so think about assets that will resonate for an image-oriented generation.



Marcus

Age:

16

Home:

São Paulo, Brazil

Likes:

Studying English,
singing, traveling

“I always post photos... of everything that I am doing. People go in and comment and so forth. So everything I put in the diary is basically what I do. For example if I go to the mall, if I go to some place or another I am always connected. My life is always well exposed to everyone online.”

II. Introduction

To better understand what it's like to come of age in a mobile world, Facebook commissioned culture experts Crowd DNA to explore the lives of teens and young adults around the world. As part of research conducted between April and May 2014, Crowd DNA spoke to 13- to 24-year-olds on 5 continents.

The study “Coming of Age on Screens” takes a look at this mobile-centric generation across 13 countries. The study is the first in an ongoing series from Facebook IQ, a new global insights practice for marketers, aimed at understanding peoples’ attitudes, behaviors, desires and relationships both online and offline.

In this report, we set out to understand this generation by finding out what's important to young people now and what will be important to them in the future. We wanted to learn how they spend their time and how they connect and express themselves. We also wanted to understand the role of technology and different digital platforms in their lives and, because of that, how this generation differs from older ones.

Among our goals were to bring dimension to a group often seen — and marketed to — as a homogenous group. We wanted to provide insights that will help marketers better understand, reach and communicate with this generation across all channels. After all, many of today's teens and young adults featured in this report are just beginning to form brand preferences, making them tomorrow's consumers.

Who

13- to 24-year-olds

Where

Australia

Brazil

Canada

Denmark

France

Germany

India

Indonesia

Italy

Norway

Sweden

United Kingdom

United States

When

April and May 2014

How

Online survey

Interviews

Mobile diaries

III. Methodology

To better understand what it's like to come of age on screens, Facebook commissioned culture experts Crowd DNA to conduct research into the lives of 13- to 24-year-olds across 13 markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Sweden, UK and US). The research, which took place between April and May 2014, included an online survey of approximately 1,000 people per market measured, as well as interviews with, and mobile diaries from, select research participants. Throughout the study, Norway, Sweden and Denmark are grouped together as "Nordics."

This report contains the findings from all of the countries researched. Unless otherwise noted, data are on average aggregated for all age groups and all countries. The quotes featured were translated from native languages.

All images were taken during interviews with the young people who participated in the study or by the participants themselves. Profiles of the teens and young adults featured in this report are all those of actual research participants.



Luna

Age:

20

Home:

Berlin, Germany

Likes:

Likes reading, watching TV shows, hanging out with friends

“I think we always need something new, because we are bored very quickly. And if we are bored then we give it up and want something new, more exciting.”

IV. The Screens Generation: In Profile

People coming of age today are defined by their optimism and their willingness to work hard to achieve their goals in life. These virtues come despite the fact that some of the teens and young adults surveyed are coming of age in countries facing difficult times. Fueling their hope is the fact that survey respondents are remarkably forward-looking and interested in the wider world, suggesting they are interested in being part of the solution.

Displaying youthful optimism

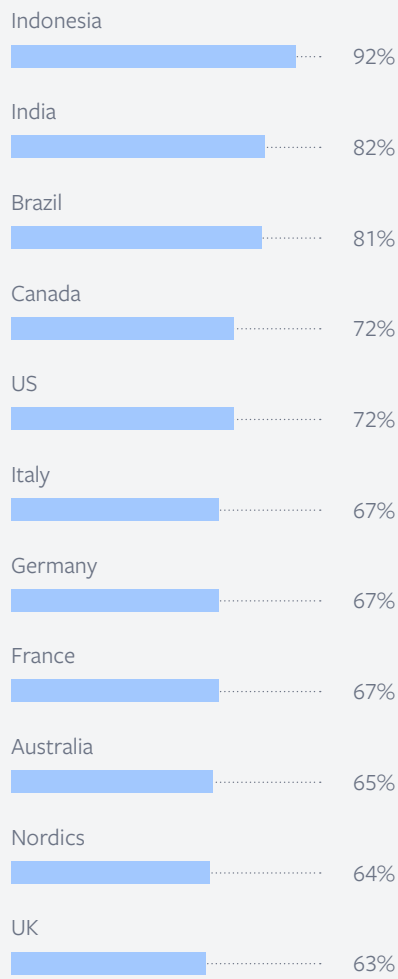
Coming of age in a challenging time, the teens and young adults surveyed in this report are surprisingly upbeat. Across the 13 countries surveyed, 58% describe themselves as optimistic. German teens and young adults are the most optimistic (69%). Young people in the US are only slightly more optimistic (59%) than the average.

“This optimism plays out in different ways,” says Andy Crysell, Managing Director, Crowd DNA. “For some, it’s about life right now, in their own country. For others, yes, there’s optimism, but also an understanding that they may need to move to a different country to really benefit.

This research also demonstrates how connected young people are, not just to each other, but to the news and to the condition of their country. They’re very much coded into the economic conditions — by no means blasé or unaware.”



“I try to see the positive in every situation.”



Source: “Coming of Age on Screens,” by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), Apr-May 2014. Survey of 11,165 young people ages 13-24 in 13 countries..

Looking on the bright side

This optimism is reflected in this generation’s approach to everyday situations. Across the 13 countries, 72% of survey respondents agree they try to see the positives in every situation, with teens and young adults in the US tied with the average. In Indonesia, looking on the bright side is virtually hard-wired (92% of Indonesian respondents say they do this).

Changing the world

More than half of all respondents (55%) agree their generation will change the world. The can-do attitude is the strongest in Indonesia (86%), followed by India (81%) and the US (60%).



Samanyu

Age:
15

Home:
India

Likes:
Playing cricket, making robots,
reading fiction novels and
studying computer languages

“I actually want to find out...what is going on around the world. That's why I like Internet the most...and I can access it anywhere.”

Seeing beyond their borders

Given their interest in changing the world, it comes as no surprise that people coming of age today are interested in a wider world, with 75% agreeing they want to learn about other countries and cultures. Some 59% say they're concerned about global issues, with global-minded attitudes strongest in Indonesia (80% say they're concerned), followed by India (74%) and Brazil (70%). In the US, some 60% of teens and young adults say they're concerned about issues beyond their borders.

Worrying about the future

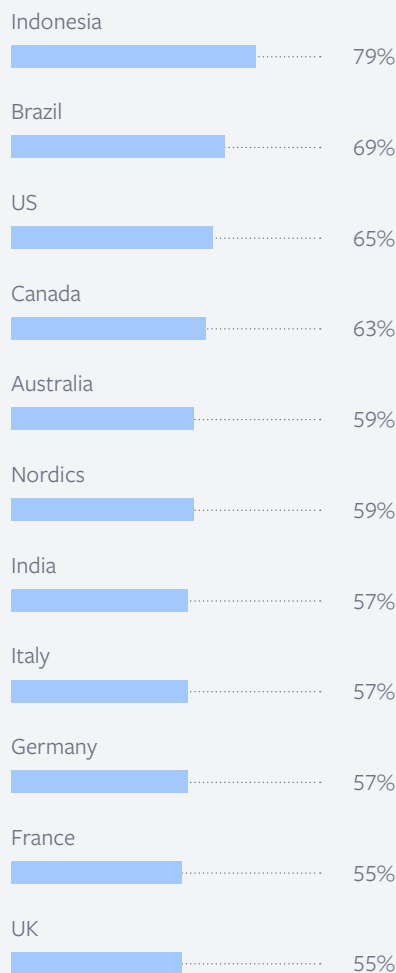
While people growing up today are generally optimistic about their lives and the world in which they live, they also have concerns. More than half (56%) are worried about their future. In Brazil, 76% say they're worried what the future will bring, followed by France (60%) and Italy (59%). Less concerned are survey respondents in the US and Australia, where 52% express worry about the future and in India, only 39%.

Planning for what's next

Concern for what's next may explain why teens and young adults today are also relatively forward-looking. Some 50% agree they're currently “planning for their future.” Survey respondents are the most future-minded in Brazil (63%) and Indonesia (62%) followed by Germany (56%) and the US (52%). Living more in the moment are survey respondents in the UK, India and France where 45%, 44% and 43%, respectively, say they're now planning for their futures.



“I am thinking about saving money for the future.”



Source: “Coming of Age on Screens,” by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), April- May 2014. Survey of 11, 165 young people, age 13-24, in 13 countries.

Saving money for the future

Part of planning for the future means thinking about building up savings, with 61% on average of people coming of age today saying they’re thinking about putting away money, with heavier money savers in Indonesia (79%) and Brazil (69%), followed by the US (65%). Survey respondents in European nations report being less savings-minded, with only 55% of young people in the UK and France saying they think about saving money — the lowest percentage in the study.

Working hard to get ahead

With savings top of mind for many of the globe’s teens and young adults, it’s no surprise that they report a willingness to work hard to accomplish their goals in life. Across the globe, 84% of people coming of age say they want to apply themselves. The work ethic is strongest in Indonesia, with 96% of survey respondents saying they’ll do what it takes. In Brazil, 91% of teens and young adults say they’re ready to work hard, followed by 88% in India and the US.



Juwita

Age:

21

Home:

Indonesia

Likes:

Reading, swimming,
hanging out with
friends and traveling

“...just got a new job
in a new workplace. I’m
really excited to socialize
with my new friends.”

Making time for friends and family

Feeling good in their social lives is key, as being happy is highly valued by this generation. In fact, it ranks as more important than a variety of other circumstances, including “being financially independent,” “being part of a loving family” and “discovering my interests and skills.”

Being happy above all else

Feeling good in their social lives is key, as being happy is highly valued by today’s youth. In fact, it ranks more in importance than a variety of other circumstances, including “being financially independent,” “being part of a loving family” and “discovering my interests and skills.”

“The ubiquity of Pharrell William’s ‘Happy’ over the last 12 months neatly demonstrates a collective desire to cut to the chase and to celebrate that happiness matters above all else,” says Crowd DNA’s Andy Crysell. “Happiness, understandably, sits atop the hierarchy. Young people are astute enough to realize that all of the other things — success in their careers or education, the chance to travel, loving relationships — all ultimately go towards fueling their general state of happiness. For now, at this stage in their lives, they understand that socializing is the best route to happiness.”

**They don’t want to worry.
They want to be happy.**

**Being happy is more important
to them than:**

- Finding a job
- Being part of a loving family
- Being financially independent
- Discovering their skills and interests
- Being in control of their destiny
- Having a close circle of friends
- Doing well academically

See individual country profiles for the stages of coming of age relevant to each country.

V. The Screens Generation: The 3 Phases of Growing Up

The 13- to 24-year-olds studied in this report are often viewed as making up one big, homogeneous group belonging to the Millennial Generation. But in fact, our research revealed there are 3 distinct phases of growing up within this generation defined by age, attitudes and behaviors. In many countries, the phases are as follows:

- **Optimists (13-15)** These respondents are hugely positive and happy in their social lives.
- **Explorers (16-19)** These respondents are forward-looking and globally curious.
- **Realists (20-24)** These young adults are more focused with their time, taking part in fewer activities and frequenting fewer hangout spots.

These phases vary slightly country to country. In Brazil, for example, the phases are slightly different, with respondents 13-15 being **Sociables**, as they're highly social but more worried about the future than their counterparts in other countries. And in Indonesia, people enter the **Explorer** phase when they're 20-24, as that's when they're most globally curious and want to learn about other countries and cultures.

"Identity moves fast between the age of 13 and 24," says Andy Crysell, Managing Director at Crowd DNA. "You are expected to change and you want to change. But now the phases are more apparent, with social media creating a powerful opportunity for young people to display personal change: wishing to fit in, followed by a move towards exploration, culminating in starting to set out your own identity. This work has shone a vivid light on these distinct phases."



Camelia

Age:

16

Home:

France

Likes:

Reading, watching TV shows, hanging out with friends

“The piece of technology I couldn’t live without would be my mobile. It’s what I use to reach anyone at any time. It’s with me all the time and the first thing I pick up in the morning.”

VI. The Screens Generation: Constantly Connected

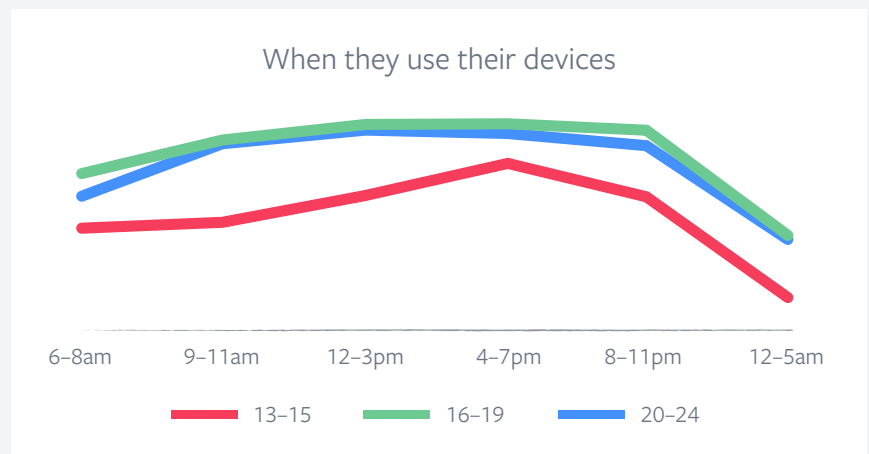
With the oldest respondents in this study born in 1990, most Millennials were born into a world where people were already talking on mobile phones and surfing the Internet. For this generation, a world without Internet or cellphones is unfathomable. Technology has revolutionized how people connect with each other and the world, and today’s teens are growing up online and on mobile. Some 81% of teens and adults surveyed in this study agree they like to use technology to keep in touch with their friends. In Indonesia, the percentage is 90%.

Never losing sight of their mobiles

People coming of age today are inseparable from their mobile phones. Across the globe, 72% of teens and young adults say they can’t leave their house without their mobile phones. The mobile habit among respondents is most pronounced in Indonesia (84%), India and Brazil (both 77%). US respondents are only slightly less attached to their mobiles, with 73% saying they can’t leave home without them. Mobile separation anxiety is lower than average in Australia (67%) and Germany (64%).

“The mobile is no longer just about talking on the move,” says Jo Tenzer, Marketing Science Lead at Facebook. “It’s a device that helps people to connect wherever they are. For this age group, their mobile phone is an extension of themselves. It’s essential for communicating with their friends and expressing themselves. Even in countries where feature phones are prevalent, data costs are high and bandwidth is slow, being connected is essential.”

They use their smartphones all day long



Source: “Coming of Age on Screens,” by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), April- May 2014. Survey of 11,165 young people, ages 13-24, in 13 countries.

93%

of young people own or use a desktop or laptop computer

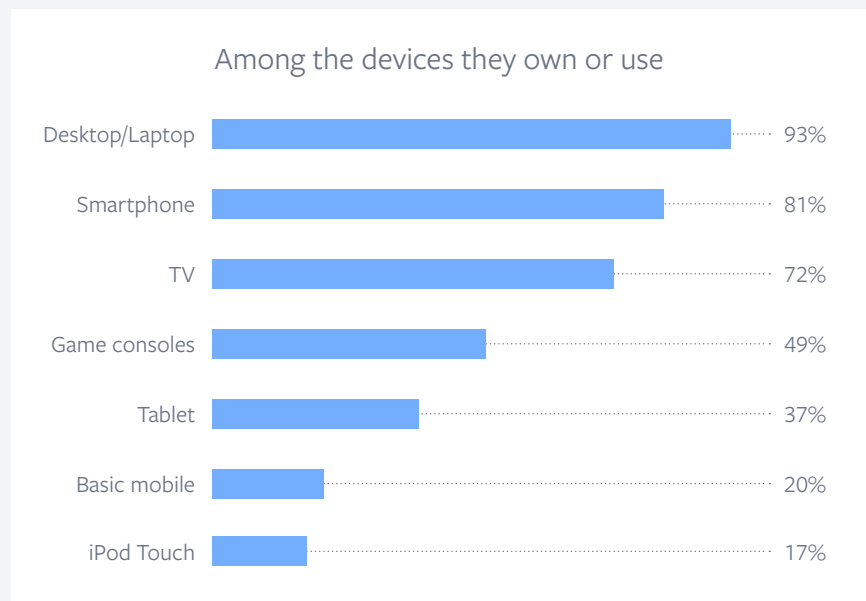
81%

of young people own or use a smartphone

Making mobile the first screen

Mobile is so captivating for people growing up today that a majority (60%) of young people around the world would rather give up TV than their mobiles. Feeling least attached to television are Indonesians (69% are willing to forsake it), followed by respondents living in the Nordics (66%). American teens and young adults are less willing than the average to surrender TV for mobile phones (56%). Across the world, teens and young adults are using their mobile phones all day long, with usage peaking in the late afternoon.

On average, they use or own 5 different devices



Source: "Coming of Age on Screens," by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), April- May 2014. Survey of 11,165 young people, ages 13-24, in 13 countries.

Living as digital natives

Mobile phones are only part of the story. People growing up today own at least 5 different devices on average and switch from device to device depending on their location and activity. Some 93% of teens and young adults own a desktop or laptop computer. And 81% of people growing up today have a smartphone. Unsurprisingly, some 78% say they know more about technology than their parents. And being an early adopter is cool: 55% agree it's important to have the latest technology or gadgets.



Cameron

Age:

13

Home:

Canada

Likes:

Playing hockey
and video games

“Before I had all this new technology stuff, I was usually bored senseless, I didn’t know what to do. But now I have my phone I can go on social media and that can use up my time in a different way.”

“Hanging out online fits alongside hanging out with their friends in person as an additional space to grow and interact.”

Jo Tenzer

Facebook

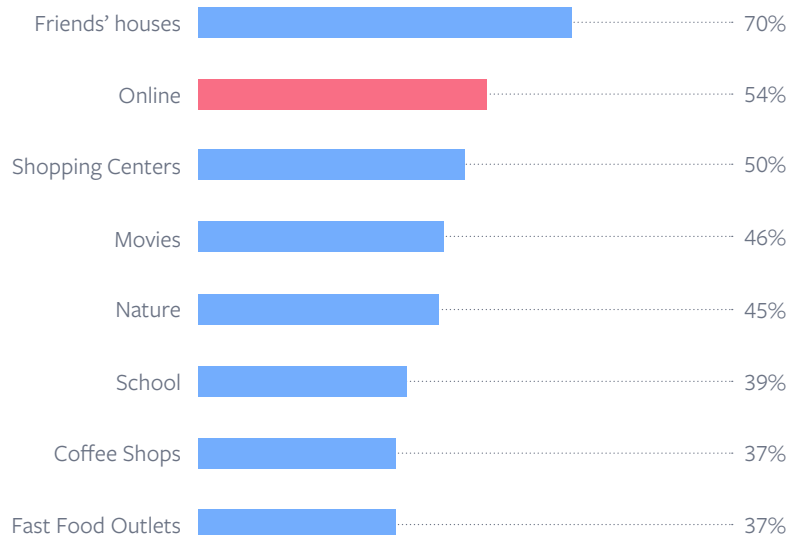
Moving seamlessly across devices

With the online world being such a big part of their lives, people coming of age today rely on their multiple devices throughout the day to stay connected. Multitasking is the norm, with respondents instinctively maximizing their time. On average, 79% of teens and young adults say they always or mostly use a mobile device while watching TV. Multiscreening while watching TV is most popular among Italian and German respondents (83% say they do it) and in Indonesia and the UK (81%). The US is on par with the average at 78%, while survey respondents in the Nordics are only slightly less likely to do it than the average, at 72%.

Hanging out online

Given the blurring of worlds online and off, it’s no surprise that online is a key place to spend time, second only to friends’ houses. Some 70% of young people today list friends’ houses as their favorite places to hang out, followed by online (54%) and shopping malls (50%). Germans are the most likely to hang out online (68%).

Online is a favorite place to hang out— second only to friends’ houses



Source: “Coming of Age on Screens,” by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), April- May 2014. Survey of 11,165 young people, ages 13-24, in 13 countries.



Micheala

Age:

14

Home:

Australia

Likes:

Figure skating, reading
and listening to music

“If I couldn’t share photos or videos, it would probably make a big impact on my life because normally the first thing I think when I take a photo is where can I share this on and when can I share it, so if I don’t have anyone to share it with or anyone else to see what I’m doing or what the photo is of I’d feel really upset about it.”

“Most Millennials have grown up with the Internet, and it plays an important role in their lives,” says Jo Tenzer of Facebook. “They are constantly connected, and few remember a world where the Internet was not in their pocket. Hanging out online is an extension of this. It allows young people to be creative and express themselves in an environment where other people share their interests. Hanging out online fits alongside hanging out with their friends in person as an additional space to grow and interact.”

Having a fear of being offline (FOMO)

With such a strong preference for hanging out online, people growing up today say they like to be connected to the Internet wherever they are. Fear of being offline (FOMO) is real and widespread. On average, 70% of teens and young adults say they like to be connected everywhere, led by Brazil at 81%, India (77%) and Indonesia (73%). In the US and UK, the number is on par with the global average at 72%. Only Western Europe is lower than the average when it comes to the need to be connected, with Germany at 65% and France at 57%.

Staying current through social media

For people growing up today, hanging out online increasingly means logging into social media, which they say strengthens their everyday connections and makes them feel closer to the wider world. Some 74% of teens and young adults agree that social media helps them stay up-to-date with their friends and family. And 65% agree they use social media to connect with people they see every day. Survey respondents say that social media also makes them feel more in tune with the world (66%) and part of a wider community (61%).

Feeling lost without social media

Nearly half of survey respondents (46%) around the world say they “feel lost” without social media, indicating how integral it is to their lives. That feeling is highest in Indonesia (69%), India (62%) and Brazil (52%). In the US, 47% of young Americans in the study say they would feel lost without it.



Ugo

Age:

14

Home:

Italy

Likes:

Skating, skateboarding
and playing video games

“I follow my favorite brands on Facebook, because now that I know how it is structured, it is easier to find news compared to visiting [a brand’s] official website... [But] If I see that a brand is posting things I’m already aware of, or is monotonous or repetitive, then I stop following it.”

VII. The Screens Generation: Image and Expression

Before the Internet, young people habitually expressed themselves through the clothes they wore, the friends they kept, the music they listened to and the sports they did (or didn’t) play. While their image offline still matters, teens and young adults increasingly express themselves online by sharing pictures and videos. They keenly understand that what they share shapes their online image.

Social media is the first place they turn to share

Those who turn to social media first to share the following



Source: “Coming of Age on Screens,” by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), April- May 2014. Survey of 11,165 young people, ages 13-24, in 13 countries.

Sharing important moments

Social media is the first place teens and young adults today turn to share the most important moments and feelings of their lives. When they’ve had a “really good day,” survey respondents say the first place they’d share the news is on social media (30%), followed by face-to-face (22%) and text (11%). The same goes for sharing a photo of, or a post about, themselves: half of young people (53%) say they would first use social media to share. This generation also uses social media to share interesting news articles (36%) and random observations (28%).

72%

expect brand content
to be entertaining

56%

would share interesting
brand content received
on their mobiles

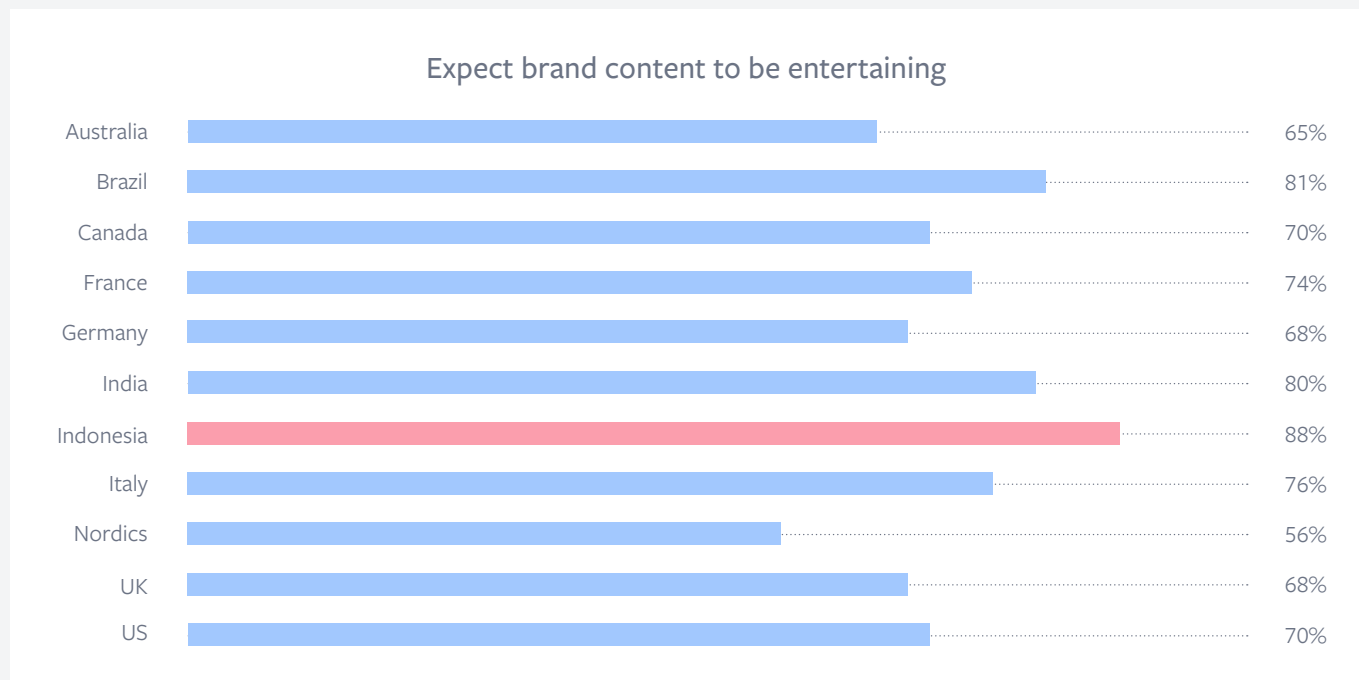
“Social media gives people the opportunity to share their experiences as they happen. This is no different for young people,” says Jo Tenzer of Facebook. “Millennials use social media to create the best version of themselves. That means sharing both the good and the bad. It’s acceptable, particularly amongst this group, to share what’s important to you and let people know who you are via social media. Photos and videos are particularly important as a visual representation of their personality and experiences. Social media allows them to express how they feel without the awkwardness that teenagers can sometimes experience face-to-face.”

Interacting with brands

For teens and young adults, brands have a place in interactions online. Survey respondents say they welcome hearing from a brand online, but that trust and relevancy are key. Some 53% of young people agree they like it when brands they like speak to them via social media. But 56% say they only pay attention to advertising from brands they trust.

“Good content is good content, as far as people growing up today are concerned,” says Crowd DNA’s Andy Crysell. “The distinction between what is an ad, what is branded content and what is media-owner content is less vital. More key is that, no matter where the content is from, there needs to be authenticity and relevancy. Young people have a strong understanding of the value exchange — they will happily interact with brands if they perceive utility and/or entertainment in the exchange. They are constantly interacting with different personalities and characters via digital and they expect brands to be similarly interesting, playful and energetic.”

Brand content can also have social currency



Source: "Coming of Age on Screens," by Crowd DNA (study commissioned by Facebook), April- May 2014. Survey of 11,165 young people, ages 13-24, in 13 countries.

Setting a high bar for brand content

Survey respondents say they also want brands to be thoughtful about what they post. Some 72% of teens and young adults say they expect brands to share entertaining content, suggesting a high bar. A majority of those surveyed (56%) say they would share interesting brand content they received on their mobile. Those numbers are even higher in Indonesia (79%), India (78%) and Brazil (69%).

VIII. Marketer Takeaways

People growing up today are hardly a homogenous group. On the contrary, their attitudes and behaviors evolve as they age, providing marketers wishing to interact with this generation with unique challenges. Among the changes, teens and young adults are increasingly switching between multiple devices throughout the day, making cross-channel and cross-device marketing a must. And while survey respondents indicate they want to hear from brands, they have high expectations. This generation prefers to hear from brands they already trust — and they ‘ll check out if they’re not interested.

Here are some key findings for marketers and corresponding takeaways:

Takeaway

Some things never change. The universal truths of growing up haven’t changed. Being inseparable from friends. Wanting to stand out while fitting in. Wanting to be understood, to grow up quickly and have a chance to leave a mark on the world. What’s changed are the ways in which people growing up today form their identities, express themselves and connect with others.

Optimists rule. Many of the study participants are coming of age in difficult economic times. Unemployment in many economies is high. Student debt has skyrocketed. The world is an increasingly competitive space — at school and in the job market. Yet people growing up today are inherently optimistic and value happiness above all.

What this means for marketers

Coming of age is a period of growth, change, possibility and at times, difficulty. And much of this now plays out online. Find a role for the brand in aiding teens and young adults in this transition. Develop content and campaigns that position the brand as a source of information, inspiration or validation.

While youthful optimism is tempered by age and reality, brands can help reinforce and build upon the positivity and hope that defines this group. Consider sharing stories of people growing up who have defied the odds with their talent, innovation and entrepreneurship. Explore content and campaigns that empower this group to achieve their own aspirations. And consider how the brand’s mission and products may align with encouraging this incredible optimism.

Takeaway

Having a place of their own. Online is where people coming of age today hang out and connect with their friends, second only to their friends' houses. They access this hangout through different devices, but the destination is always the same. It's where their friends are and where conversations happen right now, in real time, or over the course of a day — or longer.

Differences matter. People often view 13- to 24-year-olds as one big, homogeneous group belonging to the Millennial Generation. In truth, there are nuanced phases young people pass through as they inch towards adulthood.

What this means for marketers

Unlike hangout spots of old, there is a legitimate space for brands online. To be welcomed into the conversation, focus on showing the brand's human side and on personalizing messaging. Convey how the brand cares about things that matter to people growing up today in a casual and friendly way. Respect must be earned. Highlight how the brand is useful to this generation, or provide the entertainment and humor that teens and young adults today so deeply value.

There may be different ways to spark conversations and engagement with young people, based on their particular stage of coming of age. Optimists (13-15) are very tech fluent, love to share and look at the world with wide, optimistic eyes. Think about contributing to the conversation in an authentic way that will tap into this optimism and encourage sharing. Explorers (16-19) are more open to experimentation and focused on education. Consider marketing initiatives that can help fuel their passion for discovery and learning. Realists (20-24) are more focused and aware of their time, and have lost a bit of their optimism. Explore creative work that can help reignite some of that positivity and hope.

Takeaway

Living on their mobiles. Over two-thirds of this generation own or use a smartphone. 72% can't leave home without it. They check Facebook an average of 14 times a day on their smartphones. Mobile devices are the main way this generation connects.

Content is king. Online is a key place where people growing up today foster their image, craft their personas and express themselves through engaging content. A majority of teens and young adults say they share interesting brand content received on their mobiles, provided it is entertaining.

Images matter. People growing up today express themselves via photos, videos, emoticons and emojis — driving the shift to a new visual vocabulary and often replacing the need for text. They see visuals as a succinct and powerful way to get their point across.

What this means for marketers

Since people growing up today so clearly rely on their mobiles, brands need a mobile-first strategy to reach them. This includes creating bite-sized, image-heavy content, and catchy videos designed for minds on the move.

Brands should create content that reflects the image teens and young adults want to share online and appeals to their values.

It's important that content be in a language that teens and young adults speak. That language is increasingly visual. Images are one of the main ways this generation expresses thoughts and receives validation.

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