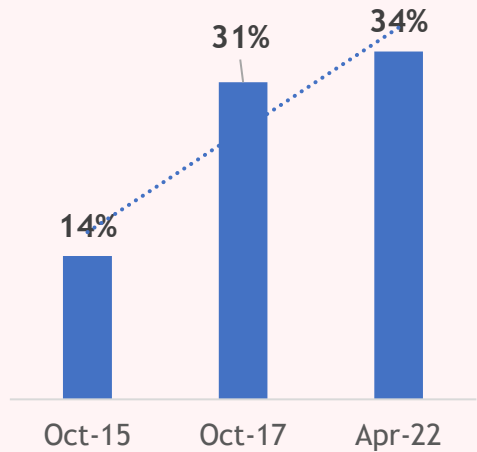


# Stuck without escape: Gen Z and social media stress

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? **Social media is a stressful part of my life**



(W12\_1)



## Why is this happening?

### Rise of TikTok trends

[TikTok trends are said to run on 90-day cycles](#) - the turnaround is quick and the variety of content is huge, which allows for a highly entertaining platform that you won't get bored of. However, on the flipside, this creates [TikTok FOMO](#). Many young people feel the pressure to keep up with the trends to feel relevant amongst their peers, and to not feel left out. Fashion trends is an area that has been particularly affected by this - microtrends rise and fall at the drop of a hat, [moving too fast to be captured in proper collections](#). Keeping up to date with different aesthetics that come and go is not sustainable for fashion brands nor the young people following them.

### Twitter as a news outlet

According to our data, [50%](#) of young Twitter users say they use it to 'keep up to date about news and current affairs'. A report also shows that [45%](#) of Gen Z have their first contact with the news in the morning via their phones. With the current political climate being sombre globally and within the country, it is no wonder young people recognise social media as a stressful part of life. Is it getting harder for young people to unplug from the news.

### Trapped in an echo chamber

In the past, TikTok's 'For You' page has been called out for [suppressing content from disabled creators](#) in an attempt to mitigate 'bullying' and 'harassment'. This points to the fact that the content we interact with is filtered to a certain extent, creating an environment where similar-minded content populate our feeds. Instagram algorithms have also come under fire for [pushing content that promotes disordered eating to teens/young adults](#) - being stuck in a negative echo chamber could fuel stress.

## Demographic differences

40% of LGBTQ+ young people say that social media is a stressful part of life compared to Straight respondents (32%). GLAAD, an LGBTQ+ media advocacy group, have deemed social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter '[effectively unsafe for LGBTQ users](#)'. The same report identified the prevalence and the intensity of hate speech and harassment toward LGBTQ+ people on those platforms. It is no surprise that more LGBTQ+ young people think social media is a stressful part of life.

## What does this mean?

### Gen Z's struggling with their mental health

According to our latest data, [47%](#) of young people think that 'poor body image' and 'low-self-esteem/not feeling good enough' are problems that are made worse by technology or social media. Social media platforms are working to support with this (e.g. Instagram having a 'hide' feature to turn off contents/ads you don't like) - but more changes should be made to make any radical difference.

### Gen Z has no escape

Social media is the go-to place for Gen Z for pretty much everything - to keep up with the news, to interact with peers, for entertainment, etc. Furthermore, having to keep up with different trends with such quick turnarounds and avoiding FOMO means that they are always plugged in. Escape is something they need to actively seek out - otherwise, they end up getting caught up in the social media trap.

## What now?

What can we learn from young people's view on social media and stress:

- Ensure that there are moments of lightness in the things your brand does/promotes - escapism cuts through to Gen Z that may be having a difficult time.
- Be mindful of the impact you could have on Gen Z's mental health. Be sure to not promote unsafe and/or damaging content through your social media engagements - the impacts of this could be dire.