

THE JOY OF MISSING OUT

JOMO

How Gen Z is finding balance in
an upside-down world



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wattpad brand partnerships 

JOMO: The Joy of Missing Out



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JOMO: The Joy of Missing Out

You don't have to tell
Gen Z they're maxed out.



They know.

Youth up to 24, a cohort otherwise known as Gen Z, is one of the most stressed out and lonely generations. But they don't need other people to tell them that. Gen Z happens to be perfectly aware of their own personal struggles—much of it brought on by the gravitational pull of a **perpetually-connected** life. While they may spend “too much” of their time online, Gen Z also recognizes the importance of proper self-care and a balanced lifestyle while living in the digital age.



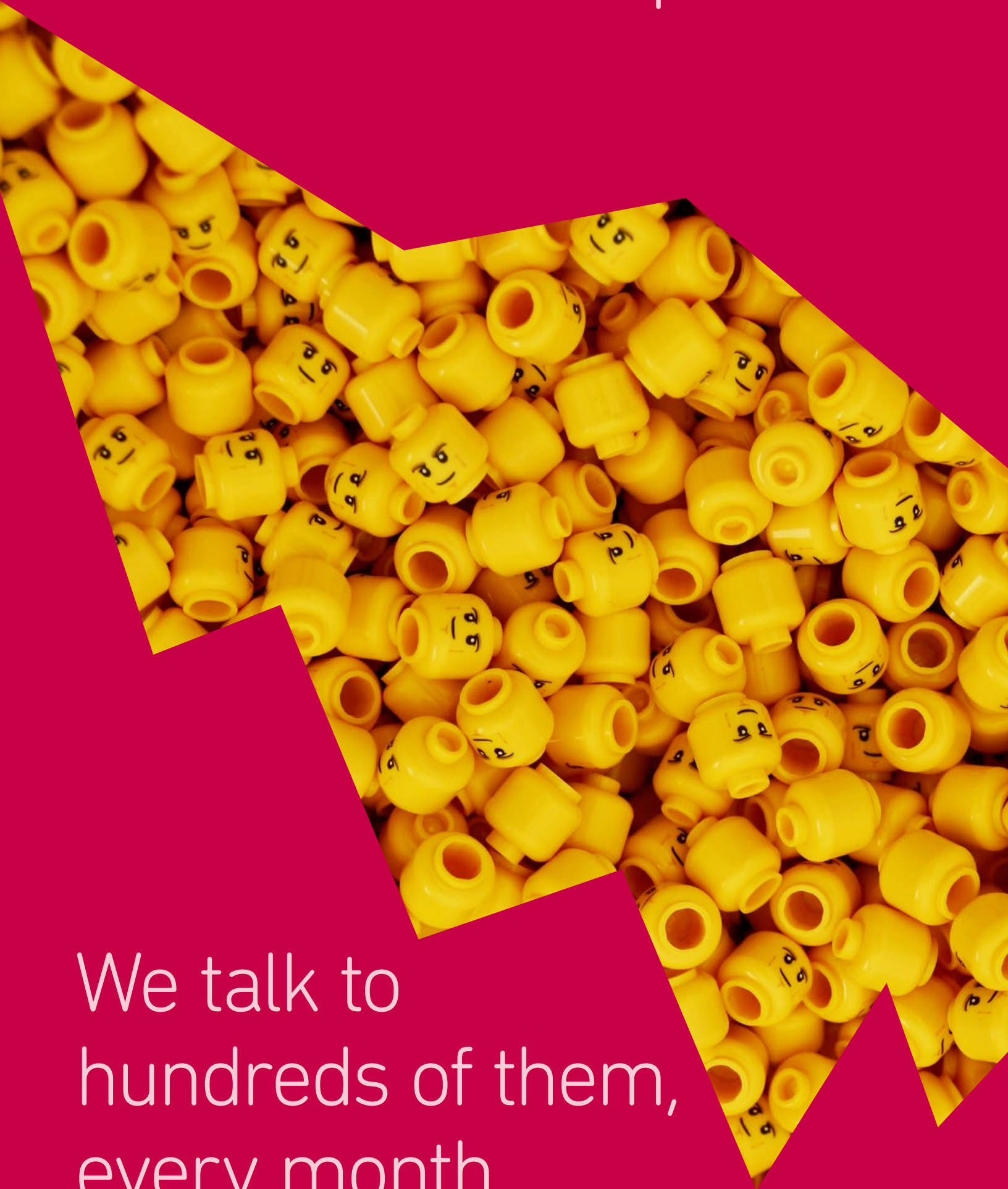
JOMO: The Joy of Missing Out



How are they doing this? By embracing a little something called JOMO, the antithesis of FOMO—the term forever tied to the quintessential Millennial idea of never wanting to miss out. Instead, **JOMO celebrates the Joy of Missing Out**. It's about creating a dichotomy between one's happiest online moments and the ones that stress them out. It's not about less online time—that's not an option. Instead, Gen Z is navigating which online activities cause them the most stress—and which create a sense of escape.

In the end, it's all about finding that perfect flow between screen time and real life.

How did Wattpad become Gen Z experts?



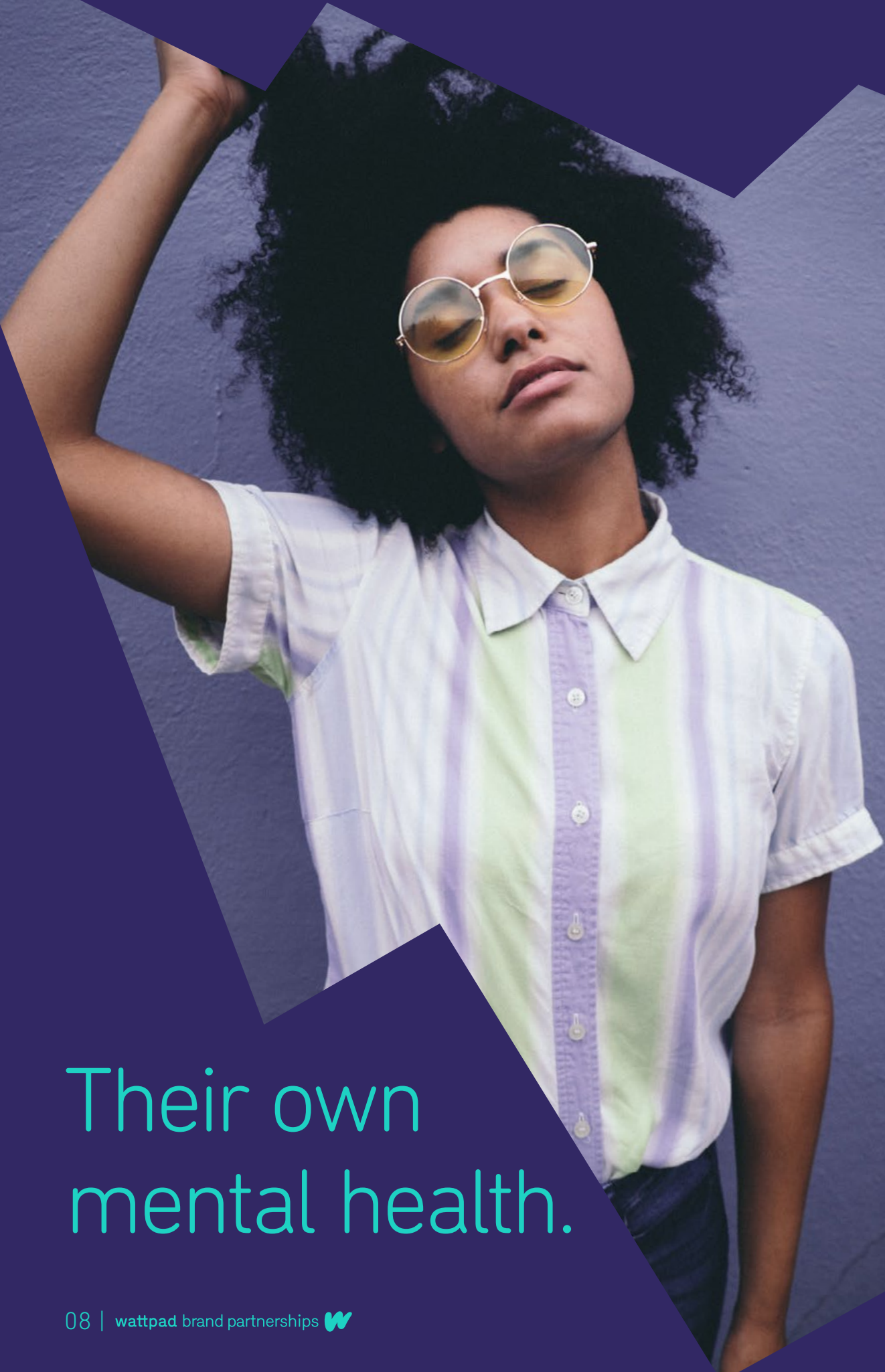
We talk to
hundreds of them,
every month.

We enlisted a voluntary panel of our most engaged community members to tell us how they really feel about their online world. The youth panel, Generation Wattpad, expands our unique insight into the minds of our user base. Through Generation Wattpad, we asked our community of Gen Zs what they find the most stressful about their online world, how they choose to relax, and how they feel about their own overall health. The results? They're feeling maxed out.



JOMO: The Joy of Missing Out

What's the greatest social issue for Gen Z?



Their own mental health.

While the JOMO movement allows Gen Z to break away from online toxicity and find more positive experiences, it's also a callout of the things impacting Gen Z.

74% of Gen Z feel that they are stressed 'often' or 'very often.' This number leaps to **95%** if you include those that said 'somewhat often.' The leading causes of stress are school/homework, family, money, friends, and health.

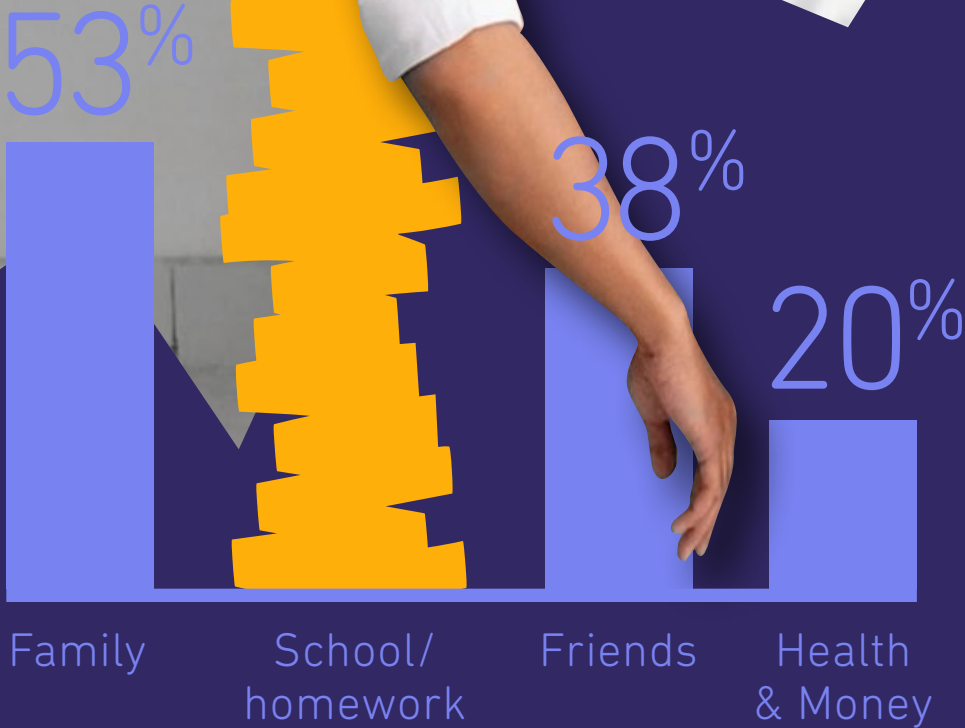
While these concerns don't necessarily have to deal with their online world, Gen Z is constantly connected—so being online can either heighten their anxieties about these issues or lessen them. When asked what the greatest social issue facing them today was, Gen Z's answer was simply their own mental health. In fact, **59%** of Gen Zs said they wanted to improve their mental health by committing to healthier lifestyle habits!



What's stressing Gen Z out?



Cause



91%

of Gen Zs between ages 18 and 21 say they have experienced at least one physical or emotional symptom due to stress [APA]

20%

of Gen Z reported feelings of stress caused by finances, compared to 62% of Millennials

35%

of Gen Z are likely to seek help for their mental illness. [APA]

Effect

Research from the American Psychological Association [APA] suggests that a strong social network can mitigate the effects of stress and improve overall mental health.¹

75%

of Gen Z feel hopeful about their future despite their struggles with mental health. [APA]

#Mood is more than a meme

Truth is, social media tends to reflect the mood Gen Z is already in—but it can drastically amplify it. And it makes sense—looking at your socials when you're already feeling anxious can compound those feelings—the constant barrage of happy faces can make your own unhappiness feel even more acute. Gen Z has dealt with this push and pull for their entire conscious lives. The pressure to constantly be 'on'; especially when you're feeling less than 'on', it's a challenge for anyone. Gen Z has been constantly bombarded with the expectations of performing the best version of their lives on social, not to mention all the worries of those engagement metrics—constant, small value judgments.



“

As self-centered as it is, it makes me happy to get likes on a picture.”

When asked what social media apps make them feel good about themselves, one member of Generation Wattpad cited Instagram and said, “As self-centered as it is, it makes me happy to get likes on a picture.” And it makes sense. Likes, comments, and follows have become a very important form of validation. On the flip side, another Generation Wattpad member said, “None of [these social media platforms] really make me feel good about myself. If I could, I would get rid of them all, but it’s the only way I can talk to people.” Different social platforms have positive takeaways for some and negative for others and it’s downright impossible to tell someone which one should be which. JOMO isn’t necessarily about Gen Z removing themselves from social media but recognizing what online interactions give them joy.

There is such a thing as positive screen time

Gen Zs are the first digital natives, meaning their world is completely integrated between 'reality' and 'online'—everything they do is on their phones. Screen time makes **59%** of Gen Z happy. More happy, they claim, than anything else, including family (40%) or pets/animals (40%). Spending so much time on their phone also makes **45%** of Gen Z feel judged.²

More than half (53%) of Gen Z find that they spend too much of their time online, anyways. **22%** of them say that social media makes them feel like they're missing out in life and should be doing more (that dreaded FOMO!)³. On the other hand **43%** said they make the active choice to spend a couple hours each day away from social media entirely (the awesome JOMO movement!).



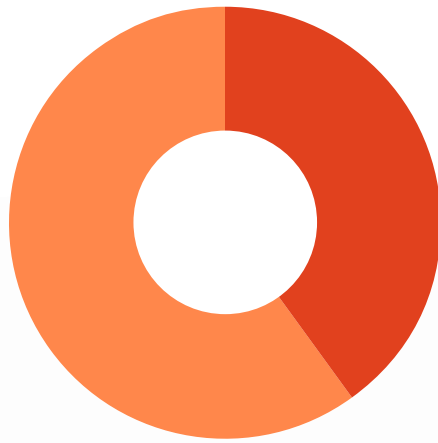
What makes Gen Z happy?

↑ Upside



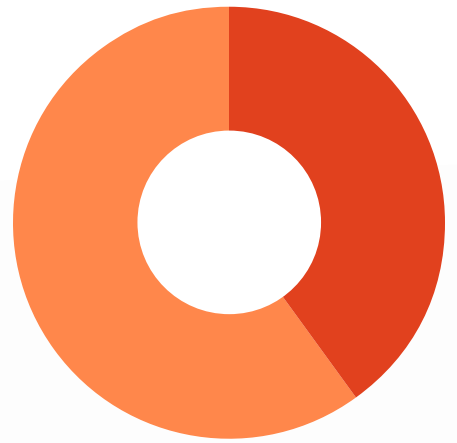
59%

Screen time



40%

Pets/animals



40%

Family



63%
of Gen Zs go
online to stream/
watch videos



↓ Downside

45%

of Gen Z says
spending so
much time on
their phone
makes them
feel judged.

53%

said they find
themselves
spending too
much time
online in
general.

56%

of online time
is spent on
social media.

22%

of them say
that social
media makes
them feel like
they're missing
out in life.



Digital detox doesn't mean going offline

Spending time away from social media doesn't necessarily mean that Gen Z is logging off. When we asked Generation Wattpad how they destress, nearly half said they specifically go online to unwind.

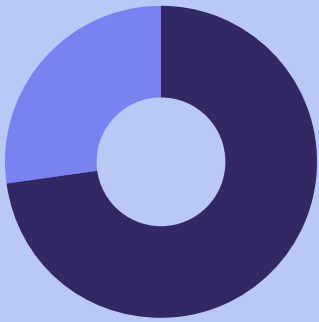
For those who chose online activity as a way to destress, they seemed to be seeking escapism and self-expression. Among the top answers of online de-stressors were reading, listening to music, writing, playing games, exploring Wattpad, and watching funny videos on Youtube.



83%

of Gen Zs
spend time online
to read/write ↪

How Gen Z de-stresses:



73%

Indulging in quiet/alone time



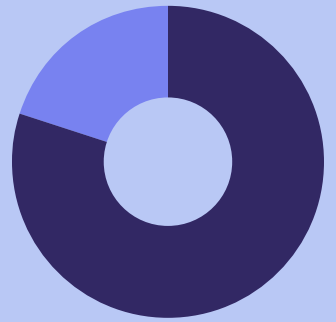
39%

Spend their time online



40%

Spend quality time with friends & family



88%

Reading and/or writing

“

I take a break away from social media as it usually causes more stress whenever I'm not in a good mood.”

61%

of Gen Zs go online to listen to music



Gen Z is optimistic, in spite of it all

Gen Z's connection to their online world allows them to react and think critically about world events happening in real time. Their consistent online presence allows them to recognize the importance of social issues that need their support in 'real life.'

65% of Gen Zs regularly volunteer and **89%** will actually pay more for a brand that has a clear/strong brand purpose. They also want to show more of their authentic selves online, moving away from overly-curated posts containing perfectly displayed avocado toast and posts on the beach, and are instead opting for unfiltered and even low-production photos that are less generic.



How Gen Z is making an impact



65%

of Gen Zs regularly volunteer

57%

of those volunteers dedicate 1-4 hours of their time once a month

30%

of them donate their money to charity each year

It's about embracing #selfcare

Like all generations before them, Gen Z just want to live a happy and healthy life. Their specific digital lifestyle is a key component to understanding how they have become not only socially aware but also intrinsically self-aware. They know that social media can have a negative impact on their mental and physical health and they're striving to make a change and find a good balance. **73%** of Gen Z want to achieve a healthier lifestyle with an improved diet, a stronger self-care routine, and more physical activity. **20%** choose physical exercise as a break away from the negativity of social media.

73%

of Gen Zs want to improve their overall health (balanced diet, drink more water, be more active, create stronger self-care routines, etc.)



“

I don't have a routine; I tend to respond to care for myself based on the state my body/mind are in at the moment, because I like being adaptable. ”

Finding balance to "spark joy."

While Gen Z may love their online world, they also know it's not always the healthiest place to be. Logging off isn't possible in this new digital age but that doesn't mean Gen Z is okay swimming in pools of toxicity. There's a good and bad side to just about everything in life—new or old, but there are always actions we can take to reduce the bad and amplify the good. While social media may be causing stress, other online communities are relieving that stress. Gen Z are more than aware of how difficult their online world can be but they're also learning exactly how to balance it all out.

20%

of Gen Zs choose exercise as a way to de-stress and break away from the negativity of social media.




How marketers can stay on the positive side of social media

Because Gen Z is more discerning and selective of their online engagement, marketers and brands should be aware of the type of content they create as well.

Capitalizing on trends, impressions, and popularity may provide short term engagement but it isn't effective in creating long term relationships with these digital natives. It's important that Gen Z feels brands care about the same things as they do and that they are authentic in regards to their content.





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Using social media as a way to engage with social causes is certainly one way to keep the attention of Gen Z. In fact, campaigns on Wattpad that have a clear social impact aspect have outperformed standard campaigns by 2X. However, cause marketing must extend beyond a single campaign and be embodied into a brand's overall purpose. When done right, brands are able to insert themselves on the positive side of the online world versus the stressful side.

JOMO: The Joy of Missing Out

Want to reach Gen Z? Work with a Gen Z-first company.

business.wattpad.com

brandpartnerships@wattpad.com

Report methodology:

Unless otherwise indicated, data presented in this report is the result of ongoing research with Wattpad's youth panel, Generation Wattpad, in the USA, composed of 13-34 year olds. Three separate surveys between October 2018 - January 2019 were conducted with approximately 400 responses each. Results presented herein are from the younger age group (13-17), unless otherwise indicated, and are reported at a 95% confidence level.

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