

STANFORD SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECT

HOPELAB



PROJECT BACKGROUND



PARTNER ORG

Stanford Center for
Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing.



GOAL

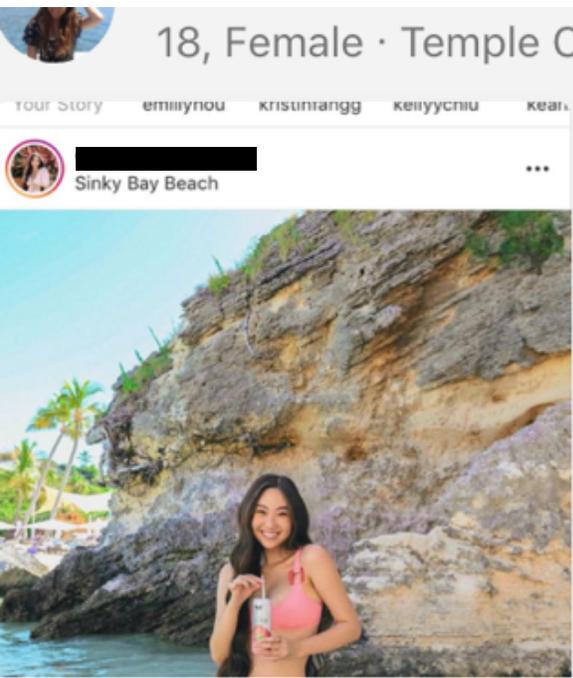
Achieve a more nuanced
understanding of young people and their...

- Challenges in engaging with social media
- Both negative and positive experiences on social media
- Troubling/triggering social media content

METHODS

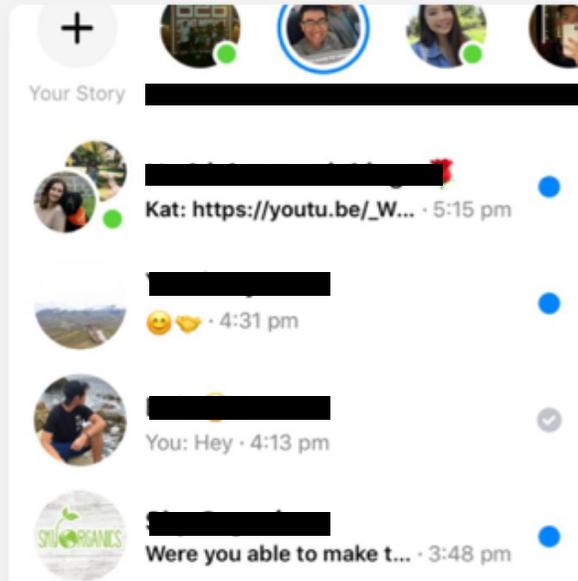
DSCOUT

Virtual diary to capture screenshots and responses to prompts



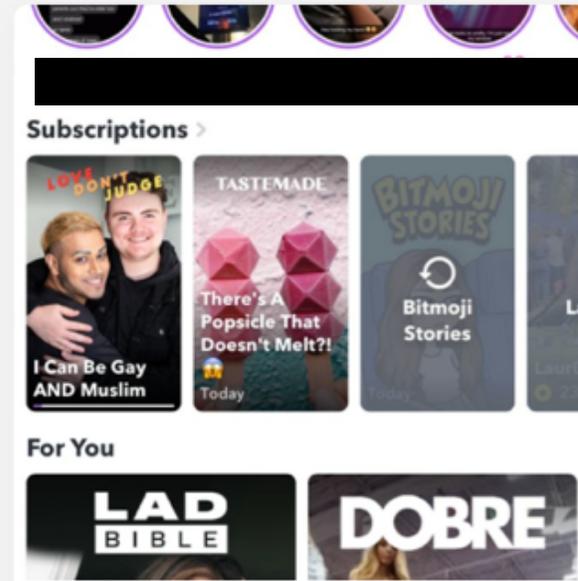
Instagram
Sep 6, 2019

📄 0 🏠 0 📖 0



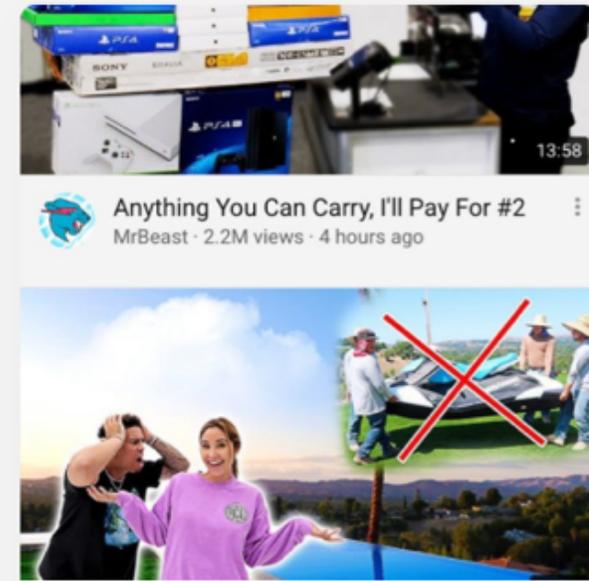
Facebook Messenger
Sep 6, 2019

📄 0 🏠 0 📖 0



Snapchat
Sep 6, 2019

📄 0 🏠 0 📖 0

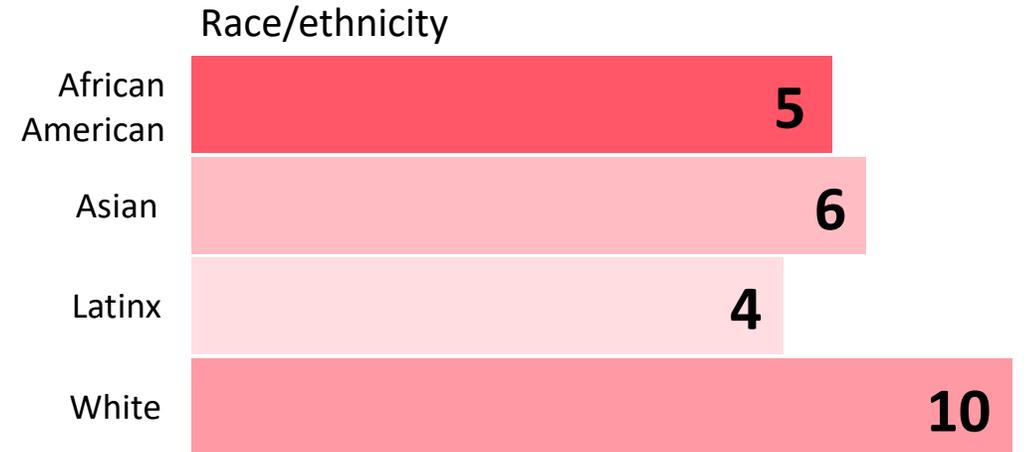
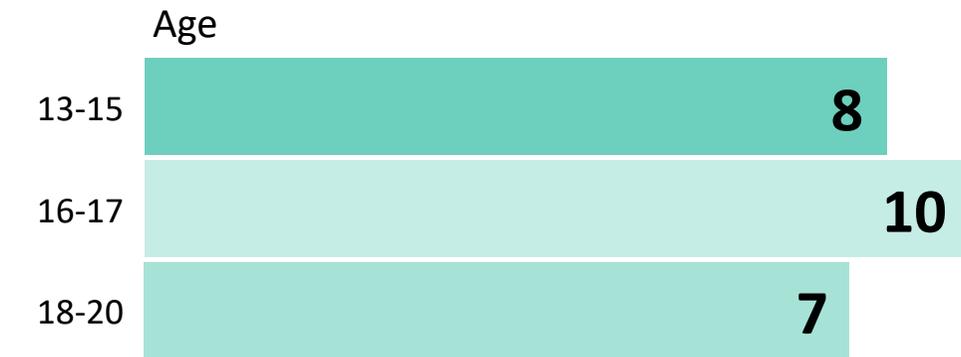


YouTube
Sep 6, 2019

📄 0 🏠 0 📖 0

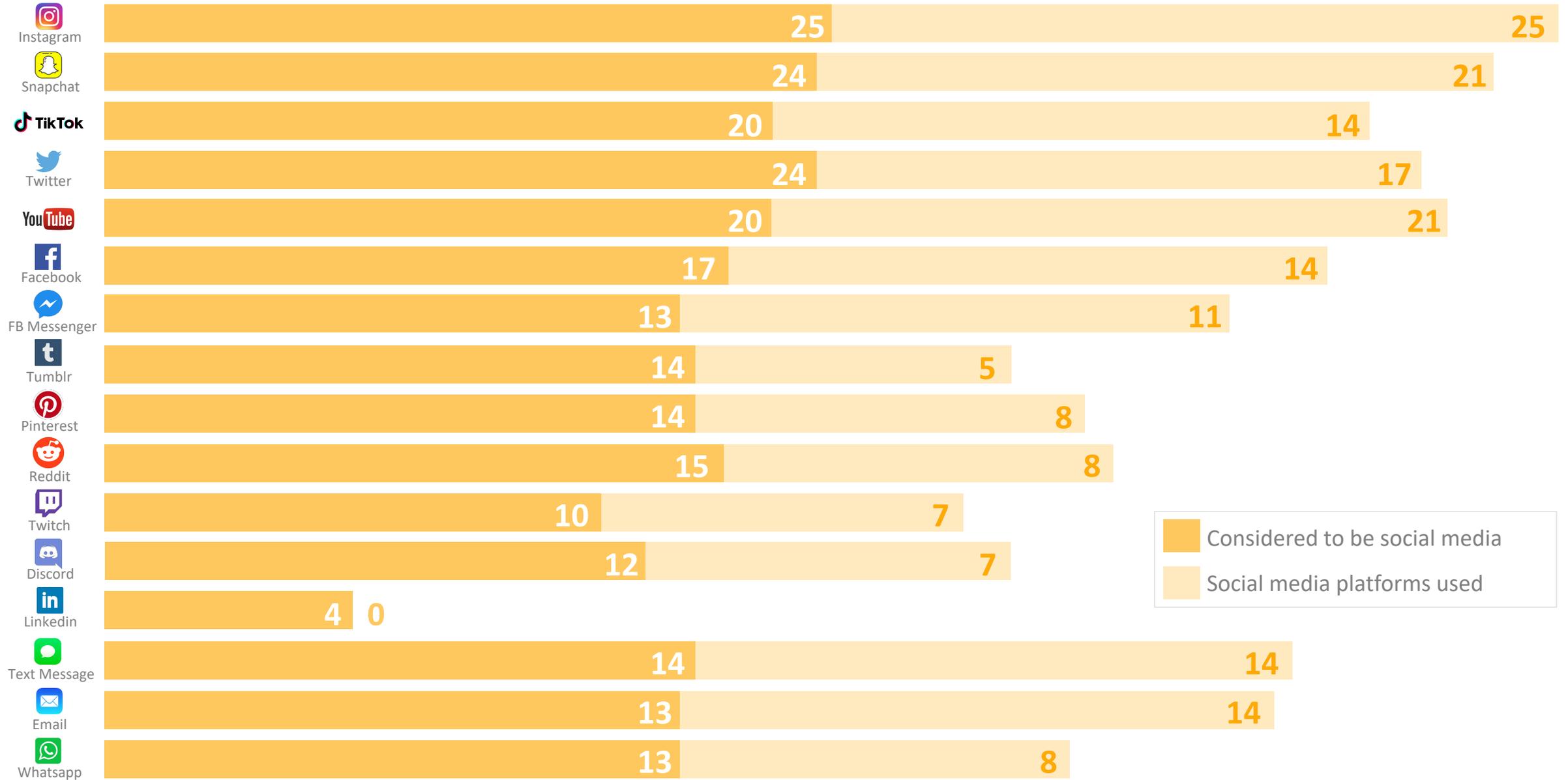
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS (N=25)

Average age = 16.52



FREQUENCY AND USE OF PLATFORMS

AWARENESS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

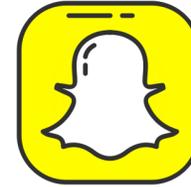


REASONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE



Instagram

Follow people, celebrities,
memes, scroll, posting



Snapchat

Streaks, stories/shows,
“keeping in touch”



YouTube

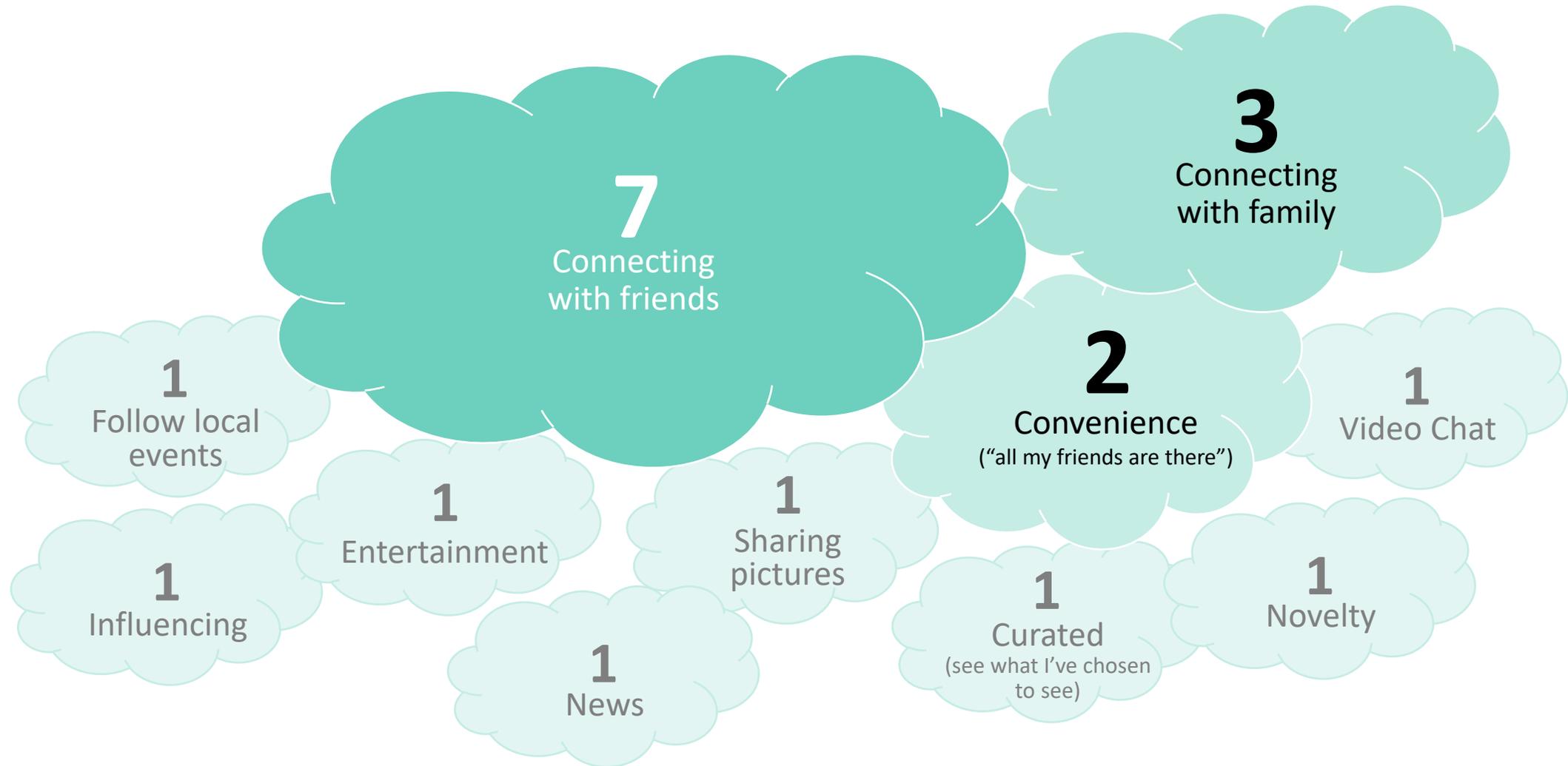
tutorials, vloggers
(entertainment and education)



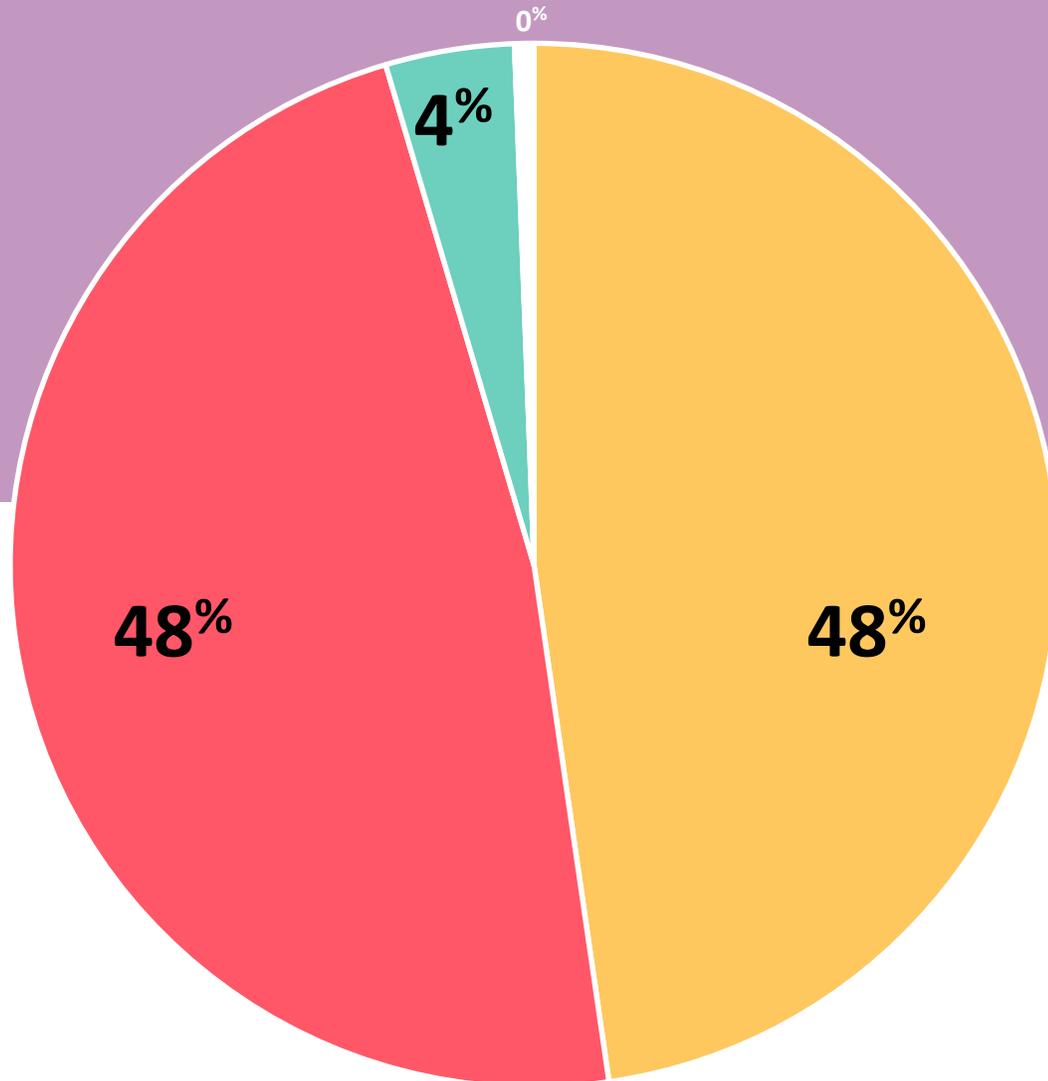
TikTok

Dance challenges, duets,
short entertainment videos

REASONS FOR USE OF FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM



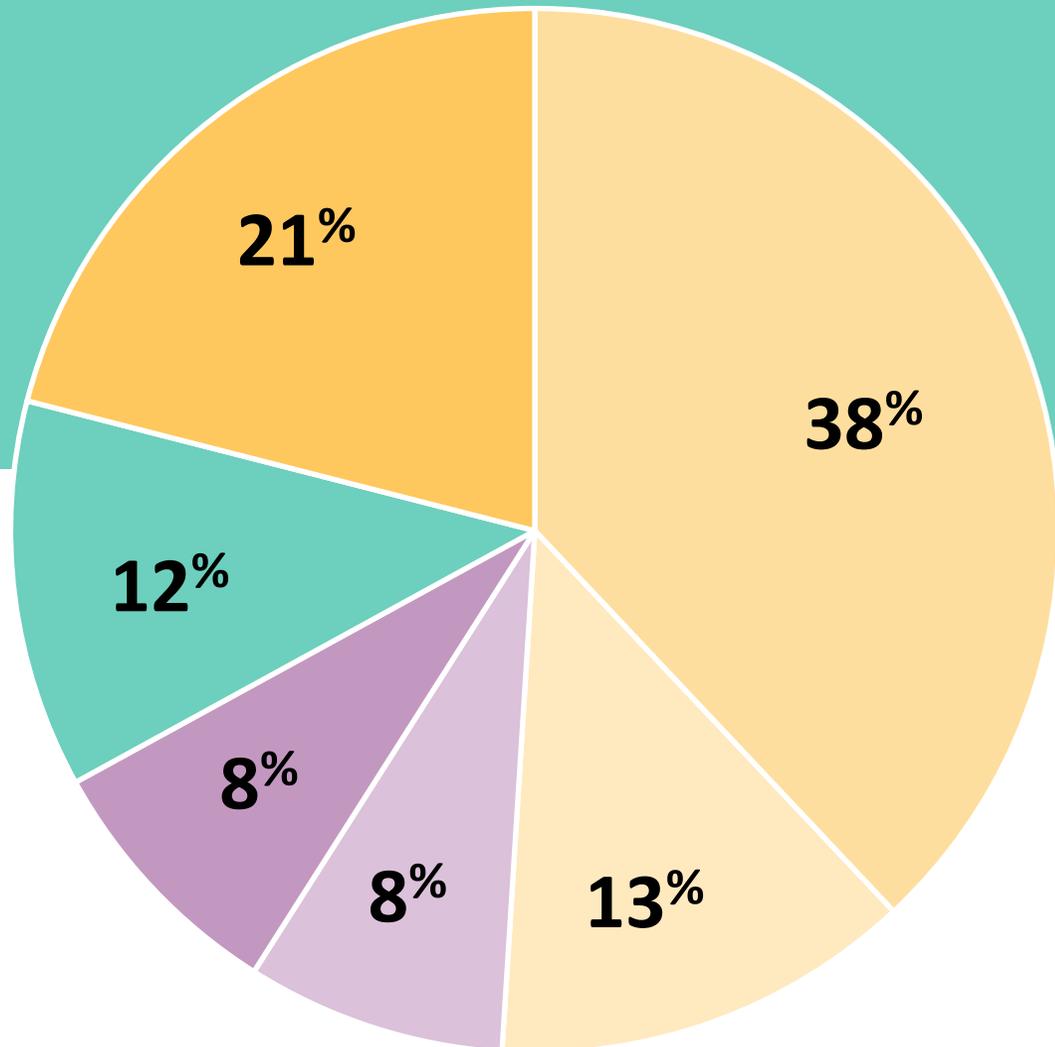
FREQUENCY OF USE



The majority of participants use their favorite social media platform either every hour or every few hours

- Every hour
- Every few hours
- Every day
- A few times a week
- Weekly
- Monthly

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA



More than half

of participants believe the effects of social media in their lives is positive.



FINDINGS

OVERALL FINDINGS

- Parent/family involvement is common
- Explicit strategies for managing negative experiences on social media
- Ubiquitous graphic content
- Mood management: using social media to “feel good”
- Young people value positivity and creativity
- Ads generate a feeling of lack of control



PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parents and family are already explicitly providing advice and feedback to young people about social media – and **young people are listening**

13 of 25

PARTICIPANTS EXPLICITLY
MENTIONED CONNECTING
WITH FAMILY THROUGH/
AROUND SOCIAL MEDIA

*“My parents even would
talk to me about what to
post and not post when I
first got started using
social media. (13m, fg) ”*

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Young people rely heavily on curating content and taking small social media breaks to manage negative experiences

EXPLICIT STRATEGIES TO MANAGE NEGATIVITY



Take
breaks



Curate
input



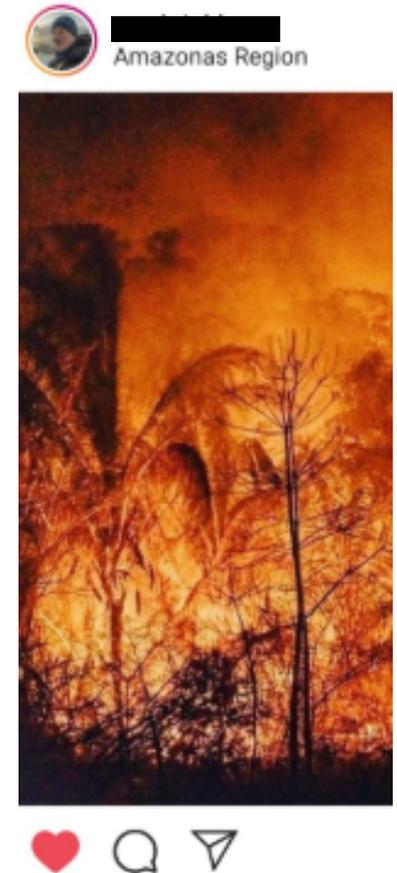
Curate
output



Report
graphic
content

EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES AND CORRESPONDING STRATEGY

Trigger			
Example quote	"Instagram will keep me up till maybe 3 a.m. just like me scrolling through Instagram and stuff." (18M, dscout)	"...problems in our world. They're sad but it helps spread awareness about these things." (13M, dscout)	"...social media gets stressful ...people saying mean things...It's important then to take a step back maybe and recollect (sic) your thoughts and maybe have some you time." (15M, fg)
Solution	Take a break – use social media for a half an hour and do something else	Take a break - stop using social media for hours or weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curate input – block or unfollow accounts• Curate output – create multiple accounts for different audiences



UBIQUITOUS GRAPHIC CONTENT

Young people are encountering graphic content frequently and there is no clear avenue on how to manage this

YOUNG PEOPLE REPORT GRAPHIC CONTENT

(ie. murders, shoot outs, sex, violence towards people and animals)

TO APPS, BUT THIS STRATEGY IS NOT PERCEIVED TO BE PRODUCTIVE



Teens did NOT report connecting with support (parents, family, friends) after seeing graphic content



“ I saw an actual murder. It was terrifying, I reported and tried to forget what it looked like... Yeah, the police got involved the day after. Instagram took a while to remove it, which is the worst part... (15F, fg) ”

School shooting PSA included trigger warning
(see image):

“I actually kind of had to regroup for a second because it hit me hard ... It actually made me cry. Like by the end of the video I was crying because it was just so like real.
(17F, dscout) ”

This PSA contains graphic content related to school shootings & may be upsetting to some viewers. If you feel this subject matter may be difficult for you, you may choose not to watch.



MOOD MANAGEMENT

Young people are intentionally and unintentionally using social media to make them “feel good”

“If I am upset over something, and I see a funny post it will make me laugh and probably make me feel a little better. I like to use social media as a distraction when I’m upset. (18F, fg) ”

“So this is a super cute Instagram post of these three little pastel houses set against a gorgeous pastel blue sky. ...seeing it made me feel so bright and peppy and inspired and happy and cheerful. (14F, dscout) ”



POSITIVITY AND CREATIVITY

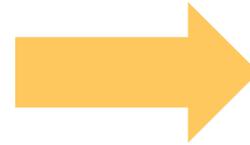
Young people want positivity and want to contribute to something cool – social media is an accessible outlet for creativity



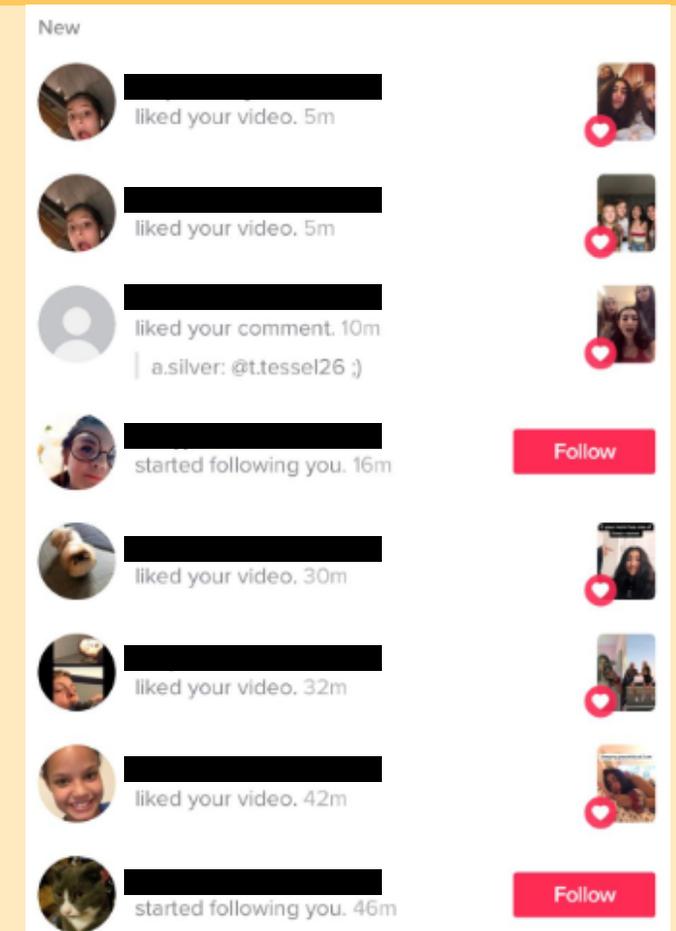
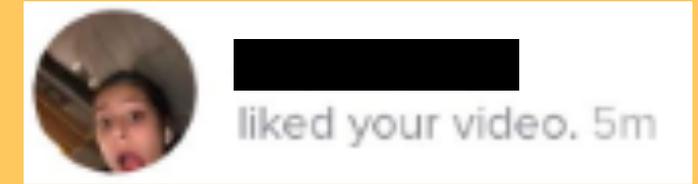
“Creating on social media makes me feel great. I use it as an outlet to deal with my mental problems really and share what I have with the world... Social media makes me feel awesome because I can share my creative side.”
(15M, fg)

POSITIVITY AND CREATIVITY ON TIKTOK

“ [Tiktok] definitely challenges you on a creative level. (F15, dscout) ”



“ I’m just a regular person who just makes funny videos on Tiktok so I really didn’t think that all of these people would like this video so much. (16F, dscout) ”



PROS AND CONS OF CONTENT CREATION

“ I like to create on social media although I don't do it often. I like it because it's a chance for me to express myself. (17F, fg) ”

“ I know friends who share their art on social media, and I used to do the same. To do so, you need to have thick skin and be really good at art lmao. (15F, fg) ”

ADS

Ads generate a feeling of lack of control and apps are held as responsible for ads

“ Uh I've seen that ad about 14, 15 times in the past maybe hour, hour and a half. (18M, dscout) ”



“ I have heavily curated my experience to see only the content I want to see. I feel powerless, a lack of control when it comes to targeted ads (18F, fg) ”

“ I'm in charge of who I follow, but when it comes to ads, I'm stuck. Nothing sucks more than seeing some ad about a trashy mobile game when you're trying to watch a video. However, I would take ads over the alternative – a paid app, probably a subscription (15F, fg) ”