

Millennials

Social media



Part of the full
Millennials report

GWI.



In this report

GWI Generation reports are designed to examine the digital behaviors of a particular generation – showcasing trends over time as well as analyzing how the audience in question compares to the overall internet population. In this report, we place the spotlight on **millennials** and their engagement with social media.

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Methodology & definitions

All figures in this report are drawn from GWI's online research among internet users aged 16-64. We only interview respondents aged 16-64 and our figures are representative of the online populations of each market, not its total population. Note that in many markets in Latin America, the Middle-East and Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, low internet penetration rates can mean online populations are more young, urban, affluent and educated than the total population.

Each year, GWI interviews over 688,000 internet users aged 16-64 via an online questionnaire for our Core dataset. A proportion of respondents complete a shorter version of this survey via mobile, hence the sample sizes presented in the

charts throughout this report may differ as some will include all respondents and others will include only respondents who completed GWI's Core survey via PC/laptop/tablet.

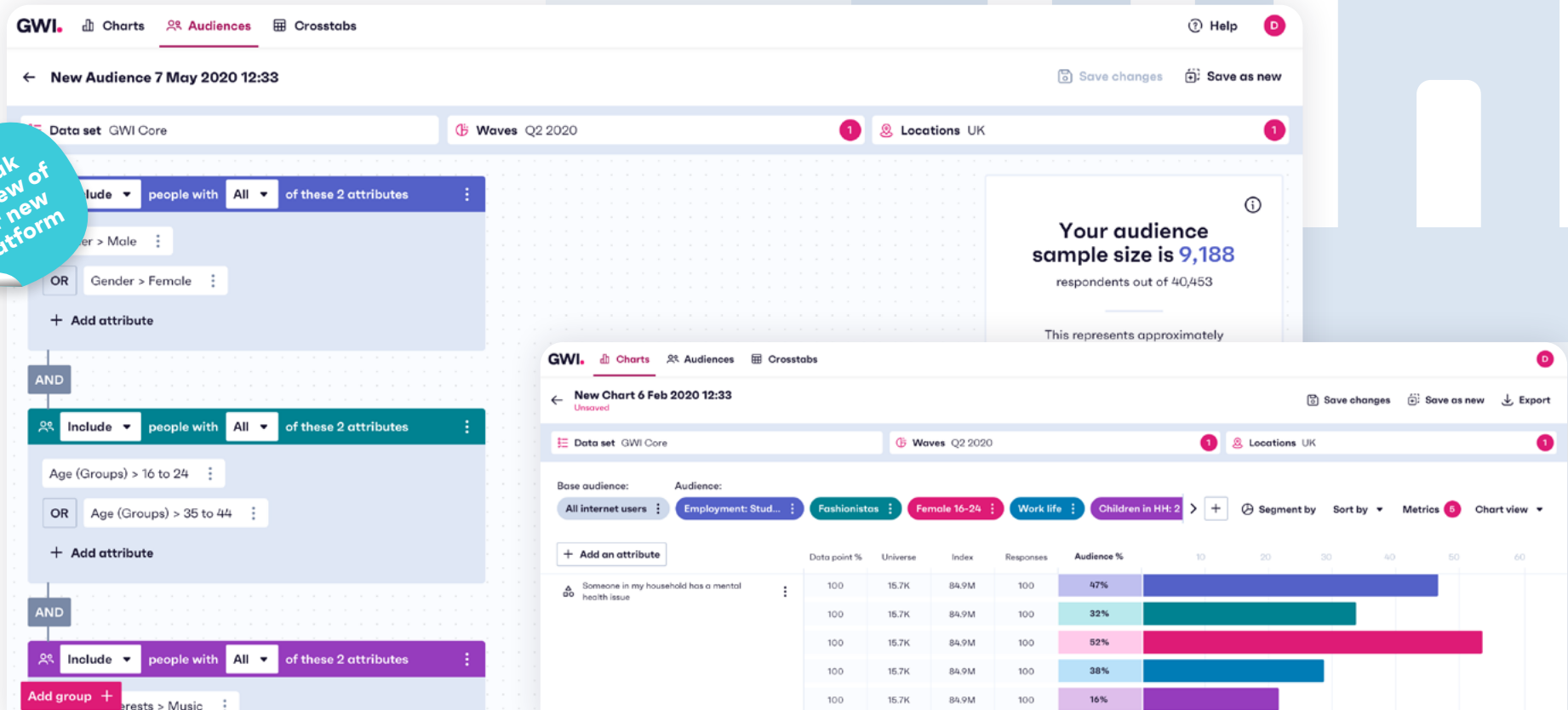
Throughout this report we refer to indexes. Indexes are used to compare any given group against the average (1.00), which unless otherwise stated refers to the global average. For example, an index of "1.20" means that a given group is 20% above the global average, and an index of "0.80" means that an audience is 20% below the global average.

For more details on the methodology or if you want to find out more about millennials, check out [our full report](#).

Discover the data on our platform

Each chart from our ongoing global research in this report contains a hyper-link that will bring you straight to the relevant question on our Platform, where you can investigate all data by demographics, over time, and among your own audiences.

Sneak preview of our new platform



1 Each of the graphs is numbered

More information can be found in the Appendix section at the end of this report

Just **click** this icon to explore the data on the platform

Source

Information about the source and base

Base

Social media and digital wellbeing

Social media has long been under the microscope for its effect on consumers’ wellbeing, with the digital detox trend exploding around 2019. However, these channels proved instrumental in keeping us connected during the crisis and helped combat feelings of loneliness. But what are millennials’ views on digital wellbeing now?

They aren’t too far from other generations, but it’s still a higher proportion who believe social media is good for society (38% vs 35% for others). At 45%, this sentiment is especially pronounced among heavy social networkers within this

group. But their relatively positive view doesn’t mean they aren’t aware of the time they spend scrolling through their social media feeds; and they’re willing to take action to mediate it. Millennials are more likely than other generations to have tracked their screen time and are also the most likely cohort to say they’re using social media less than they used to.

When it comes to the negative effects of social media, millennials are on par with other generations to think that these channels make them feel anxious. But when we dig deeper, we can see that those expressing this

sentiment are actually more likely to use social media for purely “social reasons”. For example, they’re 21% more likely than the average millennial to share personal details of their lives and 19% more likely to make sure they don’t miss out on anything. Social media is known for promoting such feelings of “FOMO” (fear of missing out) and can have a negative impact on this group’s mental health. So, although FOMO is considered an effective strategy brands can tap into to engage millennials, they should be cautious about leveraging what can potentially lead to feelings of anxiety.

Attitudes to social media

Millennials Other generations

“

I think social media is good for society

%

38 | 35

“

I am using social media less than I used to

22 | 20

“

I worry I spend too much time on social media

27 | 27

“

I feel using social media causes me anxiety

16 | 15

Millennials are more likely than other generations to have tracked their screen time and are also the most likely cohort to say they’re using social media less than they used to

Screen time tracking

% who have tracked their screen time or set limits for certain apps on their mobile

26 | 23

Leading social platforms

Millennials’ social media usage spiked during Q2 2020 when the first global lockdowns took place and 45% of this cohort reported spending longer on these channels. But the novelty of having excess time to devote to these activities has slowly worn off and the time they spend each day went back from 2h41m in Q2 to 2h34m in Q3 2020.

Millennials hold a very broad portfolio of social accounts so capturing their attention on a single platform during those two and a half hours of their day won’t be easy. They have an average of 9.2 social media accounts which makes them bigger multi-networkers than any

other generation, even their younger counterparts – Gen Z.

That doesn’t mean that all of these accounts are being used on a regular basis and with the same frequency. For example, outside of China, YouTube has slightly less reach among millennials than Facebook, but it enjoys much more monthly and daily engagement. In fact, YouTube is the only platform that draws in more users than members, which is a result of visitors to the site being able to freely consume the content without an account. On the contrary, although a substantial number of millennials have accounts with services like WeChat

SOCIAL PLATFORMS

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Average number of social media accounts owned by millennials

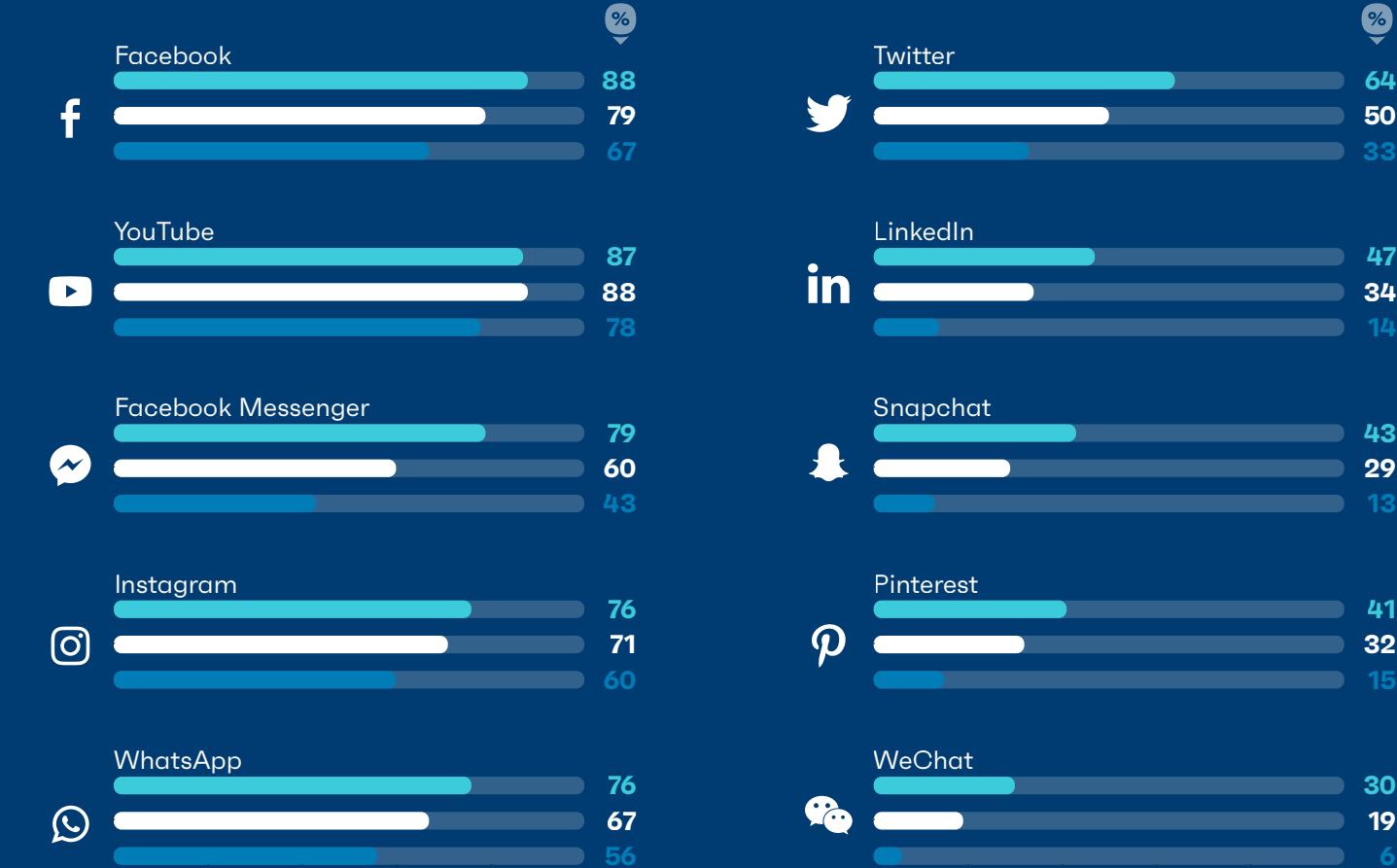
(30%), LinkedIn (47%), and Snapchat (43%), only a small proportion of them actually use these platforms regularly.

TikTok is a platform generally associated with Gen Z, but it deserves a mention here too. It was relatively niche with the millennial audience in 2019, but the outbreak has put it front and center, especially among those with young children. With its user-generated short-form videos, TikTok has lent itself to being a one-stop shop for fun and family-oriented content. Brands targeting millennial moms or dads shouldn’t think twice about reaching them on the platform.

Top 10 social platforms

% of millennials outside of China who are members/visitors of the following platforms

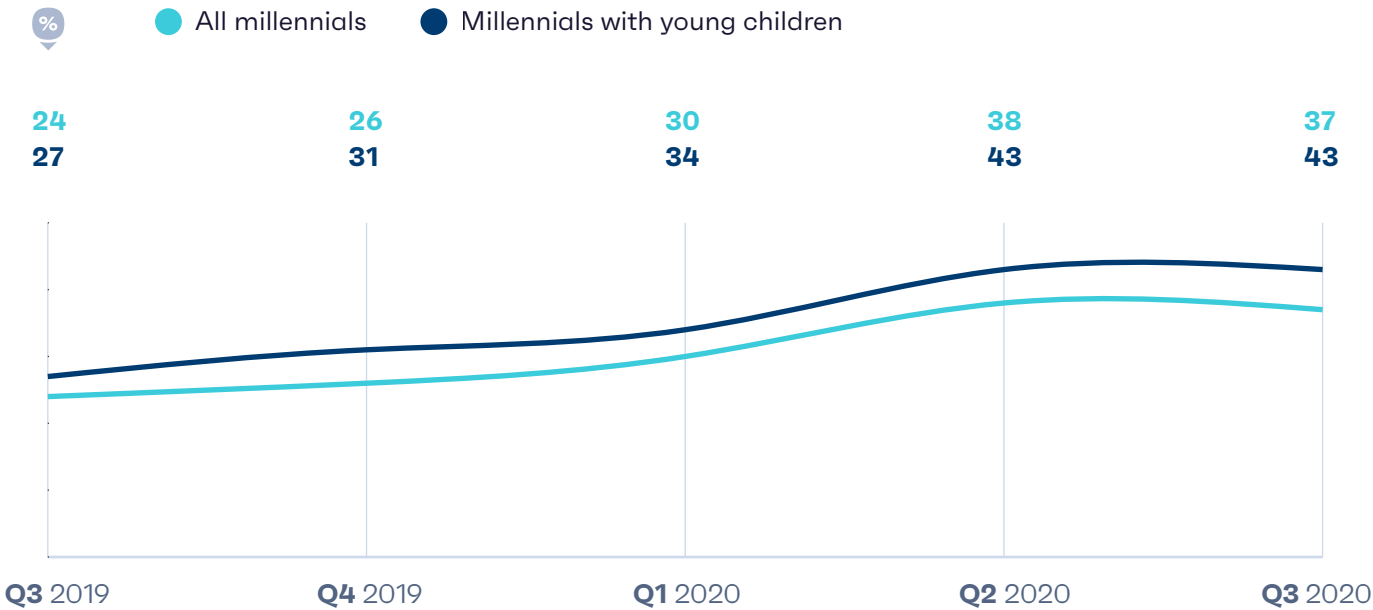
Members Monthly visitors Daily visitors



The growth of TikTok

3

% of millennials outside of China who have visited TikTok in the past month



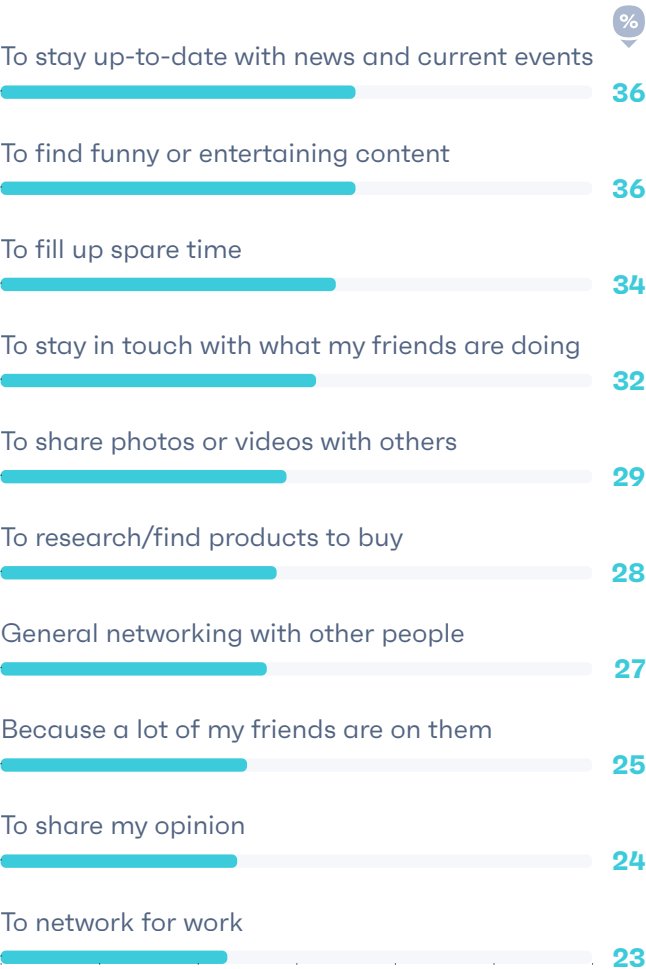
Social media motivations

Following the global trend, millennials’ social behaviors are less focused on sharing personal information and more purpose and entertainment-driven. Keeping track of news and current affairs and finding funny or entertaining content are their top reasons for logging in. For younger millennials, the latter takes precedence, while the opposite applies for the older representatives of this group. The outbreak has put these two habits front and center, and this is also evident in the accounts they follow on social media. Males and females have quite distinctive views when it comes to who they want to see on their feeds; but generally, they’re more likely to follow accounts that align directly with their interests, entertain them, and keep them informed. For example, as the keener gamers, men are much more likely to follow gaming bloggers, while women would like to see content from beauty creators. It’s important for brands looking to influencer marketing as a way to move beyond traditional methods of advertising to recognize that millennials are a very diverse group and a one-size-fits-all approach won’t be best-suited.

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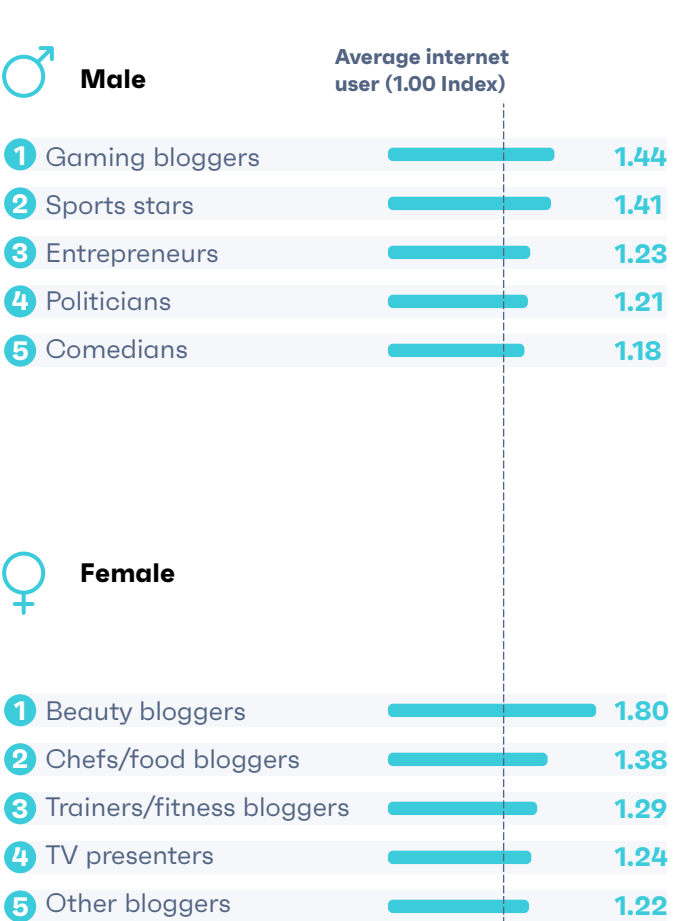
Social media motivations 4

% of millennials who say the following are their main reasons for using social media



Accounts followed 5

The most distinctive accounts millennials “follow” on social media



Video and livestreaming

Fittingly for such an entertainment-seeking group, video-based content is a calling card for their social visits. While watching videos is a more popular behavior on Facebook (51%), Instagram takes the lead when it comes to engagement with “Stories” (32%) and long-form videos on IGTV (30%). With its latest video feature “Reels”, it’s clear that the Facebook suite is making moves to attract younger demographics, as TikTok has done, by focusing on pushing more entertainment-driven content on its platforms.

Videos on social media portray brands in new

ways, while capturing and holding viewers’ attention more effectively. Most importantly, using social video as a marketing strategy is less intrusive than the use of banner ads and allows brands more opportunities in conveying their message and earning consumers’ trust. But entertainment and earning trust is just the beginning. Ultimately, Facebook’s end goal is to enhance its advertising revenue and turn the users on its platforms into shoppers, especially at times when online shopping is booming; and millennials are a key demographic here.

Our Zeitgeist research from November shows that video content is truly inspirational for them when it comes to making a purchase. Gaming livestreams is the most distinctive video type for this group (1.58 IDX) as that’s what they resonate the most with, especially the males among them. Females are much more likely to have been inspired by influencer stories (1.37 IDX) and celebrity videos (1.33 IDX). With livestream shopping a key trend for 2021, video isn’t just a nice-to-have anymore, it’s a must-have in an era when product differentiation in an over-crowded online space is harder than ever.

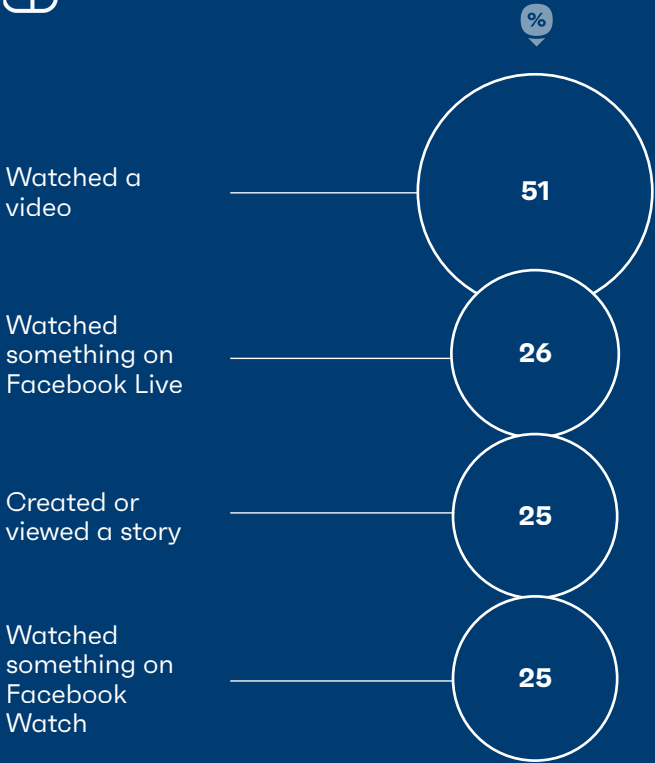
If you’d like more information on livestream shopping, please see our [Connecting the dots report](#).



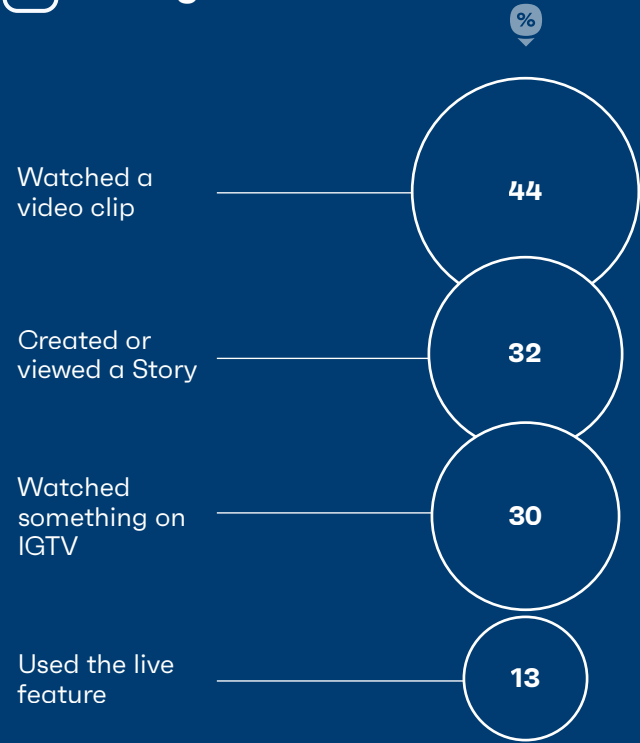
Demand for video and live content

% of millennials who have done the following in the last month

Facebook



Instagram

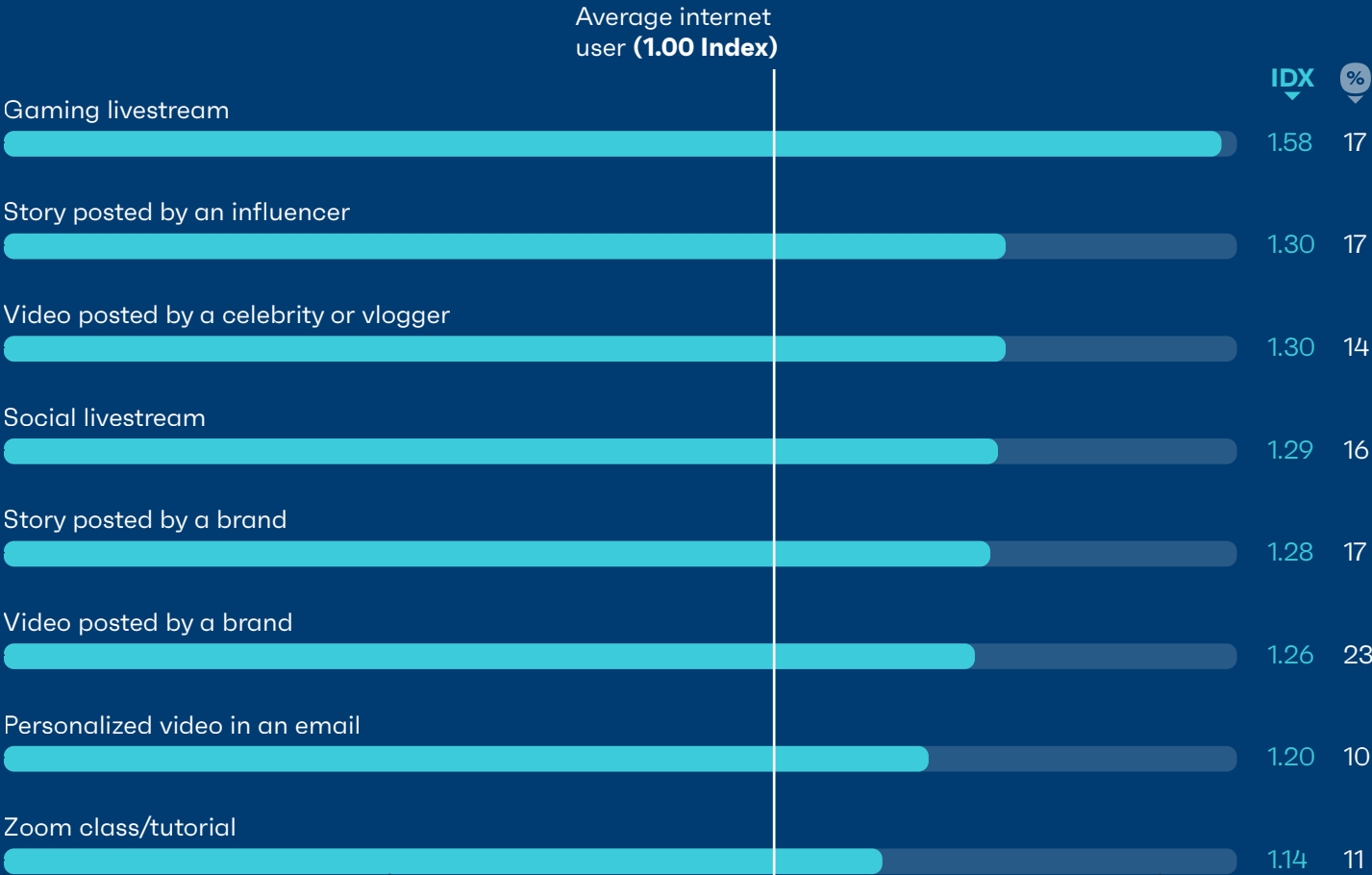


Please note these figures are based on those who have actively engaged with/contributed to each platform or used its app

6

Purchase inspiration via video content

% of UK/U.S. millennials who have been inspired to purchase a product/service in the last 3 months by the following (sorted by over-index)



7

Appendix

- 1 Which of the following do you feel describes you? • Which of these have you done on your mobile in the last month? (Tracked your screen time or set limits for certain apps)
- 2 On which of the following services do you have an account? • Which of the following sites/applications have you visited or used in the past month via your PC/Laptop, Mobile or Tablet?
- 3
- 4 What are your main reasons for using social media?
- 5 Which account types are you more likely to follow on social media?
- 6 On Facebook/Instagram, which of these have you done in the last month?
- 7 Which of these content types have inspired you to purchase a product/service in the last 3 months?



Want more answers?



Get the full report



Bought something
online in the last week



Posted a comment
in a forum



