



ADOLESCENT & YOUNG ADULT MEDIA USE

Exploring the Nuances of Social Media Use and Experiences

Date of Release: August 2023





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SUGGESTED CITATION

Carter M. C., Bickham, D.S., Hunt, E., & Rich, M. (2023). Exploring the Nuances of Social Media Use and Experiences. Boston, MA: Boston Children's Hospital Digital Wellness Lab. <https://digitalwellnesslab.org>

SPECIAL THANKS

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Introduction

How Are Youth Really Using Social Media?

You have seen the headlines alleging that social media is harming young people. The research investigating how social media relates to young people's well-being, however, is actually quite mixed; some studies show that social media use is linked to worsening mental health and other studies find that it is linked to positive (or no) outcomes (Valkenburg et al., 2022). While there is plenty that we do not yet fully understand about the effects of social media on its most vulnerable users, focusing our attention on an amorphous idea of "social media" is not making things clearer.

The search for a better understanding of social media is not new; researchers and regulators alike have been struggling to define "social media" in ways that would better help understand its potential outcomes. Most definitions remain both broad and/or technical (e.g., Aichner et al., 2021; Bayer et al., 2020), and often do not capture the complex makeup of youths' online environments and their experiences within them when qualifying what is meant by social media.

Recognizing and researching the wide differences in the opportunities provided by social media is a promising direction. The effects of social media use are almost certainly driven by a combination of factors (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013), and likely vary based on the types of online spaces with which youth engage and the specific types of interactions and experiences they have in these spaces. After all, the scope of "social media" for any one teen depends on the types of online spaces they inhabit (Carter et al., 2023).

Our [previous Pulse Surveys](#) of adolescents have focused on understanding how youth are using social media, how they perceive its influences on their health and well-being, and what strategies they use to keep themselves safe in online environments. However, it is clear that youths' diverse social media landscape requires a flexible, design-focused approach to monitor the potential impact of social media use on key outcomes of interest — such as youths' mental health and online safety.

In this survey we seek a nuanced understanding of young people's social media use by asking them about their experiences within platforms and the specific types of online spaces to which these platforms afford access. Results provide a glimpse into how a national sample of adolescents and young adults perceive their engagement in different types of online spaces as affecting their well-being, relationships, and online safety.

Categories of Platform Spaces

While social media platforms' and apps' features can vary widely, there are similarities in design and function across popular platforms (for example, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok all offer direct messaging; Bayer et al., 2020; Carter et al., 2023). Considering these spaces as individual representations of a broader category of online environments allows for a more flexible, and likely more informative, approach to investigating social media and its effects (Carter, 2023). For instance, we can look at how youth perceive the effects of their use of similar types of content feeds across multiple platforms, rather than focusing on a single platform. Moreover, we can gauge how perceived effects vary from one type of online space to another by comparing them. Results provide an initial, yet flexible basis for stakeholders to think about the implications of social media design on youths' well-being in line with emerging frameworks developed to advance the study of social media effects (Bayer et al., 2020; Bayer et al., 2022; Carter et al., 2023; Meier & Reniecke, 2021).

Using this approach, we aggregated participants' responses about similar in-platform spaces into categories that partially characterize the hub of today's social media landscape. Each category is outlined below.

Messages

In-platform spaces that enable users to engage in directed forms of message exchange.

- Chats on Snapchat and TikTok
- Direct Messages on Instagram

Search

In-platform spaces that enable users to search and explore out-of-network content.

- Search on Snapchat and YouTube
- Explore on Instagram
- Discover on TikTok

Short Video Content Feeds

In-platform spaces that curate short video content for users based on their interests and engagement.

- Shorts on YouTube
- Reels on Instagram
- Spotlight on Snapchat

Stories

Multimedia content structures, typically available for a limited amount of time and organized into feeds.

- Stories on Instagram
- Friends Stories and Subscriptions on Snapchat
- Stories on TikTok

INTRODUCTION

Research Questions

This survey builds upon our efforts to understand the relationship between social media use and well-being, targeting that relationship more directly by investigating youths' use of and experiences within different types of online spaces.

1. What **specific spaces** within popular platforms do adolescents and young adults visit most regularly?
2. How do adolescents and young adults perceive the effects of their use of **different spaces** that exist across popular platforms on **aspects of their well-being**?
3. What are the **characteristics** of adolescents' and young adults' **negative experiences** on popular platforms (e.g., where in the platform it occurred, who was involved)?

How We Conducted This Survey

A nationwide sample of 1,505 adolescents and young adults (ages 15-22) were surveyed between May 18-30, 2023 using Alchemer, an online research service. This survey was conducted using branching logic. If the participant reported regular use (i.e. two or more times in the past week) of at least one popular platform (i.e., Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, or YouTube), they were asked follow-up questions about one of the platforms chosen at random. If the participant was not a regular user of any of those primary platforms, they were asked follow-up questions about the platform they reported using most often to engage with others online.

A similar approach was used to ask follow up questions about a particular in-app space (section) within their assigned platform. Participants were asked to list the spaces they typically used on their designated platform, and were randomly assigned to answer questions about one of these spaces. If they did not list any spaces, they were asked about a space they reported using at least once over the past 7 days in a previous close-ended question.

A full description of our methods can be found at the end of this document.

INTRODUCTION

How to Use These Findings

This report presents a snapshot of youths' social media environments by reviewing which platforms respondents use most frequently to engage with others, and where they congregate within those platforms. It highlights the similarities of design spaces existing across platforms, thereby providing a generalized, yet flexible basis for assessing youths' experiences across social media platforms. Our report also explores the kinds of negative situations youth experience across different platforms and spaces within them.

The results of our survey can be used by technology companies to identify specific foci for design intervention where there is the potential for greater risk to users' mental health and/or safety. By pinpointing the kinds of in-platform spaces where youth report experiencing negative perceived effects or adverse situations, developers can adjust platform features more intentionally to empower youth (and all users) with the tools to manage, and ideally mitigate, their experiences within those spaces. Youth attribute a great deal of importance to online tools that enable them to manage their in-platform experiences (Bickham et al, 2022). Extending this flexibility to aspects of platform design represents a natural extension of already-existing tools and has the potential to support youths' agency, personal functioning, and mental health.

Parents and caregivers can use these findings to engage in more targeted conversations with their children about their experiences in different online environments and to discuss ways to use social media safely. More generally, these results can be used by all stakeholders as a step toward reframing our understanding of social media to one that is more nuanced, flexible, and reflective of youth's actual experiences in these online spaces.

Notes About the Findings

- **Important Clarification:** When considering reported statistics, it is important to note the complexity of young people's social media use patterns and their opinions about the impact of these uses. Self-reported data cannot address causality, nor do they fully account for potential dependencies that may exist between selective social media use patterns and the final platform/space assigned for follow-up questions. Conditional on reported use, platform and space assignments were randomly selected.
- For ease of reporting, we have sometimes combined the top two response options (e.g., a little better, a lot better) and bottom two response options (e.g., a little worse, a lot worse) of a five-point scale into a single concept (e.g., better, worse).



KEY FINDINGS



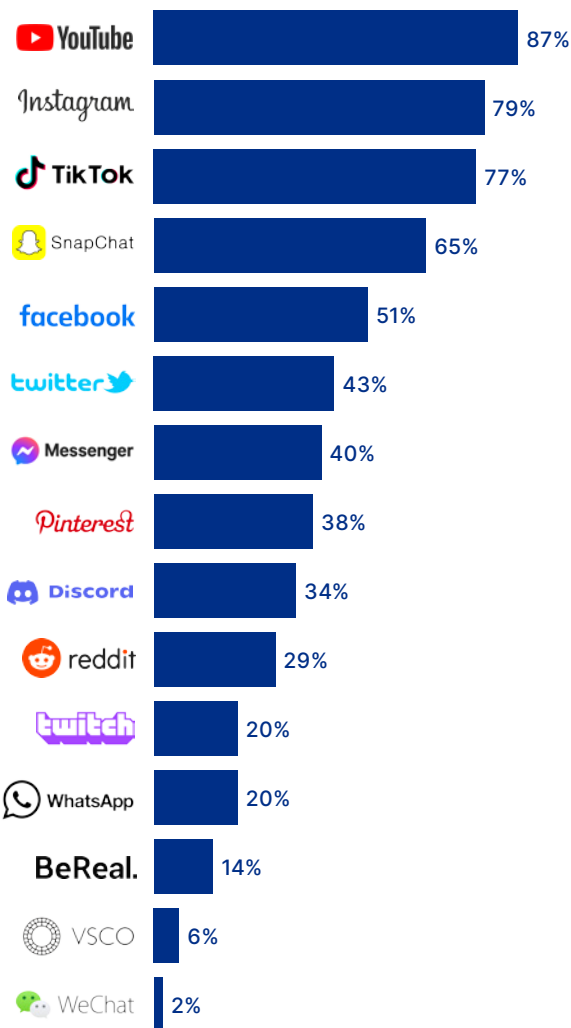
KEY FINDINGS

Adolescents' & Young Adults' Online Environments

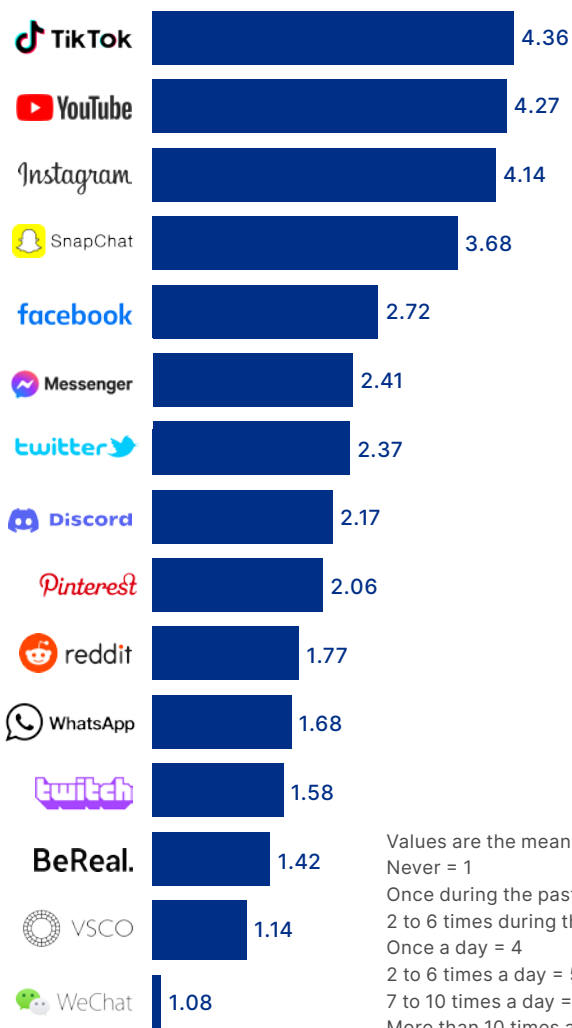
Platforms Youth Are Using Most

In [previous Pulse Surveys](#) we asked youth about the platforms they are using regularly, and in each, four have emerged as the primary platforms on which youth are spending their time: Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube (not always in that order). The same is true across other national youth surveys (Nesi, Mann, & Robb, 2023; Thorn, 2021; Vogels et al., 2022). This survey was no different; these four platforms were the top responses for our question about which platforms youth used within the past week. On average, they reported using each of these platforms on a daily (or nearly daily) basis.

Over the past 7 days, **which** of the following apps or platforms did you use?
(select all that apply)



Over the past 7 days, **how often** did you use each of the following platforms or apps?



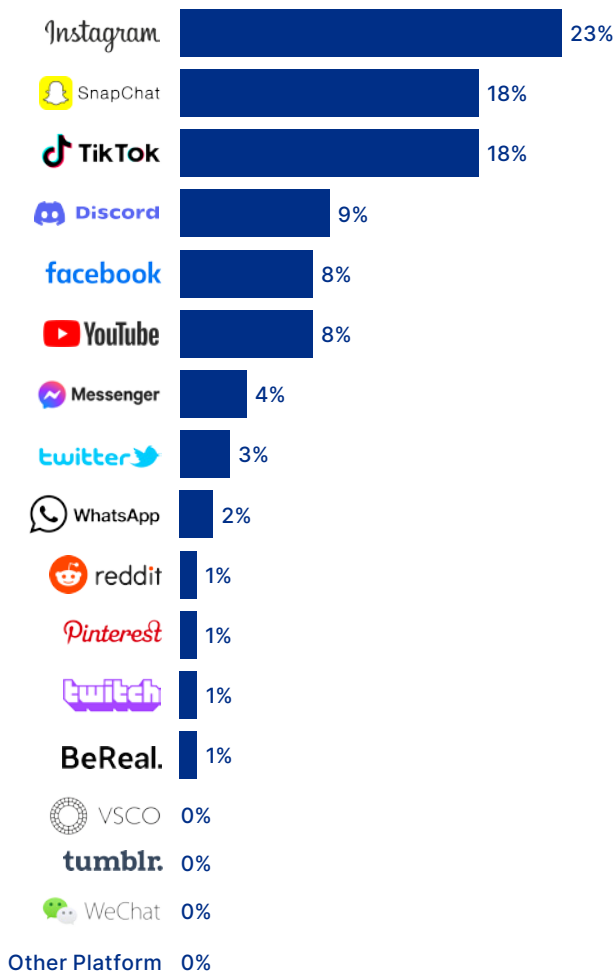
Values are the means of a 7-point scale:
 Never = 1
 Once during the past 7 days = 2
 2 to 6 times during the past 7 days = 3
 Once a day = 4
 2 to 6 times a day = 5
 7 to 10 times a day = 6
 More than 10 times a day = 7

KEY FINDINGS

Platforms Youth Are Using Most (cont.)

When it came to using these different platforms specifically to engage with others online, participants reported using Instagram (23.12%), Snapchat (18.47%), and TikTok (18.21%) most. While YouTube was popular for general use, only 7.57% reported using it the most to engage with others.

What platform or app do you **use the MOST** to engage with others online?



KEY FINDINGS

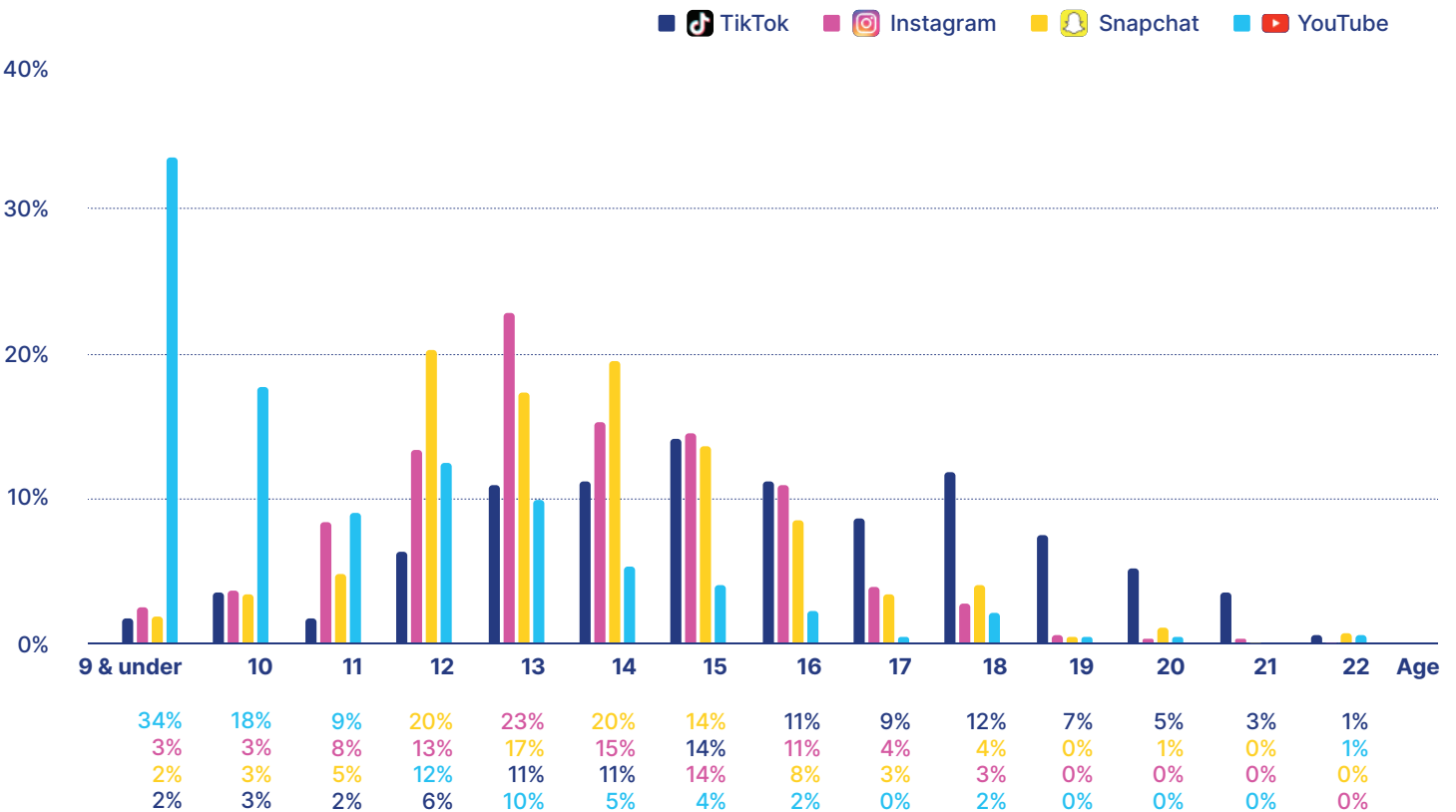
Introduction to Platforms

Note: findings for each platform are from individuals asked about a specific platform selected randomly from their responses about platform use, not all 1,505 teens and young adults surveyed. The findings of the following section should be interpreted with this in mind (see Methodology section for breakdown).

We asked participants at what age they started using their respective platform — the average for each of the primary platforms is presented below. Adoption of each platform appears to occur in stages, beginning with YouTube (11.22), followed by Instagram (13.65), Snapchat (13.75), and TikTok (15.60). Many youth reported starting to use YouTube at or before the age of 11 (possibly through YouTube Kids, although this distinction was not made), while the peak of first use of Instagram and Snapchat was around ages 12-14. Because TikTok is a fairly new platform, it was unavailable when most respondents of this survey were younger than 13, likely accounting for its later initial use.

These trends mirror findings from nationally representative surveys, results which indicated that YouTube exhibits the broadest use among pre-teens, with TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat growing in their rate of use as youth progress through adolescence (Vogels et al., 2022).

At what age did you first start using “Platform”?



KEY FINDINGS

Spaces Within Platforms

To get a better sense of where youth are spending their time within these different social media platforms, we asked participants to report on the main spaces they “typically” visit while using their assigned platform. By answering open-ended responses and selecting icons that represent the different spaces, respondents provided clear reports of the primary spaces within popular platforms where they spend their time. After, respondents selected, from an array of platform icons, the spaces they navigated to within the past seven days. The top five in-platform spaces youth in our sample reported using within the past seven days are listed below by platform.



Instagram

1. Home Feed
2. Profiles
3. Stories
4. Messages
5. Notifications



Snapchat

1. Chat
2. Camera
3. Friends Stories
4. Profile
5. Snap Map



TikTok

1. For You
2. Profile
3. Inbox
4. Following
5. Discover



YouTube

1. Home
2. Search
3. Subscriptions
4. Library
5. Shorts

Respondents were each asked about one specific platform space (section) that was randomly assigned to them from their responses to these two questions (for more details, see [How We Conducted This Survey](#)). Section labels provided by respondents were mapped back to specific in-platform spaces by having youth select, from the same set of platform icons, the one that best matched the space they provided that was selected for follow up questions.

In the next section, we discuss perceived effects of social media use within the different categories of platform spaces rather than the specific spaces or platforms themselves.

Perceived Effects of Social Media Use

Outcomes by Category of Platform Space

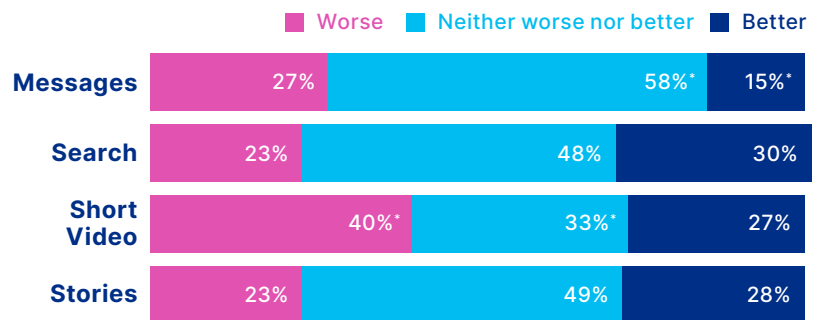
Note: findings for each category of platform space are from individuals asked about a specific space (selected randomly from their responses about use), not all 1,505 teens and young adults surveyed. The findings of the following section should be interpreted with this in mind (see Methodology section for breakdown). Additionally, for these findings asterisks (*) denote that the number of youth selecting a given response option (e.g., Worse) significantly differed for a given type of online space (e.g., Short Video) compared to the others investigated.

We asked respondents to report whether they perceived several indicators of well-being as worse or better following their use of an in-platform space within the past 7 days (n = 1343). When contrasting youths' responses across each type of platform space, differences emerged in how they felt their use of different types of in-platform spaces impacted their attention, relationships, level of stress, and overall mood.

Attention

Over half of the participants responding about Messages said it did not affect their attention (57.98%), while 15.13% said it made their attention a little or a lot better. In contrast, while 1 in 3 participants responding about Short Video Content Feeds reported it did not affect their attention (33.33%), 40.12% said it made their attention a little or a lot worse. A greater number of youth assigned to report on a Short Video Content Feed, compared to those assigned to the remaining types of spaces, associated its use with a worsening attention span.

Over the past 7 days when you used "Platform", did spending time on "Section" make [your attention span] better or worse?



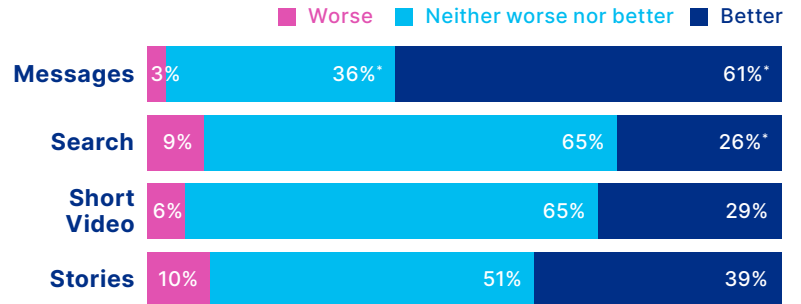
Asterisks (*) denote that the number of youth selecting a given response option (e.g., Worse) significantly differed for a given type of online space (e.g., Short Video Content Feed) compared to the others investigated.

KEY FINDINGS

Relationships

Participants responding about Messages said it made their relationships a little or a lot better (61.34%), while 36.13% reported that it did not make their relationships better or worse. A greater number of youth who reported on Messages, compared to those assigned to the remaining types of spaces, associated its use with improved social relationships.

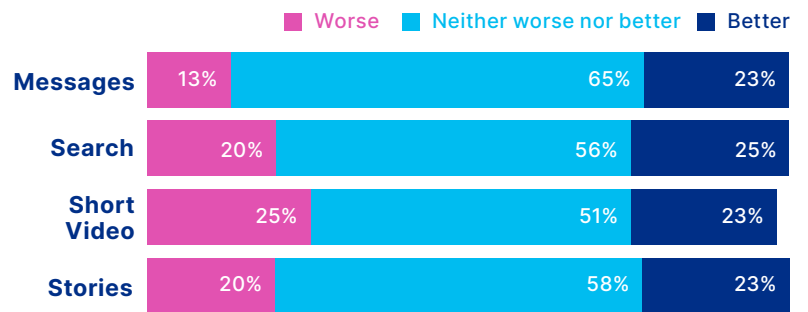
Over the past 7 days when you used "Platform", did spending time on "Section" make **[your social relationships]** better or worse?



Body Image

There were no significant differences between the different types of in-platform spaces when it came to the perceived effects on body image. Youth reported their use of different types of platform spaces affected their body image in similar ways.

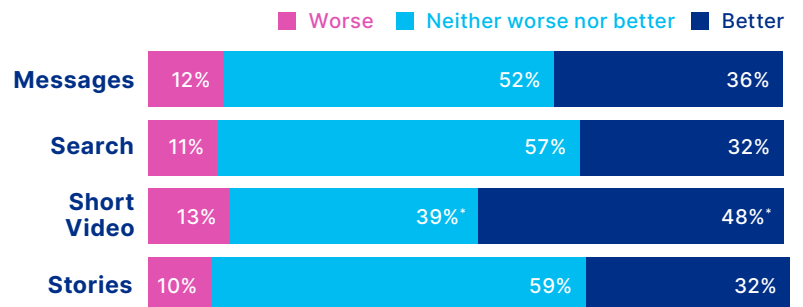
Over the past 7 days when you used "Platform", did spending time on "Section" make **[how you feel about your body or appearance]** better or worse?



Stress

Nearly half of participants responding about Short Video Content Feeds said that it made their stress a little or a lot better (48.15%) while nearly 40% of those participants reported the effect as neither better nor worse (38.89%). More youth assigned to report on a Short Video Content Feed associated its use with improved stress levels compared to those assigned to the remaining types of spaces.

Over the past 7 days when you used "Platform", did spending time on "Section" make **[your level of stress]** better or worse?



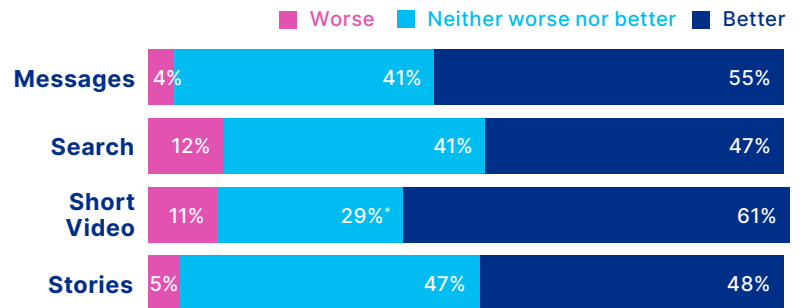
Asterisks (*) denote that the number of youth selecting a given response option (e.g., Worse) significantly differed for a given type of online space (e.g., Short Video Content Feed) compared to the others investigated.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall Mood

There were few significant differences between the different types of in-platform spaces when it came to the perceived effects on their overall mood. Fewer youth assigned to report on a Short Video Content Feed, compared to those assigned to the remaining types of spaces, felt its use did not impact their overall mood.

Over the past 7 days when you used “Platform”, did spending time on “Section” make [your overall mood] better or worse?

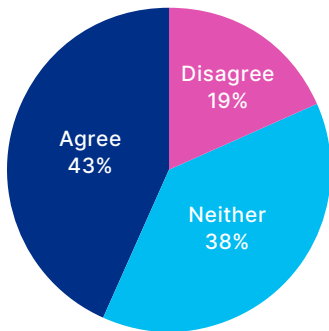


Perceived Social Support

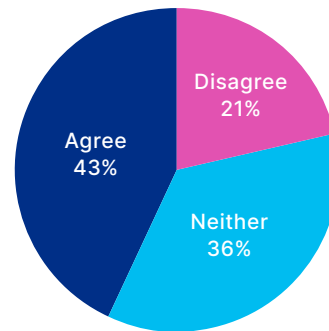
We asked participants if they felt like the people they engaged with on their assigned platform provided them with social support. Overall, 43.28% agreed that the people on their platform really try to help them, and 42.94% agreed that people were there for them when needed.

OVERALL: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

The people I engage with on “Platform” really try to help me.



The people I engage with on “Platform” are there for me when I need them.



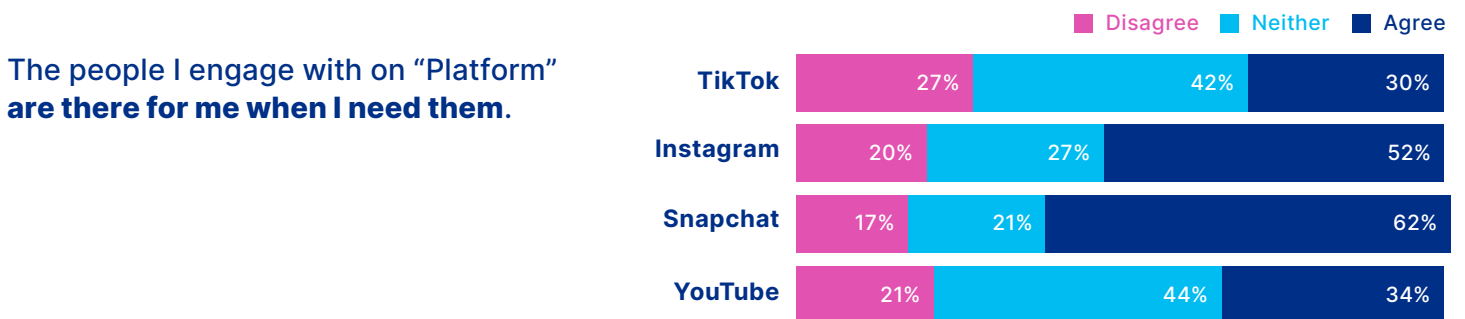
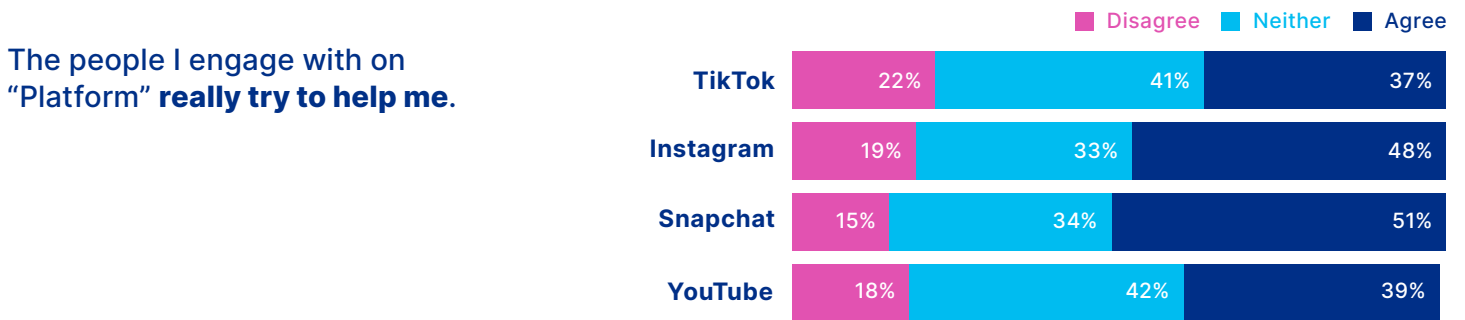
Perceptions of online social support were fairly consistent across the primary platforms.

Asterisks (*) denote that the number of youth selecting a given response option (e.g., Worse) significantly differed for a given type of online space (e.g., Short Video Content Feed) compared to the others investigated.

KEY FINDINGS

Perceived Social Support (cont.)

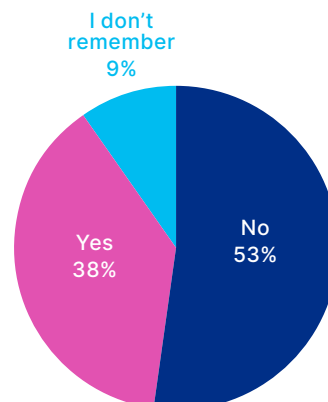
BY PLATFORM: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Negative In-Platform Experiences

We asked respondents to indicate whether they have ever had a negative experience using their assigned platform and over a third of respondents (37.97%) reported that they had a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience.

Have you EVER had a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience while using "Platform"?

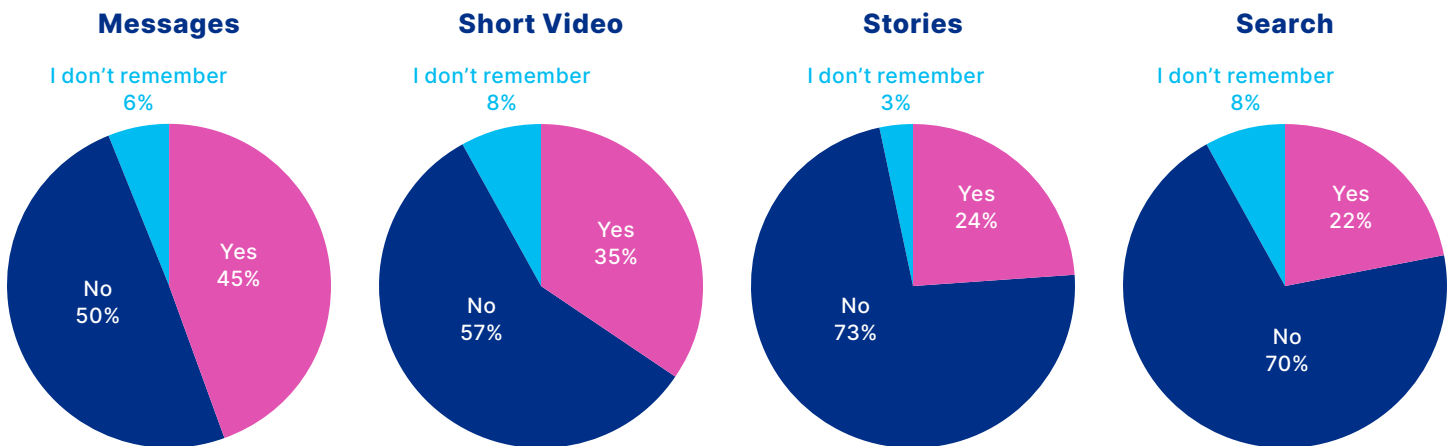


KEY FINDINGS

Negative In-Platform Experiences (cont.)

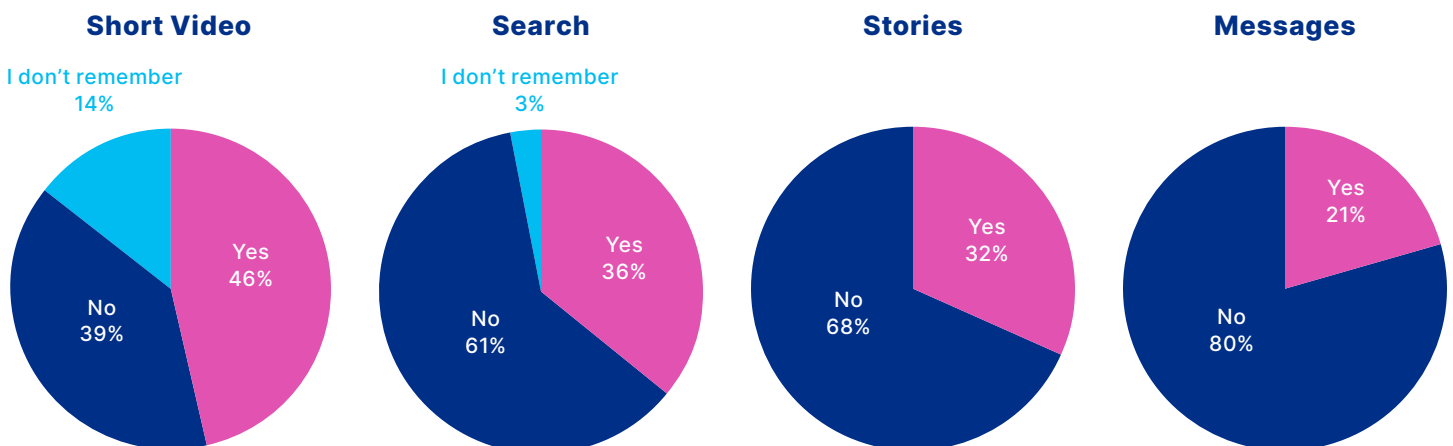
We also asked participants if they had ever had a negative experience within the specific section (space) they were responding about. Nearly half of respondents (44.54%) reported having a negative experience in a Messages section of a platform, and roughly one-third (34.57%) reported having a negative experience in a Short Video Content Feed. Reports of ever having had a negative experience were lower for those reporting about Search (22.22%) and Stories (23.91%), and higher for Messages. Differences for Messages and Search were significant compared to the remaining sections.

Have you EVER had a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience while using “Section” on “Platform”?



We asked participants who reported a negative experience in their assigned section if one had happened within the past 7 days. 46.43% reported having a negative experience over Short Video Content Feeds, 36.11% over Search, 31.82% over Stories, and 20.75% over Messages within the past week. More youth reported having had a negative experience over the past 7 days in a Short Video Content Feed compared to the remaining sections. Fewer youth reported that they had had a negative experience using Messages over the past 7 days. These differences were statistically significant.

Did you have a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience while using “Section” on “Platform” within the past 7 days?



KEY FINDINGS

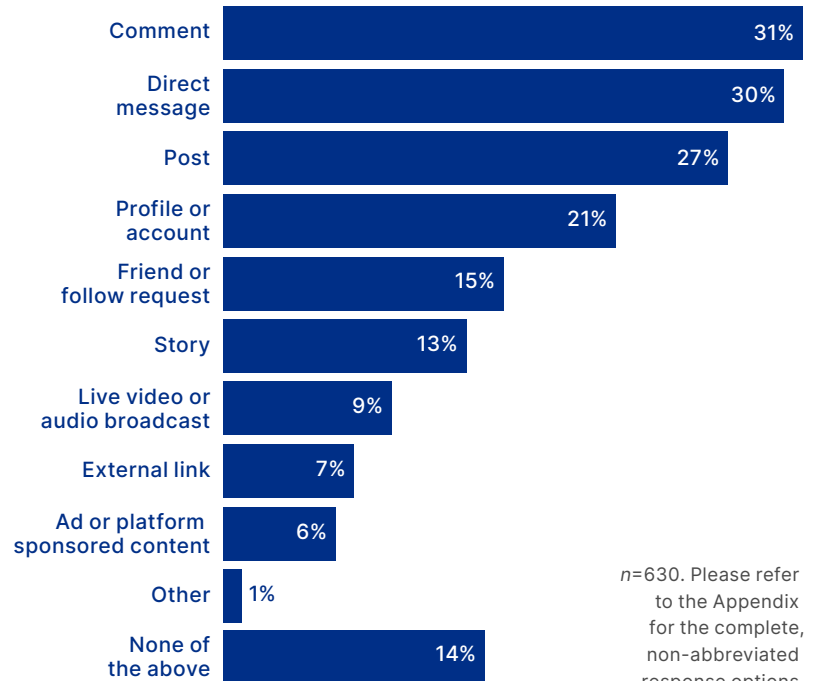
Characteristics of Negative Experiences

Participants who reported having any negative experience within their assigned platform and/or section ($n=630$) were then asked to provide details related to one specific experience.

The most common platform features involved in youths' recounting of a negative experience included a "Comment" (31.11%), "Direct Message" (30.16%), and "Post" (27.46%). "Profile or Account" (20.63%), "Friend or Follow Request" (15.08%), and/or "Story" (13.02%) were also mentioned across reports, but less frequently.

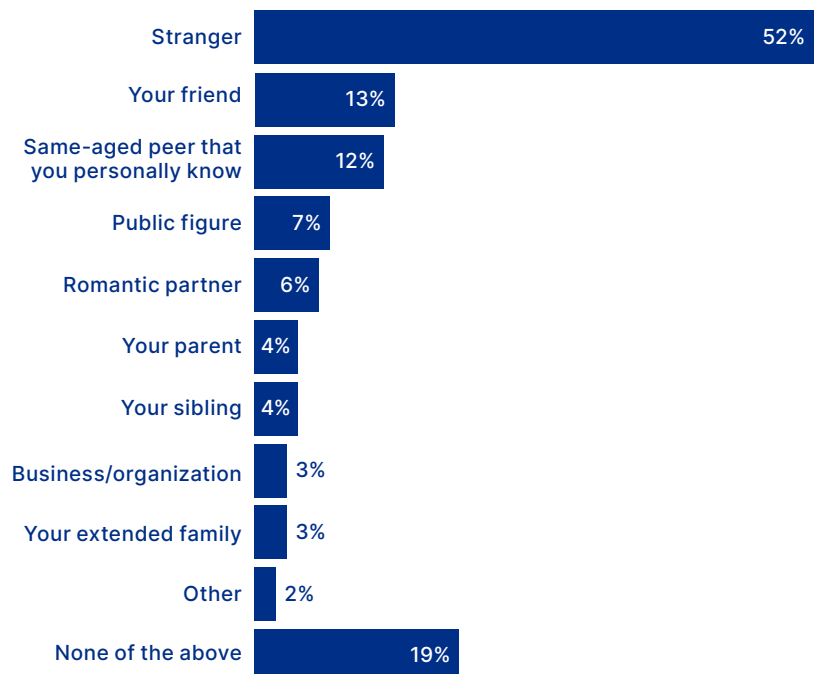
Across all reports of negative experiences, youth indicated that a stranger (i.e., someone the respondent did not know personally) was involved in some capacity over half the time (51.59%). Situations including a friend (12.54%) and/or peer (11.56%) occurred less often. Those including a romantic partner (6.35%), parent (4.44%), an extended family member (2.70%), sibling (3.65%), organization (3.33%), and/or public figure (7.30%) were reported even less frequently.

Were ANY of the following features involved?
(check all that apply)



$n=630$. Please refer to the Appendix for the complete, non-abbreviated response options.

Who was involved in this situation?
(check all that apply)

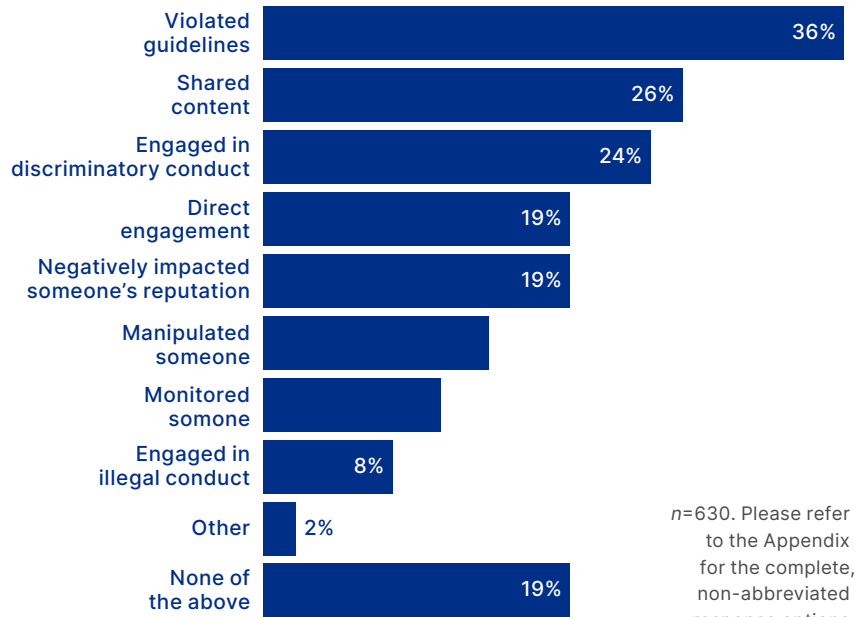


KEY FINDINGS

Characteristics of Negative Experiences (cont.)

We asked youth to specify what happened during these negative experiences. Youth reported that someone shared content with others (25.87%), engaged in discriminatory conduct (23.65%), directly contacted or targeted someone (19.37%), and/or tried to negatively impact someone's reputation (19.21%). 36.19% of youth reported that the situation violated the platform's community guidelines. Less frequent occurrences included circumstances where someone tried to manipulate/force someone to do something (14.13%); tried to monitor, stalk, or gain access information about someone (10.63%); and/or did something that was illegal (8.25%).

During this situation, did any of the following happen on "Platform"? Someone...
(check all that apply)



n=630. Please refer to the Appendix for the complete, non-abbreviated response options.

KEY FINDINGS

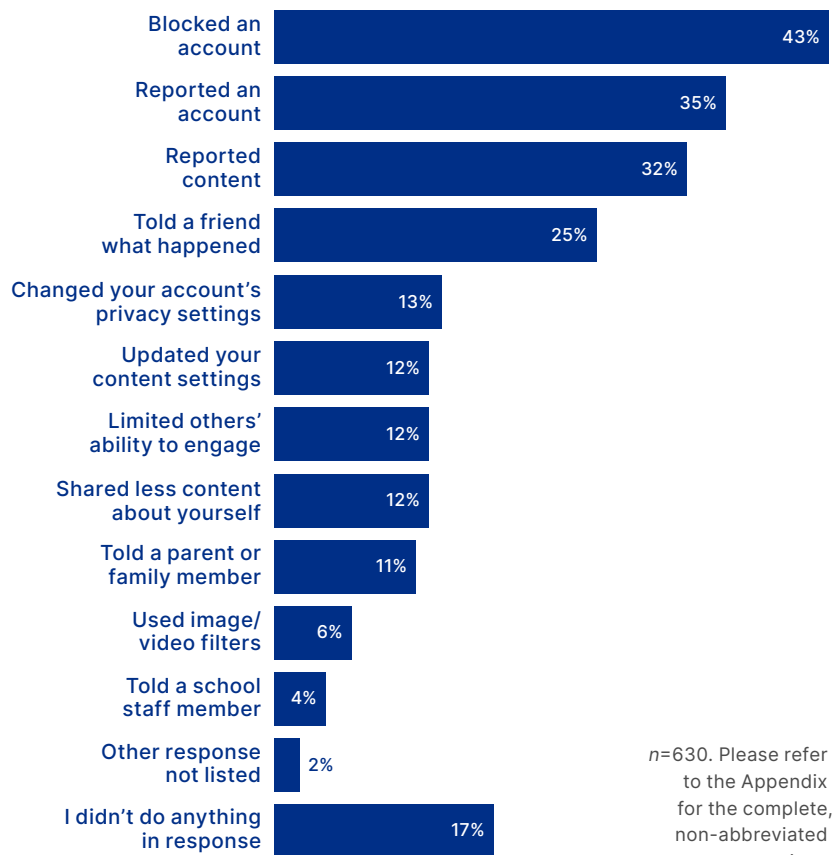
Varied Responses to Online Safety Situations

We asked participants what they had done in response to the negative experience. Blocking an account (42.70%), reporting an account (35.08%), and/or reporting content (32.28%) were the most common actions taken by youth in response to their reported situations overall.

Youth also changed their account's privacy settings (13.49%), limited others' ability to engage with (e.g., comment on) their content (12.38%), updated their content settings/preferences (12.38%), shared less content about themselves over the platform (11.75%), and/or used video/image filters more often (5.56%) in response to their negative situation.

Youth exhibited a preference towards telling a friend about the situation (25.24%) compared to a parent (10.95%) or school staff member, like a school counselor or teacher (3.97%).

Did you do any of the following in response to this experience? (check all that apply)



n=630. Please refer to the Appendix for the complete, non-abbreviated response options.

These findings are consistent with those of other national teen surveys conducted in the United States. For instance, youth have been shown to selectively respond to unsafe experiences online by using certain in-platform safety tools (e.g., blocking) relative to others (e.g., reporting) and report taking action online more often than offline (Thorn, 2021, 2023). These preferences underscore the importance of enabling youth to steward their online experiences in ways that support their personal functioning, safety, and general well-being.



SUMMARY





Summary

Key Findings

The term “social media” reflects a complex digital environment, one that will continue to change. Rather than approaching our thinking about it from a homogeneous perspective, it is important to apply a more nuanced understanding to the functions of individual platforms and how characteristics of the spaces within those platforms may affect users. This is a flexible approach to think about and monitor social media effects over time — particularly, how youths’ engagement with common aspects of platform design may affect their mental health and general well-being (Carter, 2023). Understanding in greater detail how youths’ engagement in different spaces of online platforms associates with different outcomes is critical for developing interventions and advocating for healthier design standards.

Social media use never results in all positive or all negative outcomes, but a mixture of the two (Beyens et al., 2021; Valkenburg et al., 2022). By taking context into account, our findings present an initial step towards a more nuanced understanding of the influences of social media use. Some key findings include:

1. Young people’s online environments are complex, but some platforms are more prominent than others.

- Youth continued to gravitate towards Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube for their daily social media use and engagement with others. Within these platforms, they visited a number of specific spaces that facilitate different kinds of experiences — e.g., communication with peers through messages or watching a stream of recommended short video content tailored to their interests.
- Many popular social media platforms feature similarly designed spaces which can be grouped into the following categories: Messages, Search, Short Video Content Feeds, and Stories. These all represent characteristic types of spaces across platforms, but other types also exist (Carter et al., 2023).

2. Different types of platform spaces are associated with different perceptions of positive or negative outcomes.

- Time spent in Messages was associated with improved social relationships and time spent in Short Video Content Feeds was associated with worsening attention span and improved stress. Body image concerns (i.e., worsened feelings about one’s body/appearance) were most commonly reported as a result of using Short Video Content Feeds compared to other types of online spaces.
- Youth in our sample reported both worsened and improved outcomes irrespective of the type of platform space, indicating that characteristics of an individual user or the types of interactions experienced may influence their perceived impacts of each type of platform space.

SUMMARY

3. Negative experiences online are common, particularly in Short Video Content Feeds and Messages, reinforcing how situation-specific different outcomes can be.

- Over a third of respondents said they had had a negative experience on their assigned platform. Of those examined, the spaces where negative experiences occurred most were Short Video Content Feeds (within the past 7 days) and Messages (ever). Since these types of spaces were also associated with positive outcomes, this finding emphasizes how situational contexts define youths' use experiences.
- Strangers were the most common perpetrator in negative experiences and the types of experiences ranged widely.

4. Youth responses to negative experiences online vary, but consistently point to a desire among youth to manage these experiences themselves.

- In-platform tools represented a primary vehicle with which youth safeguarded their exposure to online harms. Blocking remained more common than reporting, amending online behaviors, or adjusting privacy settings.
- While youth tended to use online safety tools more than offline strategies, they were more likely to talk to a friend than to a trusted adult about a negative online experience.

Implications

Results highlight the importance of considering the different spaces within social media platforms with which youth engage, and understanding that the functions of those spaces (e.g., for communication, for watching recommended content) may carry different implications for users' well-being. The different patterns of effects across the four categories of spaces investigated (Messages, Search, Short Video Content Feeds, and Stories) provide an initial basis for thinking about the harms and benefits of using mainstream social media platforms (Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube) and for developing more targeted interventions to aid youth in navigating social media as an evolving digital environment.

In [previous Pulse Surveys](#), we found that young people's perceived effects of media use on their well-being were mixed. In this survey, where questions focused on specific spaces within social media platforms, our findings were no different. Spaces that promote interpersonal interactions were reported as beneficial to relationships. Spaces that bombard youth with endless streams of recommended content were reported as harmful to attention. However, for a majority of teens, their use of social media is relatively neutral, with smaller subsets of youth exhibiting positive or negative psychological outcomes, likely due to underlying personal susceptibilities, different social media interactions, and/or differences in content exposure (Valkenburg et al., 2022). The existence of such differential effects makes it critical for technology companies to empower each young person with the tools they need to steward their social media experiences, e.g. customizable user settings. All youth should have the capacity to manage their use of social media for the benefit of their personal functioning and well-being. Additionally, it is imperative that future research continues to dig more deeply into which characteristics of online environments increase benefits, which increase risks, and why.

Monitoring how one's engagement with social media associates with positive and negative experiences represents one way to support beneficial, and mitigate negative, outcomes resulting from social media use (Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2021). In monitoring how use of different platform spaces may associate with positive and negative outcomes, it is possible to strategically prioritize use of some spaces over others, to change settings within a platform space and/or to explore new types of spaces in order to use social media in ways that better support one's personal functioning and well-being (Carter, 2023).

Further, while it is inevitable that negative experiences occur in online spaces, the range of those experiences and the degree to which youth are exposed to them indicate a need for more accessible tools for young people to safeguard themselves from harmful or unwanted content and contacts. Researchers should consider collaborating with companies to help maximize the benefits of platform design for youths' mental health (Livingstone, Orben, & Odgers, 2023).

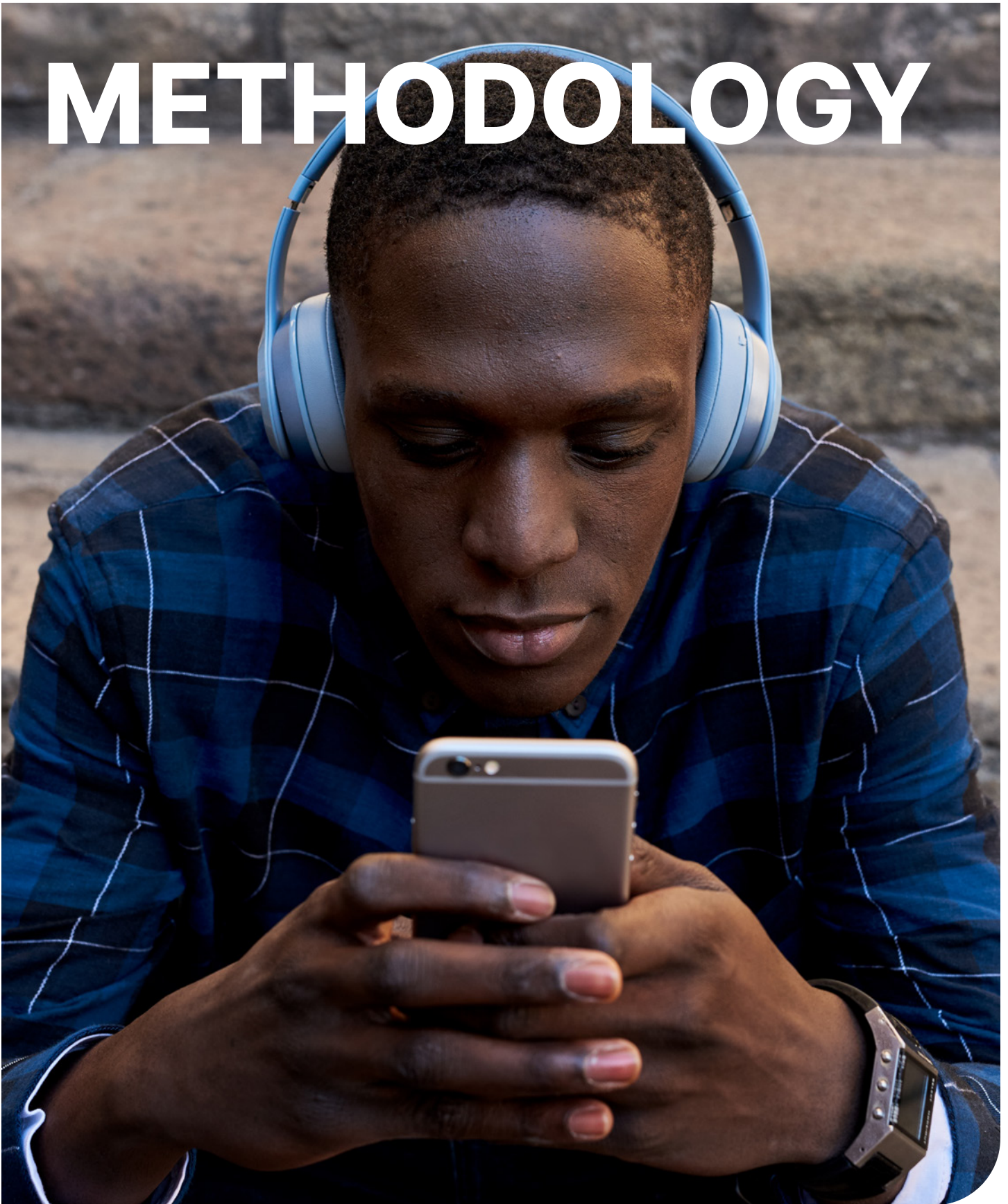
SUMMARY: IMPLICATIONS

Finally, the effects of social media use can vary depending on a range of highly individualized characteristics (e.g., home environment, gender identity, psychological diagnoses) (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Understanding that certain characteristics might make an individual more susceptible to negative outcomes in certain online environments points to a need for all users, not just vulnerable ones, to be able to manage their social media experiences based on their individual needs.

Above all, these results underscore the importance of providing youth with tools and skills to help them manage their experiences within certain categories of platform spaces (e.g., algorithm-based content feeds), and control their exposure to content/situations that may be harmful to them. Although there are some more negative sides to social media, many aspects are good — it serves as a hub of social interaction, information, advocacy, entertainment, and creativity for youth worldwide. Indeed, while some youth in our survey described having negative experiences in certain spaces (i.e., Short Video Content Feeds, Messages), some described those same spaces as also improving their social relationships, levels of stress, and overall mood. As researchers and industry continue to identify ways to further facilitate positive outcomes by design, empowering youth with the agency to increasingly control their own platform experiences may help mitigate potential, more immediate harms resulting from their use of social media. The solution is not restricting or stopping young people from using social media, but prioritizing youth safety and well-being through design, education, and intervention.



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Methodology

The findings reported here come from a nationwide online survey of 1,505 adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 and 22 years old. Participants were recruited through Alchemer, an online research service that partners with over 350 existing survey panels with a total reach of over 437 million users worldwide. Adolescents and young adults in the United States who had pre-registered with one of these panels were invited to respond. Quotas for age, gender identity, and race/ethnicity were used to obtain a broadly diverse sample with at least 1 participant from each of the 50 states. The breakdown was as follows:

- **By age:** 15-22 years old (M = 18.60, SD = 2.23); 10% 15-year-olds; 15% 16-year-olds; 9% 17-year-olds; 15% 18-year-olds; 13% 19-year-olds; 13% 20-year-olds; 15% 21-year-olds; and 11% 22-year-olds
- **By gender identity:** 49.04% identified as girl/woman; 46.58% as boy/man; 3.59% as non-binary; 0.47% other; and 0.27% preferred not to answer
- **By race/ethnicity*:** 53.55% White/non-Hispanic; 14.62% Black/non-Hispanic; 4.19% Asian; 21.20% Hispanic/Latino; 0.27% American Indian or Alaskan Native; 0.20% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; 0.27% Middle Eastern or North African; 4.72% Multi-racial; 0.73% other; and 0.20% prefer not to answer/no response.

**Respondents could choose as many categories as they wanted. In order to avoid counting participants twice, participants who selected multiple choices are included in the "Multi-racial" category. Any respondent who selected "Hispanic" was included only in the Hispanic category regardless of other race/ethnicity selections they made. This approach results in the above-listed mutually exclusive categories.*

During May 2023 we employed a dynamic survey design of up to 47 questions to assess the breadth of youths' self-reported experiences in online environments. In it, respondents were asked to report on their use of several popular social media platforms over the past 7 days. Four popular platforms that define the hub of youths' social media environments (i.e., YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram) were used to consolidate responses. If a respondent indicated that they used TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, or YouTube at least twice in the past week, the platform was eligible for follow up questions. If a respondent used all four apps multiple times within the last week (i.e., two or more times), each platform had an equal probability of selection to serve as the focal platform for follow-up questions. If a respondent did not use any of the four platforms more than once during the past week ($n = 34$), follow up questions were based on the platform they reported using most often to engage with others online — including any platform they may have inputted in an open-text response option. Respondents were asked follow-up questions about one of the four popular platforms: TikTok ($n = 348$; 23%), Instagram ($n = 359$; 24%), Snapchat ($n = 271$; 18%), or YouTube ($n = 493$; 33%). A small subset of respondents responded to another platform (e.g., Facebook, Discord, Messenger, Twitch, VSCO, WeChat, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Twitter; $n = 34$; 2%).

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A similar approach was used to ask follow up questions about a particular in-app section. Respondents were asked to report in a set of text boxes the sections they typically used on the focal platform. One of the sections included in the open-ended responses was then randomly selected for follow up questions ($n = 1134$). If a respondent was assigned to one of six popular platforms (the aforementioned four, Facebook, and Twitter), they were also asked to report on the icons they visited in the past 7 days on the app. If a respondent did not input any sections in response to the open-ended question, this question was used to populate follow-up questions. For instance, if a respondent was asked to report on one of the six platforms and indicated that they visited one or multiple in-app sections (as measured via icons) in the past 7 days, one of the sections they reported using was then randomly selected and used for follow-up questions ($n = 350$). In all other situations, respondents skipped the follow-up section-specific questions ($n = 29$). Sections were grouped to different types of online spaces by a question asking respondents to select, from a series of platform icons, the one that best represented the space they were reporting on.

A total of 139 respondents were screened out manually for section-based analyses. This included respondents who were not assigned a section due to an error with the survey platform ($n = 2$) or their pattern of responses/nonresponse in the survey ($n = 26$; e.g., not inputting or selecting a section). Assigned section labels were screened to filter out nonsensical entries (e.g., N/A, BLANK, Google) ($n = 111$). Participants assigned to platforms other than YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, or TikTok were also dropped from section-based analysis ($n = 23$). This yielded a final sample ($n = 1343$) for section-based analyses. Of these, 535 participants responded to questions about an online space falling within Messages ($n = 119$), Search ($n = 162$), Short Video Content Feeds ($n = 162$), and Stories ($n = 92$) as types of online spaces ([see Categories of Platform Spaces](#)) and were included for analysis.

Lastly, any user who indicated having ever had a negative (e.g., unsafe, uncomfortable) experience on their focal platform or section were presented with follow-up questions asking them to report on the characteristics of one negative experience that came to mind while using the platform in particular ($n = 630$).

Some questions provided responses on a five-point scale with the mid-point being a neutral option (e.g., “a lot worse”, “a little worse”, “neither better nor worse”, “a little better”, “a lot better”). For ease of reporting, we have sometimes combined the top two options (e.g., “a little better”, “a lot better”) and the bottom two options (e.g., “a lot worse”, “a little worse”) into a single concept (e.g., “better”, “worse”). For questions that used the five-point scale “never, rarely, sometimes, often, always,” we sometimes report a percentage that combines the results for “sometimes, often, and always” and refer to it as occurring “at least sometimes.”

The Boston Children’s Hospital IRB reviewed and approved this study. Data were collected from May 18-30, 2023. Wording for all the questions can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Parent and Participant Consent. Because this was a fully anonymous survey and recruitment was done through Alchemer, parental consent was waived for this survey. All participants had opted in to the survey network allowing them to be contacted directly about survey opportunities, thus having already provided one layer of consent. Participant consent/assent was obtained at the start of the survey. A passage outlined the details of the survey, risks, compensation information, details about the research team (including

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contact information), and other relevant information, followed by this language: “By selecting the “next button”, you acknowledge that you have read the above statements, that you may withdraw from the study at any time, and that you consent to participate in this study.”

Compensation. Participants were compensated by their respective survey company with accrued points based on length of the survey (the amount of points per length is determined by each respective survey company). These points can be “cashed in” for Amazon gift cards, PayPal deposits, upgrades to certain services that they use, or other ways established through the survey company agreement. Compensation systems vary slightly across companies.

Quality Control. “Attention check” questions were placed throughout the survey to ensure that participants were paying attention as they moved through the questions. If a participant answered an attention check question incorrectly, they were disqualified and redirected to an external webpage. Final data were reviewed and cleaned to remove any incomplete or low quality responses.

Rounding. For figures throughout the report, values may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding, multiple response options, or skipped question or response choices.

Mean Differences. The reported means are calculated for questions that used a five-point scale (e.g., 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree; 1 = a lot worse, 2 = a little worse, 3 = neither worse nor better, 4 = a little better, 5 = a lot worse). There is one exception: frequency of use was measured on a 7-point scale (Never = 1; Once during the past 7 days = 2; 2 to 6 times during the past 7 days = 3; Once a day = 4; 2 to 6 times a day = 5; 7 to 10 times a day = 6; More than 10 times a day = 7).

Age Categories. Throughout this report we report findings for “adolescents” and “young adults” In our analyses, adolescents refer to participants aged 15-17 years, and young adults refer to participants aged 18-22 years.

Gender Identity Categories. For many of the included measures, we compare responses of youth identifying as “boy” and “girl” but not for adolescents who identified another way (e.g., non-binary, gender fluid). Because only 4.06% identified as other than “boy” or “girl,” the group is not large enough to yield meaningful comparisons.

Comparisons. To test if there were differences in the proportion of youth indicating improved, stable, or worsening outcomes resulting from their engagement within particular types of online spaces, in addition to whether use of each associated with a higher likelihood of having had a negative online experience, we conducted Chi-Squared Tests with Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons across a:

- 4 (Stories, Messages, Short Video Content Feeds, Search Pages) by 3 (Improved, Stable, Worsened) table for each perceived effect outcome.
- 4 (Stories, Messages, Short Video Content Feeds, Search Pages) by 2 (Yes, No) table for reported negative experiences for each timeframe (i.e., ever, past 7 days).



APPENDIX



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Survey Questions

If you are interested in using any of these questions in your own research, please contact us for approved attribution styles.

DEMOGRAPHICS

P1. Are you between the ages of 15 and 22?*

Yes No

P2. How old are you? (Please only input numbers)*

P3. What country do you live in?*

United States Outside the United States

P4. What state do you live in?*

Alabama	Hawaii	Massachusetts	New Mexico	South Dakota
Alaska	Idaho	Michigan	New York	Tennessee
Arizona	Illinois	Minnesota	North Carolina	Texas
Arkansas	Indiana	Mississippi	North Dakota	Utah
California	Iowa	Missouri	Ohio	Vermont
Colorado	Kansas	Montana	Oklahoma	Virginia
Connecticut	Kentucky	Nebraska	Oregon	Washington
Delaware	Louisiana	Nevada	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
Florida	Maine	New Hampshire	Rhode Island	Wisconsin
Georgia	Maryland	New Jersey	South Carolina	Wyoming

P5. What is your gender identity?

Girl/Woman Boy/Man Non-binary Other (please specify): _____ Prefer not to answer

P6. Do you identify as transgender?

Yes No Prefer not to answer

P7. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?

Yes No Prefer not to answer

P8. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)

American Indian or Alaskan Native	Middle Eastern or North African
Asian	White
Black or African American	Other (please specify): _____
Hispanic or Latino	Prefer not to answer
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 1: PLATFORMS

Please respond to the following questions based on your personal use of media for non-school or work related purposes. This section will ask you about your use of platforms and apps.

We’re going to ask you questions about “engaging with others online.”

By “engage” we mean communicating and interacting with (for example, posting about yourself, having a conversation or “liking” content someone shared on a platform or app).

By “others” we mean people you both DO and DO NOT know personally.

By “online” we mean things taking place on the internet, apps, or platforms.

Q1. Over the past 7 days, which of the following apps or platforms did you use? (select all that apply)*

Instagram	Twitter	Discord	BeReal	Twitch	WeChat
Snapchat	VSCO	Reddit	YouTube	WhatsApp	None of the above
TikTok	Pinterest	Tumblr	Facebook	Messenger	

Q2. What platform or app do you use the MOST to engage with others online? (select one)*

Instagram	Twitter	Discord	BeReal	Twitch	WeChat
Snapchat	VSCO	Reddit	YouTube	WhatsApp	
TikTok	Pinterest	Tumblr	Facebook	Messenger	

Other — Write In Platform/App’s Full Name (Required): _____*

Q3. Over the past 7 days, how often did you use each of the following platforms or apps?

	Once during the past 7 days	2 to 6 times during the past 7 days	Once a day	2 to 6 times a day	7 to 10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
Instagram						
Snapchat						
TikTok						
Twitter						
VSCO						
Pinterest						
Discord						
Reddit						
Tumblr						
BeReal						
YouTube						
Facebook						
Twitch						
WhatsApp						
Messenger						
WeChat						

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 2: SPECIFIC PLATFORMS

In this next section, you will be asked questions about how you use “Platform.”

Q4. At what age did you first start using “Platform”?

9 and under	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
I don't remember						

Note: If you have more than one account on “Platform”, please respond to the following questions based on your activity on the account you use the MOST often.

Q5. Over the past 7 days, how often did you use “Platform” to do any of the following? (select the best option)

	Not applicable (e.g., action not possible on “Platform”)	Never	Once during the past 7 days	2 to 6 times during the past 7 days	Once a day	2 to 6 times a day	7 to 10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
Sent a direct message (e.g., sending a text or content to someone else).								
Made a post (i.e., text update, picture, or video uploaded to your profile).								
Added a story (i.e., temporary available text update, picture, or video uploaded to your profile).								
Left a comment on someone else's content.								
Hosted a live broadcast (e.g., went live).								
Liked or reacted to someone else's content.								

Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

The people I engage with on “Platform”...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
...really try to help me.					
...are there for me when I need them.					

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q7. Platforms and apps include different pages and content feeds. Take a moment to think about where you go on “Platform”. What are the main sections of “Platform” that you typically use or visit?

By “main sections”, we do NOT mean the kinds of content you come across on a particular part of “Platform”, but the places you go in the app itself, like a page, tab, or feed.

List the names of 1 to 5 using the text boxes below. If you are unsure how to answer this question, please leave the text boxes BLANK.

1: _____

2: _____

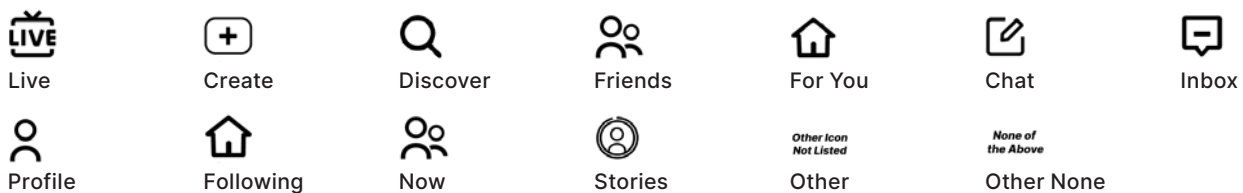
3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

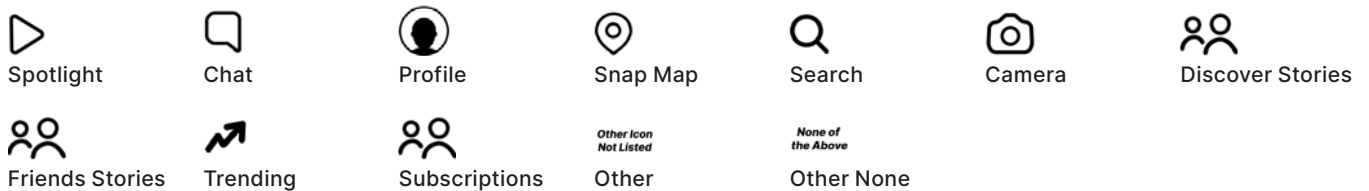
Q8. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS TIKTOK] Over the past 7 days, did you visit ANY of the following icons on [TikTok]? (check all that apply)

If you visited or used another icon on [TikTok] that is not listed, select “Other icon not listed.”



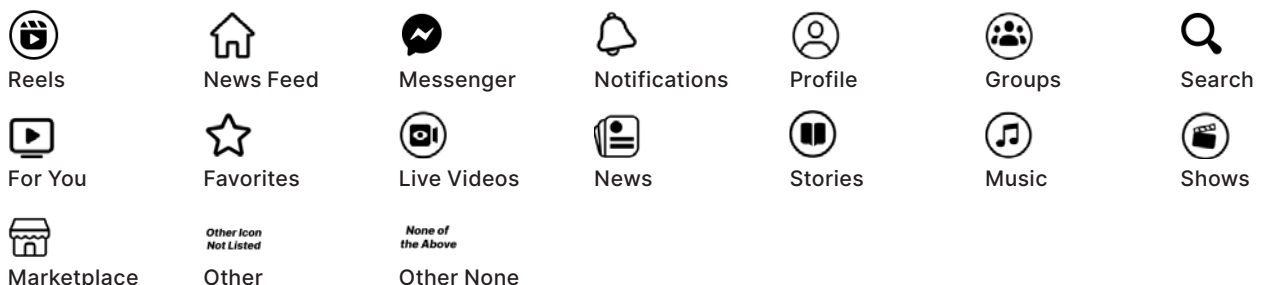
Q9. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS SNAPCHAT] Over the past 7 days, did you visit ANY of the following icons on [Snapchat]? (check all that apply)

If you visited or used another icon on [Snapchat] that is not listed, select “Other icon not listed.”



Q18. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS FACEBOOK] Over the past 7 days, did you visit ANY of the following icons on [Facebook]? (check all that apply)

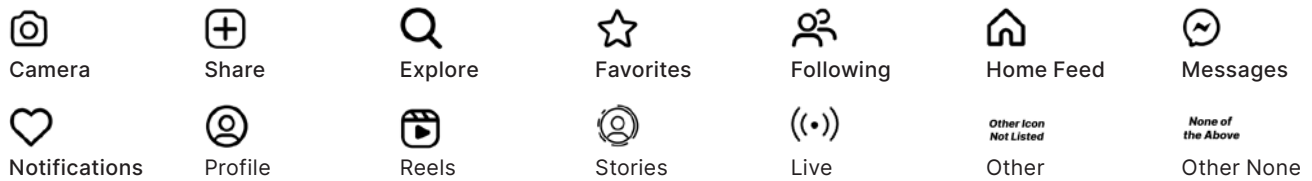
If you visited or used another icon on [Facebook] that is not listed, select “Other icon not listed.”



APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

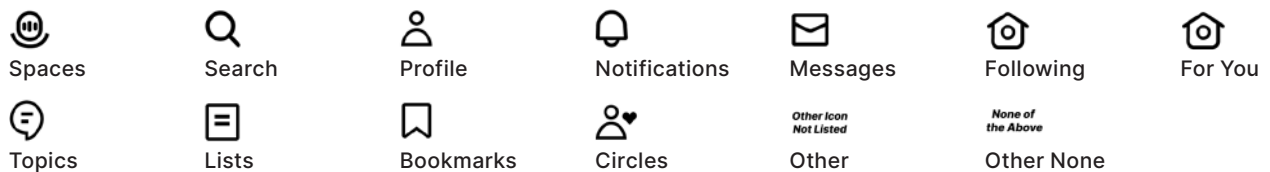
Q10. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS INSTAGRAM] Over the past 7 days, did you visit ANY of the following icons on [Instagram]? (check all that apply)

If you visited or used another icon on [Instagram] that is not listed, select “Other icon not listed.”



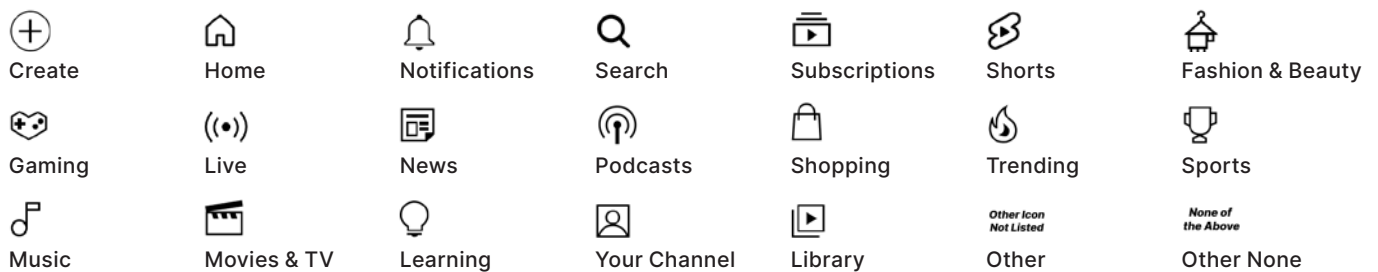
Q11. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS TWITTER] Over the past 7 days, did you visit ANY of the following icons on [Twitter]? (check all that apply)

If you visited or used another icon on [Twitter] that is not listed, select “Other icon not listed.”



Q12. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS YOUTUBE] Over the past 7 days, did you visit ANY of the following icons on [YouTube]? (check all that apply)

If you visited or used another icon on [YouTube] that is not listed, select “Other icon not listed.”



Note: The next question is going to ask you about “negative online experiences.” By “negative online experiences”, we mean a situation where you were using “Platform” and felt uncomfortable, upset, or unsafe as a result of your use of or experience on the platform.

Q13. Have you EVER had a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience while using “Platform”?*

Yes No I don’t remember

Q14. Which of the following platforms have you been asked follow-up questions about during the current survey?

Spotify Amazon Prime “Platform” Apple TV None of the above

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 3: SPECIFIC IN-APP SECTION

For each of the following questions respond to each based on your understanding of “Section” on “Platform.”

Some questions will ask you about your social network. By “social network” we mean the people you follow, are mutual friends with, or subscribe to on “Platform.”

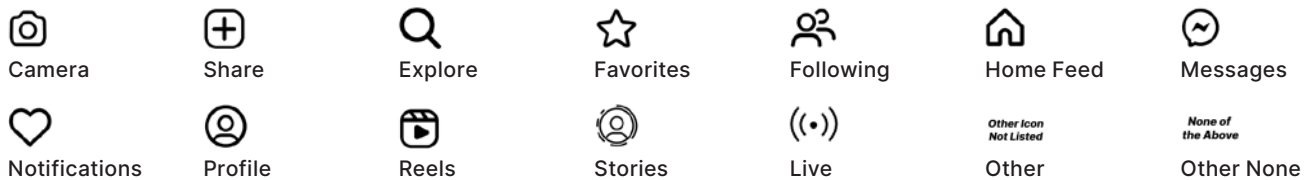
Other questions will ask you about “your parents.” By “your parents” we mean your parents or caregivers.

Again, if you have more than one account on “Platform,” please respond to the following questions based on your activity on the account you use the MOST often.

Q15. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS INSTAGRAM]

Which of the following icons best represents “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option)

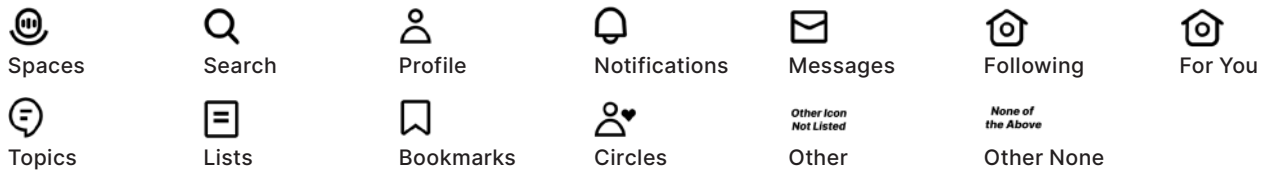
If none match well with the section, select “Other icon not listed.”*



Q16. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS TWITTER]

Which of the following icons best represents “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option)

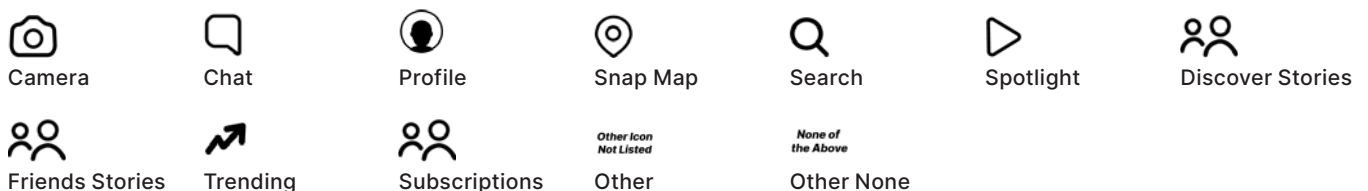
If none match well with the section, select “Other icon not listed.”*



Q17. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS SNAPCHAT]

Which of the following icons best represents “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option)

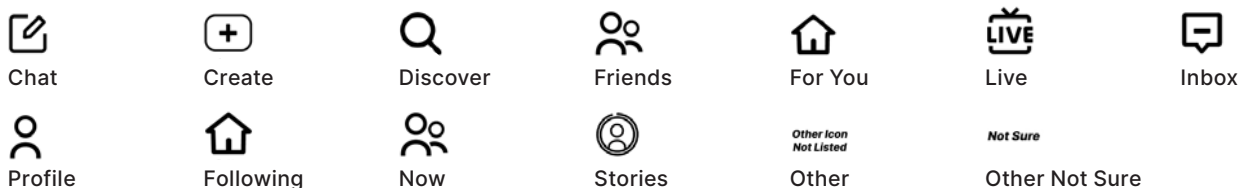
If none match well with the section, select “Other icon not listed.”*



Q18. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS TIKTOK]

Which of the following icons best represents “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option)

If none match well with the section, select “Other icon not listed.”*
























APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q19. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS YOUTUBE]

Which of the following icons best represents “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option)


















If none match well with the section, select “Other icon not listed.”*

 Create	 Home	 Notifications	 Sports	 Subscriptions	 Search	 Shorts
 Fashion & Beauty	 Gaming	 Learning	 Live	 Movies & TV	 Music	 News
 Podcasts	 Shopping	 Trending	 Your Channel	 Library	 <i>Other Icon Not Listed</i> Other	 <i>Not Sure</i> Other Not Sure

Q20. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS FACEBOOK]

Which of the following icons best represents “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option)

If none match well with the section, select “Other icon not listed.”*

 Groups	 News Feed	 Messenger	 Notifications	 Profile	 Reels	 Search
 For You	 Favorites	 Live Videos	 News	 Stories	 Music	 Shows
 Marketplace	 <i>Other Icon Not Listed</i> Other	 <i>Not Sure</i> Other Not Sure				

Q21. What does the icon that BEST represents “Section” on “Platform” look like? Please briefly describe what it looks like below.

Q22. When you first open “Platform”, is “Section” the first section you see on the platform/app?

Yes No Not sure

Q23. [IF “NO” OR “NOT SURE”] When you open “Platform,” what steps do you take to get to “Section”? (e.g., icons you click, sections you navigate through)

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q24. Read the statements below carefully and select each that you think is TRUE of “Section” on “Platform.” If you are not confident regarding whether a statement is TRUE, leave it unchecked.

The information available to me on “Section”...

- ...is personally identifying (e.g., it includes info about who people are).
- ...is presented visually (e.g., graphics, pictures, videos).
- ...is personalized (i.e., unique to me).
- ...is organized (e.g., by topic or chronologically).
- ...is exchanged directly between people (i.e., one-on-one communication).
- ...is produced by people outside my social network (e.g., recommended content, ads).
- ...is reflective of what is happening now in the present moment.
- ...is broadcasted to others (i.e., sent from one person to many people).
- ...is NOT endless (e.g., it includes a limited amount of content).
- ...is random (e.g., it is presented or linked in an unpredictable way).
- ...is accessible to everyone.
- ...is displayed with numbers or metrics (e.g., likes, views, shares, streaks).
- ...is responsive and updates instantly based on my engagement.
- ...is accessible at a later date or time.
- ...is produced by people in my social network.
- ...is public.
- ...is private.
- ...flows between those producing and consuming content at the same time (i.e., simultaneously).
- ...is presented audibly (i.e., through sound).
- ...is anonymous (e.g., it does NOT include info about who people are).
- None of above (i.e., none are true)

Q25. Take a moment to think about the different types of content you see when using “Section” on “Platform”. Please list about 1 to 3 examples of content you recently came across in a separate text box below.

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

Example 3: _____

Q26. Who do you typically encounter when using “Section” on “Platform”? (select the best option.)

- Your parents
- Your siblings
- Your extended family (e.g., cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents)
- Your friends
- Same-aged peers that you know personally (e.g., classmates, teammates)
- Romantic partners (e.g., current or former partners/exes)
- Businesses/Organizations (e.g., news outlets, brands, non-profits)
- Public figures (e.g., celebrities, influencers, professional athletes)
- Strangers (e.g., people you don’t know personally)
- Other-Write In: _____
- None of the above (i.e., I don’t encounter other people here)

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q27. What percentage of the content you see on “Section” is produced by your social network?

0 _____ [] _____ 100

Q28. What percentage of the people you encounter while using “Section” on “Platform” do you know personally offline (e.g., from home, school, work, extracurricular activities)?

0 _____ [] _____ 100

Q29. Over the past 7 days, when you used “Platform,” how often did you engage in each of the following activities on “Section”? (Select the best option.)

	Not applicable (e.g., action not possible on “Platform”)	Never	Once during the past 7 days	2 to 6 times during the past 7 days	Once a day	2 to 6 times a day	7 to 10 times a day	More than 10 times a day
Reacted to someone else’s content (e.g., liked, commented, or reacted).								
Had a back-and-forth interaction with someone (e.g., conversation).								
Searched for a particular user, topic, or piece of content.								
Browsed or watched content shared by others.								
Edited content (e.g., applied filters to images, curated posts).								
Forwarded or shared content available here with others (e.g., re-posted content).								
Checked for updates, new content, or feedback from others								

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q30. Over the past 7 days when you used “Platform,” did spending time on “Section” make any of the following better or worse?

	A lot worse	A little worse	Neither worse nor better	A little better	A lot better
How you feel about your body or appearance					
Your overall mood					
Your social relationships					
Your attention span					
Your level of stress					

The next question is going to ask you about “negative online experiences.” By “negative online experiences,” we mean a situation where you were using “Section” on “Platform” and felt uncomfortable, upset, or unsafe as a result of your use of or experience on the platform

Q31. Have you EVER had a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience while using “Section” on “Platform”?

Yes No I don’t remember

Q32. [IF “YES”] Did you have a negative (e.g., uncomfortable, unsafe) experience while using “Section” on “Platform” within the past 7 days?

Yes No I don’t remember






















SECTION 4: SITUATIONAL REPORT

Take a moment to reflect on a negative experience you’ve had on “Platform”. If multiple experiences come to mind, please respond to the following questions based on ONE of them.

Q33. Please briefly summarize what happened.

Q34. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS YOUTUBE]

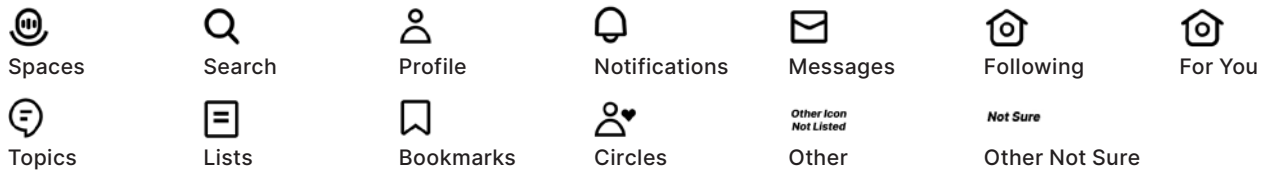
Where did this situation take place on “Platform”? (check all that apply)

 Create	 Home	 Notifications	 Sports	 Subscriptions	 Search	 Shorts
 Fashion & Beauty	 Gaming	 Learning	 Live	 Movies & TV	 Music	 News
 Podcasts	 Shopping	 Trending	 Your Channel	 Library	 Other <small>Other Icon Not Listed</small>	 Other Not Sure

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

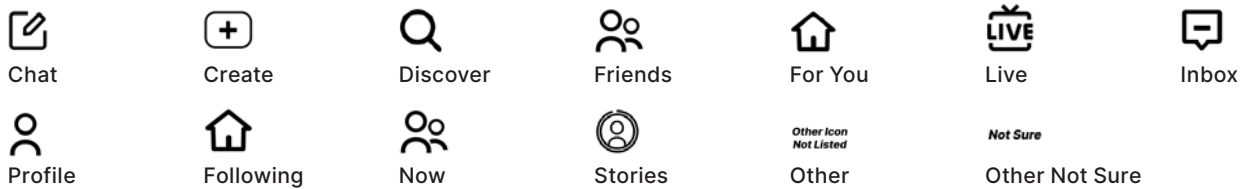
Q35. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS TWITTER]

Where did this situation take place on “Platform”? (check all that apply)



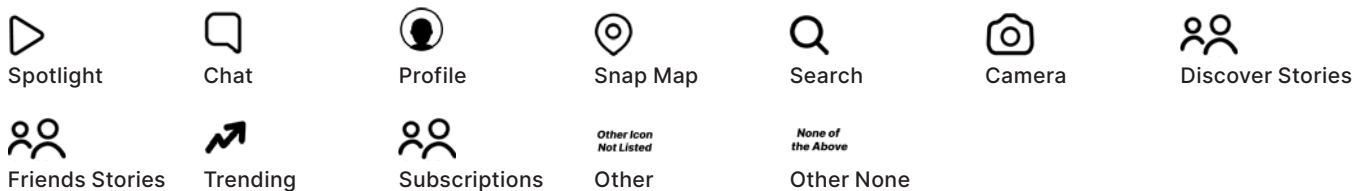
Q36. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS TIKTOK]

Where did this situation take place on “Platform”? (check all that apply)



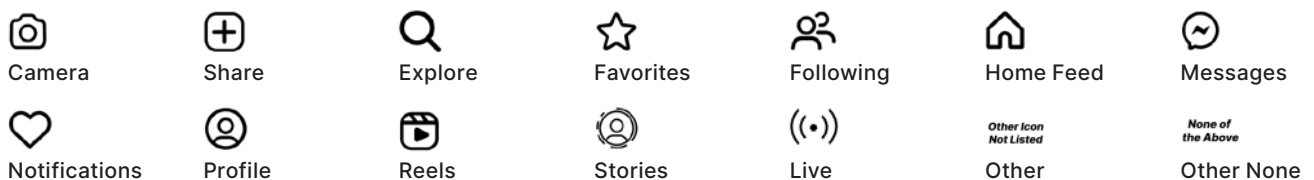
Q37. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS SNAPCHAT]

Where did this situation take place on “Platform”? (check all that apply)



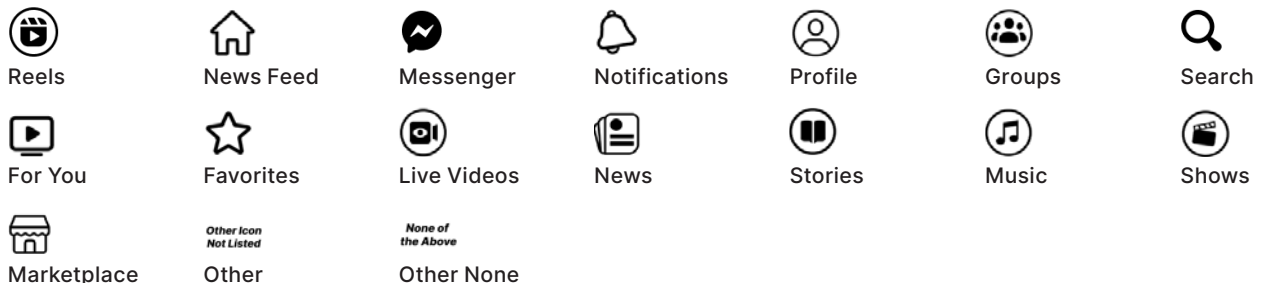
Q38. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS INSTAGRAM]

Where did this situation take place on “Platform”? (check all that apply)



Q39. [IF ASSIGNED PLATFORM WAS FACEBOOK]

Where did this situation take place on “Platform”? (check all that apply)



APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q40. Where else did this situation take place on “Platform” (e.g., page, section, content feed)?
Please list the name of each section that comes to mind, separating each by a comma.

Q41. Where did this situation take place on “Platform” (e.g., page, section, content feed)?
Please list the name of each section that comes to mind, separating each by a comma.

Q42. Who was involved in this situation? (check all that apply)

Your parent

Your sibling

Your extended family (e.g., cousin, aunt, uncle, grandparent)

Your friend

Romantic partner (e.g., current or former partners/exes)

Same-aged peer that you personally know (e.g., classmate, teammate)

Business/organization (e.g., news outlet, brand, non-profit)

Public figure (e.g., celebrity, influencer, professional athlete)

Stranger (e.g., someone you don't personally know)

Other-Write In: _____

None of the above (i.e., I was the only person involved)

Q43. Were ALL of the people involved a part of your social network on “Platform”?

Yes No Not sure

Q44. During this situation, did any of the following happen on “Platform”? (check all that apply)

Someone...

...distributed content to others (e.g., shared copyrighted, disturbing, misleading, sexual, violent, or harmful material).

...directly targeted or contacted someone (e.g., tagged them in a mean post, requested private or explicit content).

...did something that was illegal (e.g., fraud, selling illicit drugs, hate crime, assault, theft).

...violated “Platform’s” Community Guidelines or Standards (e.g., created a fake account, harassed someone, shared content that is not allowed).

...monitored, stalked, or tried to gain access to information about someone.

...tried to negatively affect someone’s reputation.

...acted in a discriminatory way toward a group/community you or others identify with (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race, religion).

...tried to manipulate or force someone to do something (e.g., grooming, coercion, intimidation).

Other-Write In: _____

None of the above

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q45. Were ANY of the following features involved? (Check all that apply.)

External link (e.g., link in bio)

Direct message

Comment

Story (i.e., temporary available text update, picture or video uploaded to a profile/account)

Post (i.e., text update, audio, picture or video uploaded to a profile/account)

Live video or audio broadcast

Advertisement or platform sponsored content

Profile or account

Friend or follow request

Other-Write In: _____

None of the above

Q46. What was your role in this situation? (Select the best option.)

I was the individual or among the individuals targeted or victimized

I was a bystander, witness, or third-party (i.e., someone else was harassed)

No one was targeted or victimized, but I was negatively impacted

Q47. [IF "I WAS THE INDIVIDUAL OR AMONG THE INDIVIDUALS TARGETED OR VICTIMIZED"] Did this situation extend or carry over to another place outside of "Platform"?

Yes, it extended to somewhere offline

Yes, it extended to another platform, website, or app

No, the situation was limited to "Platform"

Q48. [IF "YES, IT EXTENDED TO SOMEWHERE OFFLINE] Where did the situation extend to or carry over offline? (Select all that apply.)

My home My school My neighborhood, town, or city Another place not listed: _____

Q49. Did you do any of the following in response to this experience? (Check all that apply.)

Reported content

Reported an account

Blocked an account

Updated your content settings or preferences on "Platform"

Changed your account's privacy settings on "Platform"

Shared less content about yourself on "Platform"

Limited others' ability to engage with your content (e.g., share, comment on) on "Platform"

Used image/video filters more often on "Platform"

Told a friend what happened

Told a parent or family member what happened

Told a school staff member (e.g., teacher, counselor, principal) what happened

Other response not listed—Write In:

I didn't do anything in response or change my behavior following this experience

SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Q50. What year were you born? (please input the year as a four-digit number)

Q51. How often during the last 12 months have you...

	Very rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
...spent a lot of time thinking about social media or planned use of social media?					
...felt an urge to use social media more and more?					
...used social media in order to forget about personal problems?					
...tried to cut down on the use of social media without success?					
...become restless or troubled if you have been prohibited from using social media?					
...used social media so much that it has had a negative impact on your job/studies?					

Q52. Have you been diagnosed by a doctor with any of the following disorders? (select all that apply)

	Yes	No
Depression		
Anxiety		
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)		
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD)		
Learning disorder		
Eating Disorder		
Other mental or behavioral disorder not listed		

Q53. What is the highest degree of education one of your parents has obtained?

No degree

High school degree or GED

Associate's degree (e.g., community college, trade school, etc.)

Bachelor's degree (4-year college or university)

Master's degree

PhD/MD/JD or other advanced degree

Not sure

Q54. Regardless of your answers, did you answer the previous questions to the best of your ability?

I'm not really paying attention

I'm answering randomly

I've answered all questions to my best ability

None of the above



How We Create Impact

The Digital Wellness Lab conducts, translates, and distributes rigorous research on the positive and negative effects of technology and interactive media use on young people to inform our progress towards positive health and development for every child, teen, and young adult.

Through our research, we seek to:

Advance digital wellness focused design, delivery, and marketing practices in the tech industry by working to understand their current and future challenges and to translate our research outcomes into actionable insights to share with company decision-makers to enable healthy interactive media experiences for youth.

Embed digital wellness in healthcare strategies by providing evidence-based knowledge and tools designed to move towards a more standardized understanding of, and approach to digital well-being, and to empower clinicians in their ability to help young people and their families build and maintain healthy behaviors.

Our work is supported in part by unrestricted donations from technology, entertainment, and healthcare companies, however we do not evaluate, endorse, or give preference to any products or platforms.

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Snap, Inc.

TikTok

Trend Micro

Twitch



Boston Children's Digital Wellness Lab

The Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School seeks to understand and promote positive and healthy digital media experiences for young people, from birth through young adulthood.

The Digital Wellness Lab is made up of a dynamic and collaborative team of experts and thought leaders from health sciences, tech, academics and entertainment. We are ever-evolving and welcome others to join us on our mission. Here are some ways you can get involved in our work:

BECOME A SUPPORTER

The Digital Wellness Lab convenes supporters from healthcare, technology, media, and entertainment to deepen our understanding and address the future of young people's healthy engagement with media and technology. If your organization is interested in becoming involved as a financial supporter, please email us at dwl@childrens.harvard.edu

JOIN OUR TEAM

The Digital Wellness Lab is a mission-driven organization dedicated to understanding and promoting wellness in the digital age. If you are interested in joining our team, keep an eye on digitalwellnesslab.org/get-involved/#join for potential opportunities.

For more information about our work, please contact Cori Stott, Administrative Director, at dwl@childrens.harvard.edu