

Smartphones boost US teens' connections

April 9 2015, by Rob Lever



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It's not just your imagination: most American teenagers are online or on their smartphones every day, and many are almost continually connected.

A Pew Research Center [survey](#) released Thursday found that 92 percent of US teens go online daily.

That includes 56 percent who are online several times a day and 24

percent who say they are connected to the Internet and social networks "almost constantly."

A key factor is the growing prevalence of smartphones.

The survey of teens between the ages of 13 and 17 found that 73 percent had a smartphone and 30 percent had at least a basic cellphone.

Even though 87 percent of teens have access to a computer, 91 percent went online daily using a mobile device at least occasionally, Pew found.

The survey found that African-American and Hispanic youth are among the most active Internet users.

Among African-American teens, 34 percent reported going online "almost constantly" as did 32 percent of Hispanic youth and 19 percent of white teens.

"American teens, especially African-American youth, have embraced smartphones and the 24/7 access to people and information that they offer," said Amanda Lenhart, a Pew researcher and the lead author of the report.

Some 90 percent of teens with phones exchange text messages, with a typical teenager receiving 30 texts per day, Pew found. And one-third of those with smartphones use messaging apps such as WhatsApp or Kik.



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Facebook still rules

The researchers found Facebook remains the dominant [social media](#) network for young Americans despite the rise of new platforms.

Among the teens surveyed, 71 percent said they used Facebook, with Instagram—owned by Facebook—the number two social media service used by 52 percent.

Asked about other social media, 41 percent of teens said they use Snapchat, 33 percent named Twitter and Google Plus, 24 percent were on Twitter-owned Vine and 14 percent used Yahoo-owned Tumblr.

The figures appear to allay concerns that Facebook is being abandoned by [youth](#) as more older Internet users join the world's biggest social network.



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"Even as Facebook remains an important platform for a majority of teens, Instagram is commanding the attention of half of teens, and Snapchat nearly that number," said Lenhart.

"There are some interesting differentials in the most frequently used social platforms, with lower income teens using Facebook more often, while wealthier teens—while still using Facebook—are more likely than

less wealthy teens to report that they use Snapchat or Twitter most often."

More than two-thirds of the teens surveyed said they use more than one social network. But of those who use only one, 66 percent said they opted for Facebook, with Google Plus and Instagram tied for second place with 13 percent each.

The report was based on an online survey of 1,060 [teens](#) from September 25 to October 9, 2014 and February 10 to March 16, 2015. The margin of error was estimated at 3.7 percentage points.

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