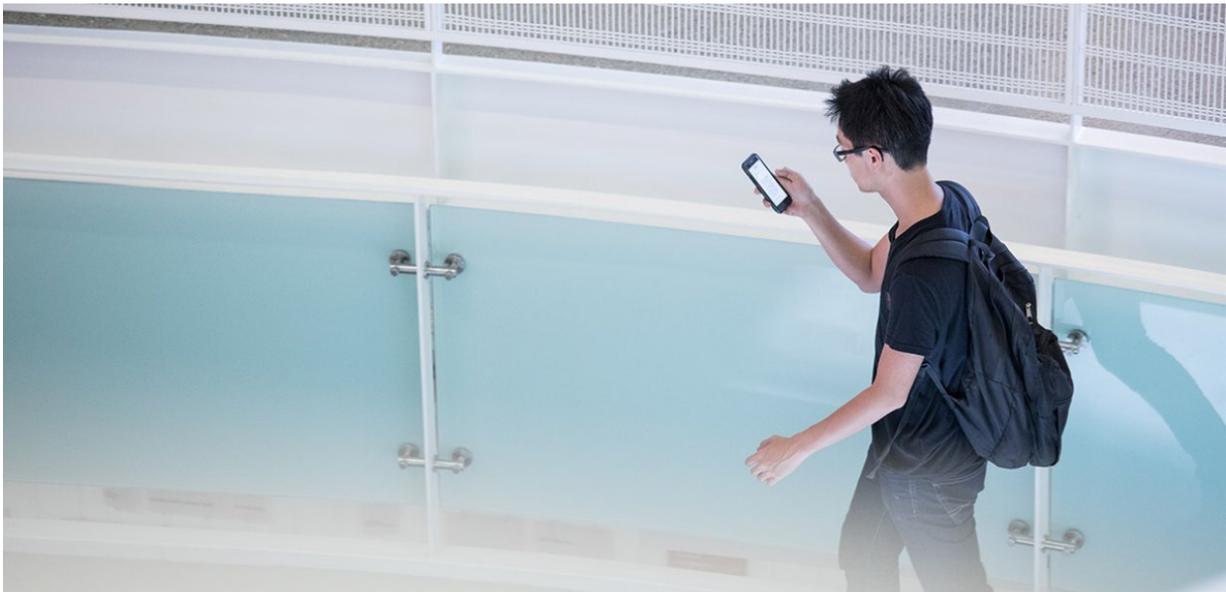


# To learn how Gen Z consumes media, researchers went right to the source

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Credit: John Davis/University of Southern California

For Gen Z, social media is viewed as both a mood and energy regulator. Their cellphone scrolling habits provide entertainment and escape and the idea of prioritizing a specific time slot for audience tune-in is becoming irrelevant.

Interested in Gen Z's information consumption habits, USC Annenberg's Center for Public Relations and Day One Agency released a first-ever

mobile ethnographic study. "Ask Gen Z: A Deep Dive into Gen Z's Scrolls" examines the state of the next generation's media diets, how they consume news, how and why they spend time online, and who influences them.

The study acts as a digital diary, uncovering how Gen Z's relationship with their scrolls and their information consumption has fundamentally changed when comparing their habits to their parents and previous generations and gives a glimpse into Gen Z's current power in the media landscape and how it will continue to evolve.

Our research predicts that over the next five years, Gen Z will have more impact on corporate reputation than any other age group," said Fred Cook, director of the USC Center for Public Relations. "They are totally tuned in, but in a totally different way. This mobile ethnographic profile provides brands with real-time insights into how, when, and where they consume content."

Foregoing a traditional survey, the study asked Gen Z USC students, born between 1997 and 2004, to log daily video updates of themselves about the information they consumed. They recorded selfie videos, took screenshots, and answered open- and close-ended questions about their media consumption habits and preferences across multiple days and at different times of the day. Data was then supplemented from the Gen Z research and strategy partner dcdx.

"The mobile ethnography approach we used to dive deep into Gen Z's media consumption habits allowed us to be a digital fly on the wall," said Professor Robert Kozinets, Jayne and Hans Hufschmid Chair of Strategic Public Relations and Business Communication. "It provided an important glimpse into Gen Z's dynamic consumption of a diverse array of media content. While other methods rely on recall, we were able to experience their media [consumption](#) as it unfolded."

Senior Research Fellow Ulrike Gretzel led the study by recruiting and screening students, compiling and reviewing hours of video replies and analyzing the data to identify specific trends. To supplement the ethnographic findings, Day One Agency collaborated with DCDX, a Gen Z consultancy with a network of more than 100,000 Gen Zers, for a quantitative representation of how Gen Z is scrolling today.

"In partnering with the USC Center for PR and wanting to delve deeper into how Gen Z consumes media, we went straight to the source: asking Gen Zers who are studying journalism and communications," said Josh Rosenberg, CEO & Co-Founder, Day One Agency. "Hearing from them firsthand further provides a peek into their changing media diets and how actively they are reshaping the media landscape."

**More information:** Ask Gen Z: A Deep Dive into Gen Z's Scrolls: [d1a.com/perspective/day-one-ag ... nenberg-gen-z-study](https://www.dayoneagency.com/perspective/day-one-ag-...-rosenberg-gen-z-study)

Provided by University of Southern California

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