

#GoodforMedia Youth Testimonials



In February and March 2024, we asked young people in our online community about their experiences navigating online platforms and share ideas for change. Here's a snapshot of what we heard:

Youth proposed these new features and policies to improve their experiences with social media:

- “I wish there was a way to hide the 'for you' page, so the only content you can access is that of the people you follow” (Megan, age 17).
- “I do wish... that there could be a feature within the apps telling me how long I've used them for and warn me if I'm going over a healthy amount of time” (Anonymous, age 19).
- “I wish social media had a bigger emphasis on people you know instead of people you don't” (Ava, age 18).
- “Maybe a tool where it shows you whether or not the photo was edited” (Setareh, age 24).
- “Some sort of restrictions on either influencer marketing... or reforms on social media usage for younger generation such as social media education in the same way drug/smoking education is done during red ribbon week in October” (Emma, age 19).
- “Put safeguards in place that stop trolling/harmful content that allows people to compare and institute programs in schools which emphasize the humanity of the person sitting on the other side of the screen” (Anonymous, age 19).
- “The solution isn't to ban apps, but rather to ban the harmful, invasive, and addictive systems within apps that allow users to be milked by advertisers, government influence/false news, addictive content” (James, age 19).

Some youth think they/their peers are addicted to social media because...

- “It gives us access to other peoples' lives and makes us forget our own troubles” (Ava, age 18).
- “It's the easiest coping mechanism to escape reality and make awkward situations not awkward” (Emma, age 19).
- “We are visual creatures and social media exploits that to the extreme” (Anonymous, age 19).

What frustrates youth most when using their phones on any given day:

- “I don’t want to spend two hours per day on social media. It doesn’t make me happy and it’s not productive towards my life goals... but I feel like I can’t help it because as soon as I open the app, I’m stuck in this endless cycle ... that has engineered my brain to not be able to look away, and I want that to stop” (Georgia, age 19).
- “The amount of notifications I got; I felt like my attention was being pulled from all to all” (Anonymous, age 19).
- “I’m scared for our generation. We are constantly receiving media that supports our point of view and interests, so we aren’t exposed to different ideas. When we are exposed to differences, there is hate and toxicity. The illusion of perfection is so harmful... we are forgetting what really matters in life” (Megan, age 17).

Youth on their least favorite social media platforms:

- “Instagram is my least favorite app because I waste so much time on it, but I feel like if I delete Instagram I will be out of the loop socially” (Megan, age 17).
- “Twitter/X... there are dozens of accounts showing gruesome or pornographic material. Today I witnessed a gruesome construction accident while just trying to see how the Warriors did today... no matter how many accounts I mute or block, or how many search terms I set to not show, there will always be more that is forced on my timeline because other users have engaged with it. I hate it” (Taylan, age 18).
- “TikTok or Instagram are my least favorite apps because they encourage mindless scrolling, consumerism, and comparisons with influencers that project society’s unrealistic standards upon women, let alone, women of color” (Emma, age 19).

Youth on their favorite social media platforms:

- “Twitter (X) is my favorite app because it is less focused on showing how perfect your life is, and people post more about social issues, politics, and news” (Setareh, age 24).
- “Instagram ... it feels like a shared scrapbook of my and my friend’s lives” (Ava, age 18).
- “Youtube or LinkedIn are my favorite apps because I love listening to a couple authentic YouTubers who are going through similar things and learning to navigate the world... I love LinkedIn specifically for networking with other professionals and gaining more insights about the current workforce I’ll enter in a few years” (Emma, age 19).