

WHAT THE FUTURE:

TEEN

Teen and brand

RELATIONSHIPS

might stay complicated PAGE 11

How AI will globalize the

creator economy

PAGE 18

We talk with: A teen who sued her state over climate change; experts from YouTube and Paramount; and experts on youth entrepreneurship and teen mental health on how teenhood could shift in the future



How teens are

TAKING CHARGE

PAGE 24

QUIZ! WHAT KIND OF FUTURIST ARE YOU?!?

And teen futurist horoscopes!

Five tensions

THAT WILL DRIVE CHANGE

PAGE 26

GAME CHANGERS



Teens aren't what you think anymore. Here's why you need a new playbook

Imagine it's 2033. Today's teenagers have aged into 20-somethings. Are they just as rabid about their content consumption? Are they pushing older generations to do more about the climate and inequality? Have they found some hope about ... anything?

This is not another Gen Z report. This is an issue about what it means to be young in today's world and what that might look like tomorrow. It's also not, therefore, an issue about the future of a *thing* or a *topic*. But rather a group of humans. So, we'll talk about where teens are today, what this cohort might look like tomorrow and what "being a teen" might look like in the future, too.

I mean, are teens really that different from us grownups? Sure, they watch more TikToks than most adults. They watch Minecraft YouTubers even after they've "outgrown" playing Minecraft. But way more adults watch football or basketball than play those sports, too.

No. Wait. There are differences. And not just that they can say "slay" without sounding cringe.

There are demographic differences. There are behavioral differences. There are differences in how they spend their time. There are differences in how they view education.

There are differences in their relationships with brands, content, creators and institutions. Finally, there are concerning flags raised in our research about optimism for the future; mostly that they have very little of it across a spectrum of socioeconomic topics. But don't worry, they still roll their eyes.

We know this, partially because we asked teens directly. Using both the Ipsos KnowledgePanel and the Club Z online community, we interviewed hundreds of teenagers and mirrored many of those questions against surveys of adults.

Being a 20-something is a relatively new concept in the recent generations. It's a life stage opened by the decades-long shift of staying in school longer and getting married, buying homes and having kids later in life. Those shifts opened a period where more youth are independent, single and often struggling financially on their own rather than coupling into dual-income households. That's a new horizon for teens to be looking toward. Will they keep up these trends?

64% of Americans with children at home think the next generation has better opportunities than they did.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Thinking about teens and the future is tricky business. They have anxiety and hope about the existential crises around them and how they will play out in the future: war, climate change, political polarization.

But at the same time, it's hard to get young people to think about the future. I know. I'm close to having three teens in my house. So, if you ask them about the future, they're just as likely to talk about a class they're looking forward to next semester. Or having to deal with their bully tomorrow. Maybe, assuming you can get more than a shrug and an "I dunno" out of them, maybe you can get them to think forward *to summer*.

But as teens become 20-somethings, the question is always: What will stick?

Will they remain massive consumers and *producers* of online content? Will they want their lives lived and *also displayed and shared* on screens? Will they shop with purpose (and also buy less and *not shop*) to help address problems like waste, climate change, or inequality? Will they even see those issues as problems?

Part of this is all a very American or at least a developed-economy story. Being a teenager, or being young in a population that is aging, as ours is, is very different from being young in areas like Africa where the U.N. projects at least one-third of all 15- to 24-year-olds will live by 2050.

But wherever teens are, there's a common idea among elder generations that the youth will save us from these problems and make the world a better place. But why should they have to? As the remarkable teenager Eva Lighthiser says later in the issue, "We're aware of the fact that previous generations were the ones who made the decisions that brought us here to this day."

We grown-ups can't blame today's teens for the lack of optimism we see in the data in this issue. The "ancient" (as my teens call anyone over 50) among us can't blame them for the high rates of anxiety and depression. After all, they didn't make climate change happen. They aren't prompting wars. Most of them can't even vote yet.

These are *our* problems we're leaving behind for our children, whom we say we'll do anything to protect. Yet, we as brands, as leaders, as governments, and as parents can start cleaning up our own messes, just as we tell our kids to do. It starts with reconsidering all the ways we have relationships with the kids these days. Here are some ideas to connect.



Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future and head of the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab.



41% of teens say future opportunities for young people will stay the same in the U.S.

(Source: Ipsos KnowledgePanel survey conducted Oct. 11-22, 2023, among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)

Contents



1. Territory map

The future of the teens will be driven by forces coming from six directions. We map them out.

2. By the numbers

We start with the state of teens in America today through Ipsos data about their aspirations and outlook for the future and how they compare to adults, plus a teen quiz and horoscopes.

3. The lay of the land

We talk with experts from media, mental health, entrepreneurship, and a teenager climate change plaintiff about shifts taking place in teen and young adult life and how they will shape the adults of tomorrow.

4. Tensions

Is college important for future success or not? Is mental health as important as physical health? Can individuals have an impact on climate change or is it too big for any person to make a difference? How people lean on these opinions today could shape the future we leave for the youth of tomorrow.

5. Future destinations

Based on our data and interviews with experts, we plot out a potential future — a plausible port in our future journey. Then, thinking of our tensions, we consider what happens if one of them shifts. We use that as a waypoint to ponder how that might send us to a different scenario, plausible port two. Then, we outline the future Jobs to Be Done, giving you a new way to think about the future. Finally, we explore the optimism gap between what we hope to see in the future versus what we expect to see in the future.

6. Appendix

Want more? We show our work, including the full text of our expert interviews, plus our contributors and links to what we're reading today that has us thinking about tomorrow.

Territory: What will drive the future of teens?

The milestones and institutions that mark growing up are shifting. Technology is altering youth's identity, relationships and future careers as their heating planet threatens their future existence. How will adolescence and teen beliefs, attitudes and behaviors evolve for future generations?

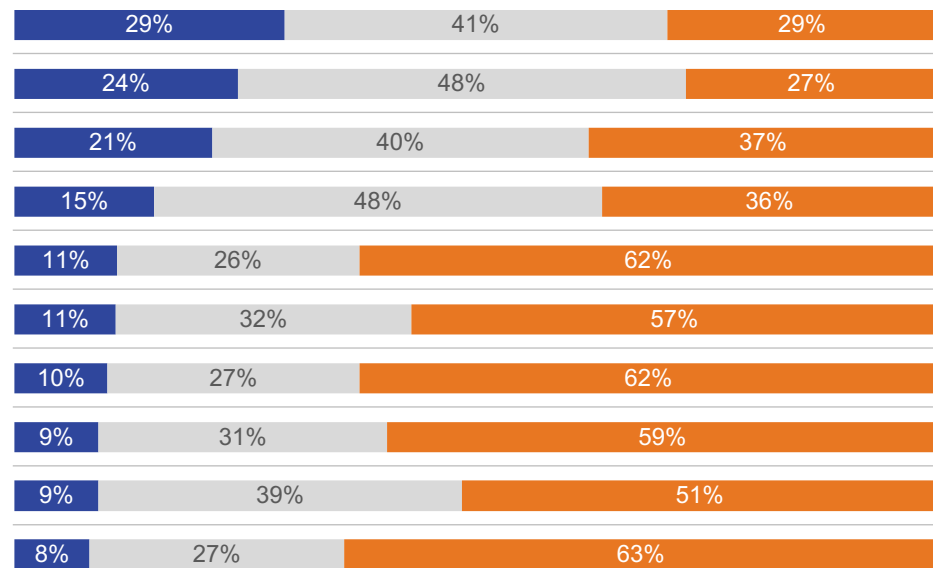


Teens by the numbers

How teens see the future

Teens aren't optimistic about their futures

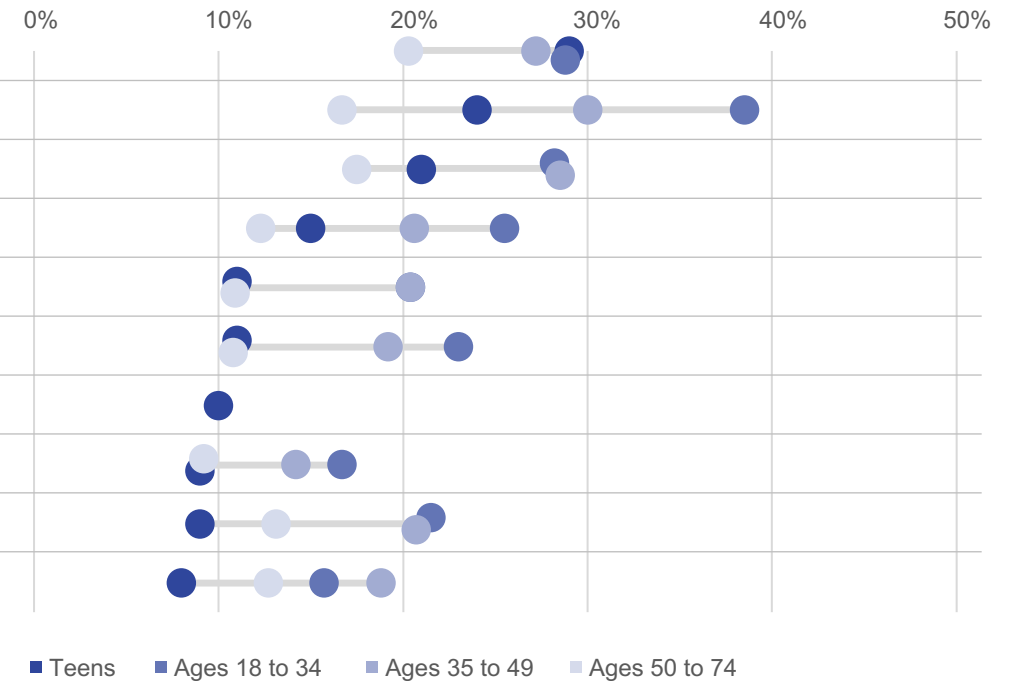
Q. Thinking about five years from now, do you feel the following will get better, worse or stay the same in the U.S.? (% Selected among teens)



■ Better ■ Same ■ Worse

And teens tend to be less optimistic than most adults

Q. Thinking about five years from now, do you feel the following will get better, worse or stay the same in the U.S.? (% Better)

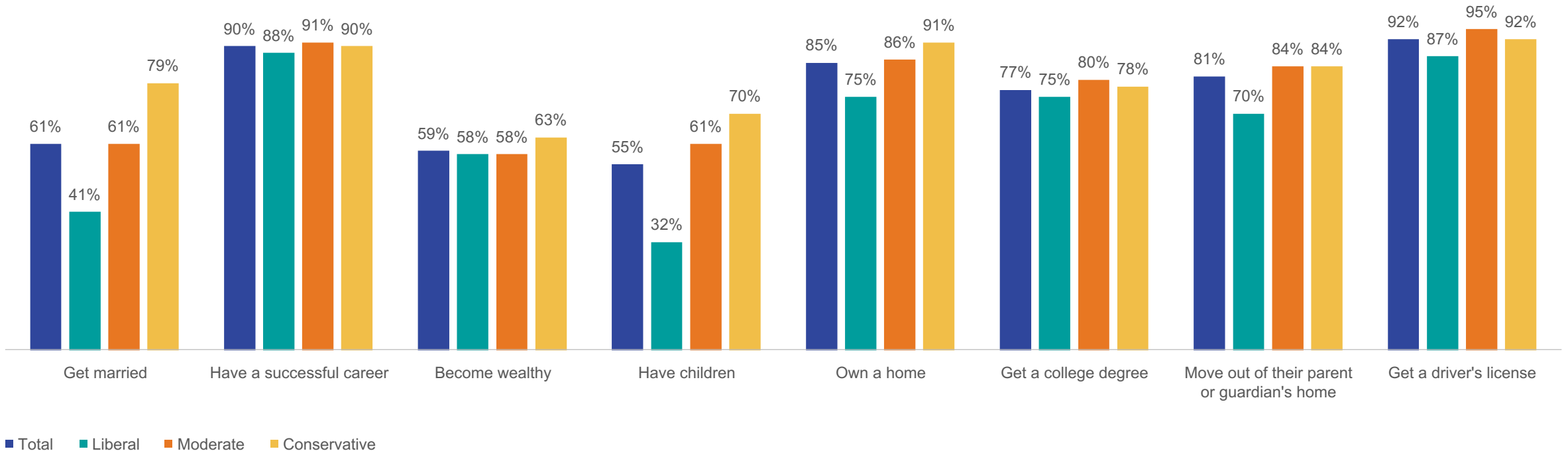


Teens by the numbers

What they value about life's big landmarks

Many liberal teens see less of a role for life's traditional milestones

Q. How important, if at all, would you say it is that someone does each of the following during their life? (% Important)

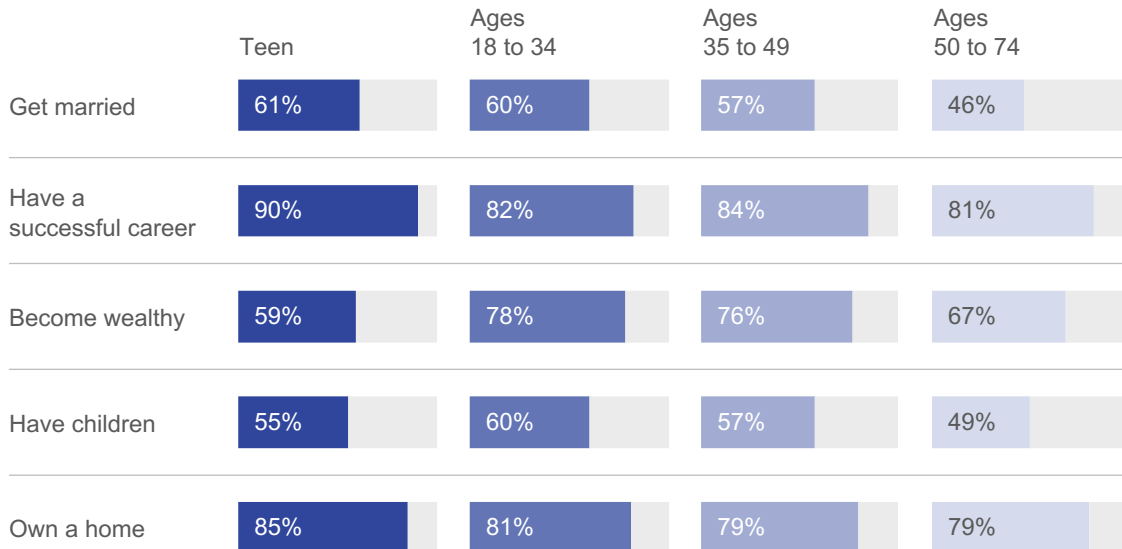


Teens by the numbers

How teens differ from adults

Teens differ with adults on marriage and career

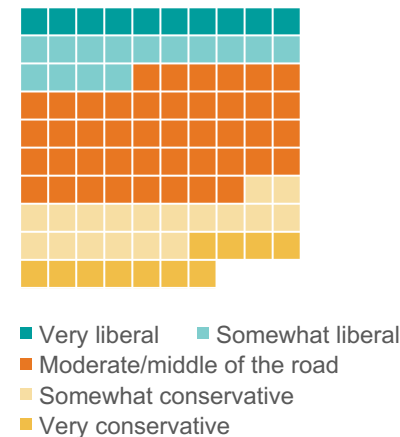
Q. How important, if at all, would you say it is that someone does each of the following during their life? (% Important)



(Sources: Ipsos Global Advisor survey conducted Aug. 25-Sept. 8, 2023, among 1,000 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)

Today's teens are as conservative as they are liberal

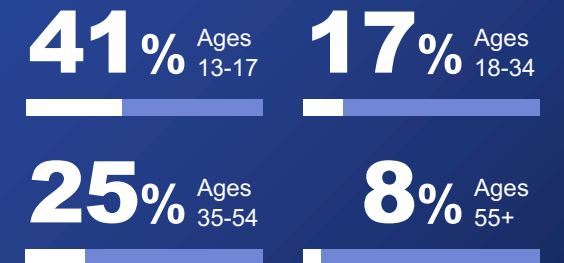
Q. When you think about how you feel politically, do you consider yourself:



(Source: Ipsos KnowledgePanel survey conducted Oct. 11-22, 2023, among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)

Teens feel safer from gun violence at school than adults think they are

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements – I feel safe from gun violence in my school (% Total teens) / Children are safe from gun violence in school (% Total adults)



(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)

What kind of futurist are you?!?

Take our quiz to find out!!!



What's your favorite piece of technology?

- Solar panels (1 point)
- Walkman (2 points)
- VR goggles (3 points)
- Space shuttle (4 points)

Which 80s sci-fi movie do you relate to the most?

- Blade Runner (1 point)
- Back to the Future (2 points)
- Tron (3 points)
- E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (4 points)

What does your perfect future look like?

- Living off-grid in a self-sustaining commune (1 point)
- Traveling through time (2 points)
- Living in a digital universe (3 points)
- Coexisting peacefully with extraterrestrial life (4 points)

Which future tech breakthrough are you most excited for?

- Renewable energy solutions (1 point)
- Time machines (2 points)
- Virtual reality (3 points)
- Interstellar travel (4 points)

What's your dream job in the future?

- Environmental scientist (1 point)
- Time-travel tour guide (2 points)
- Virtual reality game designer (3 points)
- Astronaut (4 points)

Scoring: 5-8 points: You're an Eco-Futurist! You believe in green innovations that improve sustainability. 9-12 points: You're a Retro-Futurist! You appreciate the past while looking to the future. 13-16 points: You're a Digital Futurist! You see the potential of technology to reshape our lives. 17-20 points: You're an Astro Futurist! You dream of a future among the stars.

Teen futurist horoscope! Time to manifest your *dreams*

Sagittarius



NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 21

This month, an adventure in a new city may await you. But not just any city – a smart city. Get ready to embrace the future of urban living.

Capricorn



DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 19

As a sign known for its practicality, you may find yourself drawn to the latest productivity tech. Whether it's a new AI assistant or virtual reality workspace, it's going to boost your efficiency.

Aquarius



JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18

This month, your unique ideas could lead to a breakthrough in tech. Don't hold back from pitching that innovative app or digital tool idea. The stars show a breakthrough on the 12th.

Pisces



FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20

This month is about exploring the virtual realm. You might find yourself immersed in a new virtual reality experience that allows you to explore your inner thoughts and feelings in a unique way.

Aries



MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

This month, your competitive spirit will lead you to new virtual realms. Whether it's a digital marathon or a virtual reality game, you're set to win. Look out for a technological surprise on the 15th.

Taurus



APRIL 20 - MAY 20

As the Earth signs are known to appreciate nature, you may find yourself drawn to the latest eco-tech. Investing in renewable energy could bring unexpected benefits. Your lucky number is 7.

Gemini



MAY 21 - JUNE 20

Your adaptability will be key in navigating the ever-changing landscape of future tech. Keep an eye out for an opportunity to learn a new programming language or digital design tool.

Cancer



JUNE 21 - JULY 22

This month, you might feel the urge to digitize your home. Smart home upgrades will not only increase your comfort but also bring your family together. Your lucky color for the month is neon green.

Leo



JULY 23 - AUGUST 22

As a fire sign, you're used to being in the spotlight. This month, you may find yourself becoming a star in the latest social media platform. Be ready for a new wave of followers.

Virgo



AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22

Your analytical skills will lead you to a breakthrough in a tech-related problem. A coding challenge or digital puzzle will keep you engaged. Your lucky days are the 8th and 16th.

Libra



SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

Balance is essential for you this month, Libra. In the age of AI, remember to maintain a balance between the digital and the real world. An unexpected cryptocurrency gain may be in your future.

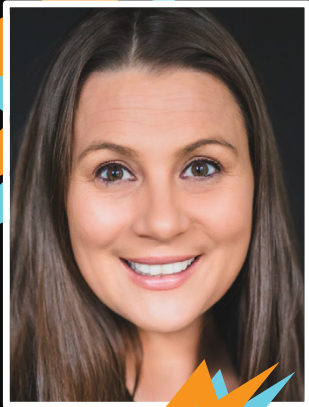
Scorpio



OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 21

Your passion may lead you to develop an innovative solution to a global problem. Harness this energy and channel it into a meaningful project, like climate change or renewable energy.

Teen and brand relationships might stay complicated



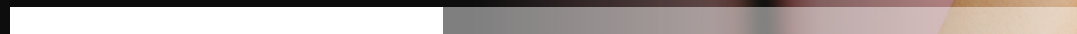
Robin Watson

Head of YouTube Creative, Global Product Solutions

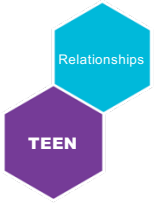
When it comes to the relationships we have with brands, one key difference generally, and generationally, is that today's teens want to have relationships at all. They want to engage with content and those that sponsor it. And many want to create content on their own. YouTube's Robin Watson watches these trends shift from her role as global head of creative for the video platform's ad products. Here's what she sees.

40%

of people describe themselves as video content creators.



(Source: Google/Ipsos, YouTube Trends Survey, conducted May 2023, among 25,892 online adults, ages 18-44 in 15 global markets.)



With fragmented identities and a fragmented media landscape it can be hard to imagine how brands will be able to connect with audiences at scale. Especially as audiences have niche interests at the overlap of the multi-circle Venn diagrams of their identities. But artificial intelligence can help here, Watson says.

“In the simplest form, you can come to YouTube, and if you don’t have an ad, we can generate an ad for you.”

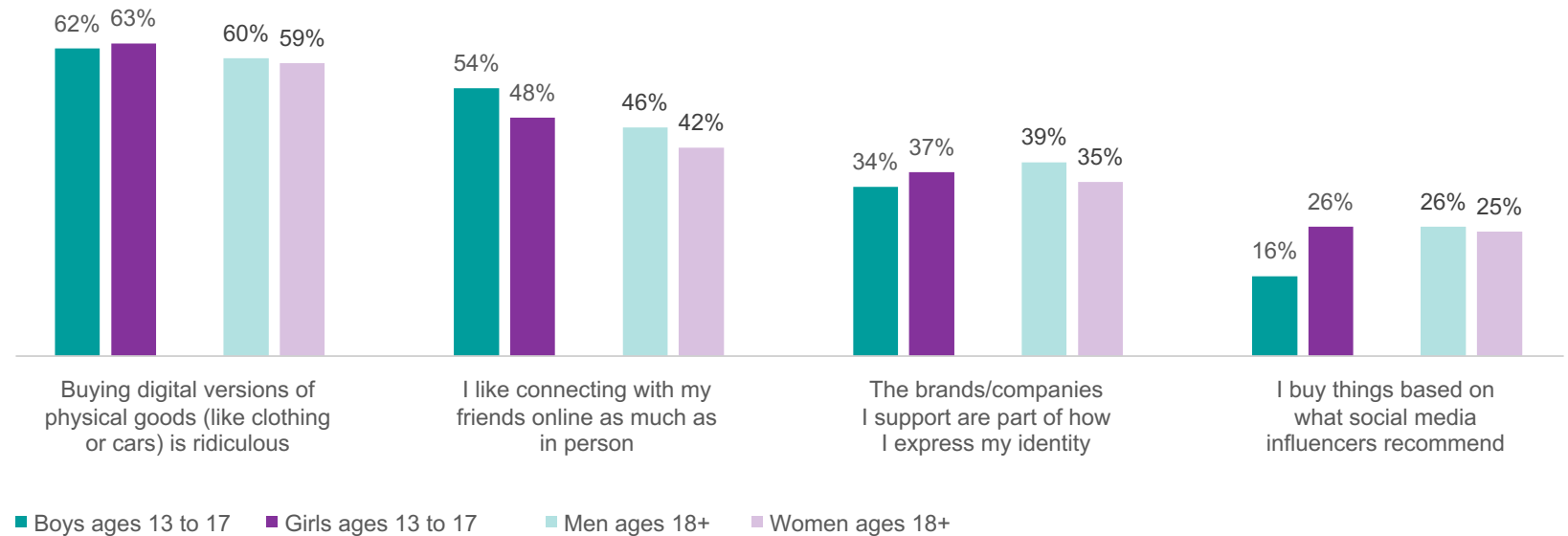
The new, rapidly developing generative AI tools will have two immediate impacts. One is allowing for customization of content for rapid deployment tailored to increasingly specific content topics.

The other is an equalizing effect. Advertisers can work with more and more small creators. It also means that smaller brands will be able to create engaging video content for their ad messages. In short, AI will allow niche to scale for creators, brands and audiences alike.

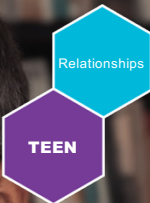
[Read the full Q&A on page 37.](#)

How gender shapes brand relationships for teens and adults

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (% Agree)



(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.):



How fragmented youth identities will shape brand strategy



Shivani Gorle

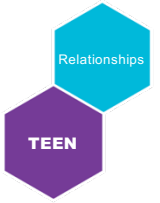
Senior manager, Audience Impact & Intelligence, Paramount Advertising

Youth relationships are changing with brands, with content, with creators, with institutions and even their own identities. Shivani Gorle studies these emerging trends and their impacts for advertiser partners at Paramount Advertising. She's thinking about how these shifts all intersect and she thinks the answer is ... intersectionality.

35%

of U.S. teens say the brands/companies they support are part of how they express their identity, similar to 37% of adults.

(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)



Gorle sees fragmented and fluid identities playing out on the creator side, as well as in the kinds of relationships teens have with creators and creators have with brands. She uses a Harry Potter metaphor to describe what she called a “playground of opportunities” for brands to expand these relationships:

“We’re seeing creator identities becoming horcruxes where they are able to break them up and corporatize each of them to serve different business needs.”

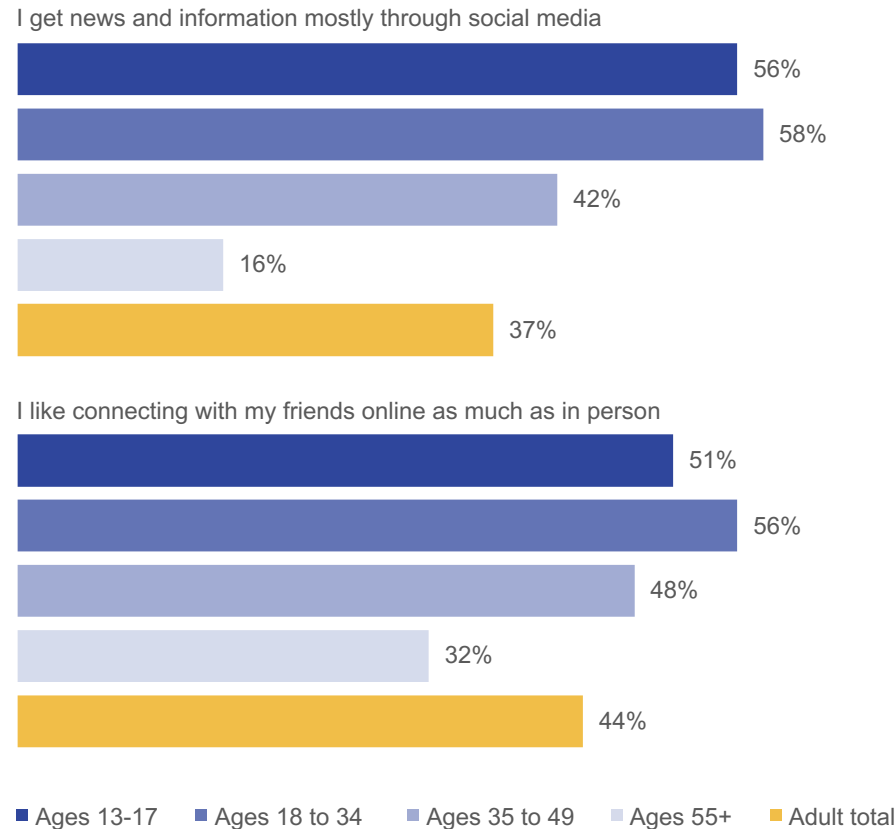
She thinks today’s youth are the “tip of the spear” and that their influence is travelling up the age brackets, influencing older generations.

One trend she sees sticking is the idea of content as a remote control for your moods. In our What the Future: Music issue we talked about the mental health benefits of listening to music. Gorle sees that benefit spilling over into all kinds of content in new, tech-enabled ways.

[Read the full Q&A on page 39.](#)

Compared to adults, teens connect more online

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. (% Agree)



(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)



How the desire for social bonds shapes teen viewership



Shifts in how young people spend their screen time are largely driven by the need for connection.

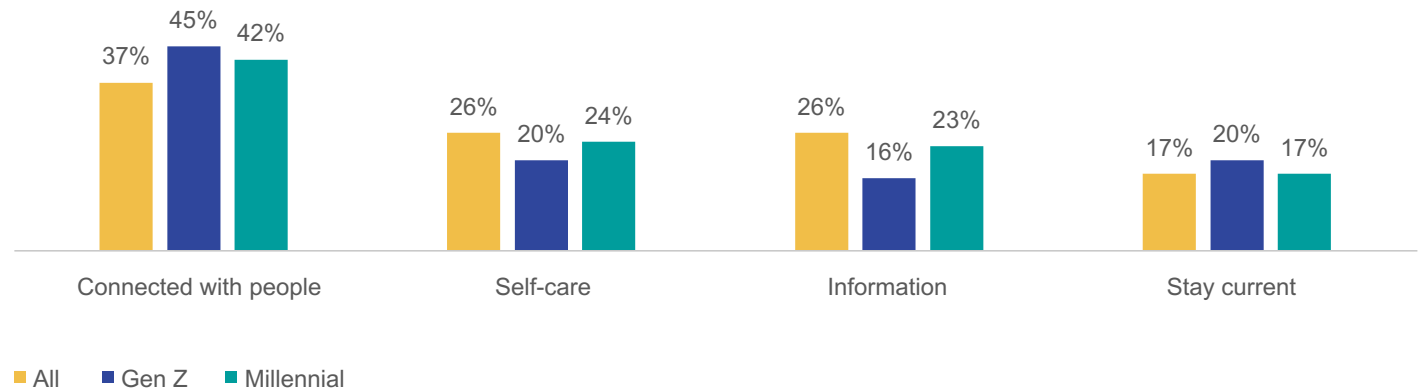
A recent Ipsos study found that half of all respondents, including Gen Zers, rank streaming TV as their favorite medium. But today’s youth are also invested in new media: When asked what they’d do with an extra hour in their day, a third of Gen Z respondents said they’d use social media or watch short-form videos. This shift is driven not only by the ease and immediacy of new platforms, but by the communities they facilitate, says Amber Jawaid, senior vice president with Ipsos’ Online Communities practice.

“Youth viewership is driven by social connections and emotional factors.”

For all businesses, this a reminder that media habits have as much to do with belonging as with technology — and that as Gen Z and younger viewers come of age, media brands will have to offer ways to connect.

Younger streaming viewers watch for connection more than older viewers

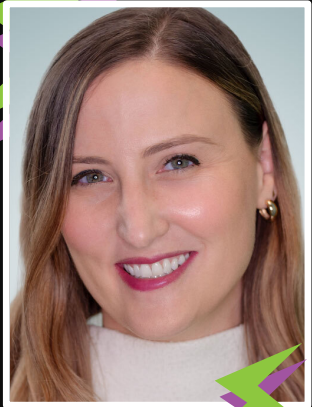
Q. Imagine you only have an extra hour each day specifically to consume media, how would you choose to spend it and why? Think about what media you would consume, would you watch with someone else, etc.



(Source: Ipsos U.S. Syndicated Community, conducted June 2023, among 701 U.S. adults, including 206 Millennials and 55 Gen Zers.)



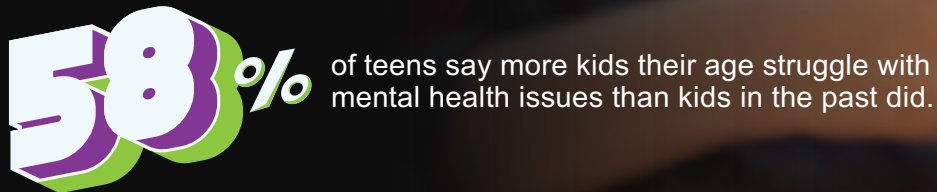
How to fill gaps in teen mental health and social media research



Barb Solish

National director in the Office of Innovation at NAMI

Young people are more stressed than ever, in part because of social media and the internet. On top of that, academic and social pressure and the fast-paced nature of modern society can lead to stress and burnout. But it's not all that simple, says Barb Solish, national director in the Office of Innovation at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). She believes more research is needed to better understand the mental load from tech on teens across demographics to find better ways to help them.



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted July 15-Aug. 1, 2022, on behalf of NAMI using the KnowledgePanel, among 1,015 U.S. teens ages 12-17 who were recruited through their parents.)



The ways that youth interact with screen time can mean many things, from texting to homework to video games. And young people are far less monolithic than they’ve traditionally been seen. Whether it’s pre-teens to older teens, boys or girls, or different ethnicities and socioeconomic status, these differences can influence how youth access technology and how it affects them, says Solish.

“All of that research needs to be parsed out and needs to be a lot more specific than we have it right now.”

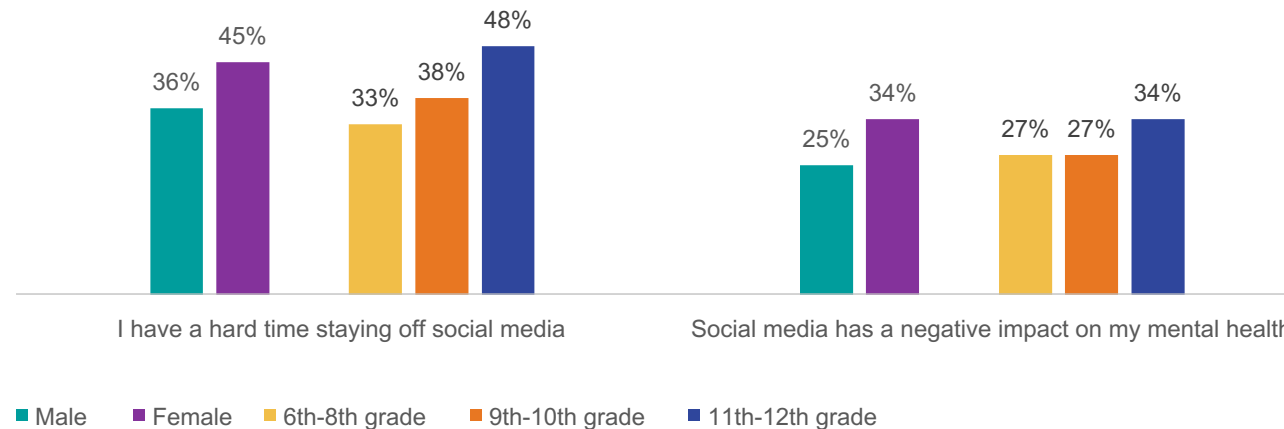
That includes the types of technology. One area that shows strong anecdotal effects is social media. But it varies. The evidence about how that affects teen mental health is “all over the map,” says Solish.

Meanwhile, some pandemic-forced social sharing helped boost people’s empathy and helped destigmatize seeking help. Now the challenge is to fix the fractured mental health system to better serve everyone when and where they need it.

[Read the full Q&A on page 41.](#)

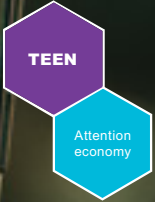
Social media affects girls and older teens most

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% Strongly or somewhat agree)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted July 15-Aug. 1, 2022, on behalf of the NAMI using the KnowledgePanel, among 1,015 U.S. teens ages 12-17 who were recruited through their parents.)

How AI will globalize the creator economy



Kaley Mullin

Youth & Trends Insights Lead, YouTube

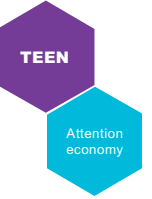
Today's youth are an increasingly diverse population in many markets. Yet even in places where traditional forms of identity like race and ethnicity are more homogenous, the intersectionality of identity and fandom opens worlds of possibilities for creators, marketers and audiences to connect. Kaley Mullin, who studies youth trends for YouTube, thinks artificial intelligence will only make that truer.



of teen girls ages 13 to 17 say they buy things based on what social media influencers recommend, compared to 21% of male peers.

(Source: Ipsos survey Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)





In the U.S., we hear a lot about the diversification of younger generations. That’s not true everywhere in the world. But what is universal is that fandom is an important part of youth identity. Creators therefore play an important role creating content for niche and mass audiences alike. Mullin sees AI opening new opportunities for these creators and fans and for the brands trying to build relationships with them. She’s especially excited about AI language translations.

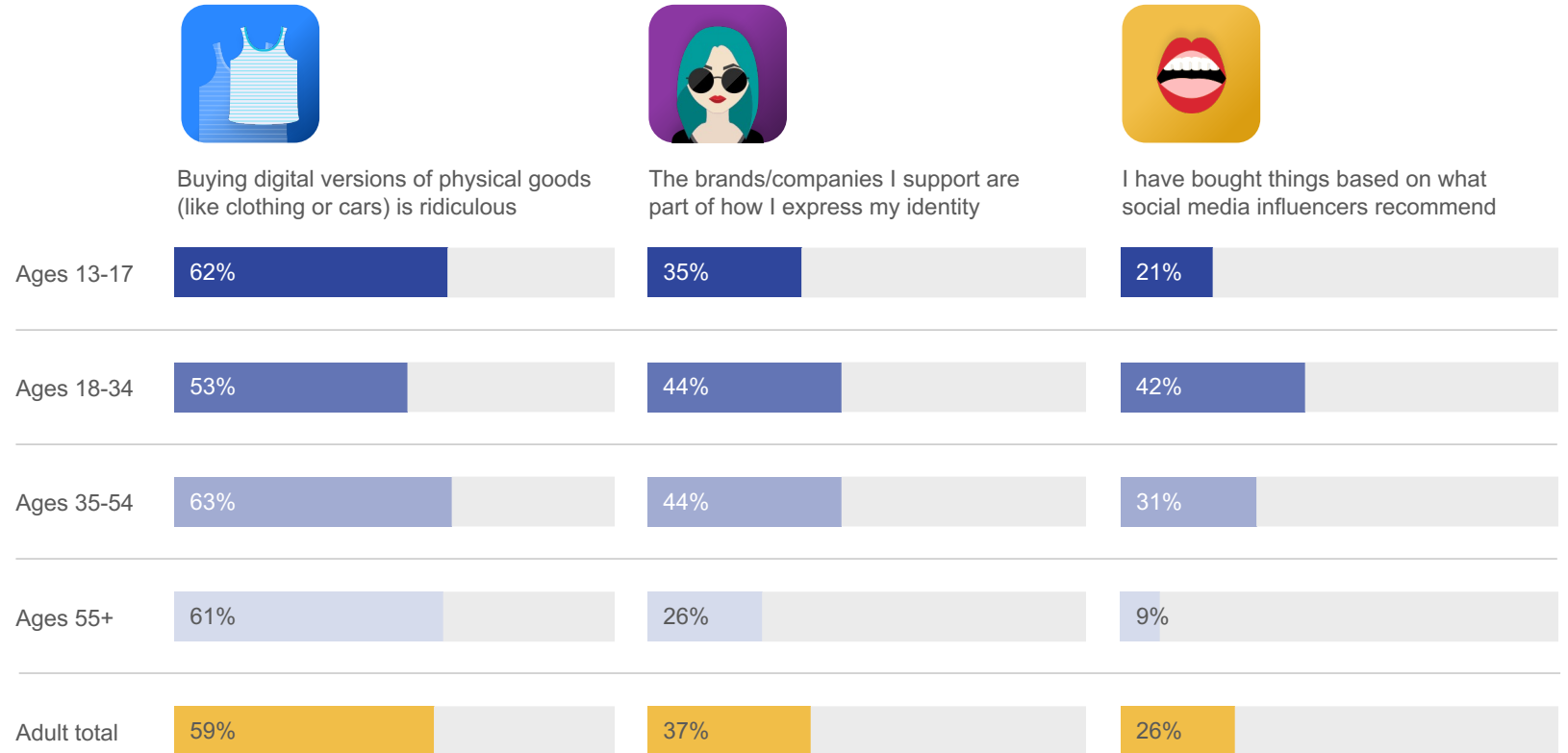
“That’s going to blow open the doors to our creators that might have a very regional audience to find an entirely new global audience for their content. That’s another way in which we’ll see Gen Z be able to lean into their niche identities.”

Being able to seamlessly create content across languages opens, well, a world of possibilities.

[Read the full Q&A on page 43.](#)

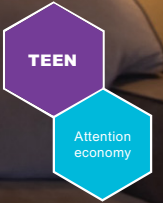
Teens are nearly on par with adults on socializing brands

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (% Agree)



(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)

Why gaming culture needs to evolve for everyone



Teens are a key market for the multibillion-dollar gaming industry — but they have a more negative view on harassment and toxic culture in gaming than older players.

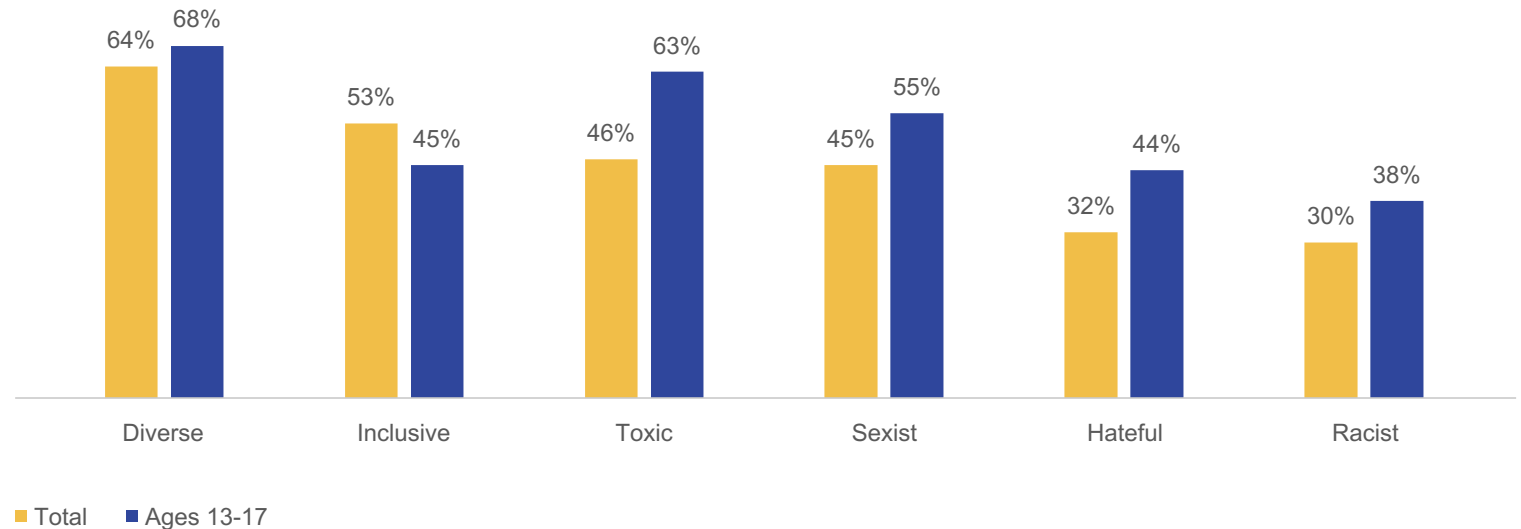
Today, gaming is immensely popular with Americans from all walks of life. Indeed, an Ipsos Generation Lab survey found that 68% of teen gamers view gaming culture as diverse. But 63% of those ages 13 to 17 also agree that it's toxic, compared with 46% of all respondents. That cohort is more likely to associate gaming culture with negative issues across the board.

Less than 10% of all gamers agree that the industry is proactive on battling these issues. If game designers fail to change this, they risk losing opportunities for growth, says Chris Hoffman, senior vice president in Ipsos' Media and Entertainment Platforms practice.

“Gaming is about community — and teen gamers hold that community to a higher standard.”

Younger players have a dimmer view on gaming culture than the general public

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Video gaming culture is ... (% Strongly agree/somewhat agree)



(Source: Ipsos Generation Lab poll conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 5, 2023, among 954 general population of people 13-34 years old, including 841 who play games for at least an hour or longer each week.)



How a new mindset is taking shape among young startups



Justin Massa

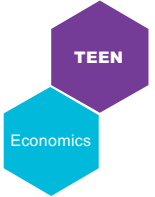
Senior vice president of Enterprise Services at Newlab

Most younger Americans would rather start their own business than work for a company, given the choice, according to Ipsos. Justin Massa was a young entrepreneur himself as founder of a highly valued and lauded startup. He has since worked with other young entrepreneurs as a mentor with TechStars Chicago and as an investor. Today, at the climate solutions incubator Newlab, he sees a key shift in the startup culture that could help solve climate change and create jobs while doing it.

51%

of adults ages 18 to 34 would rather run their own business than work for a company, when given the choice, versus 49% of all adults.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)



Two big changes are coming to the youth workforce as it comes of age. One is artificial intelligence, which Massa thinks will disrupt knowledge work, but also help entrepreneurs bring their ideas into incorporation. The other is climate change. He see young founders having a very different approach to the companies they are starting. It’s not about purpose being adjacent to the company’s mission. It’s about the purpose being the company itself, he says.

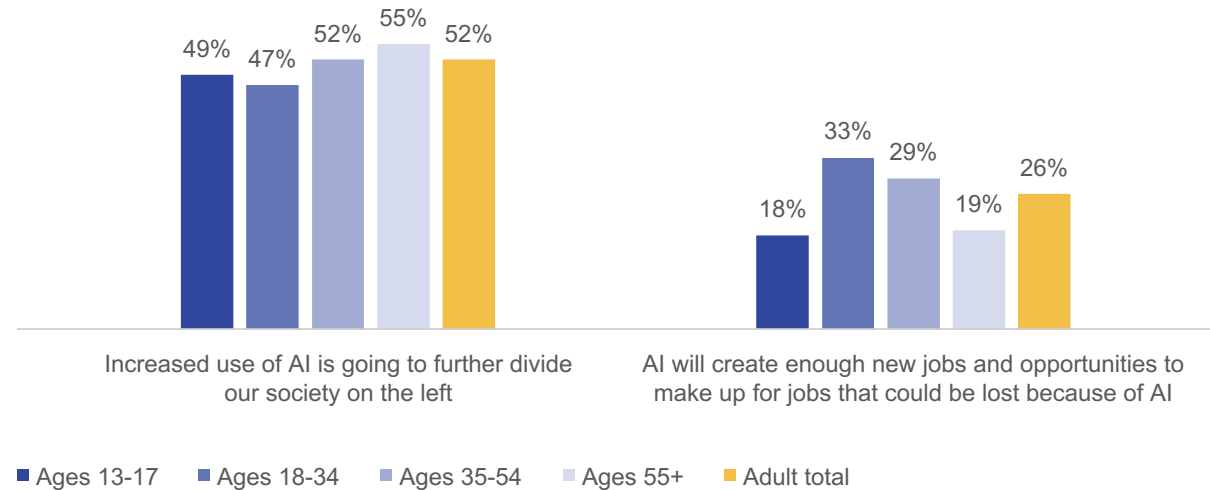
“The idea of having a company that doesn’t have larger-scale impact as a core component of its identity is very foreign.”

Massa sees that mindset as a sea change in startups moving forward. But he also sees a change on the other side of the scale. Governments and large corporations have learned how to work with startups. AI and new ways of working cooperatively yet competitively give Massa great hope that today’s and tomorrow’s youth can help move us toward solutions and create jobs in the process.

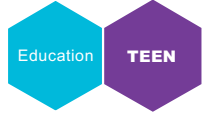
[Read the full Q&A on page 45.](#)

Youth and adults agree that AI will divide society but differ on job impacts

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (% Total)



(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)



What changing attitudes on college mean for the workforce

With tuition at new highs, many teens are looking at alternatives to college. Businesses may need to prepare for new approaches to hiring and training.

Most young people agree that “a college education is important to achieving success,” according to an Ipsos Club Z community survey. But they certainly see the price tag on that success: Nearly half said they feel stressed about graduating with debt, and only 12% expect their loans to be canceled or forgiven.

Another Ipsos study found that about one in five students considered pursuing career training, trade school, or an apprenticeship before enrolling in a two- or four-year college. If more teens opt out of higher ed, businesses will face a change to their talent pipeline, says Jennifer Torgersen, a senior director with Ipsos’ Online Communities team.

“Businesses will need to rethink how they weigh skills, credentials and training in their hiring.”

How youth feel about the costs and advantages of college

Q. Can you please share a little bit about why this your current plan? What factors could impact this plan?

“A four-year college education is a waste of time and money. I can focus on what I want to learn and then go into the workforce sooner.”

“I will need to go to a state college due to very high costs of private college. I need to keep my grades up so that I can go to the school I want.”

“I want to go to the local community college for nursing. It will be less expensive.”

(Source: Ipsos Club Z Online Syndicated Community verbatims, October 2023)



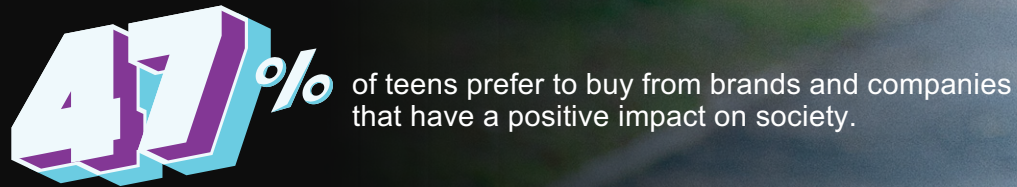
How teens are taking charge to improve their gloomy futures



Eva Lighthiser

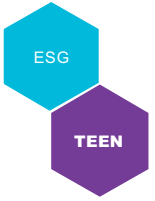
Plaintiff, Held v. State of Montana

In August 2023, a group of young Montanans won a landmark lawsuit against their home state for violating their rights to a clean and healthful environment under the state constitution. Eva Lighthiser, 17, from Livingston, Montana, is one of the teen plaintiffs in the Held v. Montana case. While she counts activist Greta Thunberg and Dr. Steve Running, an expert witness in the Montana lawsuit, as her climate heroes, she also could be seen as one for tomorrow's youth.



(Source: Ipsos KnowledgePanel survey conducted Oct. 11-22, 2023, among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)





Youth today feel like their futures are clouded by climate change. About six in ten teens surveyed by Ipsos expect the effect of climate change to get worse in the coming five years. Just 9% think climate effects will get better. Some are trying to change that through their shopping choices, while others are taking it to court.

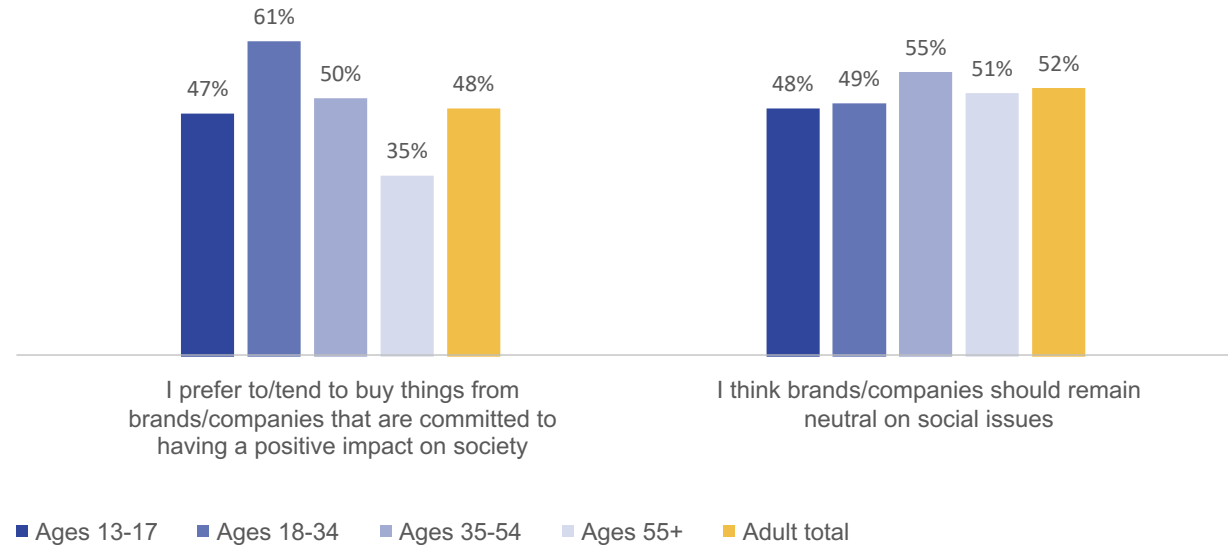
Since 1986, more than 1,600 climate change lawsuits [have been filed](#) in the U.S, according to the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. Of them, 16 involve youth plaintiffs. In their victory, Lighthiser hopes she and her co-plaintiffs set a precedent and found new power for citizens to hold governments accountable for pollution.

“It makes me really hope that this case can set a precedent for all 50 states and even proceedings in different countries. And it reminds me that there’s progress happening and that we’re moving forward.”

[Read the full Q&A on page 47.](#)

Teens are already making choices about brands on social issues

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (% Total)



(Sources: Ipsos surveys conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults; and Oct. 11-22, 2023, on the Ipsos KnowledgePanel among 358 U.S. teens ages 13-17.)

Five tensions that will drive change:

1. Brand connection or commodity?

Today, adults are somewhat split on whether it’s important to have relationships with the brands they buy. But in Ipsos’ Club Z online community, teens were 70% / 30% in favor of needing those connections. While many believe that brands should remain neutral on social issues, taking part in conversations authentically can earn trust. Paramount’s Shivani Gorle thinks brands default to a risk-adverse position, but don’t think enough about the positives. “We often just default to assuming that something might have a negative response,” she says. “But as brand, you want to be ready for both. You need a response plan in place that involves you being appreciated as a brand ally.” Will today’s polarization lead this tension to shift?

Most people want to feel connection to brands they buy

It’s important to me to feel like I can trust the brands and companies I buy from

56%

44%

I don’t need to feel a connection to a brand or company to buy their products

Q. For each of the pairs of statements, please select the statement that comes closest to your view, even if neither statement is exactly right. (% Total)

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Five tensions that will drive change:

2. Social media influence or not?

Today, most people don't look to social media for recommendations, and other Ipsos data shows that people trust their friends and families most rather than influencers. But could that shift in the future as people discover more tailored content that addresses the intersections of their identities and their interests? Both YouTube's Kaley Mullin and Robin Watson think artificial intelligence can lead to new opportunities for stronger relationships with creators, customers and brands. And not just the big, global brands or influencers. Brands have a "unique opportunity of not just going with the big guys, but also the small guys," says Watson. "There are significantly more smaller creators who are doing creative things, who have very passionate fan bases that we as marketers should think about engaging much broader beyond just who's going to give you massive scale."

Few rely on social media recommendations for shopping

It's important to me to feel like I can trust product recommendations from people I follow on social media

31%

69%

I don't look to people on social media for recommendations on which products I should buy

Q. For each of the pairs of statements, please select the statement that comes closest to your view, even if neither statement is exactly right. (% Total)

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Five tensions that will drive change:

3. Better years in the past or future?

Most adults feel the nation’s best years are in the past. Teens are more pessimistic than optimistic about their futures, and more pessimistic than the adults (see pg. 6). But that isn’t stopping all teens from trying to make a difference. When it comes to climate change, that can take the form of more conscious consumer behaviors or starting a climate business. Or even going to court. Eva Lighthiser, a plaintiff in a landmark court case in Montana, hopes people are up for the challenges ahead of us. But she also thinks government has a role to play in shaping a better climate future. “I wish that [government officials] understood on a deeper level just how much impact it has on people,” she says. “Because our futures aren’t necessarily their futures.” If we move to a better future, we can move this tension.

More people are pessimistic about America’s future

America’s best years are still ahead of us

41%

59%

America’s best years might already be behind us

Q. For each of the pairs of statements, please select the statement that comes closest to your view, even if neither statement is exactly right. (% Total)

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Five tensions that will drive change:

4. Physical or mental health matters more?

The pandemic likely intensified mental health challenges like anxiety and depression in today's youth. But it also accelerated acceptance of mental health in the public dialog. NAMI's Barb Solish sees progress on that front. "An enormous amount of the decrease in mental health stigma comes a lot from people sharing their stories online," she says. One might hope that this tension would stay where it is, but there's always a potential future where there's a backlash of some sort and it shifts back toward less acceptance. What would that future look like?

People overwhelmingly say mental health is as important as physical health

Mental health is as important as physical health

85%

15%

Physical health is more important than mental health

Q. For each of the pairs of statements, please select the statement that comes closest to your view, even if neither statement is exactly right. (% Total)

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Five tensions that will drive change:

5. Climate health or economic health?

One of the knocks against trying to address climate change is that it will cost jobs either in the short term or long term. But today, most feel like responding to climate change will create more jobs than it will take. You hear echoes of this debate when it comes to artificial intelligence or any new technology. Newlab’s Justin Massa is bullish, too. He sees the jobs being created first-hand. “Yes, there are going to be jobs that are affected,” he says. “There will be moments in which the balance gets uneven, but I would be willing to bet that if we fast-forward, we’ll see a net increase in the number of jobs as we go through this transition.” Those moments of imbalance are exactly the kind of points, however, in which tensions can quickly shift.

Most people agree climate change efforts will create jobs

Responding to climate change will create jobs in our economy

67%

33%

Responding to climate change will cost our economy jobs

Q. For each of the pairs of statements, please select the statement that comes closest to your view, even if neither statement is exactly right. (% Total)

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Plausible port one:

The America teens inherit is cause for pessimism

Imagine it's 2033. Today's teens are now in their 20s. They have come of age in a world much like the one they expected to see. They struggle to afford homes and education. Economic inequality has worsened. The politics of polarization have paralyzed decision-making. Brands, institutions, platforms, creators and audiences struggle to fit in and build the relationships they need to solve any of these problems. It's not a great world and everyone knows it.

In foresight there is often a scenario where you assume nothing changes. It's called the baseline scenario, and it is often considered more neutral than a "things get better" or "things get worse" set-up. But in the context of the future that today's teens will inherit as they emerge into adulthood, the baseline seems pretty bad.

The political and meteorological climates continue to deteriorate. Meanwhile, fragmentation, intersectionality and hybridization continue as the dominant themes for today's teens as they age. They can express and define their identity as they move fluidly between smaller and smaller niches. Artificial intelligence helps creators and brands make targeted content for smaller and smaller bullseyes.

As the world gets scary, and our collective future seems dark, we focus more and more on ourselves. We consume content that was quite literally made just for us as individuals.

But that comes as a cost. The more we focus on ourselves and the small but passionate community at the center of our personal interest Venn diagrams, the less we can come together to solve the problems robbing us of our hope in the first place.

Waypoints

Now imagine how the future could get brighter.

Today's teens and younger Americans aren't optimistic about their futures, nor our future as a nation. And when it comes to the tension between whether the nation's best days lie ahead or behind us, there is no difference by age. We're all pessimistic.

What would it take to make today's teens more hopeful about their future and the future? How do we improve their outlook on everything from job opportunities to political stability, which only 8% of teens think will improve in the next five years? One way: make the future better. Keep reading for what that world could look like.



Plausible port two:

The best is yet to come

Now imagine it's 2033 but more Americans feel that the best years of our nation is on the horizon and not behind us. How did we get there? In the past, it took massive unpleasant shocks, like a world war, to the system to get us to come together. But the pandemic failed to do that. If anything, it drove us further apart, so something more subtle happened. The Boomers and Silent Generation retired.

If you read between the lines in the darker plausible port one, there was plenty of hope embedded. But in the 2020s, two major things happened. The long-awaited generational wealth transfer happened. Some of that money went right into the pockets of other generations. But it's unevenly distributed. However, estate taxes helped fill government budget gaps, leading to more programs being funded. Equality gradually got better.

Second, younger generations moved up the corporate ladder, found the means to start their own businesses and focused on problem-solving, together and through cooperative competition where organizations worked together toward a larger community goal while competing for the best commercial solution to get to that goal.

The retirement happened in politics, too. A literal new generation of leadership emerged after the 2024 all-octogenarian election took us to peak Silent Generation.

The younger generations then took power and got to work. It's a more diverse generation. And there was a persistent education and skills gap between the more-driven women, and the less-driven men in many cases. Therefore, government began to take on a different look and progress was made.

Future Jobs to Be Done



Ipsos spins the traditional “Jobs to Be Done” framework forward with *future Jobs to Be Done (fJTBD)*. This builds on the theory that people buy products and services to fulfill certain needs or accomplish specific tasks. For example, we don’t buy a smartphone; we hire it to stay connected with our friends, family, and the world. We don’t buy tuition; we hire it to unlock opportunities for personal and professional growth.

To bring it into the future, we envision powerful and plausible scenarios through strategic foresight. While many needs are enduring and do not change over time, the context of that job will change along with the potential solutions and alternatives. These scenarios help us define the circumstances in which people may find themselves, like considering whether to pursue a full-time corporate job with traditional benefits or spearhead a personalized career path that provides more flexibility. We use fJTBD to tie these scenarios to actions that organizations can take to help people meet future needs.

While it’s typical in foresight to create fJTBD clusters, we’re sharing one scenario here as an example.



Charlotte Morris is an engagement manager at Ipsos Strategy3.

Help me build meaningful connections and drive change for future generations

In a world where many young adults feel lonely and anxious about the future, there is an opportunity to support them in reshaping the social, political and economic systems that no longer serve us.

Potential fJTBD:

- Help me cultivate real relationships and feel a sense of community, strengthening social ties and minimizing social pressures
- Provide me with resources I need to take care of my physical, emotional, and financial health
- Help me align my personal values with my career
- Help me contribute to a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable world so that the next generation inherits a better future

Imagine a world where ... social media platforms invest equal amounts in their digital channels as they do on in-person activations.

Future optimism gaps

When it comes to the future of teens, we see a continuation of a pattern we've observed repeatedly in What the Future. We largely agree on the future we want and expect that future will happen.

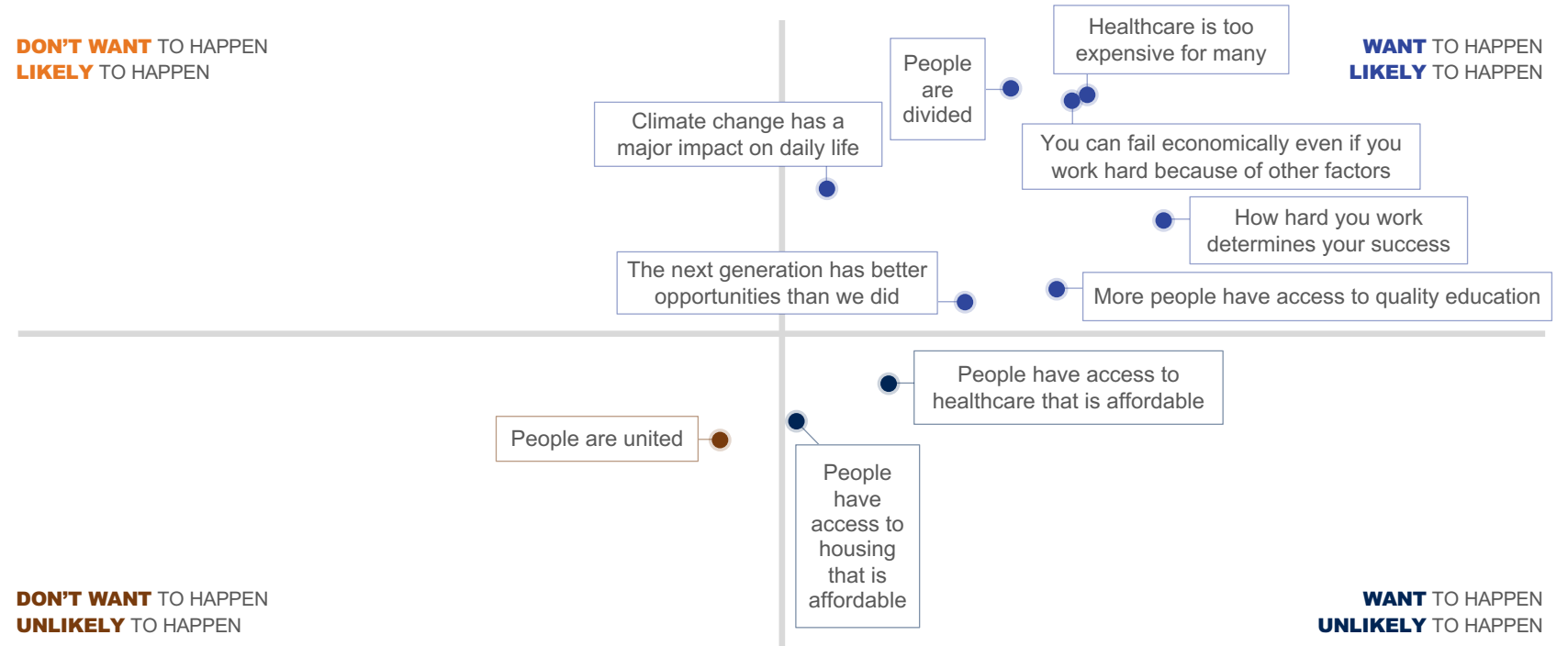
But there are gaps. We want, but don't expect, access to affordable housing, healthcare and quality education. For housing, 51% of us want it but only 36% of us think it will happen.

These gaps likely contribute to the muted optimism we have for the next generation to have better opportunities than we did. And to the muted optimism teens have for their own futures.

Brands and policymakers have an opportunity to win loyal stakeholders as youth enter and try to contribute to society by finding ways to support these fundamental needs.

Most of the things we want to happen we think are likely to happen

Q Thinking about each of the following future scenarios, do you want them to happen, or not? (% Yes) / How likely, if at all, are they to actually happen? (% Likely)



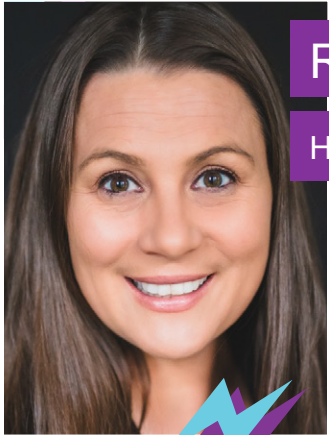
(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Oct. 16-17, 2023, among 1,113 U.S. adults.)

Appendix

In this section,
we show our work
and our workers

1. Full Q&As
2. Signals
3. Contributors

Teen and brand relationships might stay complicated



Robin Watson

Head of YouTube Creative, Global Product Solutions

When it comes to the relationships we have with brands, one key difference generally and generationally is that today's teens want to have relationships at all. They want to engage with content and those that sponsor it. And many want to create content on their own. YouTube's Robin Watson watches these trends shift from her role as global head of creative for the video platform's ad products. Here's what she sees.

Matt Carmichael: Younger generations are forecast to continue getting more diverse. How are sponsors adjusting?

Robin Watson: From a brand and marketer perspective, you're starting to see them take action. Just as the viewers and the audience are super diverse within our platform, you're starting to see marketers in the way that they're talking, in the way that they're casting, in the way they're creating narratives. When I say casting, it's not just in who they're casting, but the roles that those individuals are playing within their own ads. That's really tailoring to a more personalized experience for the viewers who are absolutely expecting representation of themselves and of their friends in the ads. It's more important as the diversity of voices and the diversity of content increases.

Carmichael: How is generative artificial intelligence going to play into helping brands reach both mass audiences on platforms like YouTube broadly, but also the niche communities within that?

Watson: It's a differentiator for us that's both a unique opportunity and challenge. In the simplest form, you can come to YouTube and if you don't have an ad, we can generate an ad for you. We'll make sure that you're speaking to somebody in a horizontal manner on the Watch page, but we have Shorts, which is a vertical environment or a feed environment. We have AI that now takes ads and automatically reframes them in a different orientation.

Carmichael: As people create and share content about brands, how does that evolve the creator/ brand relationship, and will that change as they age?

Watson: I absolutely believe that they will carry this forward. It's a unique opportunity for brands because this is a cohort that wants to engage, and they will engage with your content, and they will remix it or share it in a group chat or send it to their friends or talk about it with their family in a way that you don't have to be at the water cooler anymore. It takes on a life of its own.

Carmichael: AI tools will open all kinds of creativity on limited budgets. How will that affect relationships between creators and brands?

Watson: Particularly with youth, what we're hearing is that they're okay with creators using generative AI. AI can help supercharge creativity for big marketers who have a ton of resources. For small creators who never really had the resources to entertain or delight in the same way with sight, sound and motion in a video ad, this is a great equalizer. And there are significantly more smaller creators who have very passionate fan bases that we as marketers should think about engaging much more broadly beyond just the big guys who are going to give massive scale.

Carmichael: How are the expectations of a younger audience different?

Watson: There are stark differences with older generations. One is that they're more willing to engage with ads. From a marketing perspective, it's okay for you to say that you're an ad. Bringing your brand to the table and being clear about who you are and what you stand for is helpful in engaging younger consumers. Very simply stated, they want to know who you are. They want to know what you're about. They want you to delight them very quickly and they want you to

be relevant in the moment. That's a different tone than we've seen with the older generations who have grown up on broadcast where you're pushed an ad and it's not always relevant to you.

Carmichael: What global trends are the same and which vary across regions and markets?

Watson: There are more commonalities globally across markets and regions. Some of the elements are dialed up or dialed down depending on the market. You have to be creative. You have to show up in a way that customers want to talk to you and engage with you. That's universal. In some of the Asian markets, it's the information and the relevancy that is more important and critical than the beauty of the ad. In the U.S. and U.K., they want relevancy that's still a No. 1 driver of performance, understanding and engagement with the brand. But they want beautiful, streamlined, modern experiences.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future magazine and head of the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab.

“There are more commonalities globally across markets and regions... You have to be creative. You have to show up in a way that they want to talk to you and engage with you.”

How fragmented youth identities will shape brand strategy



Shivani Gorle

Senior manager, Audience Impact & Intelligence, Paramount Advertising

Youth relationships are changing with brands, with content, with creators, with institutions and even their own identities. Shivani Gorle studies these emerging trends and their impacts for advertiser partners at Paramount Advertising. She's thinking about how these shifts all intersect and she thinks the answer is ... intersectionality.

Matt Carmichael: How are teen viewing habits changing?

Shivani Gorle: They have faster processing speeds. That goes against the myths about their attention span. There's also the perception that there's just too much content out there for them to consume and that they don't know where to begin. But very few of them actually feel overwhelmed by the content that is out there. Younger adults are the most likely to feel like they don't have *enough* content to stream. On social, you see that manifest a little differently. Have you heard of sludge content?

Carmichael: Um, no...

Gorle: It's mainly happening on TikTok. Essentially it is one vertical video format cut up into different videos all playing at the same time. Like a clip of a TV show or a movie that's placed directly next to something that is low substance and high interest. Like someone playing

Subway Surfer or an ASMR video of someone chopping up soap, to be able to watch all three things at once. I'm not sure what that says about their attention span, but it does signal to me that they aren't as overwhelmed by the content that is out there as we think them to be. It makes sense in our age of complete context collapse. You just lean into it and embrace it. They're like, "Yeah, screw it. Let's just watch everything all at once."

Carmichael: What does that look like for the future of content?

Gorle: Teens have a malleable perception of truth and reality. Nothing is fake and nothing is real. It's all kind of one and the same. The movies and TV shows that they are gravitating towards also reflect that fluid sense of time and reality. That's the driver for the rise of multiverse storytelling, a device that has been prevalent in comic book genres. But then we saw that permeate the ordinary storytelling space with "Everything Everywhere, all at Once."

Carmichael: How are producers and advertisers adjusting to the increasing diversity of youth?

Gorle: In partnership with Ipsos, we interviewed professionals about how they think identity is represented in advertising. Young people are seeing identity as increasingly complex and intersectional. But intersectionality isn't on advertisers' radar like it should be. We heard from this younger person [who defined intersectionality as] a "kaleidoscopic view of the human experience."

Carmichael: How can advertisers adjust to that?

Gorle: Marketers are looking for ways to solve for and navigate in the gray. For consumers, the expectation for portraying nuanced and intersectional identities in advertising is light years ahead. That will be the next big shift to think about a diverse generation. I feel like Gen Z is more fluid than static. We all know the problem of culture being fragmented, but the more we come to terms with that then that kaleidoscopic form might make it easier for advertisers, too.

Carmichael: How are teens using content differently?

Gorle: They see several ways into the same piece of content, especially when they are streaming. Depending on who you are as a person, you might look for connection within it or for community or comfort within it. Content can be a mood management tool, right? There's a Reddit about fans being able to point to hyper-specific scenes from "Survivor" that make them feel a certain way. It's like a remote control for mood management.

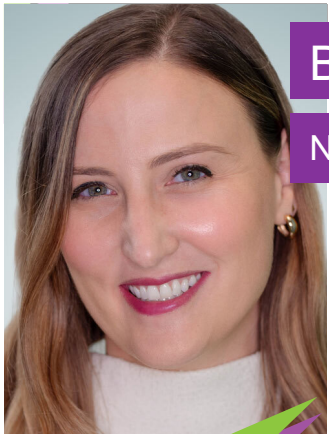
Carmichael: How is all this changing teen's relationships with the institutions around them?

Gorle: They explore the cynicism of existing systemic challenges and structures in place, whether that is questioning what the American Dream is or what capitalism is. This tells us that they want to unlock access to something that feels exclusive or unattainable otherwise.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future and head of the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab.

“Young people are seeing identity as increasingly complex and intersectional. But intersectionality isn't on advertisers' radar like it should be.”

How to fill gaps in teen mental health and social media research



Barb Solish

National director in the Office of Innovation at NAMI

Young people are more stressed than ever, in part because of social media and the internet. On top of that, academic and social pressure and the fast-paced nature of modern society can lead to stress and burnout. But it's not all that simple, says Barb Solish, national director in the Office of Innovation at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). She believes more research is needed to better understand the mental load from tech on teens across demographics to find better ways to help them.

Kate MacArthur: Thinking of teens' health and technology, what future question do you wish you knew the answer to today?

Barb Solish: We need to be thinking about the different ways that adolescents are interacting with technology. Is that screen time? What does that mean? Is that video games, social media apps? Which apps are we talking about? Are we talking about teenage girls, teenage boys? What age groups are we talking? Gender identities, ethnicities, socioeconomic status? All that research needs to be parsed out and needs to be a lot more specific than we have it right now.

MacArthur: Is there a particular concern regarding technology's impact on teens' future lives?

Solish: I would focus on the effects of social media. It's different than text messaging, different than video games. And we have some good evidence that there is an impact of social media and different apps on teen mental health.

MacArthur: How is social media changing the relationships that teens have with other people?

Solish: Some anecdotal evidence and other data show that things like messaging features of an app are a really great way to create community and to talk to your friends in a pretty safe way. But posting and filtering and making sure you have the perfect image and then worrying about how people are reacting to it is a different effect.

MacArthur: How worried should we be about youth addiction to technology?

Solish: We used to have studies that say a little bit of social media is fine and good for community. But the more hours you spend, there's diminishing returns. But there's conflicting evidence now. It's just not clear and I wish I had a better answer for that. Some people view it as like sugar or salt, like having a little is fine, but having a lot is potentially harmful for your health. But that hasn't borne out in the data now.

MacArthur: One of the societal changes we're seeing is destigmatizing therapy and medication. Is that due to social sharing or something else?

Solish: It depends. An enormous amount of the decrease in mental health stigma comes a lot from people sharing their stories online. During COVID-19 lockdowns especially, people were isolated, and they were sharing their struggles and it made it a lot less scary to feel like you are not alone. That's a huge positive. Maybe you're living in a community that doesn't recognize a mental illness as [being as] important as a physical illness or even existing. But you're seeing other people who may come from your background being open about it. And that leads to ultimately help-seeking behavior, which is what we want in the end.

MacArthur: What does that change going forward?

Solish: Even seeing it in lawmakers, both sides of the aisle are introducing bills trying to change how we even respond to crisis. The passage of the 988 [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline] bill is monumental to mental health crisis response. Instead of getting a police response, now they can respond with a mental health response. Some say one in five people experience mental health condition worldwide, but five in five people are affected. You either have a mental health condition, or someone you love does. That personal impact is creating change, too.

MacArthur: Is that equally distributed between teens and adults?

Solish: We did a survey with Ipsos, the Teens survey. There was a lot of support and positivity around mental health conversations and mental health policies. For example, schools offering mental health days as excused absences and having mental health education in classrooms. Those two are really big in terms of support for those among teens.

MacArthur: Is there anything that we haven't talked about that is important for teens for the future?

Solish: We didn't talk a lot about filters and slimming apps and things like that. They have been normalized and there's also more pushback against them. And I am seeing at least some drive for authenticity. But there's even more of that rawness that young people are striving for. But influencers and influencer culture are still using those filters. I go back to [parent and caregiver and teacher education](#) of asking the question: What do you think is real? What do you think of the filters? It might get at the core of what a young person might think about it. And it may question how they view a filter as something real or not, and how taking that extra therapeutic look at what that might mean for them.

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future.

“We used to have studies that say a little bit of social media is fine and good for community. But the more hours you spend, there's diminishing returns. But there's conflicting evidence now. It's just not clear and I wish I had a better answer for that.”

How AI will globalize the creator economy



Kaley Mullin

Youth & Trends Insights lead, YouTube

Today's youth are an increasingly diverse population in many markets. Yet even in places where traditional forms of identity like race and ethnicity are more homogenous, the intersectionality of identity and fandom opens worlds of possibilities for creators, marketers and audiences to connect. Kaley Mullin, who studies youth trends for YouTube, thinks artificial intelligence will only make that truer.

Matt Carmichael: How are you approaching the increased diversity of today's youth?

Kaley Mullin: We are taking a market-by-market approach to it because there is fluctuation in diversity. The U.S., India and Brazil are more heterogeneous. In the U.S., we're seeing young people play with their gender and sexual orientation a lot more broadly. In places like the UK and Japan, it's more racially homogenous. When we talk about youth generally, we don't want to paint with too broad of a brush diversity-wise or demographically.

Carmichael: What trends are showing regional differences?

Mullin: Something that is regional is the idea of considering yourself a video content creator. We see big regional variances in that. In India, almost half of Gen Z consider themselves to be a video content creator, but in Japan, it's only 16%. But when we ask, "Have you posted video content," almost all of Gen Z has across markets. We talk about lowering the bars to creation.

We don't need everyone to identify as a content creator, but we want that to be a potential thing if they want to express themselves in that way.

Carmichael: What are some commonalities?

Mullin: We are seeing across markets that teens today have a more expanded view and articulation of the way that they think about their identities. They are a lot more intersectional. We are witnessing this shift where it's not just about demographics, but also what they're interested in, what they're a fan of, what content that they consume. That identification with different parts of their interests versus their demographics is something that's going to continue.

Carmichael: So, a new definition of fandom?

Mullin: One thing that's more universal is that they consider themselves to be super fans of someone. We see that relatively consistently across markets and that's related to their identities.



Carmichael: How will the expression of fandom of teens change long-term?

Mullin: What I love about teens is that they can fall so passionately into fandoms and evangelize it constantly and cry about One Direction and really truly feel that immense joy and passion of loving something. The intensity of that might dampen or shift a little bit as you get older. Once you have a relationship with a creator or a public figure, even as you grow, that relationship grows with you. We often talk to 25-year-olds that say, "I've followed the same creator since I was 15 and I started watching them when I was getting bullied at school and was sitting in the bathroom eating lunch, and now they're having babies. And I love to watch their content still."

Carmichael: How is being a creator changing?

Mullin: Millennials were the first generation that said, "I want to be a YouTuber." That was seen as a bit pejorative by older generations, or risky and scary or not understood. Young people now might be more likely to say they want to be a content creator since creators tend to be more multi-platform. But even though they do tend to be multi-platform, making it on YouTube and building a community on YouTube is still the gold standard.

Carmichael: How do you see generative AI shaping this landscape going forward?

Mullin: It's going to make it easier to be creative and accessible. For instance, we have a feature that auto-dubs your voice-over into any different language. That's going to blow open the doors to our creators that might have a very regional audience to find an entirely new global audience for their content. That's another way in which we'll see Gen Z be able to lean into their niche identities.

Carmichael: How do brands fit into this future authentically with all these niche identities to reach?

Mullin: We see our role as facilitating viewers' relationships with creators and helping them find the content in creator communities that they're going to be interested in. We also see our role as validating what they're into and what they're doing. We know that viewers, especially young viewers, tend to trust brands and ads more when they're being promoted by a creator that they know, and that promotion feels more genuine and more authentic to their experience.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future magazine and head of the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab.

“Once you have a relationship with a creator or a public figure, even as you grow, that relationship grows with you.”

How a new mindset is taking shape among young startups



Justin Massa

Senior vice president of Enterprise Services at Newlab

Most younger Americans would rather start their own business than work for a company, given the choice, according to Ipsos. Justin Massa was a young entrepreneur himself as founder of a highly valued and lauded startup. He has since worked with other young entrepreneurs as a mentor with TechStars Chicago and as an investor. Today, at the climate solutions incubator Newlab, he sees a key shift in the startup culture that could help solve climate change and create jobs while doing it.

Matt Carmichael: What's it like working with young entrepreneurs today?

Justin Massa: Kids just out of college seem to understand what they want to do with their lives radically differently than we did at that same age. There has been a notable paradigm and mindset shift about how young entrepreneurs talk about what they're doing.

Carmichael: How so?

Massa: When I was first becoming an entrepreneur, you would hear talk about "I want to do well, and I want to do good." Then there was the effective altruism movement: "I want to make a lot of money and then use that to do good in the world." My hunch is that there's been an evolution of that sentiment of what it means to have a double bottom line. The thing I'm observing is it's gone from "I'll make a lot of money and then I'll donate it" to "the thing that makes me money must also be good for the world in and of itself."

Carmichael: What does that look like in practice?

Massa: The mission and business model have grown closer and closer together until — in the entrepreneurs I'm now meeting — those two things are completely enmeshed into one another. The idea of having a company that doesn't have larger scale impact as a core component of its identity is very foreign. When I had my own company (Food Genius) we donated food, did food volunteerism, but if you weren't an employee, you probably had no idea about any of that. It was adjacent to the business. It wasn't the core of what we did.

Carmichael: Do you think all this can translate into other sectors and other forms of entrepreneurship?

Massa: I don't see why it couldn't. Well, I won't say that. This vibe in fintech might be very hard.



Carmichael: What has changed since you were running a startup?

Massa: Fifteen years ago, doing entrepreneurial things with big companies was like you were the animals at the innovation zoo: “Oh, look at these neat animals. Maybe I’m going to feed one, but I’ll never take one home.” I had a meeting with a big, public-company C-suite. In hindsight, what was I thinking? Nothing was ever going to come of that. They had no clue what they were doing. We were just a dog and pony show. If I fast-forward to today, the level of sophistication of how large corporations, and especially governments, have figured out how to work with early-stage companies is a sea change. Not everybody, but some.

Carmichael: You work with climate-related startups. How are they feeling about the task at hand? Do they want to move fast and break things?

Massa: I’ve observed not just the willingness, but an eagerness and a desire on the part of forward-thinking government agencies, civic partners, mayoral administrations and corporations to lean into this and really dedicate to it. I don’t hear people say “move fast and break things” very much. The pragmatism of that still lives, which is that I’m going to push forward. But the pragmatism now manifests and the phrase that I hear us say a lot is, “We don’t have time for moonshots. We need to just get to work.”

Carmichael: How does the double bottom line work?

Massa: I thought there would be this double bottom line, but that I would still see the same business behaviors that I’ve seen in so many other industries across my career. But I’m observing a different business ethos in climate change. I have to believe it’s informed by the severity of the problem. But it’s also informed by a different generation of entrepreneurs with different priorities working in different ways, pushing industry to work differently.

Carmichael: There’s a trope that if we try and fix climate change, everybody’s going to lose their job. As someone on the inside, how do you counter that?

Massa: One of the key performance indicators we track here at Newlab is, how many jobs have we created? We’re in 90,000 square feet of space in Brooklyn that the city of New York helped us pay to build because they knew that we create jobs. Yes, there are going to be jobs that are affected. The net impact of the new jobs that are also going to be created as these industries emerge and scale massively is going to offset it. There will be moments in which the balance gets uneven, but I would be willing to bet that if we fast-forward five, six years we’ll see a net increase in the number of jobs as we go through this transition.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future magazine and head of the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab.

“But the pragmatism now manifests and the phrase that I hear us say a lot is, “We don’t have time for moonshots. We need to just get to work.”

How teens are taking charge to improve their gloomy futures



Eva Lighthiser

Plaintiff, Held v. State of Montana

In August 2023, group of young Montanans won a landmark lawsuit against their home state for violating their rights to a clean and healthful environment under the state constitution. Eva Lighthiser, 17, from Livingston, Montana, is one of the teen plaintiffs in the Held v. Montana case. While she counts activist Greta Thunberg and Dr. Steve Running, an expert witness in the Montana lawsuit, as her climate heroes, she also could be seen as one for tomorrow's youth.

MacArthur: How do climate effects shape how you feel about your future?

Lighthiser: They make me feel very uncertain about my future. Having climate change lay on my mind is something that when considering future options, it's this really, really big issue. And it's only going to continue to get worse. It makes making decisions a bit more difficult.

Kate MacArthur: In what ways have you personally been affected by climate change?

Eva Lighthiser: I've experienced a lot of different things firsthand, such as wildfires and flooding as the two most prominent ones, especially throughout my teens and preteens.

MacArthur: How so?

Lighthiser: Having smoke envelop your town and your home and seeing that all the time is really frightening. And experiencing flooding is a surreal and crazy event

because it's so crazy to watch water overtake your home. You feel threatened and you feel helpless in a way, and you're not entirely sure what to do.

MacArthur: How did you join the suit?

Lighthiser: I was probably about 13 and my mom found out about it somehow and she said, "Do you want to be a part of this?" It was kind of a no-brainer for me.

MacArthur: How did you feel when you learned the verdict?

Lighthiser: I was so excited. I was speechless.

MacArthur: How does the verdict affect your feelings about the future?

Lighthiser: It makes me really hope that this case can set a precedent for all 50 states and even proceedings in different countries. And it reminds me that there's progress happening and that we're moving forward.



MacArthur: Do you think your victory will make a difference?

Lighthiser: That's another thing I'm very uncertain about. To get to a safe level of carbon in our atmosphere is going to take a lot of work, and it completely depends on whether we're up for that challenge or not.

MacArthur: Do you blame the older generations for the climate effects we have now?

Lighthiser: When it comes down to individual people, of course it's not their complete fault. But we're aware of the fact that previous generations were the ones who made the decisions that brought us here to this day.

MacArthur: Do you put more responsibility on one or another between governments and companies?

Lighthiser: Maybe government, because they're the ones that have the final say in a lot of ways. And companies are sort of in a tier slightly below them.

MacArthur: What do you wish government understood about how climate change affects you and your peers?

Lighthiser: I wish that they understood on a deeper level just how much impact it has on people, especially youth who are

disproportionately affected by it, because our futures aren't necessarily their futures. I really hope that our government leaders can understand that this is affecting everybody and it's only going to continue to get worse if we don't do anything about it.

MacArthur: How do you view or support brands that incorporate sustainability or climate actions in their strategies?

Lighthiser: I favor in some ways, certain brands that are trying to lower their carbon footprint and trying to be more sustainable and working towards that more positive future. But I never really dived deep. I probably should, but that's not something that always is a priority for me.

MacArthur: What are your plans for the future? Will it involve activism?

Lighthiser: That's something that I've been trying to figure out recently. I love creative writing. I'm hoping to maybe incorporate that into whatever I do. But yes, finding a way to orient what I do for work around activism and writing and creating something with that would be definitely of interest to me.

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future magazine.

“We’re aware of the fact that previous generations were the ones who made the decisions that brought us here to this day.”

Signals

What we're reading today that has us thinking about tomorrow

Teen friendship has suffered a seismic shift over the past 20 years — with depressing results via [Big Think](#). Teenage friendships are changing with the rise in smartphone use, which also coincides with a doubling in teen depression.

Generation Z and the transformation of American adolescence: How Gen Z's formative experiences shape its politics, priorities, and future via [American Enterprise Institute](#). AEI interviewed some 5,000 Americans via Ipsos' KnowledgePanel to understand how teen experiences have changed across generations.

Gen Z will be last generation with white majority in US, study finds via [The Guardian](#). Of Americans born after 2012, the majority will be individuals from racial or ethnic minority groups, per updated U.S. census data.

Influencer parents and the kids who had their childhood made into content via [Teen Vogue](#). Child influencers can earn fame and profit — but their rise sparks new questions about child labor, privacy, and the risks of growing up under the spotlight.

These teens got therapy. Then they got worse via [The Atlantic](#). Concern about youth mental health has inspired several public health interventions — but the unexpected backfiring of a teen therapy program has raised new questions.

ChatGPT is changing how teen entrepreneurs think about business via [Forbes](#). Many teen entrepreneurs are discovering how chatbots are shifting how they manage homework and startups.

We need to talk about generations via [Ipsos](#). Marketing is overrun with stereotypes, hot takes and clichés. Some of the most enduring in the first two decades of this century centered on the post-1980 Millennials, who were proclaimed as a new generation that would completely disrupt business.

Gen Z via Ipsos. Gen Z has come of age amid dramatic cultural and political change, from social media to social justice. How does this next generation see the world?

How to promote equity and inclusion in the creator economy via [Ipsos](#). With the increasing importance of authentic representation and inclusivity, it is crucial to examine how online creators and audiences identify with the world around them.

Unilever creators study via [Ipsos](#). New research for Unilever unveils a growing appetite and interest amongst creators in posting more sustainability content.

Data dive: Gen Z myths vs. realities via [Ipsos](#). In five infographics, we uncover some surprising opinions of those coming of age amid climate change, inflation, pandemic and war.

The sky isn't falling: Gen Z and long-form streaming via [Ipsos](#). While most youth viewers say traditional media is their go-to media, a third say they turn to nontraditional, social and influencer-created media first for entertainment and relaxation.

Contributors



Chris Hoffman is a senior vice president in Ipsos' Media & Entertainment Platform practice. He leads a team focused on audience insights across the media, technology, and gaming ecosystems. His team investigates how audiences and brands use content-led and social-led platforms to help clients improve engagement and experiences.
christopher.hoffman@ipsos.com



Charlotte Morris is an engagement manager in Ipsos' Strategy3 consultancy where she helps brands understand and connect with consumers. She is passionate about uncovering insights about younger generations and how they're shaping culture. Previously, she led global thought leadership research at Snapchat centered around Gen Z and augmented reality. *charlotte.morris@ipsos.com*



Amber Jawaid is a senior vice president in Ipsos' SMX Online Communities practice. She leads a team focused on financial services and technology, providing clients with long-term strategic planning through ongoing consumer engagement. She brings over a decade of experience in community-focused research, pioneering some of the best practices used today.
amber.jawaid@ipsos.com



Jennifer Torgersen is a senior director in Ipsos' Online Communities practice. She helps companies in consumer packaged goods, financial services, food and beverage, and retail industries engage with their consumers and develop actionable insights leveraging both qualitative and quantitative research.
jennifer.torgersen@ipsos.com

What the Future

Editor

Matt Carmichael *he/him*

Managing editor

Kate MacArthur *she/her*

Staff writer

Christopher Good *he/him*

Art director

Stephen Geary *he/him*

Graphics

Avalon Leonetti *they/them*,
Kahren Kim *she/her*

Newsletter

Ben Meyerson *he/him*

Copyediting

Zoe Galland

Web

James De Los Santos

Survey design

Mallory Newall *she/her*,
Johnny Sawyer

Survey execution

Linda McPetrie,
Melissa Kordik,
Rachel Franz,
Loren Mastracci *she/her*

For full results and methodology, visit future.ipsos.com
and [subscribe to our newsletter](#) to receive our next issue of What the Future

What the Future is produced by the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab

GAME CHANGERS

