

Instagram Modern Teens Research Topline - 6/26/2019

The following is an Express Research Summary from Instagram Community Ad-Hoc Research, conducted via a diary study in June 2019. Teens responded to questions via images, captions, comments, long and short videos, and screenrecordings on a unique private Instagram page created for them.

Objectives:

- How are modern teens' needs, wants, and jobs evolving as other digital experience touch points change?
- What are emergent threats appearing with teens?
- What are surprising use cases, stories, or emergent trends in hacks/usage of digital products?

Participant Summary:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Market	Activity	Age	Gender	Ethnicity
2	URBAN	IG Active	17	F	Mixed Race African American & Hispanic
3	URBAN	IG Active	15	F	African American
4	URBAN	IG Active	16	M	Hispanic/Cauc
5	URBAN	IG Active	13	M	African American
6	URBAN	IG Active	14	F	African American
7	URBAN	IG Active	14	M	Hispanic*
8	URBAN	IG Active	14	M	Hispanic*
9	URBAN	IG Active	15	F	Asian
10	URBAN	IG Active	17	M	Cauc
11	URBAN	Competitive Active	13	M	Hispanic*
12	URBAN	Competitive Active	13	F	Caucasian
13	URBAN	Competitive Active	17	F	Caucasian
14	URBAN	Competitive Active	16	F	African American
15	URBAN	Competitive Active	15	F	Caucasian
16	URBAN	Competitive Active	15	F	Caucasian
17	RURAL	IG Active	17	M	Caucasian
18	RURAL	IG Active	17	F	AA
19	RURAL	IG Active	17	M	Caucasian
20	RURAL	IG Active	15	M	Caucasian
21	RURAL	IG Active	15	F	AA
22	RURAL	IG Active	14	F	Caucasian
23	RURAL	IG Active	15	F	Caucasian
24	RURAL	IG Active	14	F	Caucasian
25	RURAL	IG Active	13	M	African American
26	RURAL	Competitive Active	13	M	Hispanic*

27	RURAL	Competitive Active	14	F	Biracial (Hisp/Other)
28	RURAL	Competitive Active	15	F	Caucasian
29	RURAL	Competitive Active	16	F	Caucasian

Key Takeaways

despite life challenges, teens are playful and enjoy deep friendships and laughing together

- Teenagers' lives alternated between moments of intensity and stretches of boredom. During the summer, they relied even more heavily on social media and messaging to get access to invitations and plan activities with their friends.
- Teens were subject to continuous experiences in which they were judged by outside adult authorities, such as sports competitions, exams, college applications. They experienced enormous amounts of pressure related to these events, which they saw as having a decisive impact on their life path.
- Teens we spoke with were happy, playful, and optimistic; some were also very interested in learning and creating. Doing fun and funny things with their friends, and laughing together both online and in-person, were their treasured experiences. They valued social media's ability to help facilitate and spread fun and laughter.
- Each teen had a few very close friends, usually also including one friend who was "crazy" or "weird" who they loved for their uniqueness. Personal authenticity appeared to help them feel more comfortable and open.
- Teens' expressed extremely exacting standards for close friendship. Close friends were expected to be there for each other anytime and all the time, no matter what, to support one another, and to be instantly responsive to one another.
 - Very little flexibility was afforded, and most teens were delighted to participate in such friendships.
 - Teens were continually aware of, sensing and monitoring their friends' needs, choices, and communications. They checked their messages constantly, especially Snapchat, which always had notifications on.
 - Timing appeared to be more important than content in expressing friendship. For instance, behaviors like leaving messages unopened, or not interacting despite being active with others, were scrutinized.
 - Teens' friendships were challenged by the competing high demands of other overlapping friendships.
- Many teens had had traumatic experiences such as: the loss of a family member; homelessness; repeated injuries; frightening experiences of bullying. Each dealt with these in idiosyncratic ways, sometimes turning toward faith, family, trusted friends, community organizations, or passions/interests. Instagram was not mentioned as a resource for grieving or healing.

Teens expressed a high degree of prosocial values and behaviors

- Some highlighted how happy they felt when witnessing random acts of kindness in their community.
- Several expressed nuanced perspectives on bullying, recognizing the difficult circumstances the actor must be experiencing, such as "self-pain."
 - Most stories related to bullying involved a child who was seen as different for reasons such as: bodily characteristics (e.g., smell, large forehead), special needs (e.g., autism), skin color or race.
 - Teens shared that most instances of bullying began as teasing, jokes, or play that was taken beyond a limit and became mean-spirited.
 - As victims and bystanders, most were scared and uncertain about how to proceed. Those who had reported bullying in some ways had felt their reports were not effective or increased the problems they experienced.
- "Body shaming" was mentioned frequently as a kind of bullying on Instagram that teens disliked very much. They believed Instagram should explicitly foster more inclusiveness related to body type diversity.
- Many expressed strong protectiveness toward younger children. They were very concerned about "kids" seeing inappropriate things on social media. Several said that kids should not be able to join Instagram, even though most of them had joined when they were much younger than 13.
- Many expressed concern that Instagram should have better rules, or doesn't "do enough" to ensure people follow the rules. They mentioned problematic accounts and content, such as pro-suicide, pomography, hate-speech and other accounts they had seen that concerned them.
- Many were involved in positive activities benefiting others, the community, or the environment. They expressed intense loyalty toward friends.

teens used content as a catalyst for strengthening relationships and identity

- Teens used content primarily to learn, and to develop and strengthen friendships.
 - They curated and sifted content created by others (on Feed/Explore) in search of catalysts for lighthearted conversations with other friends. Sending memes provided a fun way to express closeness and understanding.
 - Content shared by their friends (Feed/Stories) was valuable because it gave them ideas about shared interests, and especially things they might do together.
 - Teens expressed a lot of appreciation for how Instagram helped them learn about things they were interested in, such as DIY, makeup, cooking, painting, calligraphy, dancing, sports, and video games.
- Teens expressed a desire for more control over what content they saw first, and didn't see. Some curated interest-specific feeds through creating secondary accounts.

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- A few teens had aspirations to become influencers/creators - e.g., YouTubers, or, on Instagram, to intentionally grow their following through creating more content. They enjoyed creating memes and funny videos.
- Many teens, especially in rural locations, enjoyed creating content on TikTok. Teens appreciated some of the graph characteristics of TikTok, and were less likely to take certain interactions personally, including:
 - Less likely to feel neglected or overlooked by people who are supposed to be close friends and supporters.
 - More likely to feel excited if their content becomes popular, since it is a truer test of virality (vs. just their friends reciprocating likes).
- VSCO's lack of metrics was also cited as contributing to making the platform encouraging and inspiring.

instagram's messaging features were limited compared with competitive apps

- Teens used Snapchat for time-sensitive conversations relating to the present moment and its possibilities. Teens always kept their SC notifications on.
 - SC filters made teens laugh, and helped break the ice.
 - SC let them know when others are active, which helped start conversations or interpret behavior.
 - SC let them know when others were typing, which helped them know whether to stay focused on the conversation or move to something else.
 - The experience of messaging on Snapchat felt festive and was the focal point of the app, and they liked this.
- For video-calling, most used Snapchat, FaceTime and occasionally HouseParty. Moments from video-chats was content that teens sometimes wanted to use later.

Perceptions of Instagram

- Young peoples' Instagram journeys followed a very consistent pattern:
 - Most started using Instagram much earlier than their 13th birthday
 - Almost all had a euphoric "Instagram honeymoon" period during which time they followed everyone and posted all the time.
 - Most went through an experience or a transition that caused them to become very self-conscious. At this point they deleted their previous account, deleted or archived its posts, and usually created a new account after some time.
 - Many created a secondary account. Reasons differed: to follow a specific interest more "incognito," to share with a smaller group of close friends, or to do a creative project with another friend.
 - Some felt very frustrated by the limit of five accounts.
- Most participants loved the experience of discovering and learning through the Explore page, and turned to it anytime they had time or were bored. This appears to be a uniquely value-creating aspect of Instagram.
- Several young people said they were less engaged with their finstas/spam accounts lately, but did not share reasons for this.
- Teens expressed frustration for Instagram's non-chronological feed; one mentioned that since it wasn't chronological, it might appear to people that she was "stalking" them based on the timing of her interactions, and she disliked this.
- Many teens expressed the belief that Instagram should be more original and stop copying other apps, like Snapchat.

Potential Areas of exploration in In-depth interviews:

Explore the relationship between content and conversation, the purpose of teen conversations

Explore the changing role of finstas/spam accounts and other secondary accounts

Explore the role Instagram plays in facilitating in-person and community experiences

Explore more deeply the relationship between Instagram and Snapchat and jobs each one does, and how/if it is different for rural vs urban, what people ideally want to see from Instagram relative to messaging

For competitive users, understand more fully the functional and emotional role of their preferred social app platforms, especially TikTok and HouseParty

Articulate different kinds of humor, what makes something funny for teenagers, what makes them laugh, since teens report that bullying often begins with a remark meant to be humorous. Identify which types of humor are likelier to lead to well-being challenges

Better understand what teens consider inappropriate and what role they hope for Instagram, vs users, to play in inappropriate content

Understand how Instagram fits into the process of learning, self-actualization, and increasing sphere of influence

Understand more deeply about challenges to teen well-being on Instagram

[Contact Support](#)

Conversation History

Anna-Marie Panlilio opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Sal Becerra, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Shayli Jimenez, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Kenzie Snyder, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda Aug 14, 2020 at 11:28 pm

Shayli Jimenez opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Sal Becerra, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Kenzie Snyder, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Anna-Marie Panlilio, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda Apr 16, 2020 at 7:24 pm

Deb Elitzur added Shayli Jimenez to the thread Apr 16, 2020 at 4:03 pm

Deb Elitzur added you to a document Apr 16, 2020 at 3:47 pm

Sonam Gill opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Sal Becerra, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Shayli Jimenez, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Kenzie Snyder, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Anna-Marie Panlilio, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda Dec 11, 2019 at 8:09 pm

Kenzie Snyder opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Sal Becerra, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Shayli Jimenez, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Anna-Marie Panlilio, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda Aug 27, 2019 at 9:55 pm

Emily Moser opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Sal Becerra, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Shayli Jimenez, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Kenzie Snyder, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Anna-Marie Panlilio, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda Jul 16, 2019 at 12:36 pm

Mitra Martin edited Jul 9, 2019 at 11:00 pm

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Kevin Connors opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Sal Becerra, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Shayli Jimenez, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Kenzie Snyder, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Anna-Marie Panlilio, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda Jul 5, 2019 at 6:28 pm

Sal Becerra opened your conversation with Eric Russell, Pete Fleming, Alyssa Ayunan, Nicholas Brown, Nate Foulds, Jamie McPike, Kristin Hendrix, David Kille, Julia Mayer, Mélanie Terrasse, Katie Burnheimer, Caroline Thomson, Bo Zhang, Melissa Miranda, Casey Capachi, Shayli Jimenez, Jason Buhle, Danielle D'Agostino, Lori Malahy, Nichole Schwartz, Murat Altun, Mariah Levitt, Jenna Hickey, Wei Zhou, Mitra Martin, Katie Hansen, Annie Orenstein, Teresa Eldi, Olivia Taylor, Alana Conner, Kenzie Snyder, Jessie Bisher, Alexandra Alfaro, Ben Kozary, Gina Jaeger, Sappho Faires, Anna-Marie Panlilio, Nick Russell, Jamie Kimmel, Shira Ansbacher, Amy Lou Cluff, Ebo Dawson-Andoh, Stephanie Kan, Kate Taplin, Kate Caldwell, Jan Fabbri, Sadia Harper, Erol Basusta, Shaika Barrau, Charisse Padilla, Jamie Nicholson, Jessica Weber, Randy Illum, Jennifer Ng (IG), Alisha Alleyne, Jess Chen, Aga Szymanska, Yashoda Sampath, Ren Hwang, Karen Choueiri, Melissa Pak, SheShe He, Sian Townsend, Shruti Aditya Chowdhury, Logan Theodore, Amy Hachigian, Sebastian Fite, Danny Jeong, Kyle Andrews, Daniele Owens and Anthony Shenoda on a phone Jun 26, 2019 at 7:05 pm

Mitra Martin added the document to the folder 6/3-6/17 Modern Teens (Diary+IDs) Jun 26, 2019 at 6:26 pm

Mitra Martin Jun 26, 2019 at 6:25 pm

Mitra Martin added you to a document Jun 26, 2019 at 6:25 pm

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Mitra Martin added the document to the folder 6/3-6/17 Modern Teens (Diary+IDs) Jun 26, 2019 at 6:25 pm

Mitra Martin added Sal Becerra to the thread Jun 26, 2019 at 6:32 pm

Mitra Martin added you to a document Jun 26, 2019 at 6:25 pm

Mitra Martin edited Jun 26, 2019 at 6:25 pm

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- Young peoples' Instagram journeys followed a very consistent pattern:
 - o Most started using Instagram much earlier than their 13th birthday
 - o Almost all had a euphoric "Instagram honeymoon" period during which time they followed everyone and posted all the time.
 - o Most went through an experience or a transition that caused them to become very self-conscious. At this point they deleted their previous account, deleted or archived its posts, and usually created a new account after some time.
 - o Many created a secondary account. Reasons differed: to follow a specific interest more "incognito," to share with a smaller group of close friends, or to do a creative project with another friend.
 - o Some felt very frustrated by the limit of five accounts.
- Most participants loved the experience of discovering and learning through the Explore page, and turned to it anytime they had time or were bored. This appears to be a uniquely value-creating aspect of Instagram.
- Several young people said they were less engaged with their finstas/spam accounts lately, but did not share reasons for this.
- Teens expressed frustration for Instagram's non-chronological feed; one mentioned that since it wasn't chronological, it might appear to people that she was "stalking" them based on the timing of her interactions, and she disliked this.
- Many teens expressed the belief that Instagram should be more original and stop copying other apps, like Snapchat.

Potential Areas of exploration in In-depth interviews:

Explore the relationship between content and conversation, the purpose of teen conversations

Explore the changing role of finstas/spam accounts and other secondary accounts

Explore the role Instagram plays in facilitating in-person and community experiences

Explore more deeply the relationship between Instagram and Snapchat and jobs each one does, and how/if it is different for rural vs urban, what people ideally want to see from Instagram relative to messaging

For competitive users, understand more fully the functional and emotional role of their preferred social app platforms, especially TikTok and HouseParty

Articulate different kinds of humor, what makes something funny for teenagers, what makes them laugh, since teens report that bullying often begins with a remark meant to be humorous. Identify which types of humor are likelier to lead to well-being challenges

Better understand what teens consider inappropriate and what role they hope for Instagram, vs users, to play in inappropriate content

Understand how Instagram fits into the process of learning, self-actualization, and increasing sphere of influence

Understand more deeply about challenges to teen well-being on Instagram

Mitra Martin created the document Jun 26, 2019 at 6:28 pm

DOCUMENT SLIPSHEET

Bates Number: META3047MDL-019-00015781-META3047MDL-019-00015791

BEGATTACH: META3047MDL-019-00015781

ENDATTACH: META3047MDL-019-00015791

Attachment Count: 0

PRODVOL: META3047MDL_VOL019

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Last Modified Date: 6/26/2019 12:00 AM

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