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MILLENNIALS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND POLITICS

The vast majority of Millennials, (86%), use social media daily, making them the “always on” generation. This fact has implications for many aspects of their lives including their social connections, consumption of news and entertainment, informal learning, and engagement in civic life. While White and Latino Millennials use social media to navigate life, a key and consistent finding throughout our data is that Black Millennials use social media more frequently and for a wider variety of activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media use among young adults today – known as the Millennial generation – is both common and constant, truly making them the “always on” generation. This fact has implications for many aspects of their lives, including their social connections, consumption of news and entertainment, informal learning, civic life, and even how they navigate their employment and economic aspirations.

In this report we present the findings of a nationally-representative survey of more than 1,000 18- to 30-year-olds, focusing on one key aspect of Millennials’ social media behaviors: their involvement in civic life. By some measures, young people have not expressed a high level of political engagement compared to their older counterparts. For example, compared to older citizens, young people are less likely to vote, consume the news, or maintain a group membership¹. As a result, many critics charge that Millennials are disengaged with civic life, thus undermining the nation’s civic health and sense of community. Among the many factors cited for Millennials’ lack of political engagement—such as narcissism and apathy—none may be more frequently recognized than their adoption of social media.

According to our findings, almost all (95%) Millennials use social media, and the vast majority (86%) do so on a daily basis. This “always on” feature is frequently referenced to support the view that Millennials are insufficiently engaged with others, sparking social isolation or only casual and passive engagement in civic life³. According to critics, Millennials are too busy Instagramming, tweeting, and “snapping” to care about the world around them. However, the view that social media limits the involvement of Millennials in civic life obscures a much more likely development: Rather than diminish their involvement in civic life, the adoption of social media among Millennials may be leading to the remaking of civic life. In other words, legacy expressions of civic engagement—writing to the editor, attending a town hall meeting—appear to be giving way to emergent expressions—donating to a cause online, organizing a political movement via social media, or circulating a social issues video.

¹Levine, Peter. 2007. *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens*. London: University Press of New England, pp: 77-83.

³Turkle, Sherry. 2011. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

This report explores the implications of constant connectivity in the political identities and practices of Millennials. As social media has become a routine part of everyday life, we examine how it may be enabling distinct modes of political engagement among Millennials. Specifically, we explore:

- The degree to which Millennials turn to social media for news and information about current events;
- How often Millennials encounter or post content about social or political issues in social media;
- How they respond to politically-related social media content;
- How many have taken specific political actions through social media or other online venues, such as joining political groups or donating to candidates;
- How their behaviors and attitudes about social and political content in social media vary by age, gender, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, and political ideology; and
- How their online actions relate to their offline political actions and their sense of political efficacy.

1. KEY FINDINGS

1. The Internet and social media are a nearly universal part of Millennials' lives.

Almost all Millennials are connected, mostly through mobile devices, and more than eight in ten are using social media on a daily basis. Facebook still dominates, but a majority also use Instagram and Snapchat. Millennials of color are more likely to use sites other than Facebook.

- 95% of Millennials use social media, including 86% who do so every day
- In fact, more than half (53%) do so “many times” each day
- A third (33%) of millennials post or share something on social media every day; a total of 57% do so at least weekly
- Despite the widespread view that young people trend away from Facebook use, the platform is the top social media site among Millennials
 - More than eight in ten (83%) use Facebook, including 52% who say it is the social network they use “most often”
- Instagram and Snapchat are also used by a majority of Millennials
 - 61% use Instagram and 56% use Snapchat
 - But only 13% choose each of those sites as the one they use most
- African American and Latino Millennials are more likely than White Millennials to prefer sites other than Facebook
 - 61% of Whites say Facebook is the site they use “most often”, compared to 47% of Blacks and 43% of Latinos.
 - 41% of Latinos and 35% of African Americans say either Instagram or Snapchat are the sites they use “most often”, compared to 20% of Whites.

“ Almost all Millennials are connected, mostly through mobile devices, and more than eight in ten are using social media on a daily basis. ”

2. Social media has assumed an important role in many realms of young people’s lives, beyond simply serving as a way of staying in touch with friends and family.

This includes informal learning, entertainment, connecting to people with shared interests, and getting news about current affairs. In nearly every realm, Black Millennials consider social media to be far more important in their lives than their White peers do. Among all Millennials who use social media:

- 82% say social media is “very” or “somewhat” important in their life for staying in touch with family and friends
- 78% say it is important in their life for learning about things that interest them
- 67% say it is important in their life for entertainment
- 65% say it is important for increasing the type of people and information they have access to, and 59% for connecting to people who share their interests
- 65% say it is important for getting news about current affairs
- African Americans are more likely than Whites to say social media are “very important” in their life for entertainment, increasing the type of people and information they have access to, getting news and information about current affairs, connecting to people who share their interests, and promoting their business or work lives (Latinos fall in between on all these items, and there is less consistency in their responses).
- Some of these differences are quite large. For example, 45% of African American respondents say social media are “very important” in their lives for learning about things that interest them, compared to 24% of White respondents, and 32% say social media are “very important” for getting news and information about current affairs, compared to 17% of white respondents.

“In nearly every realm, Black Millennials consider social media to be far more important in their lives than their White peers do.”

3. In particular, social media has become the top source of news for Millennials.

Eighteen- to thirty- year-olds are far more likely to get news through social media (and other online sources) than from traditional sources such as TV, radio, or newspapers.

- Social media is the top source of news, with 34% saying they get “a lot” of news that way, followed by online news sites (25%) and mobile apps (23%)

- Cable, network, and local TV are far behind (14%, 13%, and 13% respectively)
- When asked where they get “most” of their news, more than twice as many name social media (31%) as name the next closest source (16%, for online news sites)

“ When asked where they get “most” of their news, more than twice as many Millennials name social media as name the next closest source.”

Of course, news that is accessed through social media may originate from a variety of sources, including “traditional” news institutions such as the New York Times or CNN. The findings about social media as a news source illuminate the mode of delivery of news, but not necessarily the original source of the news content. However, the fact that social media is such an important conduit for news does indicate that the viral nature of the delivery, and the potential for “fake” or inaccurate news sources, is substantial.

4. In addition, many Millennials use social media as a tool for political and social engagement. Many millennials have taken online actions or used social media to make their social or political views known.

- A majority of Millennials (54%) have signed an online petition
- About one in four say they have become more involved in a social or political issue because of something they saw in social media (28%) or donated to a social cause online (24%)
- Close to one in five (19%) have participated in social media campaigns to influence a government decision or action
- Seventy-nine percent of Millennials see posts or discussions about social or political issues in their social media feeds, including 45% who “often” do
- Three in ten (31%) post such content themselves (6% do so “often”)

Clearly, the kinds of content coming across Millennials’ social media feeds includes a great deal of content on political issues, and many are using social media to express their political views or to inform their off-line involvement.

5. At the same time, most Millennials are not happy with the tone of the political discussions they encounter on social media, finding them less respectful and less trustworthy than those in other media, and saying such content leaves them feeling frustrated and worn out. Among Millennials who say they often or sometimes see social and political content in their social media:

- About half say they find political discussions in social media to be less respectful (53%) and less trustworthy (47%) than those they see in other media, such as television, radio, and newspapers; about a quarter say the respectfulness and trustworthiness are about the same as in other media (25% and 28% respectively)
- Despite the ability of social media to tailor content to the user, Millennials don't consider the political content in social media to be more relevant or informative than what they see in other media. In fact, 33% say such content is less informative than in other media (21% say "more" and 31% say "about the same"), and 27% say it is less relevant to them personally than what they see in other media (24% say "more" and 34% say "about the same.")
- When asked whether such content was more likely to make them feel informed or confused, 58% chose "informed," and 40% said "confused." Similarly, more respondents said such content made them "interested" (57%) rather than "bored" (41%). So, while a majority find such content interesting and informative, there are still sizable numbers (roughly four in ten) who say they mainly find it confusing and boring.
- The vast majority (72%) say the political content on social media is more likely to leave them feeling "frustrated" than "motivated," and 70% say they feel "worn out" instead of "energized."
- Some Millennials have a positive response to the social media content they come across that concerns social or political issues. About one in four say such content leaves them feeling "energized" (27%) or "motivated" (25%).

“ Millennials are concerned about the tone and quality of the political discussions they encounter on social media. ”

6. African American Millennials have a far more positive response to social and political content in social media than their White or Latino peers do; in fact, they are at least twice as likely as Whites to say such content leaves them feeling energized and motivated.

- Forty-four percent of African Americans say they feel motivated by the political content they encounter in social media, compared to just 16% of Whites (31% among Latinos)
- Forty-two percent say they feel energized by the political content they encounter in social media, compared to 21% of White Millennials (31% among Latinos)

- African Americans are significantly more likely to say they feel more empowered to express their views about important issues thanks to social media (62% agree, compared to 46% of Whites and 42% of Latinos).
- They are also the most likely to say that social media gives them more influence over government or corporate decisions (42%, compared to 25% of Whites and 35% of Latinos).

“African American Millennials are much more likely than their White or Latino counterparts to say that social media gives them more influence over government and corporate decisions.”

7. Millennials who identify as liberals are much more likely than moderates or conservatives to respond positively to and participate in social and political content in social media.

- Thirty percent of Millennials consider themselves liberal, 38% say they are moderates, and 18% consider themselves conservative (13% identify as “other”).
- Liberals are much more likely than conservatives to see political content in their social media: 65% do so “often,” compared to 38% of moderates and 39% of conservatives.
- Liberals also post more political content on social media: 44% say they often or sometimes post about social or political issues on their social networking sites; by comparison, 28% of moderates and conservatives do so.
- Liberals are significantly more likely to say that social media is an important way for them to connect with people who care about the same issues they do (73% vs. 52% of conservatives), and they are also more likely to report having had problems with people they know due to political disagreements they’ve had on social media (46% vs. 29% of conservatives).
- Liberals are the most likely group to say they feel informed and interested, rather than confused or bored, by the political content they encounter in social media.
 - For example, among liberals 74% say political social media content makes them feel informed, while 25% say it makes them feel confused. But moderates are evenly split at 49% to 49%. (Conservatives are in between, at 62% informed vs. 35% confused) media.

“Liberal Millennials are far more likely than their moderate or conservative peers to say they feel informed by and interested in political content in social media.”

- Similarly, 73% of liberals say political social media content leaves them interested, while 26% say bored. But among conservatives, 54% say interested and 42% bored (52% vs. 45% among moderates).
- Liberals are also far more likely than conservatives or moderates to say that social media helps them feel more empowered to express their views about important issues: 66%, compared to 46% of conservatives and 45% of moderates.

8. Despite the challenges of the current political environment, Millennials are optimistic about their generation’s ability to effect political change – especially liberals and Millennials of color.

- Eight in ten (80%) Millennials agree that “dramatic change could occur in this country if my generation banded together and demanded change,” including nearly four in ten (38%) who “strongly agree”.
- Seventy-five percent agree that “people in my generation have the skills to work together to achieve political goals,” with 29% agreeing “strongly.”
- Liberals are far more likely to believe in the possibilities of dramatic political change (+27 percentage points compared to moderates and +35 compared to conservatives who “strongly agree” that dramatic change could occur if their generation banded together and demanded it).
- African Americans and Latinos are both far more likely than Whites to believe that dramatic change could occur in this country if their generation banded together to demand it (African Americans +28 percentage points compared to Whites who “strongly agree”, and Latinos +14 percentage points over Whites).
- African American Millennials are far more likely than Whites or Latinos to believe that their generation has the skills to work together to achieve political goals (+16 percentage points compared to Whites who “strongly agree”, and +20 percentage points compared to Latinos).

“African Americans and Latinos are both far more likely than Whites to believe that dramatic change could occur in this country if their generation banded together to demand it.”

2. CONNECTIVITY

Virtually all Millennials have Internet-connected devices, and nearly three out of four say the main way they go online is through a mobile device. Ninety-nine percent of 18- to 30-year-olds owns at least one device that connects to the Internet: either a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer. Eighty-six percent have high speed Internet access at their home; 14% do not. Two-thirds (68%) go online mainly through their smartphone and 5% mainly through a tablet, for a total of 73% who mainly go online through a mobile (handheld) device.

Device Ownership

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who own a:

Smartphone	93
Laptop computer	73
Tablet device	46
Desktop computer	31
None of the above	1

Among Millennials, **9/10** own a smartphone.

Primary Connectivity

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who say the main way they go online is through a:

Smartphone	68
Laptop computer	19
Desktop computer	8
Tablet device	5

Nearly **7/10** Millennials say the main way they go online is through a smartphone.

Demographic differences:

Age and gender. There are no differences by age in terms of ownership of computers and mobile devices, nor is there any difference regarding the primary means of going online. Male Millennials are more likely than females to own desktop computers (39% vs. 23%), while females are more likely than males to own a tablet (56% vs. 38%). Women are also more likely to go online through mobile devices than males (79% vs. 66%). More specifically, while the majority of men and women in our survey say the main way they go online is through a smartphone, women are even more likely than men to say they go online this way.

SES and race/ethnicity. The only difference in device ownership by socio-economic status is that those on the higher end of the scale are more likely to own a laptop (79% vs. 67% of lower-income Millennials). There are no racial or SES differences in the likelihood of having a high-speed home Internet connection, and none by SES in terms of primary type of

connectivity (mobile or not). African American and Latino Millennials are more likely than white millennials to say their primary way of going online is through a smartphone (75% of Latinos and 73% of African Americans compared to 63% of whites).

“ African American and Latino Millennials are more likely than White Millennials to say their primary way of going online is through a smartphone. ”

Primary Connectivity, By Demographics

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who say the main way they go online is through a:	Male	Female	White	Black	Latino
Smartphone	*63a	73b	63a	73b	75b
Laptop computer	24a	14b	22a	13b	18ab
Desktop computer	10a	5b	10	7	4
Tablet device	3	6	4	6	3
Total mobile	66a	79b	67a	79b	78b

A substantial number of Millennials have connectivity challenges, cutting back in other areas to afford Internet service, or experiencing inconsistent connectivity. As mentioned above, 14% of Millennials don’t have high-speed Internet service at home. In addition, one in four 18- to 30-year-olds (26%) say they often or sometimes have to cut back in other areas to afford their Internet service; a third (34%) say they are very or somewhat dependent on publicly available WiFi. Some encounter problems with inconsistent connectivity, including reaching the limits on their data plans (27% in the past year), having their cell phone or Internet service cut off because they couldn’t pay for it (14% and 11% in the past year, respectively). A total of 40% of Millennials say they experienced at least one of the latter three connectivity challenges during the past year.

*All superscripts note which items differ in a statistically reliable way. For a description of statistical significance in this report, see page 57.

Affordability And Reliability Of Connectivity

Affordability of Internet connection – percent of 18-30 year-olds who:

Often have to cut back in other areas to afford Internet service	8
Sometimes have to cut back in other areas to afford Internet service	18
Don't have to worry about paying for Internet service	58
Don't have home Internet access	14

Reliability of Internet connection – percent of 18-30 year-olds who have experienced the following in the past 12 months:

Cell phone service got cut off because it was hard to pay for	14
Internet service got cut off at home because it was hard to pay for	11
Reached the limit on their mobile device data plan and couldn't go online for a while	27
Any of the above	40

Degree of dependence on public WiFi – percent of 18-30 year-olds who are

Very dependent	10
Somewhat dependent	24
Not too dependent	33
Not dependent at all	33

Demographic differences:

Age and gender. There are almost no differences by age or gender in affordability or reliability of Internet service; the one exception is that 25- to 30-year-olds are more likely than 18- to 24-year-olds to say their home Internet service has been cut off in the past year because of inability to pay (15% vs. 8%).

SES and race/ethnicity. Not surprisingly, there are a number of differences based on socio-economic status, with lower-SES Millennials much more likely than their higher-SES counterparts to report “often” having to cut back in other areas to afford Internet service (15% vs. 5%), being very or somewhat dependent on public WiFi (42% vs.

Lower-SES Millennials are more likely than higher-SES Millennials to rely on public WiFi or experience connectivity problems.

27%), and experiencing some type of inconsistency in their connectivity in the past year (51% vs. 31%). For example, Millennials who are very dissatisfied with their financial situation are much more likely than those who are very or somewhat satisfied with their situation to have had their cell phone service cut off because it was hard to pay for (26% vs. 7% among those with a smartphone) or have home Internet service cut off because of money in the past twelve months (17% vs. 8% among those with home service). Differences by race are scattered and inconsistent: Latinos are more likely than Whites to “often” cut back in other areas to afford Internet service (17% vs. 6%, with Blacks in between at 10%); Blacks are more likely than Whites to be “very dependent” on publicly available WiFi (15% vs. 8%, with Latinos in the middle at 13%); and Blacks are more likely than Whites to say they’ve had their Internet service cut off in the past year due to difficulties paying the bills (17% vs. 10%, with Latinos in between at 10%).

Affordability And Reliability Of Connectivity

	By Race/Ethnicity			By Economic Satisfaction		
	White	Black	Latino	Very/ somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
<i>Affordability of Internet connection – percent of 18-30 yealds who:</i>						
Often have to cut back in other areas to afford Internet service	6a	10ab	17b	5a	11b	15b
Sometimes have to cut back in other areas to afford Internet service	21	23	17	12a	25b	33b
Don't have to worry about paying for Internet service	72	66	64	80a	62b	51b
Don't have home Internet access	12	12	16	12	15	17
<i>Reliability of Internet connection – percent of 18-30 year-olds who have experienced the following in the past 12 months:</i>						
Cell phone service got cut off because it was hard to pay for	11	16	14	7a	16b	26b
Internet service got cut off at home because it was hard to pay for	10a	17b	10ab	8a	12ab	17b
Reached the limit on their mobile device data plan and couldn't go online for a while	29	25	21	25	28	32
Any of the above	36	41	37	30a	40ab	50b
<i>Degree of dependence on public WiFi – percent of 18-30 year-olds who are</i>						
Very dependent	8a	15b	13ab	7	11	13
Somewhat dependent	22	21	27	20	27	29
Not too dependent	34	33	32	37	28	29
Not dependent at all	36	30	27	35	33	29

3. POLITICAL EFFICACY AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Millennials indicate a fairly strong sense of collective political efficacy, and a somewhat lower level of individual political efficacy. In the survey, we wanted to assess the degree to which Millennials feel politically efficacious, that is, to what extent they believe that they personally and their generation collectively can exercise political agency. We take a snapshot of different dimensions of political efficacy:

Dimensions Of Political Efficacy

Individual	Internal	Measures the degree to which an individual believes she can act politically.
	External	Measures the degree to which an individual believes her political actions can influence the decisions of people in government.
Collective	Internal	Measures the degree to which an individual believes that the group he is a member of can act together to achieve a political goal.
	External	Measures the degree to which an individual believes that the group he is a member of can compel those in power to respond to the group's demands.

Millennials exhibit relatively strong levels of individual internal political efficacy. Three out of four Millennials agree that “I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country,” including one in four who agree “strongly.” On our measure of individual external political efficacy, 44% disagreed with the statement “People like me don’t have any say about what the government does,” with 11% disagreeing strongly. According to our findings, Millennials have an even stronger sense of collective rather than individual political efficacy. When it comes to measures of collective external political efficacy, eight in ten agree that “dramatic change could occur in this country if my generation banded together and demanded change,” including nearly four in ten (38%) who “strongly agree”. Millennials are also more likely than not to feel a positive sense of collective internal political efficacy. For example, seventy-five percent agree that “people in my generation have the skills to work together to achieve political goals,” with 29% agreeing “strongly.”

Political Efficacy

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who agree/disagree that:	Total strongly/somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.	75%	25	50	18	6
People like me don't have any say about what the government does.	55%	19	37	33	11
Dramatic change could occur in this country if my generation banded together and demanded change.	80%	38	43	15	4
People in my generation have the skills to work together to achieve political goals.	75%	29	46	17	7

Demographic differences:

Age and gender. Younger Millennials are more likely than older ones to believe their generation has the skills to work together to achieve political goals (+9 percentage points “strongly agree”). On the measure of individual internal political efficacy men were more likely than women to “strongly agree.” Millennial males are much more likely than females to believe that they have a good understanding of the important political issues facing the country (+16 percentage points “strongly agree”).

SES and race/ethnicity. Those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale are less likely than those at the higher end to believe they have a good understanding of important political issues (no difference in the percent who “strongly agree”, but -11 percentage points among those who agree “strongly” or “somewhat” combined). Less financially secure Millennials are also more likely to agree that people like them have no say about what the government does (+19 percentage point difference “strongly agree”). African Americans Millennials are far more likely than Whites or Latinos to believe that their generation has the skills to work together to achieve political goals (+16 percentage points compared to Whites who “strongly agree”, and +20 percentage points compared to Latinos). African Americans and Latinos are both far more likely than Whites to believe that dramatic change could occur in this country if their generation banded together to demand it (African Americans +28 percentage points compared to Whites who “strongly agree”, and Latinos +14 percentage points over Whites).

Relationship to political social media use:

Millennials who often or sometimes use social media to post about social or political issues are more likely than those who hardly ever or never do to say they have a good understanding of the political issues facing the country (+12 percentage points “strongly agree” compared to those who never post political content). They are more likely to believe their generation has the skills necessary to work together for political change (+14 percentage points “strongly agree” compared to those who hardly ever post social or political content; the difference with those who never post social or political content is not statistically significant). And they are far more likely to believe that dramatic change is possible if their generation bands together to demand it (+20 percentage points “strongly agree” compared to those who hardly ever post social or political content and +23 percentage points compared to those who never do). These data highlight a critical finding about the relationship between collective political efficacy and politically-oriented use of social media.

Millennials who post about political issues to social media are more likely than those who hardly ever do to feel more politically efficacious.

It may be that Millennials who feel a greater sense of collective political efficacy are more likely to use social media for political purposes; or Millennials who actively post about social and political issues on social media may develop a greater sense of collective political efficacy. The data from this study cannot indicate whether there is a causal relationship or, if so, in which direction causation flows.

Relationship to political ideology:

Those on either end of the political extremes are more confident that they understand the important political issues facing the country (+21 percentage points among liberals and +16 percentage points among conservatives who “strongly agree” compared to moderates); and liberals are far more likely to believe in the possibilities of dramatic political change (+27 percentage points compared to moderates and +35 compared to conservatives who “strongly agree” that dramatic change could occur if their generation banded together and demanded it). Liberals are also far more likely to believe that their generation has the skills to work together to achieve political goals (+24 percentage points compared to moderates and +23 percentage points compared to conservatives that “strongly agree”).

Most Millennials say they don't always vote, and have never attended a political event in person. Only about one in four (27%) Millennials say they always vote, with another 39% saying they do so sometimes. One in three (34%) say they hardly ever or never do. One in five Millennials say they have ever attended either a political rally or demonstration (21%) and a similar number say they have ever participated in face-to-face meetings or groups working to address social or political issues. A total of a third (33%) of Millennials report having done one or the other of those, while 10% have done both.

Political Activity

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who:

Attend political events

Have attended a political rally or demonstration	21
Have participated in-person in meetings or groups working to address social or political issues	22
Have done either of the above	33
Have done both of the above	10

27% of Millennials say they vote always.

39% of Millennials say they vote sometimes.

14% of Millennials say they hardly ever vote.

Vote...

Always	27
Sometimes	39
Hardly ever	14
Never	20

Demographic differences:

Age and gender. Younger Millennials are more likely to have attended a political rally or demonstration (24% v. 16%). There are no other differences by age or gender.

African American Millennials are more likely to have attended a rally or in-person meeting about social or political issues than either their White or Latino counterparts.

SES and race/ethnicity. There are no differences in likelihood of attending political events or voting based on socio-economic status. African American Millennials are more likely than their White or Latino peers to have attended in-person meetings or groups about social or political issues (31%, vs. 20% of Whites and 19% of Latinos). And Latinos

are less likely than African Americans or Whites to vote (17% “always” vote, compared to 32% of African Americans and 31% of Whites).

Relationship to political social media use:

Millennials who are more politically active on social media are also more politically active off-line. Thirty-seven percent of those who often or sometimes post political content on their social media sites have also attended in-person meetings about social or political topics (compared to 19% of those who hardly ever do and 13% of those who never do). And 30% have attended a political rally or demonstration, compared to 23% of those who hardly ever post political content on social media, and just 10% of those who never do so. Similarly, 37% of political social media users say they vote all the time, compared to 24% of those who “hardly ever” and 23% of those who “never” post political content on social media.

Relationship to political ideology:

First, 30% of Millennials described themselves as “very” or “somewhat” liberal. There were no substantial racial or gender differences in the likelihood of Millennials identifying as “liberal.” On the other end of the political ideology spectrum, 18% of Millennials identified as “very” or “somewhat” conservative. There were no substantial gender differences. However, Whites (17%) were more likely than Blacks (5%) or Latinos (9%) to identify as “somewhat conservative.”

Millennials at either end of the political spectrum are more likely to vote, and liberals are far more likely than others to participate in off-line political activities. Thirty-three percent of liberals and 39% of conservatives say they vote all the time, compared to 24% of moderates. And among liberals, 36% say they have attended an in-person meeting on a social or political topic, compared to 18% of moderates and 15% of conservatives. Similarly, 34% of liberals have attended a political rally or demonstration, compared to 16% of moderates and 14% of conservatives.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Almost all (95%) Millennials use social media, and the vast majority visit their social media sites every day. They post and share on social media far less often than they check it, but many still do so on a daily basis.

Ninety-five percent of 18- to 30-year-olds use social media. Eighty-six percent use it every day, including more than half (53%) who say they do so “many times” each day. In addition to the 5% who don’t use social media at all, another 3% use it only once a week or less. A third (33%) of millennials say they post or share something on social media every day, 24% do so weekly, and a third (36%) say they do so less than once a week (including 7% who say they never do).

Frequency of social media use

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who visit social media

Many times a day	53
A few times a day	27
Once a day	6
A few times a week	6
Once a week	1
Less than once a week	2
Don’t use social media	5

Frequency of posting to social media sites

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who *post* or *share* something on a social media site:

Many times a day	11
A few times a day	13
Once a day	9
A few times a week	17
Once a week	7
Less than once a week	29
Never	7
Don’t use social media	5

1/3 of Millennials post to social media at least once a day

Nearly **1/4** post either a few times or many times a day

Demographic differences:

Among those who use social media, there are no substantial differences in the frequency of social media use by age or gender. Older Millennials (25-30) are more likely to post on a daily basis than younger ones (40% vs. 31%), and women are more likely to be daily posters

than men (42% vs. 29%). Whites visit social media sites more than Latinos (60% visit many times a day vs. 48% of Latinos, with Blacks in between at 58%), and Blacks post more frequently (47% do so daily, compared to 36% of Whites and 29% of Latinos). Also, Millennials who are very or somewhat dissatisfied with their financial situation are much more likely than those who are very or somewhat satisfied with their situation to post or share something on social media many times a day (43% of the very dissatisfied and 40% of the somewhat dissatisfied, vs. 29% of the very/somewhat satisfied).

- Women are more likely to be daily posters to social media than men.
- Blacks post more frequently than Whites or Latinos.
- Millennials who are very or somewhat dissatisfied with their financial situation are more likely than those who are very or somewhat satisfied with their situation to post something on social media many times a day.

Frequency of social media use, by demographics

Among 18-30 year-olds who use social media, percent who	18-24 year-olds	25-30 year-olds	Male	Female	White	Black	Latino
<i>VISIT social media:</i>							
Total daily	90	90	88	93	90	91	94
Many times a day	58	53	53	58	60a	58ab	48b
Weekly	9	6	11a	5b	7	7	4
Less than weekly	1a	4b	1	2	2	1	2
<i>POST to social media:</i>							
Total daily	31a	40b	29a	42b	36a	47b	29a
Many times a day	11	13	14	12	12a	22b	9a
Weekly	27	24	25	27	26	25	24
Less than weekly	33	28	36a	26b	30ab	22a	40b
Never	8	7	10	6	9	6	7

Facebook is by far the most popular social media site among this age group.

More than eight in ten (83%) Millennials use Facebook, including 52% who say it is the social network they use “most often.” Instagram and Snapchat are also used by a majority of millennials (61% and 56% ever use those sites, respectively), but only 13% choose each of those sites as the one they use most.

Top social media use

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who use each site	Ever	Most often
Facebook	83	52
Instagram	61	13
Snapchat	56	13
Twitter	31	7
Pinterest	30	2
LinkedIn	24	1
Reddit	16	6
Tumblr	11	1

Demographic differences:

Age. There is some variation in use of particular social media sites, based on age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Younger Millennials are more likely to use Snapchat and Instagram: 68% of 18- to 24-year-olds ever use Snapchat, compared to 43% of 25- to 30-year-olds; and 66% of younger Millennials use Instagram compared to 55% of older Millennials. Older Millennials are 18 percentage points more likely than younger ones to say that Facebook is their primary social media site (64% vs. 46%). Nearly three in ten young Millennials (29%) choose either Snapchat or Twitter as the social media site they use most often. It will be interesting to see, in years to come, whether the younger Millennials start using Facebook more as they grow older, or whether Facebook usage will begin to trend down as the younger Millennials age up.

“ Younger Millennials are more likely than older ones to use Snapchat or Instagram. Older Millennials are more likely than younger Millennials, 64 to 46 percent, to say Facebook is their primary social media site. ”

Gender. Women are substantially more likely than men to use Pinterest (47% vs. 13%), and men are more likely to use Reddit (24% vs. 8%). Twenty-two percent of men choose either Reddit (12%) or Twitter (10%) as the site they use most often (compared to 6% of women). Women are also more likely to name Facebook or Instagram as the site they use “most often” (60% of women vs. 49% of men for Facebook, and 17% of women vs. 11% of men for Instagram).

- Whites are more likely than Blacks or Latinos to say Facebook is the site they use “most often.”
- Latinos and Blacks are more likely than Whites to say Instagram or Snapchat is the site they use “most often.”

Race/ethnicity. Facebook is more popular among White Millennials than among Black or Latino ones. Nearly nine in ten (88%) Whites in this age group use Facebook, compared to 77% of Blacks and 71% of Latinos. Sixty-one percent of Whites say Facebook is the site they use most often, compared to 47% of Blacks and 43% of Latinos. Moreover, Latinos are the least likely to use LinkedIn (13%, compared to 27% of

Whites and 25% of Blacks), and Blacks are the least likely to use Reddit (just 7%). Twitter is more popular among African American Millennials, with 41% saying they use it, compared to 26% of Latinos (Whites are in between at 33%). However, only 10% of Black Millennials say Twitter is their primary social media site. And African American and Latino Millennials are more likely than Whites to say that Instagram and Snaaphchat are their main social media sites: a total of 41% of Latinos use one of those two sites most often, as do 35% of Blacks, compared to 20% of Whites.

Top Social Media Sites, By Demographics

	18-24 year-olds	25-30 year-olds	Male	Female	White	Black	Latino
<i>Percent who ever use each site:</i>							
Facebook	80	85	79a	86b	88a	77b	71b
Instagram	66a	55b	59	63	57	64	62
Snapchat	68a	43b	54	58	57	62	54
Twitter	35	27	34	29	33ab	41a	26b
Pinterest	28	32	13a	47b	32	25	26
LinkedIn	22	27	24	24	27a	25a	13b
Reddit	18	14	24a	8b	20a	7b	13ab
Tumblr	15a	6b	9	13	9	13	15
<i>Percent who use each site most often</i>							
Facebook	46a	64b	49a	60b	61a	47b	43b
Instagram	16	12	11	17	10a	18b	21b
Snapchat	19a	8b	16	12	10a	17b	20b
Twitter	10a	4b	10a	5b	8	10	6
Pinterset	2	4	1a	4b	2	4	2
LinkedIn	*	1	1	*	1	0	1
Reddit	8	5	12a	1b	8a	2b	7a
Tumblr	1	*	*	1	*	2	1

Social media is most important to Millennials for staying in touch with friends and family, but many also use it for informal learning.

A noteworthy trend regarding Millennials’ social media behavior is the extent to which it is becoming important for multiple aspects of their lives. A technology that was once used primarily to connect to friends and families is now adopted to connect to a wide array of activities and interests. Just under half (46%) of Millennials say social media is “very important” in their life for staying in touch with friends and family. But many Millennials also consider social media “very important” for learning about things that interest them (31%), entertainment (25% say it is “very important”), and getting news about current affairs (19% say that is “very important”). One in seven (14%) Millennials say that social media is “very” important for promoting their business or work life.

At least a quarter of Millennials say that social media is “Very important” for the following:

- Staying in touch with family and friends
- Learning about new things that interest them
- Increasing the type of people and information they have access to
- Entertainment

Importance Of Social Media In Various Realms

In general, how important is social media in your life for (among social media users):	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important
Staying in touch with family and friends	46	36	10	6
Learning about things that interest you	31	47	13	9
Increasing the type of people and information you have access to	26	39	24	10
Entertainment	25	42	25	8
Connecting to people who share your interests	20	39	31	10
Getting news or information about current affairs	19	46	27	8
Promoting your business or work life	14	26	28	31

Demographic differences:

Age and gender. Younger respondents say social media is even more important to them than older ones for entertainment (31% say it is “very important”, compared to 19% of older respondents) and for connecting to people who share their interests (24% vs. 15%). Women are more likely than men to say social media is “very important” for staying in touch with friends and family (53% vs. 40% among men).

SES and race/ethnicity. There are no differences between Millennials based on socio-economic status in terms of the importance of social media in their lives for the various functions asked about in this survey. However, there are substantial differences by race. Social media seem to be substantially more important to African American Millennials across a variety of realms. For example, Blacks are more likely than Whites to say social media are “very important” in their life for entertainment, increasing the type of people and information they have access to, getting news and information about current affairs, connecting to people who share their interests, learning about things that interest them, and promoting their business or work lives (Latinos fall in between on all these items, and there is less consistency in their responses). Some of these differences are quite large. For example, 45% of African American respondents say social media are “very important” in their lives for learning about things that interest them, compared to 24% of White respondents, and 32% say social media are “very important” for getting news and information about current affairs, compared to 17% of White respondents.

In what can only be described as a shift in what has long been called the “digital divide,” African American Millennials are much more likely than their White counterparts to view social media as a very important part of many aspects of their lives including for entertainment, learning about new things, promoting their work lives, and increasing the types of people and information they have access to.

African American Millennials are much more likely than their White counterparts to view social media as a very important part of many aspects of their lives including for entertainment, learning about new things, promoting their work lives, and increasing the types of people and information they have access to. “

Importance Of Social Media In Various Realms, By Demographics

Among social media users, percent who say social media is very/somewhat important in their life for:

	18-24	25-30	Male	Female	White	Black	Latino
<i>Staying in touch with family and friends</i>							
Very	44	49	40a	53b	46	48	49
Very/somewhat	82	84	78a	87b	83	82	83
<i>Learning about things that interest you</i>							
Very	32	29	30	31	24a	45b	34ab
Very/somewhat	74a	83b	78	78	77	79	83
<i>Entertainment</i>							
Very	31a	19b	28	23	24a	34b	25ab
Very/somewhat	72a	62b	67	68	66	70	68
<i>Increasing the type of people and information you have access to</i>							
Very	29	23	28	23	24a	34b	26ab
Very/somewhat	68	62	62	66	64	72	61
<i>Getting news/information about current affairs</i>							
Very	20	18	20	18	17a	32b	21ab
Very/somewhat	65	65	65	65	61a	73b	72b
<i>Connecting to people who share your interests</i>							
Very	24a	15b	21	19	19a	30b	19a
Very/somewhat	61	56	57	61	56a	70b	60ab
<i>Promoting your business or work life</i>							
Very	12	18	13	16	13a	24b	14a
Very/somewhat	40	41	43	39	36a	53b	42ab

5. NEWS SOURCES - ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

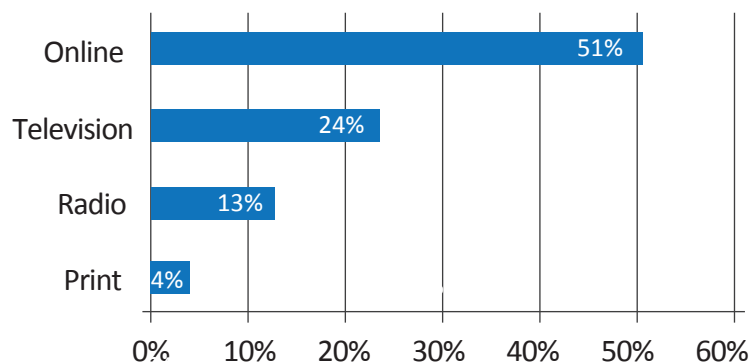
Millennials are far more likely to get news from online and social media sources than from traditional sources such as TV, radio, or newspapers.

News consumption is one measure of civic and political engagement. People who consume news are more likely to be informed about current affairs and social and political issues.⁴ More and more news consumption is happening through social media channels. This is especially true among Millennials and points to some important cultural shifts in the formation of an informed/misinformed citizenry.

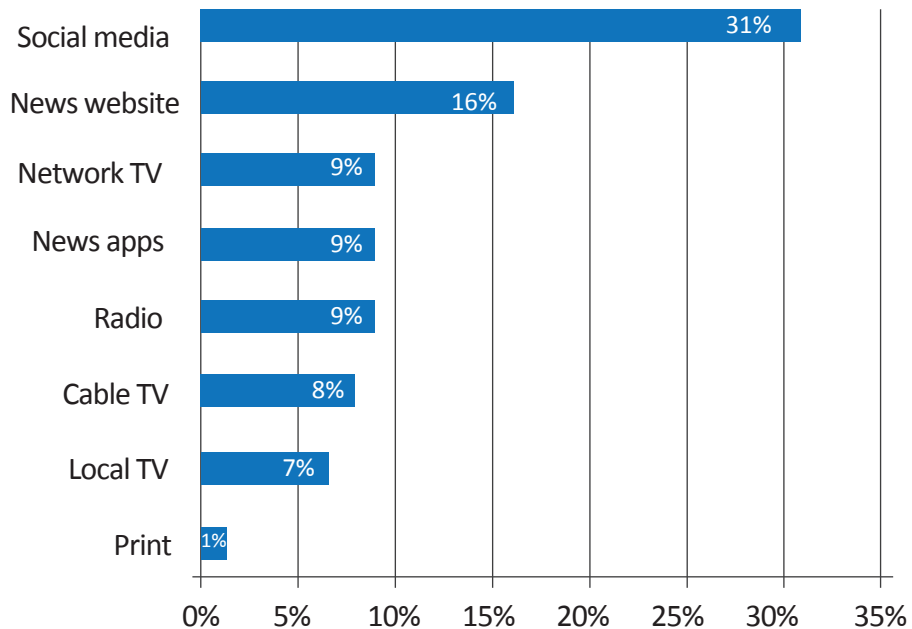
Social media is the top source of news among 18- to 30-year-olds, with 34% saying they get “a lot” of news that way, followed by online news sites (25%) and mobile apps (23%). Cable, network, and local TV are far behind (14%, 13%, and 13% respectively). All together, more than half (51%) say they get “a lot” of news from online sources, compared to 24% from any TV source, 13% from radio, and 4% from print. When asked where they get “most” of their news, more than twice as many name social media (31%) as name the next closest source (16%, for online news sites).

Millennials are much more likely to say they get “a lot” of news from online sources, compared to TV sources, radio, and print.

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who get "a lot" of news from each source:



⁴Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who get “the most” news from each source:

Of course, online news may come from a variety of news institutions, including those that originated in print or television, such as the New York Times or CNN. The findings about online news sources concern the mode of delivery of news, but not necessarily the original source of the news content. Most of the major news organizations are creating and/or updating their news stories throughout the day, making the production of news delivered digitally a truly 24-hour and even real time enterprise. However, the fact that social media are such an important conduit for news does indicate that the viral nature of the delivery, and the potential for “fake” or inaccurate news sources, is substantial.

All told, a total of 63% of Millennials say they get “a lot” of news from one or more sources, 30% get “some” news from one or more sources, 7% get less than that. About one in ten (13%) millennials “often” turn to online sources such as blogs and podcasts about social or political issues, and nearly half (47%) do so at least “sometimes.”

News Sources

Amount of news 18-30 year-olds get from each source:	A lot	Some	Get 'the most' news from
Posts or links on social networking sites (like Facebook or Twitter)	34	36	31
Online news sites (such as CNN.com, NYTimes.com, Yahoo! News, Google News)	25	37	16
News apps on a mobile device (such as BuzzFeed, or news org app like CNN)	23	32	9
Cable television news shows (such as CNN, Fox News, MSNBC)	14	33	8
Network television news shows (such as CBS, NBC, ABC)	13	38	9
Local television news shows	13	34	7
Radio news	13	32	9
Print newspapers	4	18	1
Any online source	51		56
Any TV source	24		24
Any source	63	30	NA

Demographic differences:

There are no differences between younger and older Millennials or between men or women in the percent who say they get “a lot” of news from any of the sources asked about in this survey. The only news source that showed any variation by socio-economic status was cable TV, with low-SES respondents more likely to say they get “a lot” of news from cable (19% vs. 11% for the higher group).

However, there are substantial differences by race, with African Americans more likely to get “a lot” of news from many different sources. The hierarchy of news sources is fundamentally the same across racial and ethnic groups, but for nearly every source asked about, African Americans are more likely than their White counterparts to say they get “a lot” of news from that source. The difference is most pronounced with local and cable television: 9% of White

Millennials report getting “a lot” of news from local TV, compared to 20% of both African Americans and Latinos; 12% of Whites and Latinos say they get “a lot” of news from cable TV, compared to 25% of African Americans. Similarly, African Americans are more likely to say that they get “a lot” of news from social media (46%, compared to 33% of Whites and 31% of Latinos). In addition to exhibiting higher levels of political efficacy and political posts to social media, African American Millennials also consume more news from the sources we asked about than their White or Latino counterparts. The findings from our data suggest that Black Millennials compared, for example, to White Millennials are more active when it comes to a variety of civic related practices such as news consumption, posting political content to social media, and involvement in offline political activities (i.e., attending a meeting about a political issue in-person).

It is also worth noting that Millennials who mainly go online via a mobile device are more likely to say they get “a lot” of news from social media (37%) than those who mainly go online with with a desktop or laptop computer (26%). Some research suggests that people who get their news from a mobile device multiple times a day tend to turn to more news sources, read in-depth news articles, watch news videos, and send and receive news through social networks.⁵ As we note above it may also be possible that these same people are more exposed to “fake news.”

News Sources

Percent of 18-30 year-olds who get “a lot” of news from:	White	Black	Latino
Social networking sites	33a	46b	31a
Online news websites	24a	35b	24ab
News apps	21a	30b	26ab
Cable television	12a	25b	12a
Network television	11a	19b	17ab
Local television	9a	20b	20b
Radio	13	13	16
Print newspapers	5ab	9a	3b
Any online	50	59	52
Any TV	19a	38b	28ab
“A lot” from ANY source	64	69	63

⁵Available at www.journalism.org/2012/10/01/future-mobile-news/.

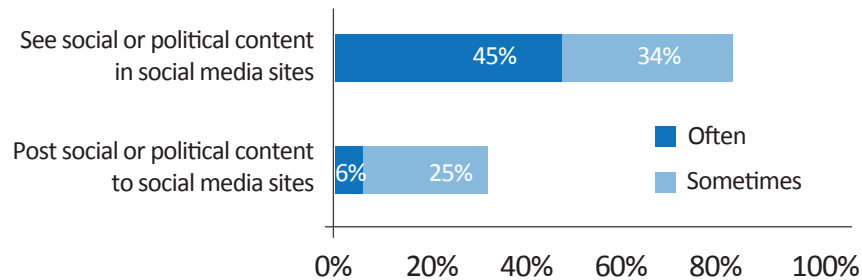
6. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Millennials see a lot social and political content in their social media, but far fewer actually post such content themselves.

Forty-five percent of those who use social media say they “often” see posts or discussions about social or political issues, and another 34% say they “sometimes” do. But only 6% say they often post such content, with 25% saying they sometimes do. More than a third of Millennials (35%) say they “never” post about social or political issues on social media.

POLITICAL CONTENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who use social media, percent who “see” or “post” content on social or political issues on their social media sites



Demographic differences:

There are no differences by age, gender, or socio-economic status in the likelihood of Millennials either “often” seeing or posting social media content on social or political issues. White Millennials are more likely than Blacks or Latinos to see political content in social media “often” (51%, compared to 40% of African Americans and 35% of Latinos).

Blacks are more likely to post such content often (14%, compared to 4% of Whites and 5% of Latinos). Further, Millennials who are dissatisfied with their current financial situation are also more likely than those who are either very or somewhat satisfied to say they post social and political content “often” on social media (10% vs. 4% of the very/somewhat satisfied group).

Millennials who are dissatisfied with their financial situation are more likely than those who are satisfied to post political content “often.”

White (39%) and Latino Millennials (35%) are much more likely than black Millennials (22%) to say that they “never” post political content.

Relationship to political ideology:

There is a substantial difference among Millennials who identify as liberals vs. those who identify as conservative when it comes to use of social media to post content on social or political issues. Among those who say they are very or somewhat liberal, 44% say they often or sometimes post about social or political issues on their social networking sites; by comparison, 28% of moderates and 16% of very or somewhat conservatives do so. Thirteen percent of liberals say they post such content “often,” compared to 3% of moderates and 2% of conservatives. Liberals also see more political content in social media: 65% do so “often,” compared to 38% of moderates and 39% of conservatives.

Relationship to offline political involvement:

In addition, online political activity and offline political activity seem to go together – the same people are likely to be involved in both. There doesn’t appear to be one type of person

Millennials who often post political content on social media are also more likely to have participated in a political rally or an in-person meeting about a social cause than Millennials who do not post such content.

who is active politically online, and another type who is active offline. For example, those who often or sometimes post political content online are also more likely to have participated in a political rally or an in-person meeting about a social or political issue (65%, compared to 26% of those who “hardly ever” post about politics on social media and 16% of those who “never” do).

A majority of millennials say the political content they encounter in social media interests and informs them, but a larger proportion also say they feel frustrated and worn out by it.

The survey asked Millennials who often or sometimes see content on social or political issues in their social media feeds a series of questions about how such content makes them feel. When asked whether such content was more likely to make them feel informed or confused, 58% chose “informed,” and 40% said “confused.” Similarly, more respondents said such content made them “interested” (57%) rather than “bored” (41%). So, while a majority find such

content interesting and informative, there are still sizable numbers (roughly four in ten) who say they mainly find it confusing and boring.

RESPONSE TO POLITICAL OR SOCIAL CONTENT ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who often or sometimes see political or social content in their social media feeds

When you encounter social or political content on social media, which comes closer to describing how you feel?			
Worn out	70	Energized	27
Frustrated	72	Motivated	25
Informed	58	Confused	40
Interested	57	Bored	41

For a large percentage of Millennials, social media content involving political issues leaves them feeling “frustrated” and “worn out.”

Some Millennials have a positive response to the social media content they come across that concerns/involves social or political issues. About one in four say such content leaves them feeling “energized” (27%) or “motivated” (25%). However, the vast majority report a negative response to such content: 72% say it is more likely to leave them feeling “frustrated” than “motivated,” and 70% say they feel “worn out” instead of “energized.”

Demographic differences:

There are no differences between younger and older Millennials in how they respond to social or political content in social media. The only gender-related difference is that men are more likely than women to say such content leaves them feeling informed (64% of men, vs. 52% of women) rather than confused (34% of men, 46% of women).

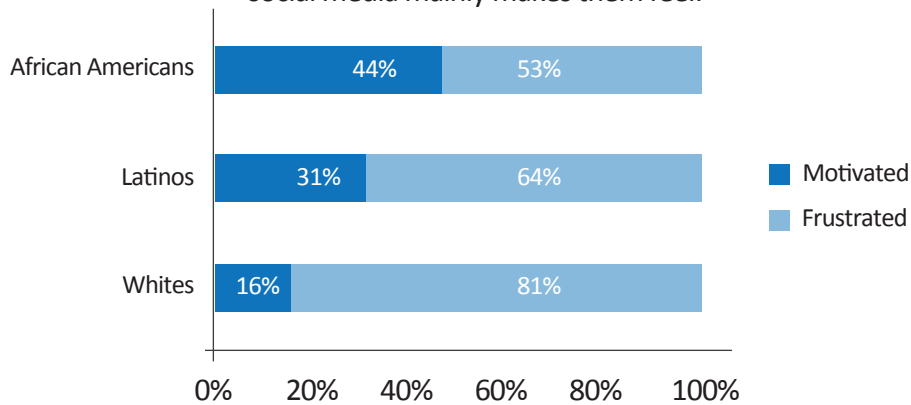
However, African American Millennials have a very different response to social/political content in social media than than their White or Latino peers do. Blacks are far more likely to say they feel energized and motivated by such content: 42% say they feel energized, compared to 21% of White Millennials, and 44% say they feel motivated, compared to just 16% of Whites (Latinos are in between on both items). Combining all four measures of

Although Black Millennials have a more positive valence toward political content in social media than Whites or Latinos, the overall attitudes of each tends to be more negative than positive.

respondents' attitudes about politically-oriented content in social media, 40% of Whites have a mainly negative valence, compared to 22% of Blacks and 24% of Latinos; by contrast, 30% of Blacks have a mainly positive valence, compared to just 11% of Whites and 13% of Latinos. Overall, the attitudes of Whites, Blacks, and Latinos toward social and political content in their social media tend to be more negative than positive. We say more on this below.

MOTIVATION VS. FRUSTRATION, BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Percent of 18- to 30-year-olds who say the social and political content they see in social media mainly makes them feel:



RESPONSE TO POLITICAL CONTENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA, BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who often or sometimes see social and political content on social media

When you encounter social or political content on social media, which comes closer to describing how you feel?	White	Black	Latino
<i>Worn out v. energized</i>			
Worn out	77a	56b	64b
Energized	21a	42b	31ab
<i>Frustrated v. motivated</i>			
Frustrated	81a	53b	64b
Motivated	16a	44b	31b
<i>Informed v. confused</i>			
Informed	54a	71b	53a
Confused	43a	28b	45a
<i>Interested v. bored</i>			
Interested	51a	62b	67b
Bored	46a	37ab	31b

Relationship to political ideology:

Millennials across the political spectrum are equally likely to say they feel worn out and frustrated by political discussions in social media, but liberals are most likely to say they feel informed and interested, rather than confused or bored. For example, only 26% of liberals say political social media content makes them feel bored, compared to 45% of moderates and 42% of conservatives.

RESPONSE TO POLITICAL CONTENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA, BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who often or sometimes see social and political content on social media

When you encounter social or political content on social media, which comes closer to describing how you feel?		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
<i>Worn out v. energized</i>				
	Worn out	70	69	71
	Energized	28	28	27
<i>Frustrated v. motivated</i>				
	Frustrated	73	73	72
	Motivated	24	25	26
<i>Informed v. confused</i>				
	Informed	74a	49b	62ab
	Confused	25a	49b	35ab
<i>Interested v. bored</i>				
	Interested	73a	52b	54b
	Bored	26a	45b	42b

Millennials say the political discussions they see on social media are less respectful and trustworthy than those they see in other forms of media.

Different forms of media offer different formats for discussion of political issues. Newspapers, for example, include editorials, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor; talk radio includes a host, possible guests, and call-in comments from the audience; television often includes vociferous panel discussions among political partisans. Social media offer unique affordances: the chance for anyone, not just “experts,” to offer political posts, unlimited room for comments, and links to various forms and sources of information. In addition to the affordances of media varying, the tone of political discussion across different media can vary as well. In this survey, we asked respondents a broad set of questions about their opinions about the political discussions they encounter in social media as opposed to those they encounter in other media. Specifically, respondents were asked whether they find political discussions in social media more or less trustworthy, respectful, relevant, and informative than those in other forms of media.

About half of Millennials who see social/political content on social media say they find political discussions in social media to be less respectful (53%) and less trustworthy (47%) than those they see in other media, such as television, radio, and newspapers. About a quarter say the respectfulness and trustworthiness are about the same as in other media (25% and 28% respectively).

Interestingly, Millennials do not find political discussion on social media to be more relevant or informative than those they see in other media. The use of algorithms to highlight content the user is interested in, and the ability to selectively pick what to click on and pursue, does not seem to have succeeded in many Millennials’ views. In fact, Millennials are more likely to say political discussions in social media are less relevant and less informative than those they see in other media.



A majority of Millennials find political discussions in social media less respectful compared to TV, radio, and print media.

POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA VS. OTHER MEDIA

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who often or sometimes see social and political content on social media

Are the political discussions you see on social media more or less...than the political discussions you see in other types of media (such as on television, radio, or in newspapers)?

	More	Less	About the same
Informative	21	33	31
Respectful	7	53	25
Relevant to you	24	27	34
Trustworthy	9	47	28

Demographic differences:

Age and gender. The only difference in how younger vs. older Millennials compare political discussions on social media to those in other media is that younger ones (18-24) find the social media discussions more “relevant” to them than their older counterparts (25-30) do. A third (33%) of 18- to 24-year-olds say political discussions on social media are more relevant to them than those in other media, compared to 23% of 25- to 30-year-olds. (A third of both age groups say such discussions are actually less relevant to them, and the rest say they are about the same as discussions in other media). Men are more likely than women to say such discussions are “less informative” than those in other media (45% of men say that, compared to 32% of women); this is the only difference by gender.

Race/ethnicity. There are a number of differences in how Millennials of different races and ethnicities assess the political discussions they see in social media. Black and Latino Millennials consider social media discussions to be more informative than those in other media, while Whites find them less so (47% of Whites say they are less informative, compared to 26% of Blacks and 29% of Latinos). Whites also find such discussions less trustworthy than Blacks or Latinos do (62% of Whites say they are less trustworthy than other media, compared to 45% of Blacks and 49% of Latinos). And Whites also consider political discussions in social media less respectful than Blacks or Latinos do (68% say they are less respectful than other media, compared to 50% of Blacks and 54% of Latinos). There is no difference in relevance by race/ethnicity or gender.

Relationship to political ideology:

Conservative Millennials are much less at home in the political discussions on social media than their liberal counterparts are. Liberals are far more likely to find such discussions informative (33% vs. 13% of conservatives) and relevant (39% vs. 21% of conservatives). Conservatives are more likely to say they are less respectful (74%) and less trustworthy (70%) than those they see in other media (compared to 62% and 55% of liberals, respectively).

These data point to an interesting conundrum. On the one hand, Millennials are frequently using social media and are likely to see content related to social and political issues via social media. On the other hand, Millennials are likely to view this content and the discussions that ensue online in largely negative terms. In general, they are more likely to view related discussions as less respectful than the discussions they see generated by traditional media. They are also likely to view such discussions on social media as less trustworthy than the discussions they see in traditional media. In other words, the medium through which they are most likely to encounter social and political issues—social media—is also the medium they find less respectful and trustworthy when it comes to political discussion. This should raise some serious concerns for the owners of social media platforms about the kinds of communities, conversations, and norms that have come to define the social media experiences of Millennials.

POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA VS. OTHER MEDIA, BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who often or sometimes see social and political content on social media

Are the political discussions you see on social media more or less...than the political discussions you see in other types of media (such as on television, radio, or in newspapers)?

	18-24	25-30	Male	Female	White	Black	Latino
<i>Informative</i>							
More	28	20	25	24	18a	36b	31b
Less	35	42	45a	32b	47a	26b	29b
Same	36	37	30a	43b	35	37	39
<i>Respectful</i>							
More	7	10	10	6	5a	16b	11b
Less	64	59	64	59	68a	50b	54b
Same	30	30	26	34	27	34	34
<i>Relevant</i>							
More	33a	23b	30	26	26	31	30
Less	32	31	34	29	31	30	37
Same	34a	46b	35a	45b	43a	38ab	30b
<i>Trustworthy</i>							
More	13	9	14	8	11	14	11
Less	55	57	54	57	62a	45b	49b
Same	32	34	32	35	27a	41b	40b

TABLE: POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA VS. OTHER MEDIA, BY IDEOLOGY
 Among 18- to 30-year-olds who often or sometimes see social and political content on social media

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
<i>Informative</i>			
More	33a	23ab	13b
Less	30a	37a	59b
Same	37	39	28
<i>Respectful</i>			
More	8	10	5
Less	62ab	55a	74b
Same	31ab	35b	21a
<i>Relevant</i>			
More	39a	25b	21b
Less	23a	36b	36b
Same	37	39	43
<i>Trustworthy</i>			
More	10	13	9
Less	55a	53a	70b
Same	35a	34ab	22b

Some Millennials have been harassed on social media due to their social or political views.

Overall, among those who use social media, 16% say they have ever been the target of hostile or harassing messages because of social or political views they expressed on social media. There are no differences by age, gender, or race/ethnicity.

Most millennials don’t feel a strong sense of political empowerment from social media.

Only 4% of those who use social media “strongly agree” that social media helps them have more influence on government or corporate decisions (26% agree “somewhat”). But nearly half (48%) agree at least “somewhat” that social media helps them feel more empowered to at least express their views, if not actually influence decisions. As with the findings pointing to a lower level of individual than collective political efficacy among Millennials, these findings also indicate that Millennials see the limits to their ability, as individuals, to impact government or corporate decisions. While they believe that social media have helped them express

their views, they are less certain about whether it has helped them influence government or corporate policy.

Those who often post social or political content online are more likely to feel politically empowered by their social media use. For example, 71% of those who “often” or “sometimes” post political content online say social media helps them feel more empowered to express their views, compared to 25% of those who never post such content. Similarly, 48% of the frequent political posters say social media helps them have more influence over government and corporate decisions, compared with 20% of those who never post about such issues. The data from this survey does not explain whether their sense of social media’s empowerment leads them to post more political content on social media, or their frequent posting leads to a greater sense of empowerment.

Social Media And Social/Political Empowerment

Among those who use social media, percent who agree/disagree that:	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Social media helps me feel more empowered to express my views about important issues	14	34	29	22
Social media helps me have more influence on government or corporate decisions	4	26	34	35

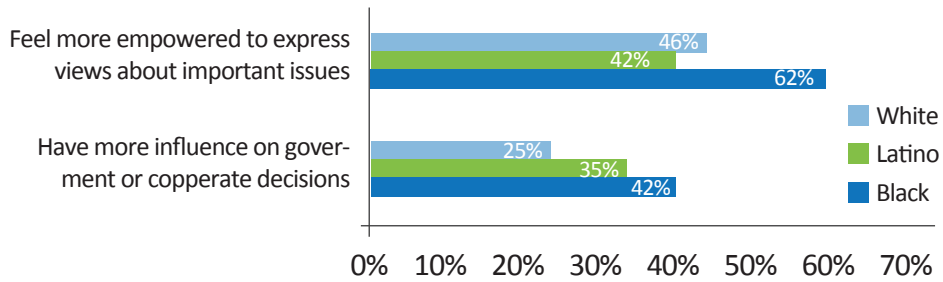
Demographic differences:

Younger Millennials are more likely to agree that social media helps them feel more empowered to express their views (55% agree at least somewhat, compared to 41% of older Millennials). And men are more likely than women to say social media gives them more influence on government or corporate decisions (35% vs. 26% agree at least somewhat). The biggest demographic differences are by race: African Americans are quite a bit more likely to say they feel more empowered to express their views about important issues thanks to social media (62% agree at least somewhat, compared to 46% of Whites and 42% of Latinos). Black Millennials are also the most likely to say that social media actually gives them more influence over government or corporate decisions (42%, compared to 25% of Whites and 35% of Latinos).

Black Millennials are more likely than White or Latino Millennials to believe that social media gives them more influence over government or corporate decisions.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL/POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT, BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who use social media, percent agree that it helps them:

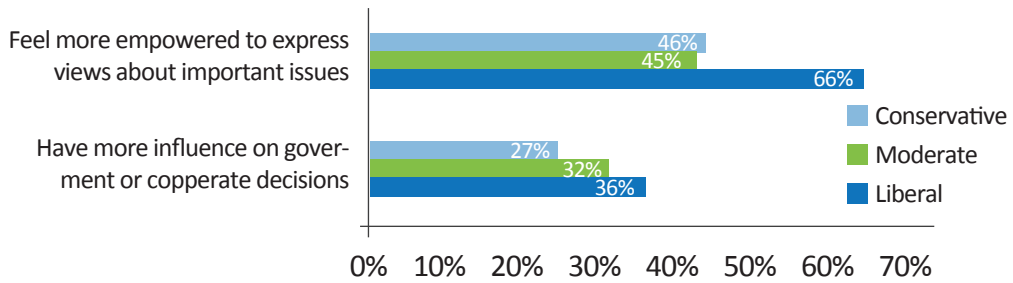


Relationship to political ideology:

Liberals are more likely than conservatives to feel empowered to express their views through social media, and to feel that it gives them more influence on government or corporate decisions. For example, 66% of liberals compared to 46% of conservatives say that social media makes them feel more empowered to express their views about important issues. Similarly, liberals (36%) are more likely than conservatives (27%) to say that social media helps them have more influence on government or corporate decisions.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL/POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT, BY IDEOLOGY

Among 18- to 30-year-olds who use social media, percent agree that it helps them:



Many millennials have taken online actions or used social media to make their social or political views known.

A majority (54%) have signed an online petition, and one in four say they have become more involved in a social or political issue because of something they saw in social media (28%) or donated to a social cause online (24%). One in five have participated in social media campaigns to support or oppose a particular brand (21%), and to influence a government decision or action (19%).

Using Social Media For Social/Political Action

Among 18-30 year-olds, percent who have ever:

Signed an online petition	54
Become more involved in a social or political issue because of something you saw on social media	28
Donated to a social cause online	24
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular product or brand	21
Participated in a social media campaign to influence a government decision or action	19
Participated in a social media campaign to influence a corporate decision or action	17
Learned about a political gathering online that you later attended in person	16
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular TV show or movie	15
Started or joined a political group on a social network site	11
Donated to a political candidate online	10

54% of Millennials have signed an online petition.

21% of Millennials have participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular product or brand

28 % of Millennials have become involved in a political issue because of something they saw on social media.

Demographic differences:

For most of the social/political online actions asked about in this survey, there were no differences between demographic groups in the likelihood of having taken those actions. There were no differences by age, gender, or race/ethnicity in the proportion of Millennials who have ever donated to a political candidate online, donated to a social cause, learned about a political gathering online that they later attended in person, become more involved in an issue they first learned about online, started or joined a political group online, or supported or opposed a product or brand on social media. The only difference by age was that 18- to 24-year-olds are more likely than 25- to 30-year-olds to have participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular TV show or movie (19% vs. 12%). Whites are most likely to have signed an online petition (60% vs. 52% for Blacks and 45% for Latinos), while African Americans are most likely to have participated in a social media campaign to influence either a corporate decision or action (26% vs. 17% of Whites and 16% of Latinos) or a government decision or action (25% vs. 19% of Whites and 15% of Latinos).

Relationship to political ideology:

Far more than any demographic differences being predictive of online political activity, political ideology is strongly related. Millennials who consider themselves liberals are far more likely than those who say they are moderates or conservatives to have participated in every type of online political/social activity asked about in this survey, from the one in five (19%) who say they've donated to a political candidate online up to the three

Liberal Millennials are much more likely than Conservative Millennials to have participated in a wide range of online political activities such as making an online donation to a political candidate, signing online petitions, or becoming involved in an issue because of something they saw online.

out of four (74%) who say they've signed an online petition. Nearly half (48%) say they've become more involved in a social or political issues because of something they saw on social media; moderates are half as likely to have done so (24%), and conservatives even less so (17%).

Using Social Media For Social/Political Action

Among 18-30 year-olds, percent who have ever:	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Signed an online petition	74a	47b	46b
Become more involved in a social or political issue because of something you saw on social media	48a	24b	17b
Donated to a social cause online	40a	19b	18b
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular product or brand	31a	20b	16b
Participated in a social media campaign to influence a government decision or action	36a	16b	8b
Participated in a social media campaign to influence a corporate decision or action	32a	17b	6c
Learned about a political gathering online that you later attended in person	27a	14b	8b
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular TV show or movie	24a	15b	9b
Started or joined a political group on a social network site	20a	9b	8b
Donated to a political candidate online	19a	8b	2b

Relationship to posting of political content on social media:

Not surprisingly, Millennials who ‘often or sometimes’ post political content on social media are much more likely than those who ‘never’ do to have also engaged in other online social/political actions, including:

- sign an on-line petition (69% to 43%)
- become more involved in a social or political issue because of something they saw on social media (56% to 13%)
- donate to a social cause online (38% to 11%)
- participate in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular product or brand (40% to 8%)

- participate in a social media campaign to influence a government decision or action (37% to 8%)
- participate in a social media campaign to influence a corporate decision or action (33% to 6%)
- learn about a political gathering online that they later attended in person (33% to 4%)
- participate in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular TV show or movie (31% to 4%)
- start or join a political group on a social network site (24% to 3%)
- donate to a political candidate online (18% compared to 5%)

Using Social Media For Social/Political Action, By Frequency Of Posting On Social Media

Among 18-30 year-olds, percent who have ever:	Often/ sometimes post political content	Hardly ever do	Never do
Signed an online petition	69a	54b	43b
Become more involved in a social or political issue because of something you saw on social media	56a	23b	13c
Donated to a social cause online	38a	27b	11c
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular product or brand	40a	20b	8c
Participated in a social media campaign to influence a government decision or action	37a	16b	8c
Participated in a social media campaign to influence a corporate decision or action	33a	17b	6c
Learned about a political gathering online that you later attended in person	33a	11b	4c
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular TV show or movie	31a	14b	4c
Started or joined a political group on a social network site	24a	9b	3c
Donated to a political candidate online	18	10	5

These findings are consistent with those discussed in Part Six on offline political activity that strongly suggests that Millennials who post content about social and political issues on social media tend to be much more politically active than their counterparts who do not post such content. Importantly, some of the items above suggests that this greater activity translates to both online (i.e., signed an online petition) and offline (i.e., attended a political gathering in person) engagement. Again, these findings do not identify causation, but they do show a strong relationship between posting political content online and using social media as a platform to participate in a range of political activities. Most of those who are posting about political issues online are going even further and engaging in both online and offline political activities.

Most Millennials don't see social media as an "echo chamber" of like-minded users. A majority believe that their social media sites expose them to people with social or political views different from their own and help them better understand the perspectives of people they disagree with.

More than two-thirds of Millennials (67%) agree that their social media use exposes them to people with different social or political perspectives, and 61% agree that social media helps them understand those people's views better. Roughly the same portion agree that social media is an important tool for connecting with people who care about the same issues they do (62%). In other words, at the same time that Millennials are using social media to connect with like-minded people, they are also being exposed to, and coming to better understand, people with whom they differ. Far fewer say that they've had problems with people because of political disagreements on social media, although more than a third do say that has happened (37%).



A majority of Millennials believe that their use of social media exposes them to different social or political perspectives.

Agreeing And Disagreeing About Politics On Social Media

Among those who use social media, percent who agree/disagree that:	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
When I use social media, I am usually exposed to people with social or political views that are different from mine	24	43	20	12
Social media is an important way for me to connect with people who care about the same issues I do	18	44	23	15
Social media has helped me better understand the perspectives of people I disagree with	12	49	24	14
I have had problems with people I know because of political disagreements we've had on social media	10	27	28	34

Demographic differences:

The only demographic differences on these issues are that Black Millennials are more likely to say that social media are an important way to connect with like-minded people (71%, compared to 60% of Whites and Latinos), and to say that social media also help them better understand the views of people they disagree with (70%, compared to 60% of Whites and Latinos).

Relationship to political ideology:

Liberals and conservatives have similar experiences in social media helping them be exposed to and better understand people with views different from their own. However, liberals are far more likely to say that social media is an important way for them to connect with people who care about the same issues they do (73% vs. 52% of conservatives), and they are also more likely to report having had problems with people they know due to political disagreements they've had on social media (46% vs. 29% of conservatives).

Relationship to political use of social media:

Millennials who “often” or “sometimes” post political content on social media vary significantly from those who “never do” when it comes to exposure to different viewpoints through social media. Contrary to popular belief, Millennials who post political content on social media “often” or “sometimes” do not believe they live in a social media echo chamber. For example, Millennials who “often” or “sometimes” post political content on social media are much more likely than those that “never do” to report being exposed to people with different views and having disagreements online. Millennials who post political content “often” or “sometimes” are more likely than those that “never do” to:

Millennials who ‘often or sometimes’ post political content to social media are much more likely than those who ‘never do’ to believe that social media exposes them to people with political views that are different from theirs.

- be exposed on social media to people with social or political views that are different from theirs (79% compared to 55%);
- believe social media has helped them better understand the perspectives of people they disagree with (75% to 53%); and
- have had problems with people they know because of political disagreements they have had on social media (56% to 19%).

Agreeing And Disagreeing About Politics On Social Media

Among those who use social media, percent who agree:	Often/ Sometimes post political content	Hardly ever do	Never do
When I use social media, I am usually exposed to people with social or political views that are different from mine	79a	69a	55b
Social media has helped me better understand the perspectives of people I disagree with	75a	57b	53b
I have had problems with people I know because of political disagreements we’ve had on social media	56a	39b	19c

CONCLUSION

This survey documents the universality of social media usage among the Millennial generation, as well as the evolving and expanding roles it plays in Millennials' lives. But the survey also uncovers some fascinating differences in how members of this generation engage with, respond to, and feel about social media. Millennials, despite wide public perception, are incredibly diverse in their social media experiences and behaviors.

Ninety-five percent of Millennials use social media, more than eight in ten use it every day, and a majority use it many times a day. For more than two-thirds of Millennials, going online through a smartphone is the primary mode of connectivity. One reason Millennials engage with social media so frequently is that the social media experience is no longer simply about posting pictures of recent activities to share with friends or keep family members up-to-date. As social media evolves, we now see the diversity of ways it matters in people's lives: for informal learning, entertainment, access to news and information, participating in civic and political life, and to connect to people with whom they share common interests. And this appears to be especially true for African Americans as discussed below.

SOCIAL MEDIA: A SOURCE OF NEWS FOR MILLENNIALS

The evolution of social media into a source of news is particularly noteworthy. Social media has far surpassed other sources of news among Millennials, with nearly a third saying they get most of their news from social media, compared to less than ten percent from network or cable television, and just one percent from print. Of course, news that is accessed through social media often originates from traditional news sources, but, as we know too well from recent headlines, it often does not. Clearly, social media has become the dominant conduit for news among this generation. The potential impact of inaccurate news from unreliable sources is great. And news organizations need to understand that the future of news production, circulation and public engagement must be based on the fact that news consumers will get most of their news from social media. This has implications for the kinds of resources that news organizations invest in to remain relevant in what can only be described as a steady and historic sea shift in the consumption of news. Our findings related to Millennials' news consumption behaviors are also interesting in light of announcements from Facebook (January 2018) that it will limit the amount of content from news organizations that circulates via its users' newsfeeds.

SOCIAL MEDIA: A SOURCE OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT FOR MILLENNIALS

Related to their reliance on social media for news, Millennials are also now using social media as a means of civic and political engagement. About eight in ten say that posts and discussions about social or political issues are part of their social media feeds, and one in three say they themselves post about such issues. Many have used social media to sign online petitions, donate to candidates or causes, or try to influence government policies. More than one in four say they have become more involved in social or political issues because of something they first saw in social media. This is an important shift in how we think about the future of civic life and political participation. Rather than dismiss civic engagement through social media as weak or passive it is clear from this survey that such activities are becoming a fact of life in the formation of Millennials' civic identities and practices.

It is often suggested that people who are politically active online are engaging in “clicktivism,” a term that is used derisively to suggest a more passive and ineffectual form of political activity than offline activism. But our data suggest a more complex dynamic. Online and offline political activity seem to go together – the same people are likely to be involved in both. There doesn't appear to be one type of person who is active politically online, and another type who is active offline. And in fact, the connections and information Millennials access about social and political issues online often lead them to take offline actions, and help them feel more politically empowered. In other words, rather than reflecting soft or no engagement at all with offline political activities, Millennials who most often post social and political content on their social media are actually more active in offline political life.

SOCIAL MEDIA: TOXIC NORMS AND POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS

Yet it is also clear that, despite their increasing reliance on social media for political content, most Millennials are deeply dissatisfied with the tone of the political discussions they encounter there. The vast majority say the political dialogue in social media leaves them feeling frustrated and worn out, and about half say such content is less respectful or trustworthy than what they see, hear, or read in other forms of media. And despite the ability of social media to target content for users, Millennials don't find the political content they encounter in social media to be more relevant or informative than what they see in other media.

Indeed, one of the great promises of social media was that the content would be more personalized than in other media. Users decide who to follow and what to click on. Algorithms are meant to target content likely to be of interest to the user. Yet the kinds of political environ-

ments being created on social media are wearing people out. This speaks, more broadly, to trends that social media companies and news organizations should be concerned about: namely, the deterioration of community and conversation in online forums. While significant portions of Millennials get their news from and see social and political issues on social media, they are also likely to develop negative sentiments regarding the content and related discussions. There may be several reasons for this, including the deliberate use of bots to manipulate conversations, the deliberate circulation of misinformation or “fake news” that intends to amplify divisions, or simply the presence of hostile and disrespectful norms forming online.

Our findings support the rising demand that social media and technology companies address the toxic norms and practices—bullying, harassment, hate speech, and fake news—that undermine our connected lives. Our findings suggest that Millennials are mindful of the downside of social media and are likely concerned about it. Also, the data above bolsters the claims by some critics that current trends in social media use undermine deliberate debate and civic discourse. It is clear that social media companies should work to design policies, features, and procedures that help build and sustain more hospitable online communities and conversations. Doing so, as Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg notes, must be their top priority if they are to remain relevant and meaningful in people’s lives.⁶

MILLENNIALS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS DIVERSE AND COMPLEX

As social media becomes an important component of so many aspects of Millennials’ lives, important differences between different types of Millennials are emerging. This can be as basic as the reliance on different social media networks among different demographic groups. A majority of older Millennials say Facebook is their top social networking site, and a majority of younger Millennials do not. A majority of Whites say they use Facebook most often, a majority of Millennials of color use some other site most often.

The Social Media Behaviors of African Americans

But beyond site preference, there are also dramatic differences in how Millennials use social media and in their attitudes about social media in their lives. One of the most marked and consistent differences concerns African American Millennials: social media is a much more integral part of their lives overall, and they have a far more positive valence toward political

⁶ Manjoo, Farhad. 2018. The Difficulties With Facebook’s News Feed Overhaul. The New York Times, January 12. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/12/technology/facebook-news-feed-overhaul.html?rref=collection%2Fbyline%2Ffarhad-manjoo&action=click&contentCollection=undefined®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=4&pgtype=collection

content in social media than other Millennials do. Millennials of all races visit their social media sites on a daily basis; but African Americans are far more likely to post every day. Millennials of all races say social media is very important to them for staying in touch with family and friends; but African American Millennials are far more likely to say social media is very important in their life for learning about things that interest them, accessing news and information about current events, connecting to people who share their interests, and promoting their business or work life. And African Americans respond far more positively to the social and political content in social media, saying they feel motivated, energized, and empowered by such content.

Black Millennials are also much more likely than their White and Latino counterparts to say that they “often” post content related to social or political issues on social media. They also exhibit higher levels of collective political efficacy than their White counterparts. And they are far more likely than Whites to say that their use of social media helps them have more influence on government decisions. What our data cannot explain, however, is whether or not this higher sense of collective political efficacy is a result of increasing social media and direct activism or, vice versa, social media and direct activism is a result of a stronger sense of collective political efficacy. Whatever the causal dynamics one thing is clear, activism—direct and digital—and collective political efficacy are connected.

Trends like these point to a pivotal shift in what has long been characterized by researchers and policymakers as the “digital divide” or the formation of the “technology rich” and the “technology poor.” More specifically, a key and consistent finding throughout our data analysis is that African American Millennials use social media more frequently than their White counterparts and for a wider variety of activities. Further, our findings suggests that African Americans are more likely to feel empowered, informed, and motivated by their use of social media. As a result of findings like these we believe that researchers, educators, and policy makers should begin to view African Americans as active, trend-setting, and empowered when it comes to their use of social media.

Liberal and Conservative Millennials’ Use of Social Media Vary

Another significant finding from the survey is that liberal Millennials are engaging with social and political content in social media far more than moderates or conservatives. Liberals see much more political content, post more political content, use social media more often to connect with like-minded people, and are far more likely to say they feel informed, interested, and empowered by social and political content in social media.

MILLENNIALS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL EFFICACY

In addition to being a generation that is highly engaged with social media, Millennials believe they can change the world. Indeed, 80% say that dramatic change could occur in this country if their generation bands together and demands it, and three out of four think they have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing the nation. Our data suggest that Millennials are much more likely to believe that they can make an impact collectively rather than individually, underscoring a recognition on their part that social change requires a collective rather than individual effort. Further, consistent with other findings throughout our study, African American Millennials expressed a significantly higher degree of external collective political efficacy. In other words, African American Millennials believe that as a group their generation can compel those in power to respond to their expressed concerns. This is a generation of young people who are hopeful, engaged, and, with social media, empowered with new tools to connect, learn, and act. The widespread adoption of social media has serious implications for the future of civic life and political participation. Rather than dismiss Millennials' use of social media to stay informed or to get involved as passive or ineffective, educators, policy makers, and tech designers would be better served learning how to harness these practices to build more equitable and sustainable communities.

METHODOLOGY

This report presents the main findings from a nationally-representative, probability-based survey of 1,010 respondents age 18 to 30 years old in the U.S. The survey project was conceived and directed by S. Craig Watkins, PhD Professor in the Moody College of Communication at the University of Texas at Austin. The research was funded through a generous grant provided by the MacArthur Foundation and the Digital Media Learning Hub at the University of California at Irvine. Questionnaire design was conducted by Victoria Rideout of VJR Consulting and Watkins. Vendor selection and data analysis was conducted by Rideout. The survey was fielded by NORC at the University of Chicago. This report was written by Ms. Rideout under the direction of Professor Watkins, and edited by Professor Watkins. The topline results for the full survey are available in the Appendix of this report

Basic information on the survey. The survey was conducted from September 27-October 21, 2017, using NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak® Panel. The survey was offered via the web in English and Spanish. The full sample of 1,010 respondents includes oversamples of African-American (300) and Latino (300) respondents. The over-samples were collected to provide greater power for analyses within those subgroups. Responses from those subgroups were then weighted down to their natural incidence for analyses of the full general population sample. The design effect for the survey is 2.27, and the margin of sampling error for the full sample is 4.64%. The Survey Completion Rate, calculated in compliance with the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative, is 27.9%. This figure indicates the percent of final respondents among eligible respondents who finished the screener. Panelists were offered the cash equivalent of \$5 for completing the survey. On October 19 the incentive was increased to \$10 to boost cooperation from Latino and African-American non-respondents.

Survey sample and weighting. The AmeriSpeak Panel® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Randomly selected U.S. households are sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Frame, and then contacted by U.S. mail, telephone interviewers, overnight express mailers, and field interviewers (face to face). Recruitment is a two-stage process: initial recruitment using less expensive methods and then non-response follow-up using personal interviewers. The non-response follow-up improves the representativeness of the AmeriSpeak sample with respect to certain demographic segments, including but not limited to rural and/or lower income households, cellphone-only households, persons age 18 to 34, African Americans, Latinos, and persons without a high school degree or those who have only

a high school degree (no college). The resulting data are weighted to reflect external population totals, obtained from the 2017 Current Population Survey of the U.S. Census, for age, sex, education, race/Latino ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census Division. Oversamples of African American and Latino respondents are scaled down to match the race/ethnicity proportions within the 18- to 30-year-old general population.

Definition of Millennials. There are no official definitions of generations, but the term “Millennial” has been applied to the generation that came of age or was born around the turn of the century. While the birth years for this informally-defined generation can range from 1982 to 2004 (or ages 13 to 35 in the year 2017), for the purposes of this study the population was defined as those who were ages 18 to 30 years old in 2017 (born between 1987 and 1999). Also in this report, the terms African American and Black are used interchangeably to refer to self-identified non-Latino persons of African descent.

Socio-economic status (SES). Surveys typically assess respondents’ socio-economic status by highest level of education achieved and through estimates of household income. For adolescents, those measures are usually based on highest parental level of education and household income. However, for a population that ranges in age from 18 to 30 years old, measures of educational attainment and household income are not reliable indicators of SES. During this stage of life, many respondents are still in the process of completing their education, and educational attainment can be more closely correlated with age than with SES. Household income is also an unreliable measure, since the circumstances of individuals vary in ways that annual income may not always reflect. Some respondents may be supported by their wealthy parents while they attend graduate school, some may be supporting themselves with part-time jobs while attending college but living at home, others may have a spouse, children, a mortgage and a two-income household. Therefore, we developed a question designed to reveal respondents’ own sense of their economic circumstances, whether they are living at home after graduating from high school, living in a dorm and attending college, or supporting a family. We asked respondents: How satisfied are you with your current economic situation? And allowed them to select from the response options very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. While this measure has not been externally validated, we found it to be a useful proxy for SES for our analyses. Findings should be considered in this light.

Statistical significance. Where relevant, differences among demographic groups have been tested for statistical significance. Findings are referred to in the text in a comparative manner (e.g., “more likely to,” “less often”) only if the difference is statistically significant at

the level of $p < .05$ (i.e., differences as great as those noted would occur by chance no more than five times in 100). In tables where statistical significance has been tested, superscripts indicate whether results differ at $p < .05$. Only those items with different superscripts differ significantly. Items that share a common superscript, or that have no superscript, do not differ significantly. For example, in Row 1 below, none of the items differs in a statistically reliable way. In Row 2, each item differs from the other significantly. In Row 3, the items in the first and third columns differ from the item in the second column, but not from each other. And in Row 4, items in Columns 1 and 3 differ from each other, but not from Column 2.

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Row 1	72%	68%	76%
Row 2	35% ^a	25% ^b	15% ^c
Row 3	53% ^a	20% ^b	60% ^a
Row 4	40% ^a	35% ^{ab}	43% ^b

Data analysis. Several stages of data analysis were conducted for this report. First, we explored distributions of the responses to each major question or sub-question, using descriptive statistics such as the mean. The bulk of the data presented in this report rely on these descriptive statistics. Second, we explored whether there were differences in any findings by demographic variables including age, gender, race/ethnicity, or SES (economic satisfaction). Next, we analyzed responses based on non-demographic variables such as self-defined political ideology (i.e., liberal, moderate, or conservative). We also created scales and divided respondents into groups based on level of social media use, level of political social media use, attitudes toward political content in social media, sense of political efficacy, and level of off-line political involvement. We then conducted bivariate or multivariate analyses where appropriate, to test for associations between a variable such as level of social media usage, attitude, or political activity level and a demographic variable (such as age, gender, or race/ethnicity) or other scaled variable (e.g. relationship between offline political involvement and political social media usage).

Future reports and analyses. This report summarizes findings concerning social media usage and the social-political behaviors and attitudes of respondents. A second report exploring the use of social media for economic or career-related purposes will be released at a later date. Additional analyses on the data presented in the current report will be conducted by researchers at the University of Texas, Austin, under the direction of S. Craig Watkins.

TOPLINES

N=1010 respondents ages 18-30

Q1. Which of the following best describes your current work situation. Are you currently:

Working full time	45
Working part time	26
Unemployed/laid off	5
A full-time parent or homemaker	6
Not working, other	18

Q2. Are you currently attending school?

Yes, attending school full time	29
Yes, attending school part time	11
No, not currently enrolled in school	61

Q3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Less than high school	7
High school diploma or GED	27
Some college	40
Bachelor's degree	20
Advanced degree	6

Q3A. Are you...

Married	24
Widowed	*
Divorced	1
Separated	2
Never married	57
Living with partner	15

Q4. Which best describes your living situation:

I live in a college dorm	6
I live with my parents	24
I share a house or apartment with roommates	15
I live with a spouse/partner	38
I live alone	13
Other	4

The next question is about your total income for 2016. Please count your income before taxes and from all sources (such as wages, salaries, tips, net income from a business, interest, dividends, money received from family members, alimony or child support, Social Security, or public assistance).

Q5. Was your total personal income in 2016...

Less than \$10,000	37
\$10,000 to 19,999	17
\$20,000 to \$34,999	20
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13
\$50,000 to \$74,999	7
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3
\$100,000 to \$124,999	1
\$125,000 to \$149,999	*
\$150,000 or more	*

Q5A. How satisfied are you with your current financial situation?

Very satisfied	8
Somewhat satisfied	39
Somewhat dissatisfied	28
Very dissatisfied	25

Q6. How confident are you about your future financial prospects?

Very confident	25
Somewhat confident	51
Not too confident	18
Not at all confident	6

Q7. Which comes closest to describing your political views?

Very liberal	13
Somewhat liberal	17
Moderate	38
Somewhat conservative	13
Very conservative	5
Other	13

Q8. When it comes to political elections, how often do you vote?

All the time	27
Some of the time	39
Hardly ever	14
Never	20

Q9. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.	25	50	18	6
People like me don't have any say about what the government does.	19	37	33	11
Dramatic change could occur in this country if my generation banded together and demanded change.	38	43	15	4
People in my generation have the skills to work together to achieve political goals.	29	46	17	7

Q10. Have you ever done either of the following:

	Yes	No
Attended a political rally or demonstration	21	79
Participated in-person in meetings or groups working to address social or political issues	22	77

Q11. People get their news about current events from many different sources. How much news about current events do you get from each of the following sources?

	A lot	Some	Hardly any	None
Network television news shows (such as CBS, NBC, ABC)	13	38	25	23
Cable television news shows (such as CNN, Fox News, MSNBC)	14	33	27	26
Your local television news shows	13	34	26	27
Radio news	13	32	27	27
Print newspapers	4	18	32	44
Posts or links on social networking sites (like Facebook or Twitter)	34	36	17	12
News apps on a mobile device (such as BuzzFeed, or a news organization's app, such as CNN)	23	32	20	24
Online news sites (such as CNN.com, NYTimes.com, Yahoo! News, Google News)	25	37	19	18

Q12. Which source do you get most of your news from?

Network television news shows (such as CBS, NBC, ABC)	9 (9.1)
Cable television news shows (such as CNN, Fox News, MSNBC)	8
Your local television news shows	7
Radio news	9 (8.5)
Print newspapers	1
Posts or links on social networking sites (like Facebook or Twitter)	31
News apps on a mobile device (such as BuzzFeed, or a news organization's app, such as CNN)	9 (8.7)
Online news sites (such as CNN.com, NYTimes.com, Yahoo! News, Google News)	16
Other (please specify)	3
Get hardly any or no news from any of these sources	7

Q13. Which of the following, if any, do you own:

Desktop computer	31
Laptop computer	73
Tablet	46
Smartphone	93
None of the above	1

Q14. Do you have high speed internet service at your primary place of residence (other than the data plan on your phone)?

Yes	86
No	14

Q15. What is the main way you go online:

Through a laptop computer	19
Through a desktop computer	8
Through a tablet	5
Through a smartphone	68

Q16. Which of the following social media sites, if any, do you use? *Among all.....*

Twitter	31
Facebook	83
Snapchat	56
Instagram	61
LinkedIn	24
Reddit	16
Pinterest	30
Tumblr	11
Other – please specify	2
None – I don't use social media	5

[IF Q16≠10]

Q17. How often do you visit or use a social media site? *Among all....*

Many times a day	53
A few times a day	27
Once a day	6
A few times a week	6
Once a week	1
Less than once a week	2
Doesn't use social media	5

[IF Q16≠10]

Q18. How often do you post or share something on a social media site (such as post a photo, share a link, or write a comment)? *Among all.....*

Many times a day	11
A few times a day	13
Once a day	9
A few times a week	17
Once a week	7
Less than once a week	29
Never	7
Doesn't use social media	5

[If uses more than one social media site]

Q19. Which social media site do you use most often? *Among all...*

Twitter	7
Facebook	52
Snapchat	13
Instagram	13
LinkedIn	1
Reddit	6
Pinterest	2
Tumblr	1
Other – please specify	1
Doesn't use social media	5

[IF Q16≠10]

Q20. In general, how important is social media in your life for: *Among those who use...*

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important
Entertainment	25	42	25	8
Getting news or information about current affairs	19	46	27	8
Staying in touch with family and friends	46	36	10	6
Connecting to people who share your interests	20	39	31	10
Promoting your business or work life	14	26	28	31
Learning about things that interest you	31	47	13	9
Increasing the type of people and information you have access to	26	39	24	10

[IF Q16≠10]

Q21. Which of the following types of people or organizations do you follow on social media?

Among those who use....

Athletes or sports organizations	34
Actors/actresses	39
Friends	84
Family members	75
Journalists or news organizations	28
Singers/musicians	49
Comedians	40
Political leaders	24
Social/political organizations	25
Television shows, films or networks	44
Authors	20
Opinion leaders	16
Faith leaders	13

[IF Q16= uses Facebook]

Q22. Some Facebook groups are “private” or “closed,” meaning you have to be accepted into the group to join, and only members can participate in posting or viewing content. Usually these groups are people who share a common interest, for example a hobby, a type of job, a political perspective, or a health condition. Have you ever joined a private or closed Facebook group? Please do not include groups that were formed just for the purpose of completing a project at school.

Among all.....

Yes	60
No	22
Don't use Facebook	12
Don't use social media	5

[IF Q22=yes]

Q23. How many private or closed Facebook groups do you belong to?

Desktop computer	31
Laptop computer	73
Tablet	46
Smartphone	93
None of the above	1

[IF Q22=yes]

Q24. How often do you participate in online conversations with these groups? *Among all....*

Often	5
Sometimes	21
Hardly ever	26
Never	9
Don't belong to private group	22
Don't use Facebook	16
Don't use social media	5

[If Q22=yes]

Q25. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about private or closed Facebook groups:

Among those who belong to a private Facebook group

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
They have helped me perform my job better	6	19	16	10	48
They have helped me during a personal crisis	6	21	16	12	44
They have helped me develop close relationships with others	9	27	15	12	36
I feel safer talking about certain issues online in a private or closed group	10	30	13	14	33
I feel supported by the other members of my private or closed Facebook groups	13	36	11	8	30
I feel disappointed by my interactions with others in private Facebook groups	3	13	17	30	36

[If Q16≠10]

Q26. Have you ever done either of the following:

	Yes	No	Don't use social media
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular TV show or movie	15	79	5
Participated in a social media campaign to oppose or support a particular product or brand	21	74	5

[If Q16≠10]

Q27. When you use social media, how often do you see posts or discussions about social or political issues? *Among those who use...*

Often	45
Sometimes	34
Hardly ever	11
Never	9

[If Q16≠10]

Q28. How often do you post, share links, or comment about social or political issues on social media?

Among those who use...

Often	6
Sometimes	25
Hardly ever	33
Never	35

[If Q16≠10]

Q29. How much do you agree or disagree with each statement:

Among those who use...

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Social media is an important way for me to connect with people who care about the same issues I do	18	44	23	15
Social media helps me feel more empowered to express my views about important issues	14	34	29	22
I have had problems with people I know because of political disagreements we've had on social media	10	27	28	34
Social media helps me have more influence on government or corporate decisions	4	26	34	35
Social media has helped me better understand the perspectives of people I disagree with	12	49	24	14
When I use social media, I am usually exposed to people with social or political views that are different from mine	24	43	20	12

Q30. Have you ever done any of the following:

	Yes
Donated to a political candidate online	10
Donated to a social cause online	24
Learned about a political gathering online that you later attended in person	16
Signed an on-line petition	54
[SHOW IF Q16=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9] Participated in a social media campaign to influence a corporate decision or action <i>(among all)</i>	17
[SHOW IF Q16=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9] Participated in a social media campaign to influence a government decision or action <i>(among all)</i>	19
[SHOW IF Q16=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9] Become more involved in a social or political issue because of something you saw on social media <i>(among all)</i>	28
[SHOW IF Q16=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9] Started or joined a political group on a social network site <i>(among all)</i>	11

Q31. How often do you read, listen to, or watch any blogs, podcasts, online newsletters, or video channels about social or political issues?

Often	13
Sometimes	34
Hardly ever	30
Never	23

[SHOW IF Q27=1,2,3]

Q32A. When you encounter social or political content on social media, which comes closer to describing how you feel? *Among those who see social/political content in social media....*

A. Worn out	70	Energized	27
B. Frustrated	72	Motivated	25
C. Informed	58	Confused	40
D. Interested	57	Bored	41

[SHOW IF Q27=1,2,3]

Q33. Are the political discussions you see on social media more or less _____ than the political discussions you see in other types of media (such as on television, radio, or in newspapers)? *Among those who see social/political content in social media....*

	More	Less	About the same
Informative	21	33	31
Respectful	7	53	25
Relevant to you	24	27	34
Trustworthy	9	47	28

[If Q16≠10]

Q34. Have you ever been the target of hostile or harassing messages because of social or political views you expressed on social media? *Among all....*

Yes	16
No	79
Don't use social media	5

[If Q16≠10]

Q35. Have you ever used your social networking sites to: *Among all....*

	Yes	No	Don't use social media
Find out about available jobs	51	42	5
Get career advice	34	60	5
Join an online community specifically to help you find work	27	67	5
Learn a new skill to help improve your employment chances	32	62	5
Raise money to support a business you started	9	85	5
Promote your career or business	24	71	5
Sell a product <i>you created</i>	15	79	5
Sell a product that <i>you didn't create</i>	21	73	5

Q36. Have you ever:

	Yes	No
Earned money by taking on jobs through a service-providing website or mobile app, such as Task Rabbit, Uber, Lyft, or some similar site or app	12	88
Rented out parts of your home through an online site like AirBnB or HomeAway	4	95

[SHOW IF Q35_7=1 OR Q35_8=1 OR Q36A=1 OR Q36B=1]

Q37. Which of the following statements best describes the income you earn from selling products or services through social media or service-providing apps like Uber, Lyft, Task Rabbit, or AirBnB?

Among all....

It is essential	3
It's an important part of my income, but not essential	8
It's nice to have but I could live without it	23
Don't earn money this way	65

[SHOW IF Q16≠10]

Q38. Have you made any major decisions about your career, work, or financial situation over the past two years? *Among all....*

Yes	49
No	45
Don't use social media	5

[SHOW IF Q38=1]

Q39. What role, if any, did your social media networks play in your decision-making about your career, work, or financial situation? *Among all....*

A major role	6
A minor role	14
No role	29
Didn't make major decision	45
Don't use social media	5

[SHOW IF Q39=1 OR Q39=2]

Q40. In which ways, if any, did your social media networks help you in your decision-making about your career, work, or financial situation? *Among all...*

Connecting you to other people for advice or sharing valuable experiences	9
Connecting you to professional or expert advice	9
Sharing valuable information about available jobs	10
Sharing valuable information about education or training	9
Introducing you to a prospective employer	7
Other	1
None – social media didn’t help my decision making	2
Didn’t make major decision	45
Don’t use social media	5

[SHOW IF Q39=1 and MORE THAN ONE SELECTION IN (Q16=1-9)]

Q41. Which social media site played the most important role in your decision-making about your career, work, or financial situation?

Twitter	*
Facebook	3
Snapchat	*
Instagram	*
LinkedIn	2
Reddit	*
Pinterest	*
Tumblr	-
Other – please specify	*
Social media didn’t play role	2
Didn’t make major financial decision	45
Doesn’t use social media	5

[SHOW IF Q39=1 OR Q39=2]

Q42. When you used social media to help improve your financial or employment situation, did you get help from: *Among all...*

People you know very well	10
People you know only slightly	10
People you do not know at all	8

[SHOW IF Q16=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9]

Q43. Are people in any of the following occupations part of your social media network, or not? *Among all....*

Lawyers	23
Doctors	27
Computer programmers	33
Teachers	47
Police officers	24
Secretaries/administrative assistants	29
Retail salespeople	41
Cleaning people	19
Food servers	39
Construction workers	27
None of the above	24

[SHOW IF Q14=1]

Q44. Do you ever make personal sacrifices to afford Internet connectivity (such as eat out less, or save money in other ways)? *Among all....*

Yes, I <u>often</u> have to cut back in other areas to afford my Internet service	8
I <u>sometimes</u> have to cut back in other areas to afford my Internet service	18
I don't have to worry about paying for my Internet service	58
Doesn't have home Internet access	14

Q45. How dependent are you on publicly available Wi-Fi or hot spots to connect online?

Very dependent	10
Somewhat dependent	24
Not too dependent	33
Not dependent on them at all	33

[SHOW IF Q13_3=1 OR Q13_4=1 OR Q14=1]

Q46. Following is a list of issues people sometimes encounter with technology. For each one, please mark if this is something that has happened to you in the past 12 months. *Among all...*

[SHOW IF Q13_4=1] Your cell phone service got cut off because it was hard to pay for	14
[SHOW IF Q14=1] Your Internet service got cut off at home because it was hard to pay for	11
[SHOW IF Q13_3=1 OR Q13_4=1] You reached the limit on your data plan for a mobile device, and couldn't go online for a while	27
None of the above	60