

# Three Charts: TikTok Penetration Among US Gen Zers

## ARTICLE |

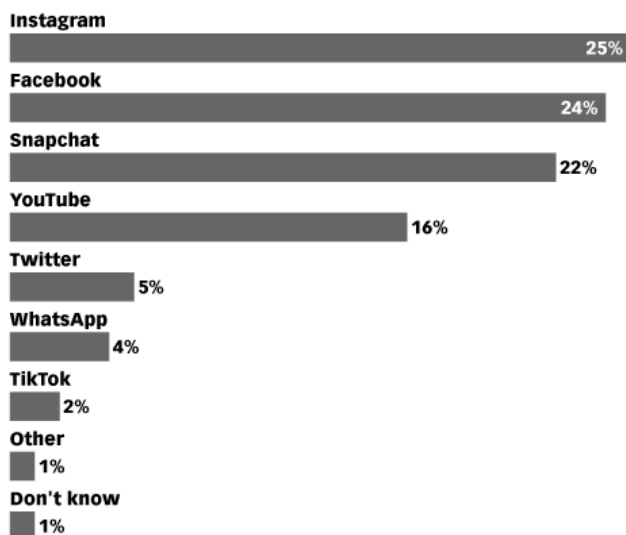
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**T**he media's obsession with Gen Z and TikTok is ever-present, but whether or not penetration levels are as high as the frenzy would indicate is debatable. Three charts paint a clearer picture of what social media usage currently looks like among Gen Zers.

According to a September 2019 survey from [YouGov](#), just 2% of US teens (ages 13 to 17) identified TikTok as the social platform they used most often. That was well behind Instagram (25%), Snapchat (22%) and even Facebook (24%), which we forecast is shedding teen users in the US.

## Which Social Media Platform Do US Teens Use Most Often?

% of respondents, Sep 2019



Note: ages 13-17 who have a social media account  
Source: YouGov, "Youth Omnibus," Sep 18, 2019

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Still, evidence suggests that the short-video app is gaining ground among Gen Zers.

In Piper Jaffray's most recent edition of their biannual "Taking Stock with Teens" survey, 4% of US teens called TikTok their favorite social media platform when surveyed in fall 2019, up from spring 2019, when virtually no respondents reported the same as the platform hadn't yet gained popularity among teens enough for them to consider it their favorite.

## US Teens' Favorite Social Media Platform, Fall 2016-Fall 2019

% of respondents

	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019
Snapchat	35%	39%	47%	45%	46%	41%	44%
Instagram	24%	23%	24%	26%	32%	35%	35%
Facebook	13%	11%	9%	8%	5%	6%	3%
Twitter	13%	11%	7%	9%	6%	6%	3%
Pinterest	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
TikTok	-	-	-	-	-	0%	4%

Note: teens with an average age of 16; excludes "other" responses  
Source: Piper Jaffray, "Taking Stock with Teens: Fall 2019," Oct 8, 2019

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And a September 2019 survey from [Morning Consult](#) found that 42% of US Gen Zers ages 13 to 16 said they use TikTok, on par with the percentage who use Facebook (41%) and Twitter (40%), while Instagram usage remains the highest among this demographic, at 79%.

**Social Media Platforms Used by US Gen Z and Millennial Internet Users, by Demographic, Sep 2019**  
% of respondents in each group

	YouTube	Facebook	Instagram	Snapchat	Twitter	Twitch	TikTok
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	95%	69%	70%	53%	50%	34%	21%
Female	92%	79%	78%	64%	42%	12%	23%
<b>Age</b>							
13-16	98%	41%	79%	68%	40%	31%	42%
17-21	97%	68%	84%	74%	52%	26%	32%
22-26	93%	85%	75%	63%	47%	23%	15%
27-31	92%	88%	73%	50%	49%	20%	12%
32-38	89%	84%	61%	40%	41%	15%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>

Source: Morning Consult, "The Influencer Report: Engaging Gen Z and Millennials," Nov 5, 2019

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Illustrating similar popularity, an October 2019 newsletter from [Apptopia](#) noted that as of September 2019, 48% of TikTok’s active mobile user base in the US was 20 and younger, a higher rate than Snapchat (44.5%) and even Instagram (43.5%).

Brands looking to target TikTok’s core young audience should determine if and how they fit into the platform’s ecosystem. “The brands that are bold enough to want to invest in TikTok are also creatively bold enough to know that they have to come up with an idea or an activation that makes sense for that platform,” said Liz Cole, vice president and group director for social strategy at Digitas. “Because it’s a more emerging platform, not many brands have activated on it yet. It feels fresh. There’s a lot of opportunity to be the first to try an idea.”

To advertise effectively, brands must know their audience and the platform as well as “understand what role the brand is going to play,” according to Haley Paas, senior vice president and head of strategy and insights at Carat USA. “Otherwise you could open yourself up to a lot

of criticism on the platform, given that it's mainly user-generated content."

It's true; TikTok users are highly engaged as content creators — more than one-third (34%) are creating new content on any given day, according to Cole. That stat, she said, "is just so interesting to compare and contrast with some of the wider reaching, but more passive platforms, like Twitter or YouTube."