

# Understanding Generation Z

---

**TREND REPORT**

insight.fya

# Who are Generation Z?

**We spend a lot of time talking and thinking about millennials..... but there's another generation already leaving high school and finding their way in the world.**

---

Generation Z are highly individual, entrepreneurial, globally connected, digital natives and have high expectations of the world they're stepping into. Born between 1995 and 2009, there are 4.6 million Generation Z in Australia today with 2 billion worldwide.

They are growing up in rapidly changing and complex times. Their formative years have been impacted by the Global Financial Crisis, growing cultural diversity, increasing global insecurity, global brand influence and the rise of social media in a truly digital world.



# Seamlessly connected 24/7

**Generation Z are the first true digital natives. They have never known a world without smartphones, social media and content streaming.**

---

To them, mobile is everything. Young people consume almost all of their content on the move - their phone is where they socially interact, access information and view their entertainment.

Technology has become a tool - classed as a utility just like water or electricity. It is fun, entertaining and useful, enabling them to move seamlessly between the digital world and real life.

Being "online" is no more. Today's young people are always connected.





# The 8 second rule

**There has been much focus on today's new attention span - 8 seconds.**

---

Today's young people have been said to possess a "highly evolved eight-second filter"<sup>1</sup> when viewing content. They live in a world where they have unlimited options but limited time. They sort through enormous amounts of information quickly and move on ruthlessly. If your content is deemed worthy enough to capture their attention though, they dive deep!

Their engagement with content is highly visual. They prefer to watch a youtube video summarising a topic than read an article discussing it. With a world of information at their fingertips, this has seen young people interact increasingly through image-based messages and communication is often through colour and picture. For example, Facebook rolled out the ability to create visual text messages on their platform. They saw the need to make text based messages as visually eye-catching as the photographs and videos flooding newsfeeds.<sup>2</sup>



# Social Media and young people in Australia

**82% of Gen Z in Australia get more local, national and international news from social media than newspapers and TV news programs.**

---

**Facebook continues to be their main social media channel - with 99% active daily. Snapchat is their second channel of choice - 84% use it every day, with Instagram third at 79%.<sup>3</sup>**

# Individuals over institutions

**More than any other generation, Gen Z are influenced by their peers - and in today's world, those peers are global, they are always connected and could well be an internet star.**

---

When information is available at all times, young people have adapted to be a highly discerning group. They demand authenticity and transparency from the brands and organisations who market to them. They know when they are being sold to and they expect to be an integrated part of the conversation rather than being told what to do.

# Technology enables engagement

**A number of factors are now impacting on the way young people are engaging in social and civic action.**

---

This includes, the rise and dominance of a number of social networks, the rise in new technologies, the reduction in barriers to creating content and the potential for young people to access large audiences through online platforms for that content.

It is important to recognise that young people are using technology to explore new ways to make an impact in the world. Looking beyond the cynicism and stigma of “clicktivism”, Gen Z see digital activism as a tangible and immediate way to take action. Through their connectivity they have access to vast amounts of information to drive their knowledge, inform opinions, take action and connect to communities of like-minded peers. This is combined with a growing distrust of institutions and a growing disenchanted worldview where young people are suspicious of traditional institutions being able or willing to address the complex issues we face.

A recent Do Something report said that 77% of young Americans believe that the government does not care about young people and that young people believed that partisan politics offer limited solutions and fewer results to the most important issues of our time<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, in the recent Global Shapers Survey of 18 - 35yr olds, 46% of the participants stated they didn't trust the media with similar levels of distrust towards big companies, banks and governments.<sup>5</sup>



A person is silhouetted against a vast, starry night sky. They are standing on a dark, rocky outcrop, looking up at the Milky Way galaxy, which stretches across the frame. The sky is filled with countless stars and the bright, hazy band of the galaxy. The overall mood is contemplative and awe-inspiring.

# Attitude to the future

**Gen Z are more cautious and pragmatic than their Gen Y predecessors with a greater sense of responsibility.**

---

They feel the pressure of and have real fears about the future while at the same time are prepared to fight hard to create a stable one for themselves. They know that unemployment is a real risk for them. They are creative and entrepreneurial in spirit, but in a shift away from the attitudes of Gen Y, they see not having to be reliant on anyone else for security as a way to ensure they can survive and thrive in the changing world of work.

Driven by causes and their values, they possess a strong sense of purpose. Faced with the question of purpose or profit, they are willing to trade dollars for passion when it comes to work.

They want to, and will, change the world for the better.



# What is insight. fya?

**We've spent the past three decades getting to know young Australians. Let us help you do the same.**

---

Insight.fya is a brand new offering from the Foundations for Young Australians (FYA).

FYA is a national independent non-profit organisation dedicated to all young people in Australia. We believe young people are not a problem to be helped or solved. They are ambitious, creative and capable of rethinking the world and solving tomorrow's problems today. Delivering a range of initiatives (co) designed with young people, FYA aims to develop the skills, networks and ideas of young Australians so they can create a better future.

FYA has a long and diverse history of successfully engaging with a wide range of young people across the country through programs, online activity, events and collaborations.

We work with young people and those supporting young people to build a culture and ecosystem of socially active and engaged young people in Australia.

Insight.fya uses our knowledge and expertise to create a growing range of offerings to help other orgs understand, support and authentically engage with young people.

# insight.fya

---

**This report was downloaded  
at [insight.fya.org.au](http://insight.fya.org.au)**

**Copyright and disclaimer** - The materials presented in this report are for information purposes only. The information is provided solely on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessments of the matters discussed. Readers are advised to verify all relevant representations, statements and information and to obtain independent advice before acting on any information contained in or in connection with this report. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, the Foundation for Young Australians does not accept liability for any loss or damages that may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information.

Copyright © 2017 The Foundation for Young Australians. All rights reserved.

## References

---

1. **What Is Generation Z, And What Does It Want?**  
Fast Company, (2015)
2. **Facebook encourages text statuses with new colored backgrounds**  
TechCrunch, (2016)
3. **Y Gen Z are Next**  
Junkee Media & oOh Media, (2017)
4. **How Young People Get Busy, Online and Off Beyond the Selfie**  
TMI Strategy, (2016)
5. **The Global Shapers Survey**  
Global Shapers Community, (2017)