

THE ROLE OF ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS FOR INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Teens and young adults frequently connect with friends and family both in-person and through online communication platforms, and these connections are a key source of their happiness, according to a new survey conducted on behalf of Snap Inc. by NORC at the University of Chicago.

The nationally representative survey of 13- to 40-year-olds explores the social dynamics of teens and young adults and highlights how online communications platforms – and certain specific features within them – play a significant role in their relationships with close friends and family.

Teens and young adults use a wide variety of features associated with online communication platforms, and features that connect them to family and friends are the most likely to bring them happiness. Three in five (62%) say they feel happy directly messaging with family and close friends while far fewer feel happy scrolling through their feed (38%), looking at content produced by celebrities or influencers (30%), or following the news through their timeline or feed (25%).



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Three Things You Should Know

About the Snap survey conducted by NORC. Among 13- to 40-year-olds.

- 1) 62% say direct messaging with family and close friends makes them feel extremely or very happy, making direct messaging the most enjoyed feature of online communication platforms.
- 2) 48% interact daily with their close friends on social media and messaging apps, compared with 32% who do so in-person.
- 3) 56% say they feel overwhelmed by social media and messaging apps, but 80% say these online communication platforms help them feel more in touch with their friends.

About 9 in 10 teens (13- to 17-year-olds) and young adults (18- to 40-year-olds) interact at least weekly with friends and family members both in-person and through online communications platforms such as social media or messaging apps. Many connect each day in-person with family (59%) or close friends (32%), and about half interact daily through online communication platforms with family (49%) or close friends (48%).

Interacting with immediate family and close friends is one of the most valuable uses of online communication platforms for 13- to 40-year-olds. When it comes to using social media or messaging apps, teens and young adults are about twice as likely to say it is very or extremely important to be able to interact with immediate family and friends (49%) than say the same about staying engaged with their community (21%), following the news (24%), or interacting with less close family or friends (26%).

The study does reveal a mix of positive and negative attitudes toward online communications platforms. Over half (56%) of 13- to 40-year-olds feel at least a little overwhelmed by what they encounter on social media and messaging apps, and 45% feel pressured to post content that makes them look good to others. However, these platforms can also serve as a key facilitator for positive relationships, 80% say online communication platforms make them feel more in touch with what is going on in their friends' lives.

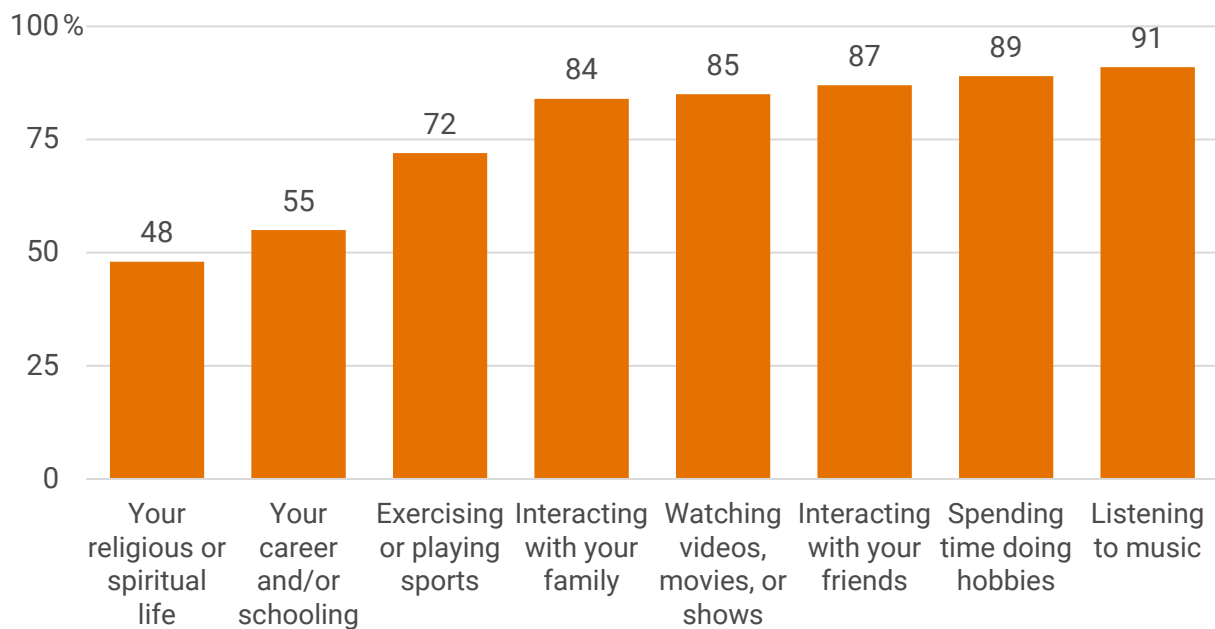
The nationwide poll was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago from October 27 to November 10, 2023, using AmeriSpeak®, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 2,208 panel members ages 13 to 40. The margin of sampling error is +/- 2.9 percentage points.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT SOURCES OF HAPPINESS FOR TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS, AND THEY FREQUENTLY INTERACT BOTH IN-PERSON AND ONLINE.

Regardless of whether interactions take place in-person or through online communications platforms, interacting with friends is a major source of happiness for teens and young adults, alongside listening to music, pursuing hobbies, watching videos, shows, or movies, or interacting with family.

Interacting with friends is a large source of happiness.

Percent of 13-40 year olds who say the following makes them extremely or very happy



Question: Please tell us how happy or unhappy each of the following make you:

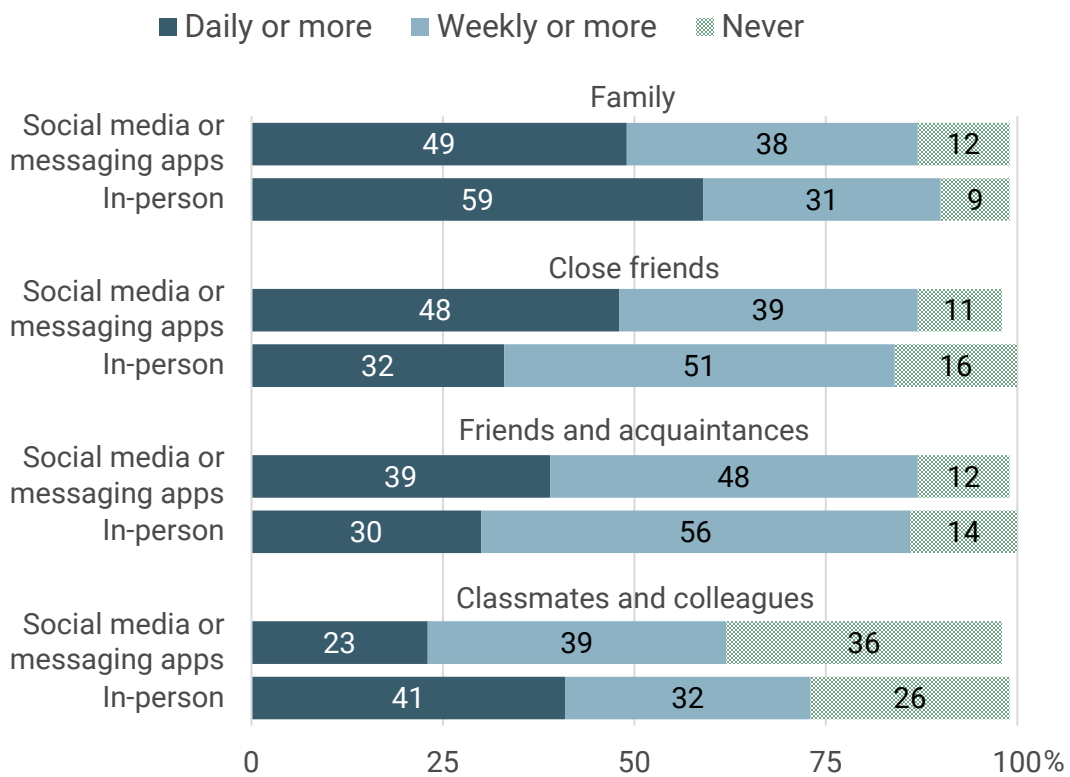
Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

When it comes to interacting with family, 59% of 13- to 40-year-olds interact with their family in-person daily, and half (49%) use online communications platforms such as messaging apps or social media to connect every day.

Online communications platforms are a key facilitator of friendships. Teens and young adults are more likely to interact at least once a day with their close friends through messaging apps or social media than they are in-person.

Teens and young adults have highly frequent interactions via online communications platforms and in-person.

Percent of 13-40 year olds



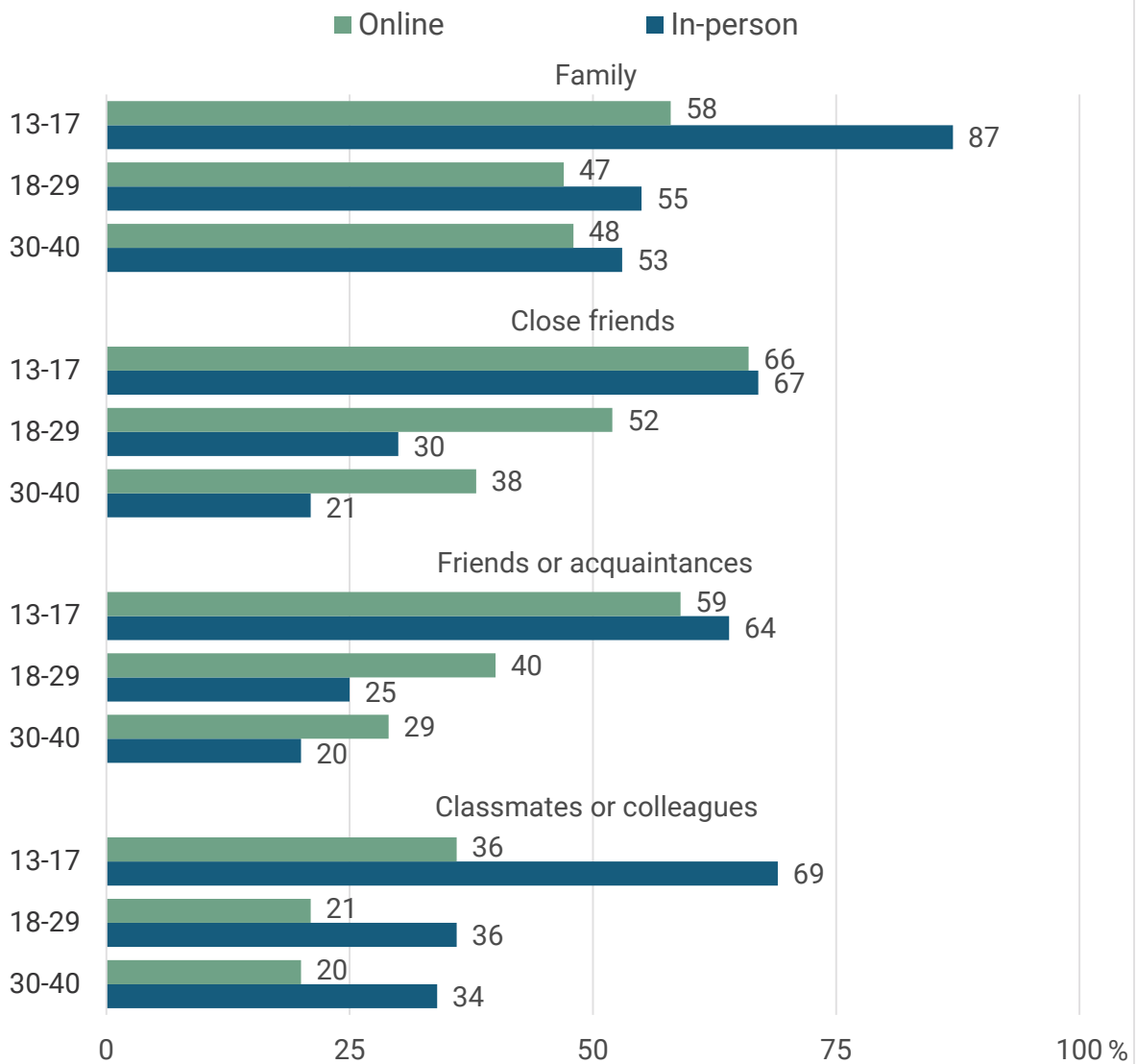
Question: In a typical week, how often do you interact with each of the following [by seeing them in-person]/[on social media or messaging apps]?

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

Overall, teens have a higher frequency of social interaction than young adults, both in-person and online. However, young adults report interacting with close friends and acquaintances significantly more online than in-person. Teens are equally likely to interact with their close friends online and in-person, but significantly less likely to interact with their acquaintances online, as opposed to in-person.

Teens interact online and in-person more frequently than young adults.

Percent of 13-40 year olds who interact at least daily



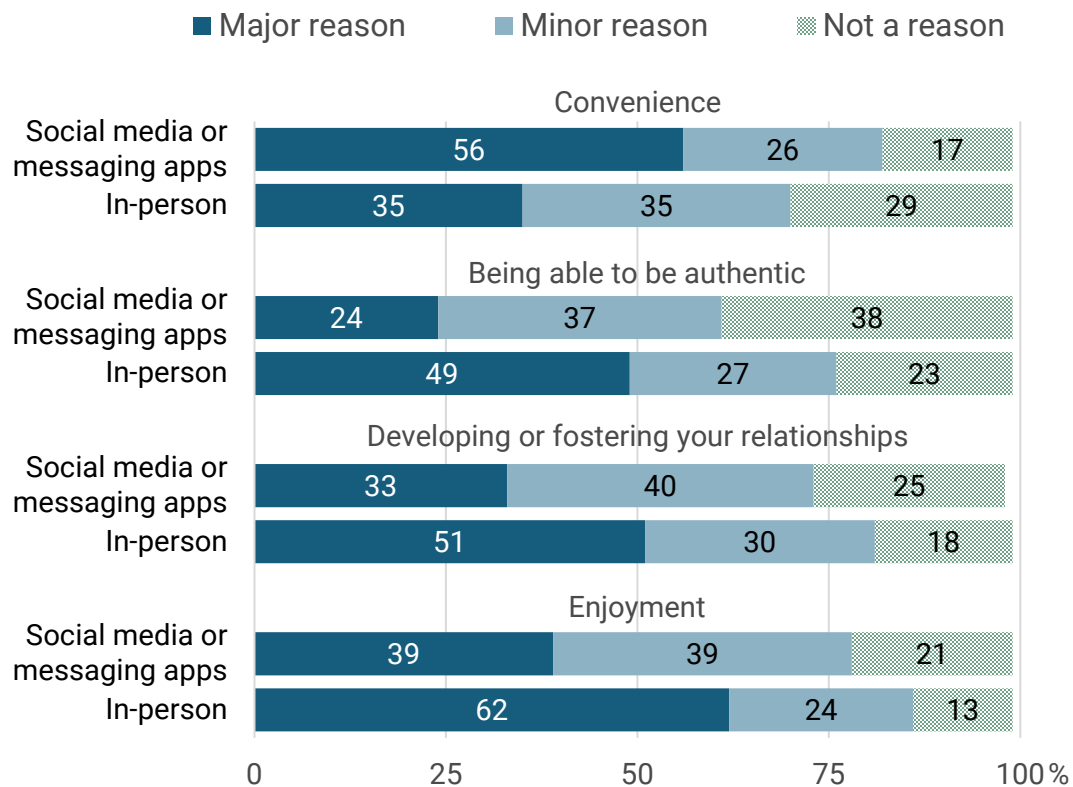
Question: In a typical week, how often do you interact with each of the following [by seeing them in-person]/[on social media or messaging apps]?

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents

While teens and young adults are slightly more likely to view in-person communication with friends and family as authentic, enjoyable, and conducive to relationship-building compared with online communication, a large majority also cite these as reasons for online interaction. They also tend to view online communication through messaging apps or social media platforms as more convenient than in-person communication.

Convenience is a major reason many 13-to 40-year-olds say they interact with online communications platforms.

Percent of 13-40 year olds



Question: When it comes to interacting with friends and family [in-person/on social media or messaging apps] is each of the following a major reason, minor reason, or no reason you choose to do so in-person?

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

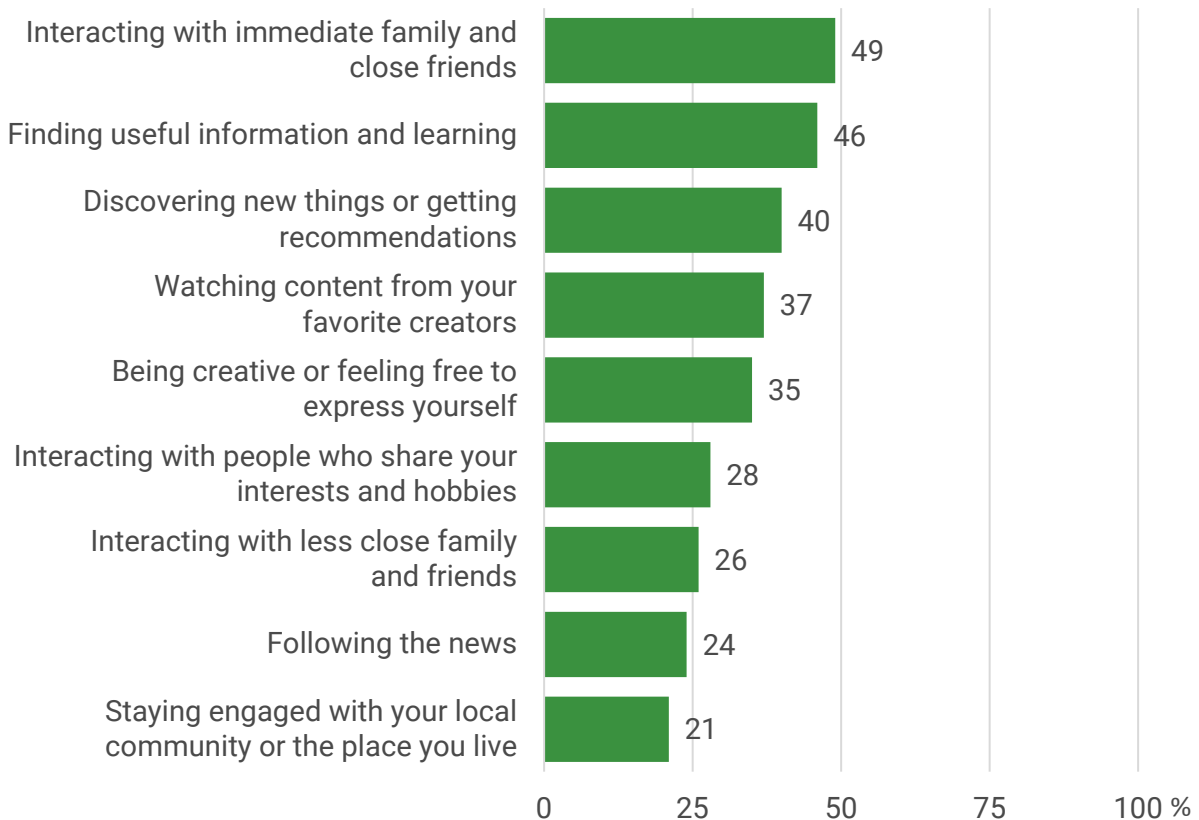
TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS PRIORITIZE STRENGTHENING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN THEIR ONLINE LIVES.

Online communications platforms play a crucial and foundational role in nurturing and enhancing close relationships. Although these platforms serve a multitude of functions and offer diverse forms of information and interaction, teens and young adults say connecting with close friends and immediate family is the most important reason for why they use them.

Nearly half say connecting with immediate family and close friends is extremely or very important, about twice as many who say the same about following the news or staying engaged with their community.

Interacting with close family friends is the most popular activity on online communications platforms.

Percent of 13-40 year olds who say extremely or very important



Question: When using social media or messaging apps, how important are each of the following things to you?

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

INTERACTION WITH ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS CAN LEAVE TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS FEELING OVERWHELMED, BUT ALSO CREATES CONNECTION.

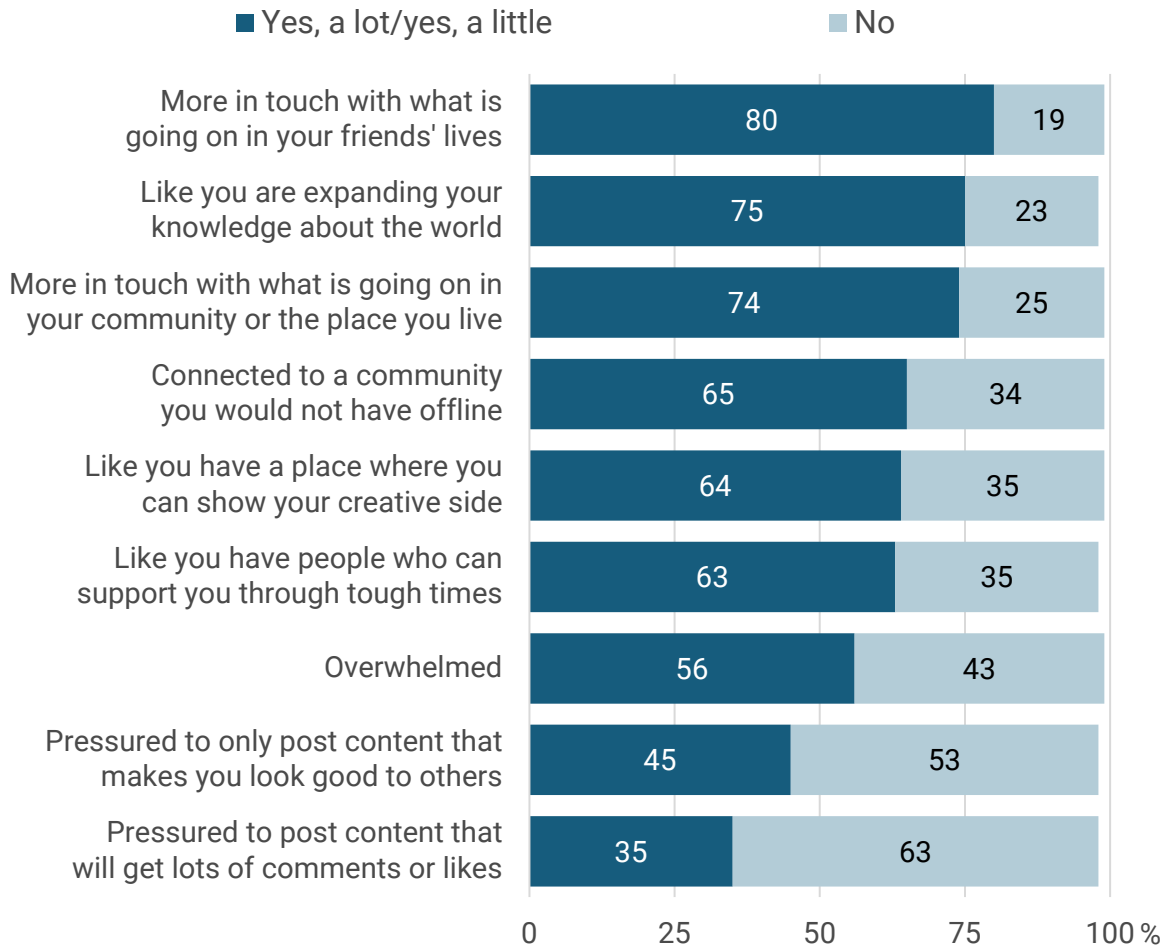
Although most teens and young adults say what they see on online communications platforms can make them feel overwhelmed, these feelings are less common than positive feelings of connection and support.

Many teens and young adults report experiencing negative emotions when posting or engaging with content on online communications platforms. More than half (56%) report feeling overwhelmed with what they see online, just under half (45%) feel pressured to only post content that makes them look good to others, and about a third (35%) say they feel pressured to post content that will drive engagement from other users.

However, far more (80%) teens and young adults say what they see on online communication platforms makes them feel more connected with what is going on in their friends' lives. Nearly 3 in 4 (74%) say it makes them feel more connected to their communities, and about 2 in 3 (65%) say they have found a community they would not have found otherwise offline, and just over 3 in 5 (63%) feel that social media provides them support when they are going through tough times.

Most teens and young adults say online communication platforms bring both positive and negative feelings.

Percent of 13-40 year olds



Question: In general, does what you see on social media or messaging apps make you feel...

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

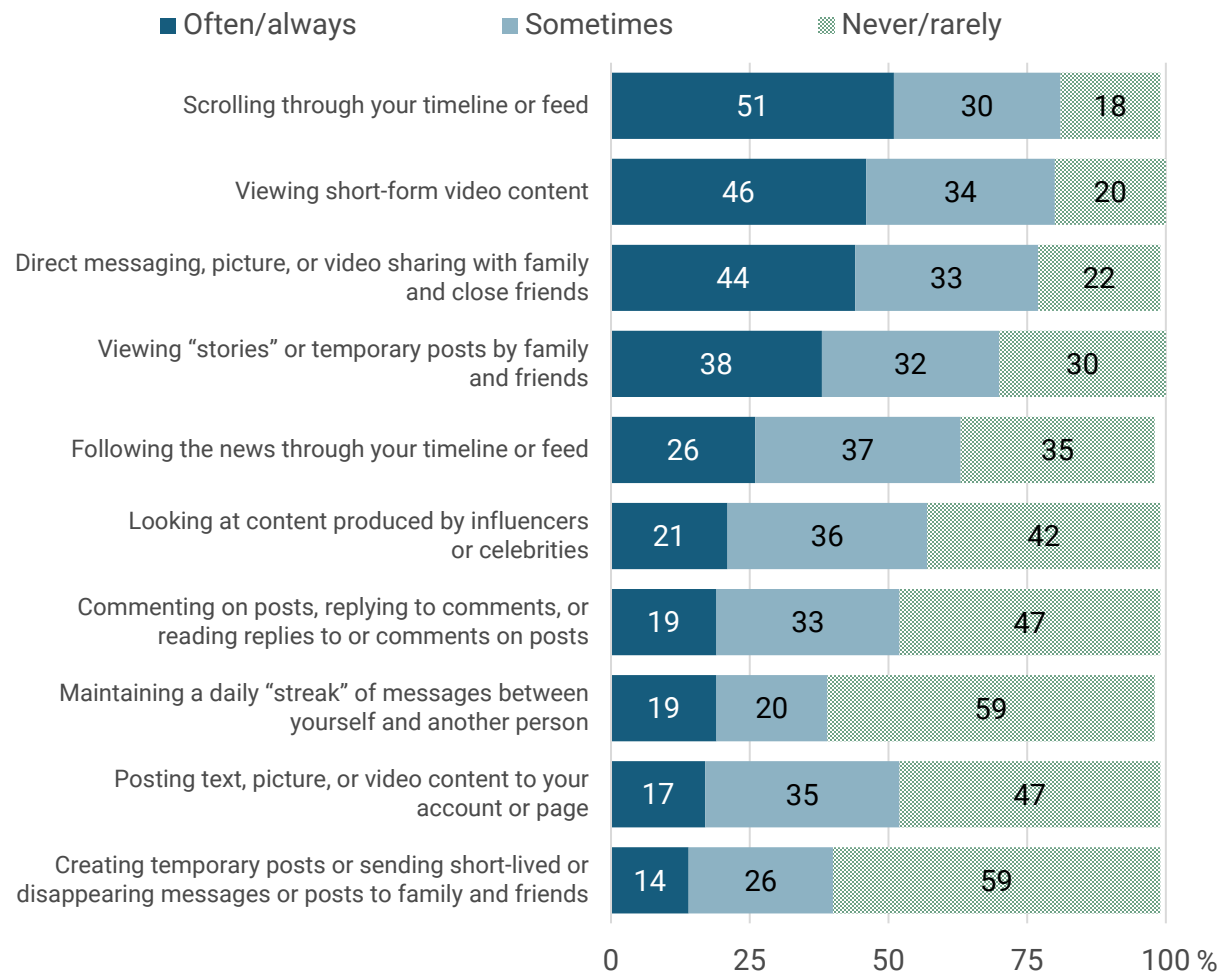
TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS CITE FEATURES OF ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS THAT FACILITATE INTERACTION WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY AS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR TO THEIR HAPPINESS.

Teens and young adults use a range of features of online communication platforms, and some features are used more frequently and regarded more positively than others.

They often scroll through their timeline or feed, view short-form video content, and directly message with family and close friends. They are more than twice as likely to frequently use these features than they are to view content produced by celebrities or influencers or engage with comments on posts.

Scrolling through their timeline, viewing videos, and direct messaging are most frequently used online communications platform features.

Percent of 13-40 year olds



Question: How often do you do each of the following when using social media or messaging apps?

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

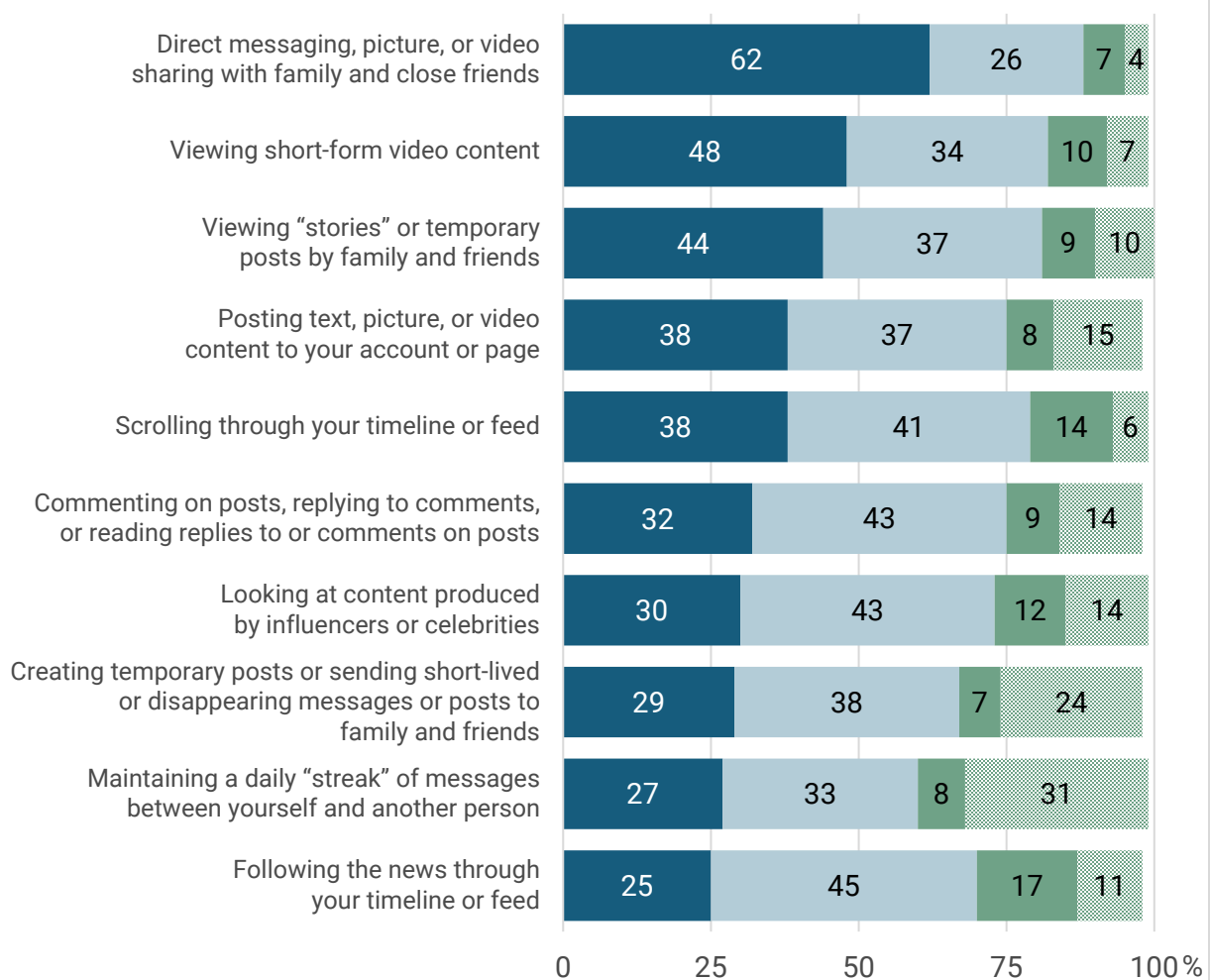
Teens and young adults report direct messaging with family or friends as the feature that brings them the most happiness. Direct messaging is the only feature asked about in the survey that makes the majority (62%) of 13- to 40-year-olds happy. Nearly half say they feel happy when viewing short-form video content (48%) or viewing stories or temporary posts from friends or family (44%).

In contrast, only a quarter (25%) say following the news brings them happiness, and less than a third (30%) say they are happy looking at content produced by influencers and celebrities.

Direct messaging with friends and family is the online activity teens and young adults enjoy the most.

Percent of 13-40 year olds

■ Very/somewhat happy ■ Neither happy nor unhappy ■ Somewhat/very unhappy ■ Never do it



Question: How happy or unhappy does each of the following make you feel when you are doing it on social media or messaging apps?

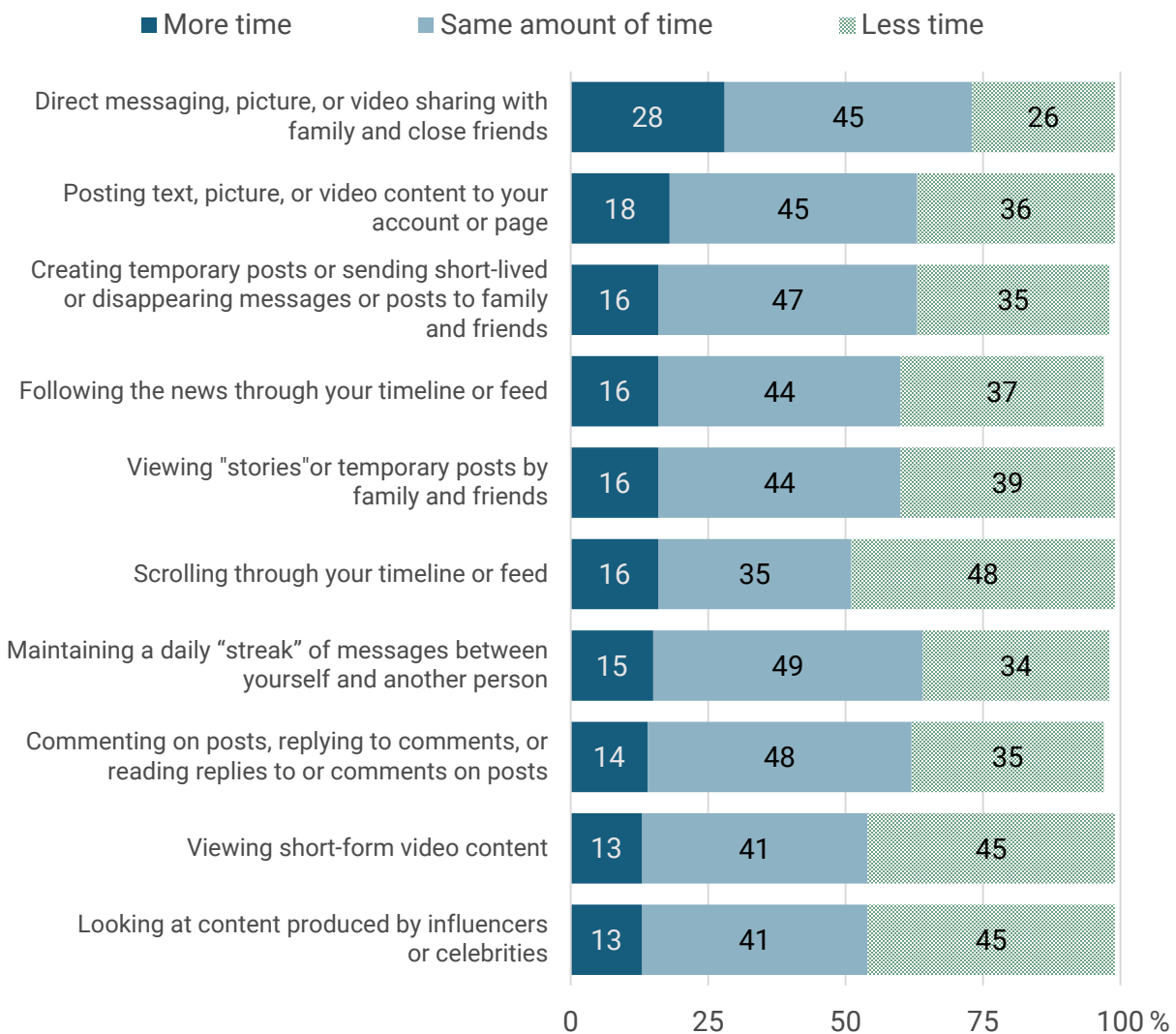
Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

Overall, teens and young adults want to spend less time rather than more time using most features associated with online communications platforms. In particular, they are roughly three times more likely to want to reduce their time spent scrolling through their feeds, watching short-form videos, and following influencers than to increase it.

Direct messaging with family and close friends stands out as the only feature wherein the proportion of teens and young adults who want to increase their usage of it (28%) is roughly equal to the share that want to decrease it (26%).

Direct messaging is the only feature that as many teens and young adults say they want to use more as say they want to cut back.

Percent of 13-40 year olds



Question: In the coming year, would you want to spend more time, less time, or about the same amount of time doing each of the following on social media or messaging apps?

Source: Poll conducted by NORC from October 27– November 10, 2023, with 2,208 respondents age 13-40 nationwide.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey, funded by Snap Inc., was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. Data were collected using AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between October 27 and November 10, 2023. Adult panel members ages 18 to 40 were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,978 completed the survey – 1,977 via the web and 1 via telephone. Teen panel member ages 13 to 17 were drawn from AmeriSpeak Teen, and 230 completed the survey – all via the web. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive (\$3) for completing the survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 262 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third of the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data prior to weighting.

The final stage completion rate is 18.8 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 21.5 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 78.9 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 3.2 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/-2.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a raking process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Raking variables included age, gender, census region, race/ethnicity, and education. Population control totals for the raking variables were obtained from the 2022 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of people ages 13 to 40.

For additional information about the AmeriSpeak Panel methodology is available at: <https://amerispeak.norc.org/us/en/amerispeak/about-amerispeak/panel-design.html>.

For more information, email info@norc.org.

ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge.

NORC conducts research in five main areas: Economics, Markets, and the Workforce; Education, Training and Learning; Global Development; Health and Well-Being; and Society, Media, and Public Affairs.

ABOUT SNAP INC.

Snap Inc. is a technology company. We believe the camera presents the greatest opportunity to improve the way people live and communicate. We contribute to human progress by empowering people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together. For more information, visit [snap.com](https://www.snap.com).

Snapchat is an app that empowers people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together. It's the easiest and fastest way to communicate the full range of human emotions with your friends without pressure to be popular, pretty, or perfect. Snap's camera supports real friendships through visual communication, self-expression, and storytelling. Moving forward, our camera will play a transformative role in how people experience the world around them, combining what they see in the real world, with all that's available to them in the digital world.