



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

American Teens are Taking Breaks from Social Media; Some Step Back Deliberately, but Other Breaks are Involuntary

Conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

*Interviews: 12/7-31/2016
790 teens age 13-17*

Margin of error: 4.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level among all adults

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.

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Note: Some numbers in the topline findings below do not match frequencies reported in the final report write-up. Some analysis in the report write-up is stated out of all teens, while the topline findings below report frequencies based on only those who were asked the question directly.

Q1. Do you access the internet on a cell phone, tablet or other mobile device, at least occasionally?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Yes	97
No, I don't use the internet on a mobile device	2
No, you don't go online at all	1
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED ON WEB/REFUSED	*

N=790

Q2. Do you, personally, have or have access to each of the following items, or not?

AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016	Yes	No	DK	SKIP/ REFUSED
A smartphone	89	11	-	*
A laptop computer	80	18	-	2
A tablet computer like an iPad or a Samsung Galaxy Tab	68	29	-	4
A desktop computer	54	42	-	4
A cell phone that is not a smart phone	19	72	-	9

N=790

Asked if Q1=1 or 2 OR if uses a smartphone or cell phone in Q2...

Q3. Do you do any of the following online or on your cell phone?

AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016	Yes	No	DK/ Unsure	SKIP/ REFUSED
Use regular text messaging directly on your phone, not on an app	91	9	*	*
Use a social media site	88	12	*	-
Video chat with friends or family	76	24	*	*
Use an app that automatically deletes the messages you send like Snapchat or BurnNote	64	35	1	*
Live stream video from your phone or computer (on sites like YouNow, Periscope or Facebook)	44	55	1	-
Use messaging apps like Kik, Line or WhatsApp	40	58	1	1
Read or comment on a discussion site (such as reddit)	27	71	2	*
Meet new people online through a chat site	18	80	1	*
Visit anonymous sharing or question apps like Whisper, YikYak, or Afterschool	14	82	4	1

N=787

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Asked if Q1=1 or 2 OR if uses a social media site in Q3...

Q4. How often do you use the following, if at all?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016	Almost constantly	Several times a day	Once a day	At least once a week	Less often	Never	Don't know	SKIP/REF
YouTube	28	34	16	15	4	3	-	*
Snapchat	26	31	7	6	6	25	-	*
Instagram	22	30	9	8	8	24	-	*
Facebook	11	20	8	13	14	34	-	*
Twitter	7	12	6	6	16	52	-	1
Steam	4	5	3	7	12	70	*	*
Tumblr	3	4	2	5	14	71	-	1
Twitch	1	1	3	5	12	76	*	*
LinkedIn	*	1	1	3	6	89	1	*

N=786

If uses messaging apps...

Q5. How often do you use the following?

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016	Almost constantly	Several times a day	Once a day	At least once a week	Less often	Never	Don't know	SKIP/REF
Regular text messaging or iMessage	38	47	7	3	3	2	-	*
Kik	15	16	8	9	17	34	-	1
Skype or FaceTime	14	16	11	21	24	14	-	1
Facebook Messenger	13	17	10	13	14	31	-	1
WhatsApp	7	8	6	8	22	48	-	1
GroupMe	4	5	1	6	10	74	*	1
Line	3	5	1	4	7	80	-	1
Viber	2	1	1	3	10	82	-	1

N=332

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If uses social media in Q3 or any of the apps more often than 'Never' in Q4...

Q10. How does social media make you feel? *Select all that apply*

[RESPONSE OPTION ORDER RANDOMIZED]

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Connected to my friends	75
More informed	48
Connected to my family	40
Supported	19
Like I always need to show the best version of myself	14
Overloaded with information	10
Like I am missing out	9
Overwhelmed	8
Alone	4
Some other way, please specify	7
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	*

N=

737

Q11. Have you ever taken a break from social media?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Yes	58
No	35
Don't know/Unsure	6
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

790

Ask if never have taken a break from social media and used social media...

Q12. Have you ever wanted to take a break from social media?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Yes	23
No	68
Don't know/Unsure	9
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

279

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Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q13. Why did you take a break from social media? Select all that apply

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
My parents took my phone	38
It was getting in the way of school work or other things I needed to do	38
I was tired of the conflict and drama	24
I was tired of having to keep up with everything posted to the platform	20
My phone was lost/stolen/broken	17
I wanted to get away from a former friend, ex-boyfriend or girlfriend	5
Loss of connectivity due to camp or vacation (VOL.)	4
I'm tired of it, it's stupid, or got bored (VOL.)	4
My friends left the platform	3
I was being bullied or harassed	3
Some other reason, please specify	10
Don't know/unsure	*
SKIPPED/REFUSED	*

N=

447

Ask if wanted to take a break from social media but didn't...

Q14. Why haven't you taken a break from social media? Select all that apply

[HALF OF RESPONDENTS SHOWN RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-6 IN REVERSE ORDER]

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
My friends are there	59
I don't want to miss out on what's going on	56
It's how I find out what's happening in my friends' lives	52
It's how I find out what's happening in the world	44
I can't – I need to use it for extracurricular activities	22
I can't – I need to be there for school	21
I'm addicted (VOL.)	7
Some other reason, please specify	3
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	-

N=

57

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Ask if never wanted to take a break from social media...

Q14A. Why haven't you felt the need to take a break from social media? Select all that apply

[HALF OF RESPONDENTS SHOWN RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-6 IN REVERSE ORDER]

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
My friends are there	73
It's how I find out what's happening in my friends' lives	53
I don't want to miss out on what's going on	48
It's how I find out what's happening in the world	48
I can't – I need to use it for extracurricular activities	17
I can't – I need to be there for school	12
I don't use it much (VOL.)	1
Some other reason, please specify	3
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	-

N=

196

Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q15. How many times have you taken a break from social media?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Once	18
Twice	22
3 or more times	60
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	-

N=

447

Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q16. Thinking about the most recent time you took a break from social media, how long were you completely off the platform?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Less than a day	10
1 to 3 days	25
4 to 7 days	18
7 to 10 days	12
10 to 14 days	6
More than 14 days	29
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	-

N=

447

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Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q17. When you took your most recent break from social media, how many social media platforms did you leave?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
1	19
2	18
3	12
4	4
All the social platforms you use	44
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	3
N=	447

Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q18. Did you check back in on the social media platform(s) you left during your break, or not?

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Yes	38
No	62
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	-
N=	447

Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q19. How did you feel during your social media break? Select all that apply

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Like I had more time to do other things	38
Glad that I had my break	32
Relieved	29
Anxious that I was missing out	25
Like I wanted to get back on as soon as possible	23
Less connected to news and information	21
More connected to people who are important to me	19
Less connected to people who are important to me	19
Like I wanted to stay off longer	11
More connected to news and information	5
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIPPED/REFUSED	*
N=	447

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Ask if taken a break from social media...

Q20. What was it like when you went back onto your social media platform(s)?

[HALF OF RESPONDENTS SHOWN RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5 IN REVERSE ORDER]

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Nothing was really different	53
I visited the platform less often than before	19
I posted less	17
I was more careful about what I shared	13
I reduced the number of people I followed, who followed me or who I was friends with on the platform or platforms	10
I never went back on some or all of the platforms	7
I posted more	4
SKIPPED/REFUSED	1
DON'T KNOW	*

N=

447

AGE

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
13	21
14	19
15	18
16	20
17	22

N=

790

GENDER

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Male	51
Female	49
Other	*

N=

790

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TEEN RACE/ETHNICITY¹

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
White	54
Black or African American	15
Hispanic	23
Other	8
<i>N</i> =	790

PARENT HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Under \$10,000	5
\$10,000 to under \$20,000	5
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	10
\$30,000 to under \$40,000	9
\$40,000 to under \$50,000	7
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	16
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	14
\$100,000 to under \$150,000	19
\$150,000 or more	16
<i>N</i> =	790

PARENT² EDUCATION

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
Less than a high school diploma	7
High school graduate or equivalent	22
Some college	22
College graduate or above	49
<i>N</i> =	

¹ Teens’ race/ethnicity was derived from a combination of their own answer to a question about their race and the AmeriSpeak® profile variable of their parent. Race was imputed for the teen based on their parent if the teen did not answer the question about their race (n=8).

² Parent education and parent race/ethnicity were asked of parents and only apply to the parent who was sampled as an AmeriSpeak® Panelist. Income was asked of parents as well, but applies to the entire household.

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PARENT RACE/ETHNICITY

	AP-NORC 12/7-31/2016
White	58
Black or African American	14
Hispanic	23
Other	5

N= 790

AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research Poll

Study Methodology

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from 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. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. 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 December 7 and 31, 2016, with teenagers age 13 to 17 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Adult panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and after confirming that there were children of the appropriate age in the household, permission was sought from a parent or guardian to survey their teenager. If a given panelist had multiple teens at home, one teen was randomly selected to participate. Completed interviews were conducted with 790 teenagers, 739 via the web and 51 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference.

The final stage completion rate is 31.5 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 34.3 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 95 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 10.3 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification 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. Poststratification variables at the adult level included age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census division. This produced a weight for each teen that was then adjusted so as to be calibrated to the external controls totals for age, sex, race/ethnicity, Census division, and household income for the U.S. population of teenagers age 13 to 17. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2016 Current Population Survey. The weighted data were used for all analyses.

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A full report is available on The AP-NORC Center website: www.apnorc.org.

About the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is the world's essential news organization, bringing fast, unbiased news to all media platforms and formats.
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest and most respected, independent research institutions in the world.

The two organizations have established the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

The founding principles of The AP-NORC Center include a mandate to carefully preserve and protect the scientific integrity and objectivity of NORC and the journalistic independence of AP. All work conducted by the Center conforms to the highest levels of scientific integrity to prevent any real or perceived bias in the research. All of the work of the Center is subject to review by its advisory committee to help ensure it meets these standards. The Center will publicize the results of all studies and make all datasets and study documentation available to scholars and the public.