

Navigating teen technology and social media use

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Preparing
Students for
Tomorrow

Department of
Family Social Science
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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Objectives

1. Participants will understand the benefits and risks of teen technology and social media use.
2. Participants will understand how screen time has changed during the pandemic.
3. Participants will consider tools for supporting and limiting teen screen time.



COVID -19 and Technology use

- Data we'll present first are pre-COVID statistics and not reflective of the current context
- We'll then share what we know about how COVID has impacted technology and social media use
- As schools and programs have reopened there will again be shifts

Social Media Use

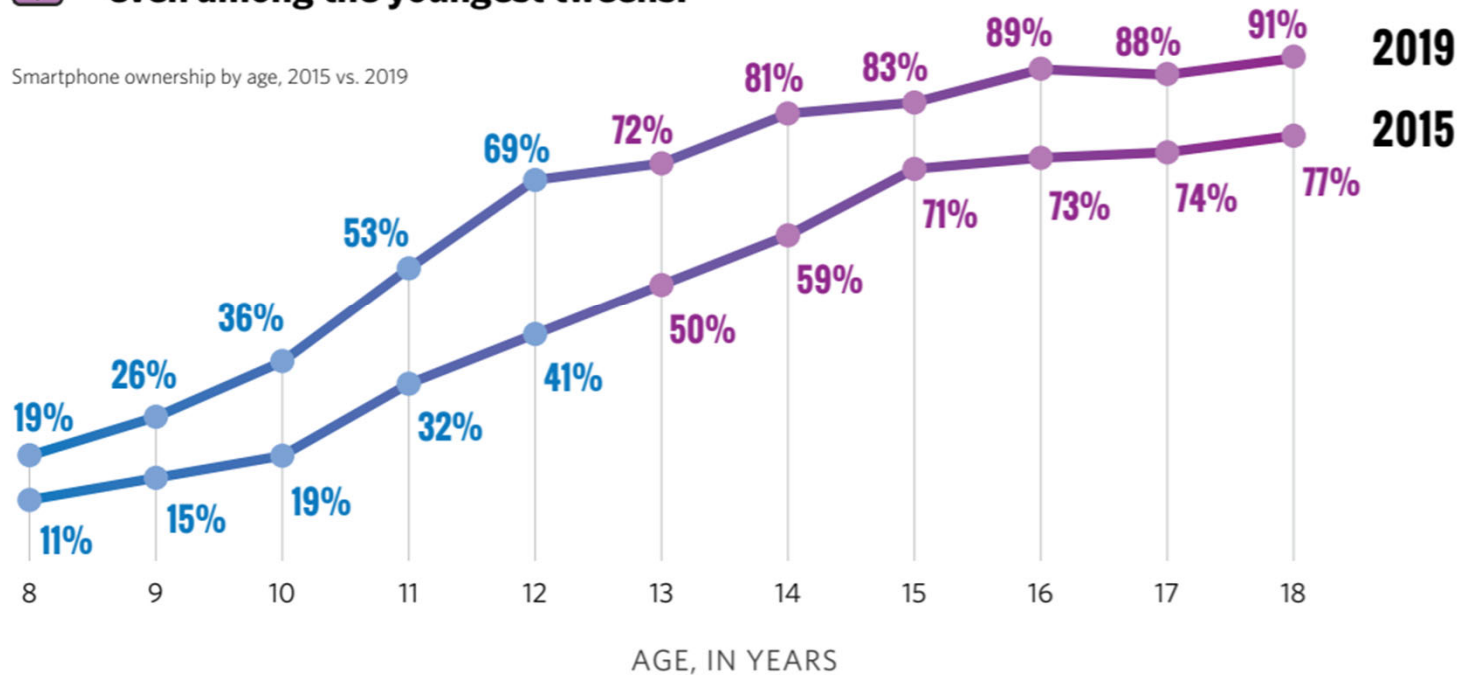
- Adolescents are active users of technology, and have grown up with it
- With social media, teens are often the “first,” introducing new social media into the family
- Let’s consider the role of social media in families with adolescents, and the ways social media can be both beneficial and potentially harmful for teens and family relationships

What does teen cell phone use look like?



Smartphone ownership has risen dramatically, even among the youngest tweens.

Smartphone ownership by age, 2015 vs. 2019



Common Sense Media

What does teen tech use look like?

Top screen media activities for tweens and teens

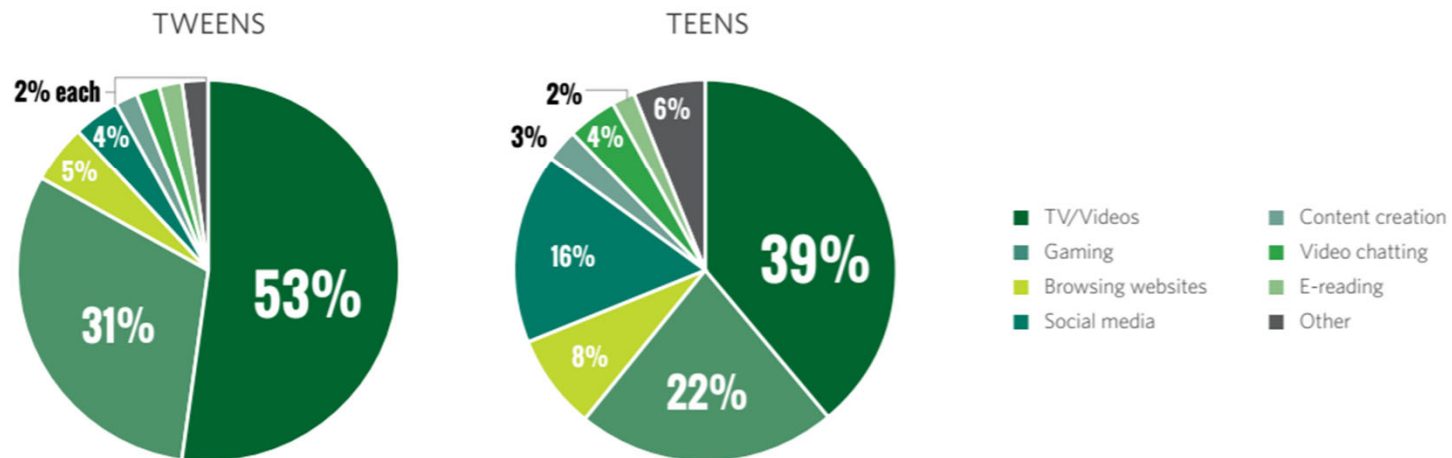
Proportion of screen time devoted to various media activities, 2019

#1 

Watching TV/videos

#2 

Playing games

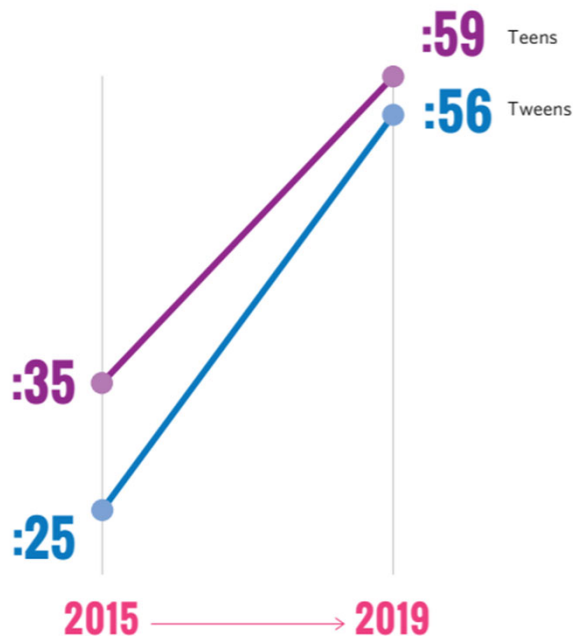


Note: Content creation includes writing on digital devices, making art, or creating digital music. "Other" includes using GPS or other functional apps, using email, shopping, and doing any other digital activities not specifically asked about in the survey.

Common Sense Media

What does teen social media use look like?

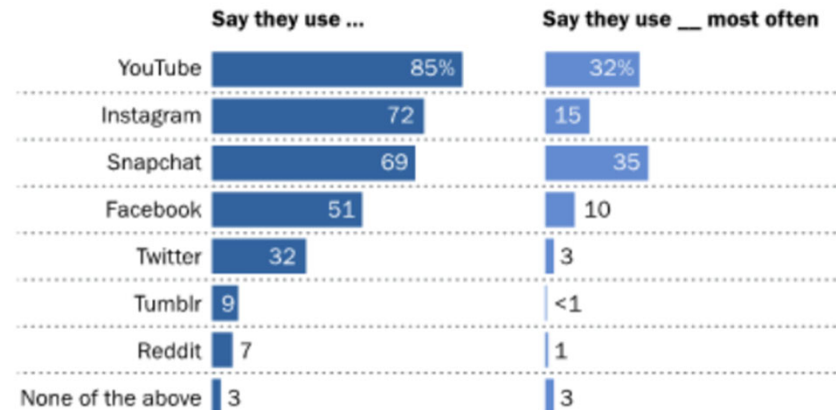
 **Time spent watching online videos has increased substantially.**



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YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens

% of U.S. teens who ...



Note: Figures in first column add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. Question about most-used site was asked only of respondents who use multiple sites; results have been recalculated to include those who use only one site. Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

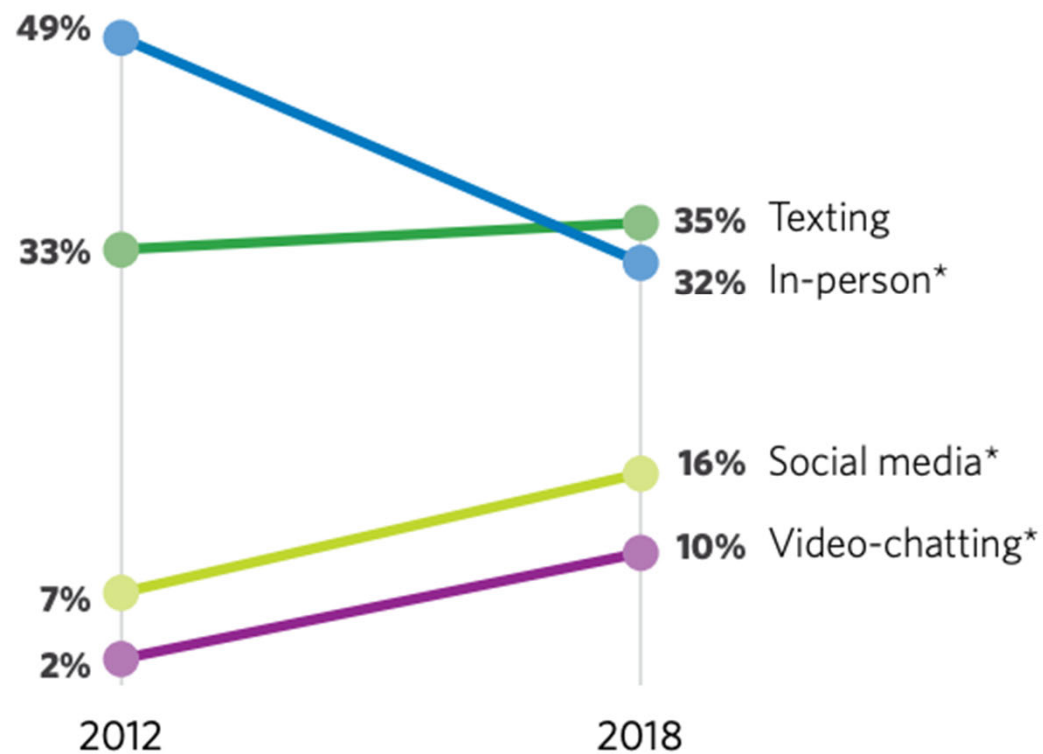
"Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As of fall 2020, it is estimated that 69% of US teens were monthly TikTok users.
(<https://www.businessofapps.com/data/tik-tok-statistics/>)

FIGURE F. Preferred Method of Communication, 2012 vs. 2018

Among 13- to 17-year-olds, percent who say the following is their favorite way to communicate with friends:

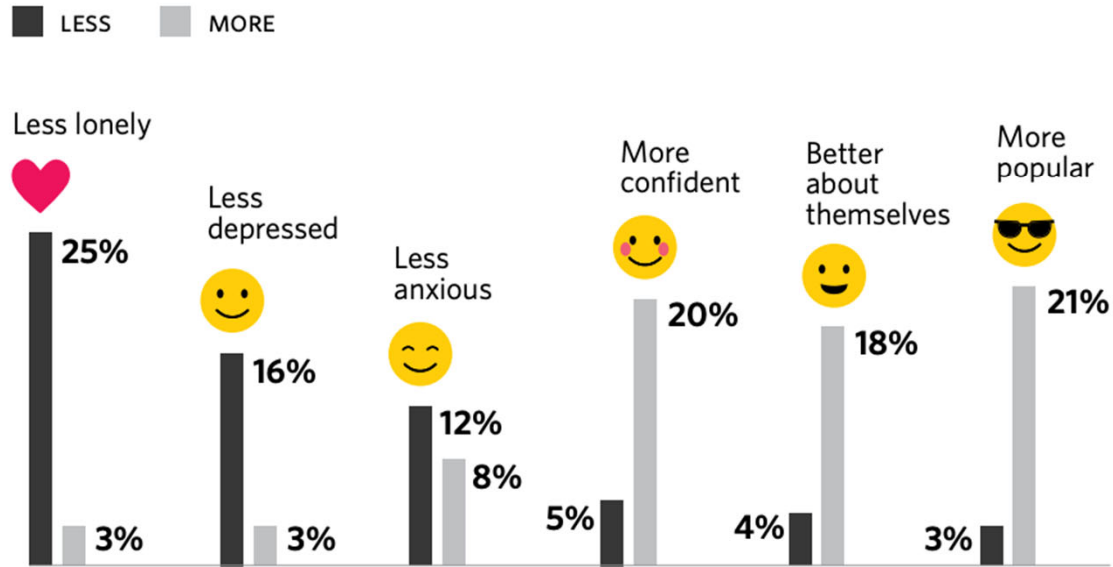


*Differences over time are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Common Sense Media

Teens are much more likely to say social media has a positive rather than a negative effect on how they feel.

Social media users who say using social media makes them feel "more" or "less":



How important is social media to you for:

	Not at all	Not too	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
Keeping up with your friends on a day to day basis	7%	14%	38%	28%	11%
Having meaningful conversations with your close friends	11%	19%	36%	24%	9%
Expressing yourself creatively	13%	23%	37%	20%	7%
Documenting and sharing the highlights of your life	13%	27%	37%	19%	5%

Common Sense Media

How would you describe your teens' social media use:

They use it frequently, and want the most up to date apps and devices

They like technology and social media, but feel overwhelmed or stressed out by it

They use technology only when they have to; they don't express interest in new apps or devices

How would you describe your own social media use:

I use it frequently, and have the most up to date apps and devices

I like technology and social media, but try not to use it too often, it can feel like a burden

I use technology only when I have to, I am not up to date with apps or devices

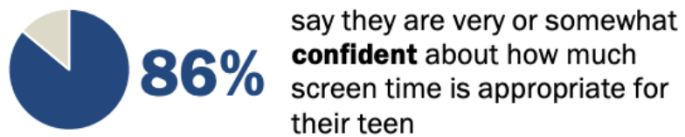
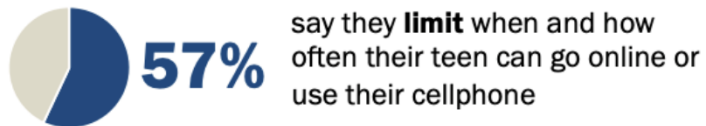
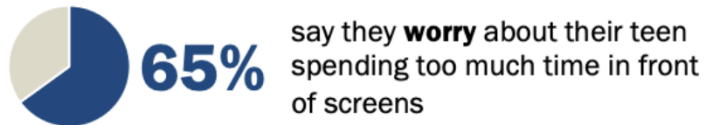


What stands out to you in both polls?

Was anything surprising?

What parents are saying about their teen's screen time

% of U.S. parents of teens who ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer or gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

"How Parents and Teens Navigate Screen Time and Device Distractions"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

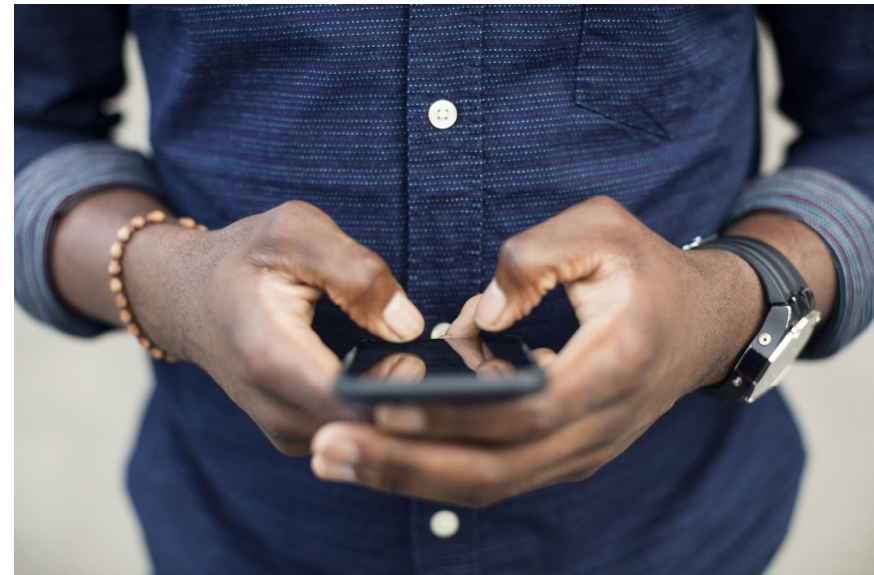


FIGURE G. Silencing Digital Devices, 2018

Among 13- to 17-year-olds with a cellphone, percent who say they turn off, silence, or put away their phones when:

Going to sleep



Having a meal with someone



Doing homework



Visiting family



Hanging out with friends



■ All/Most of the time ■ Some of the time ■ Hardly ever/Never

Note: Segments may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

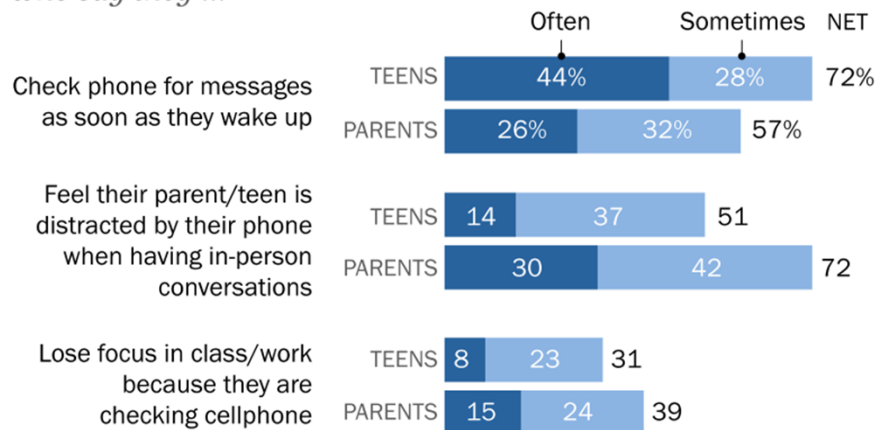
Common Sense Media

Parents and teens report varying levels of attachment, distraction due to their cellphones

% of U.S. teens/parents who say they ...



% of U.S. teens/parents who say they ...

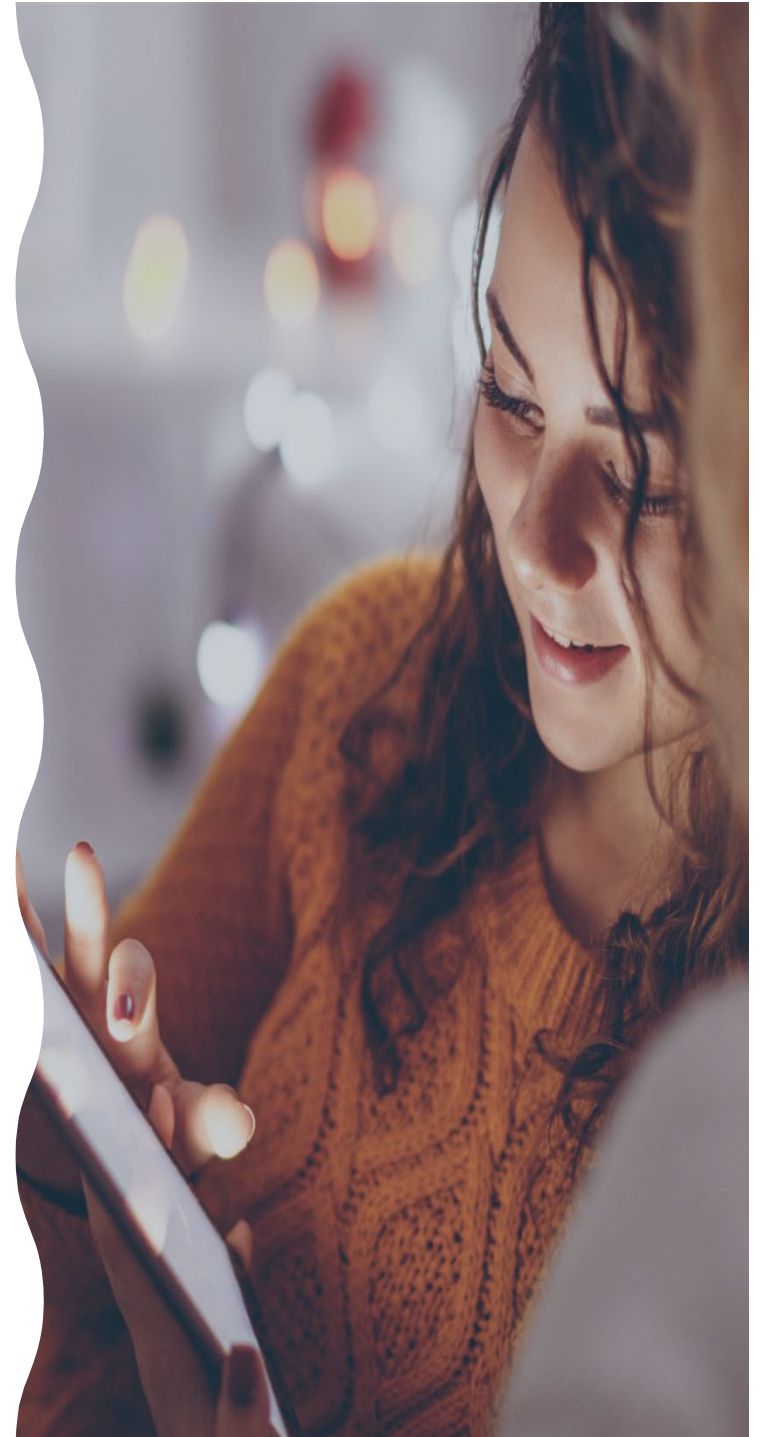


Note: Parents refer to parents of teens ages 13 to 17. Teens were asked how often they lose focus in class, whereas parents were asked how often they lose focus at work.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

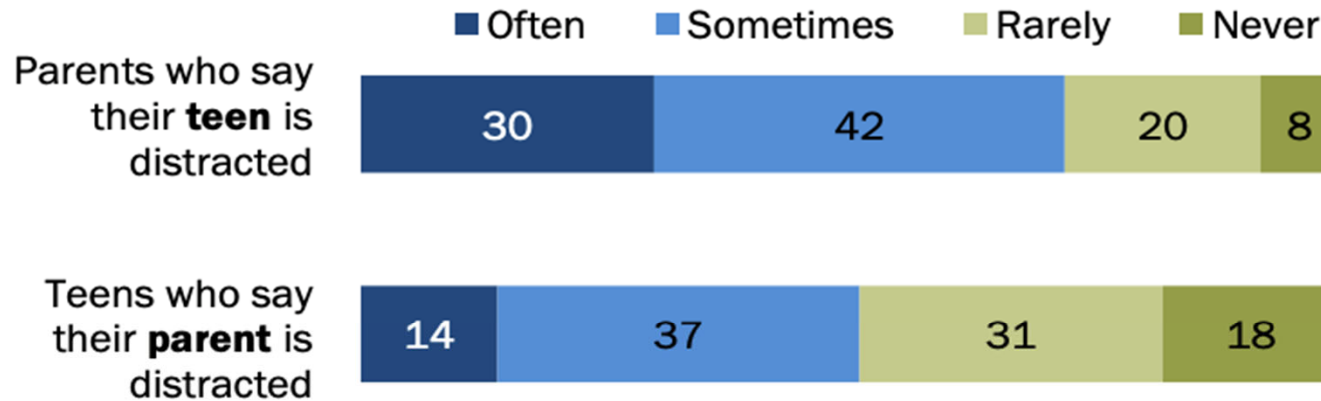
"How Parents and Teens Navigate Screen Time and Device Distractions"

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About seven-in-ten parents say their teen is distracted by their cellphone during conversations at least sometimes; half of teens say the same of their parents

% of U.S. parents/teens who say their teen/parent is ___ distracted by their cellphone when they are trying to have a conversation in person



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

“How Parents and Teens Navigate Screen Time and Device Distractions”

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C y b e r b u l l y i n g

- Persistent
- Hard to detect
- Anonymous
- Shared with a potentially large audience
- Easier to be hurtful
- Permanent

<https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/cyberbullying/>

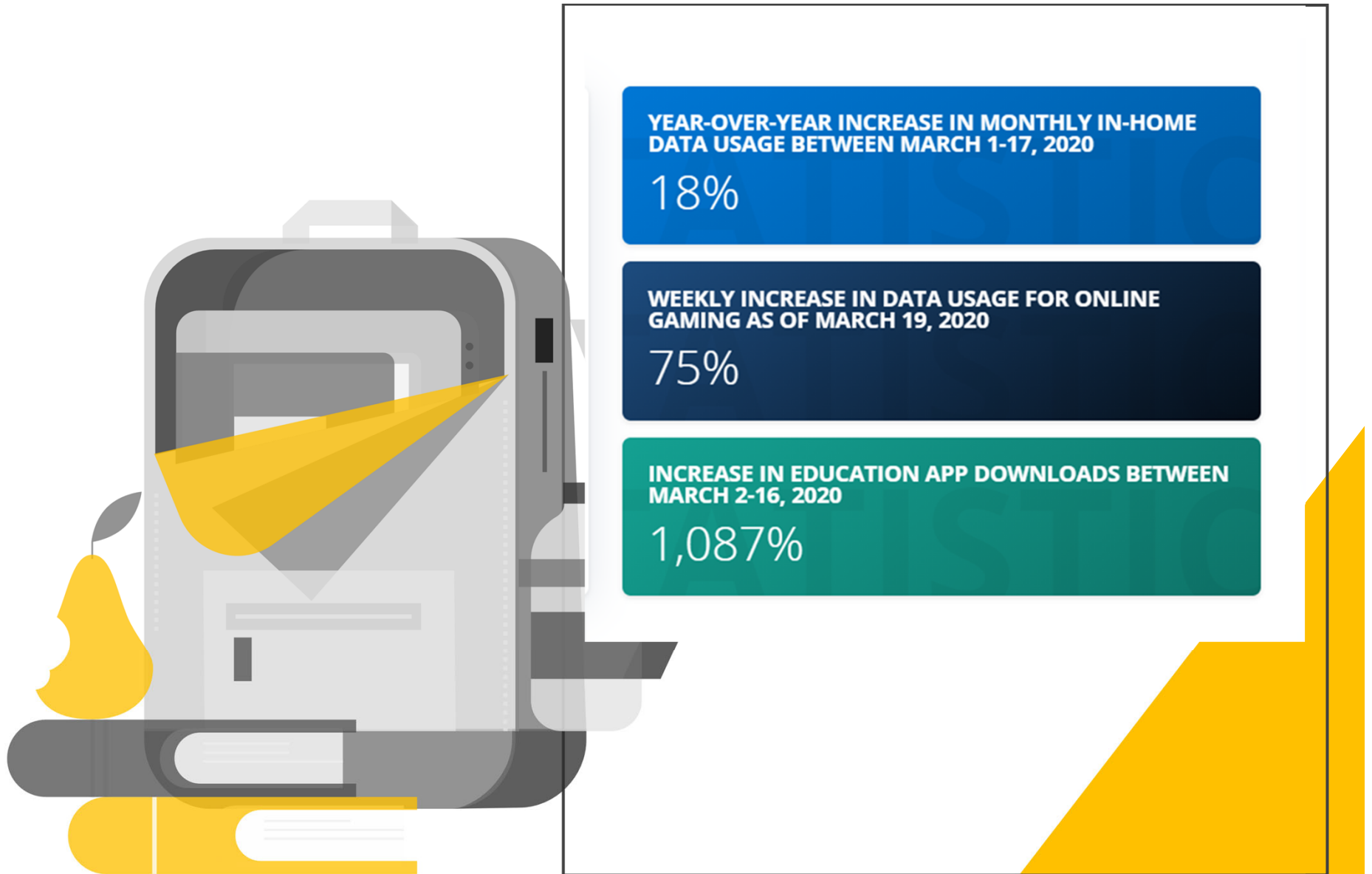
What you post online can get you in trouble

- Cyberbullying can quickly become discriminatory harassment, criminal behavior, or sexual harassment and lead to trouble with school or with the law.
- Posting threats online can also lead to trouble with school or with the law.

stopbullying.gov



What happened (and is still happening) during COVID-19?

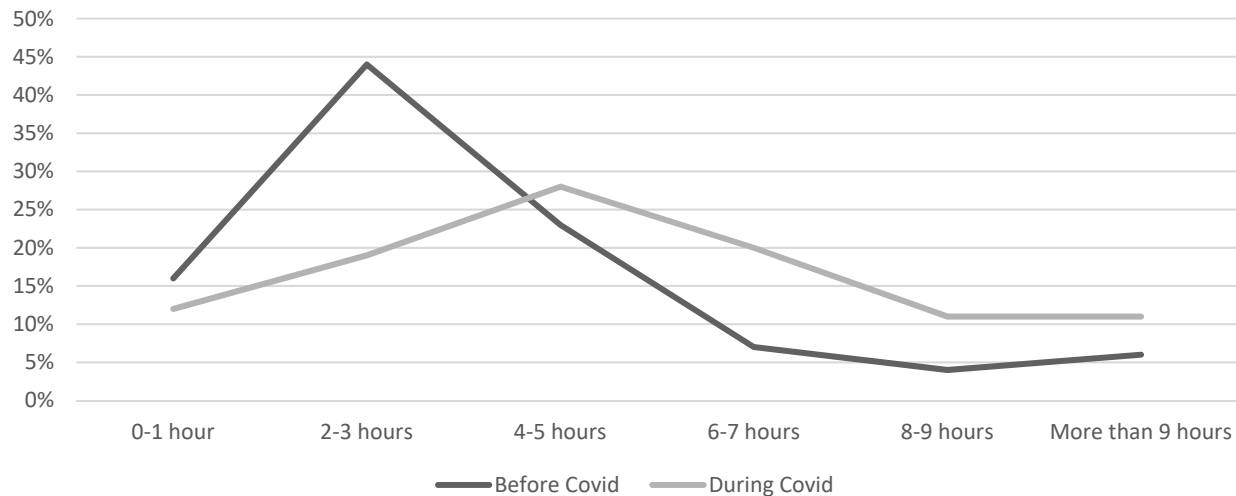




During an August 2020 survey, 63 percent of responding parents from the United States reported having lowered their standards for what they deem as appropriate screen time for their children due to the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1189217/us-parents-screen-time-children-coronavirus/>

Approximate daily time spent by children on digital devices before and during COVID-19 outbreak according to parents in the United States as of August 2020



Note(s): United States; August 13 to 15, 2020; 18 years and older; 899 respondents; parents

Further information regarding this statistic can be found on [page 8](#).

Source(s): Morning Consult; [ID 1164976](#)

Benefits of Social Media Use for Youth



Place to express themselves



Build community

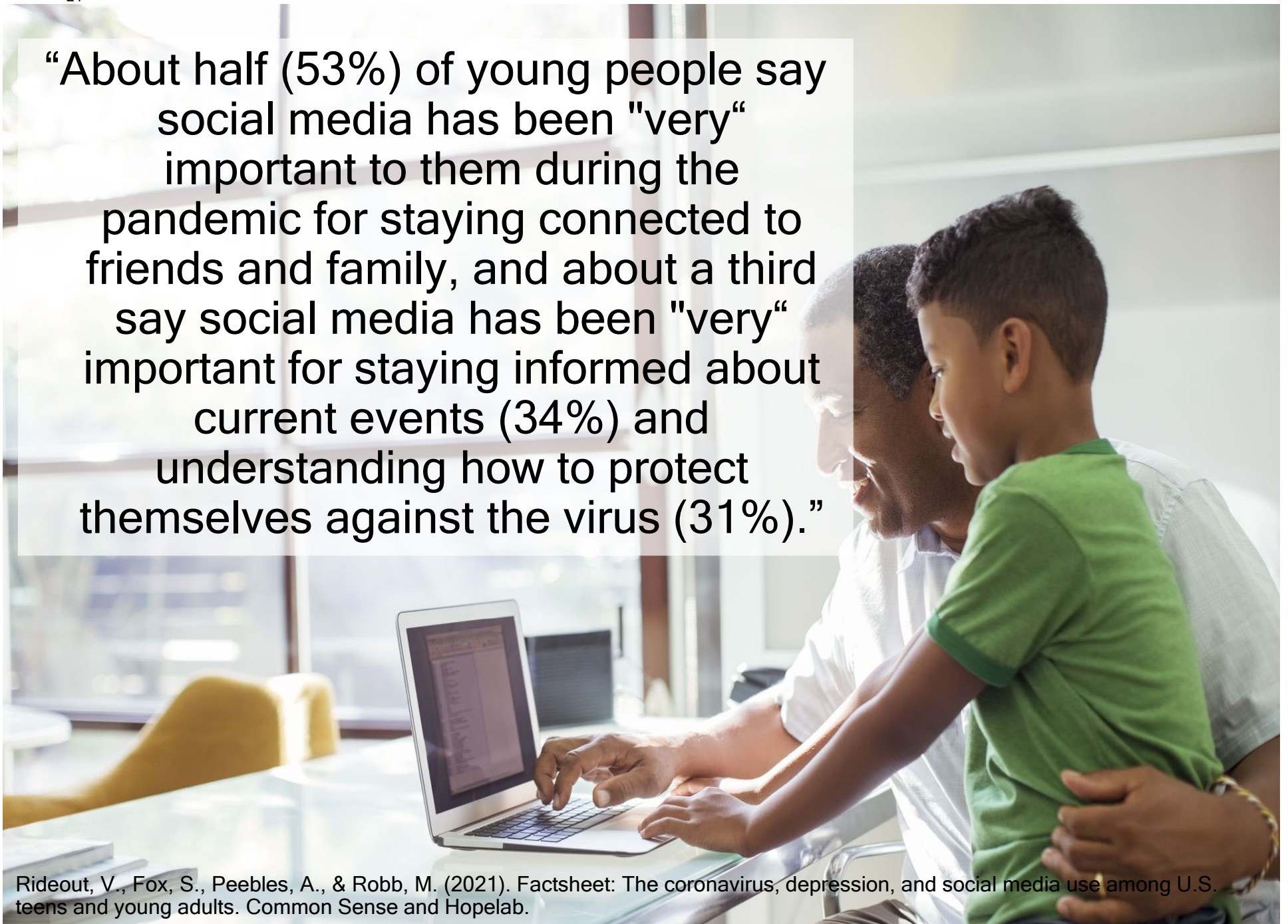


Connect with relatives




Prevent youth from feeling isolated and alone

“About half (53%) of young people say social media has been “very” important to them during the pandemic for staying connected to friends and family, and about a third say social media has been “very” important for staying informed about current events (34%) and understanding how to protect themselves against the virus (31%).”



Rideout, V., Fox, S., Peebles, A., & Robb, M. (2021). Factsheet: The coronavirus, depression, and social media use among U.S. teens and young adults. Common Sense and Hopelab.



“Despite the negative content they see, digital media has been a lifeline for many of them to access critical health information, stay connected to their peers, find inspiration, and receive comfort in a difficult time.”

<https://www.common sense media.org/research/coping-with-covid19-how-young-people-use-digital-media-to-manage-their-mental-health>

Evaluating and Limiting Screen Time

- Unfortunately, there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to rules for screen time.
- The frequency and strategies will depend on
 - 1) youth age
 - 2) youths' previous online behavior
 - 3) youth maturity
 - 4) devices and apps they are using

Tips for Monitoring Social Media Use

Be

- Be open and understanding

Establish

- Establish ground rules together

Model

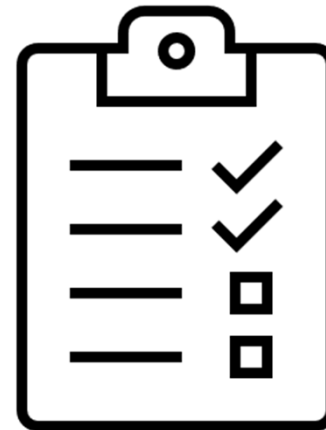
- Model behavior & establish family rules

Spend

- Spend time on commonsensemedia.org
 - Click on the “Parents Need to Know” tab at the top

Check out

- Check out the services your cell phone provider offers, google offers parental controls, there are also pay services like Bark



Conclusions



- ✓ COVID-19 and distance learning have dramatically changed what teen screen time looks like.
- ✓ Face-to-face and online communication are not the same; and in person still matters!

Additional Resources

<https://extension.umn.edu/tough-topics-kids/teens-online-and-social-media-use>

Tips for talking with teens about their online behavior.

<https://cascw.umn.edu/youth-in-care-and-social-media-use/>

This page includes resources designed for youth in care, but much of the information reflects the concerns all families may have and how to keep their teens safe online.

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

Provides expert, parent, and youth reviews, objective advice, helpful tools, and more, including how to set privacy settings in various social media apps.



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