

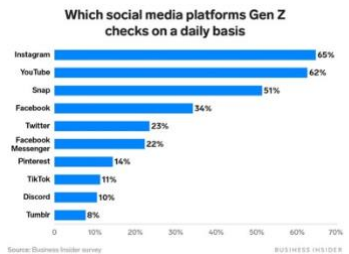
How Gen Z is Changing the Way We Get News

COVID-19 Updates Changing Rapidly

By Sarah Pishko

One are the days of running out on the damp morning grass to grab the newspaper. The days of waiting, waiting to hear what's happening in the world, in your community, and even when tragedy strikes. The sound of crinkling paper, and breaking news interruptions on TV. Even though these might not be extinct yet, the times and the ways in which people receive their information and news has changed drastically in the past 20 years.

Generation Z--born from 1995-2012 and sometimes referred to by iGen--have grown up in social networks. Zer's learns, communicates, and receives information differently than any generation has before--not all good or all bad but certainly different.



Gen Z uses technology and social media on a daily basis

Young people of this generation are influenced by social media as their primary news source. Today, with the growing pandemic, many in this generation are turning to platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to get their news. Although this seems like a great and efficient way

to get news in a timely manner, these platforms may be affecting the way people are viewing the COVID-19 virus.

In order to determine the impact that receiving news through social media has on generation Z, I interviewed two expert social media users in this generation, Allison Srygley and Mali Cassak. Allison studies at the University of Delaware in Delaware and Mali studies at McAlister University in Minnesota. Both have been social media users since they were 15, and now use platforms like Twitter and Instagram exclusively to keep up on politics and pop culture.

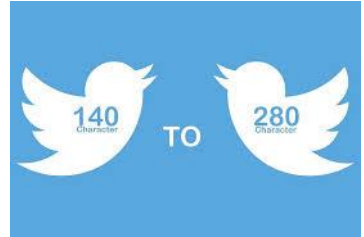
Allison's preferred platform is Twitter, Mali's is Instagram. Naturally though, a message published in one platform can circulate to the other. Both Allison and Mali indicated that the majority of their news comes from social media, but they had been watching TV news to learn more about COVID-19.

Many argue that getting news and information from these platforms can be isolating, since these platforms are curated by oneself thus creating a bubble of our own views. People also see conventional news sources as much more credible than social media. "Twitter allows for a space open to everyone's opinions and views, something you don't really get watching the news. Something that people don't often think about is that

"Twitter allows for a space open to everyone's opinions and views, something you don't really get watching the news." – Allison Srygley

news anchors and producers themselves are biased, causing viewers to only get one point of view. On platforms like Twitter, people are able to point out incorrect information or logic as well as put it in a bigger social context that the news cannot” said Allison.

Noting the strengths of Twitter Mali said,“I like the fact that things are shorter on twitter, it allows things to be concise and get to the point. Accounts also always have the option of making a thread, for a longer post. I feel like the news can be too much information or just talking, while on these platforms users are able to get the jist of the problem quickly, with the option to explore further if they want to.”



Twitter recently changed it's character limit from 140 to 280 characters per tweet

Twitter and other social media sites seem to give more opportunity for expression, which in turn is more opportunity for learning. Allison and Mali both noted that when being current is important, the ability to quickly share and receive updates on social media is important

There are many conflicting ideas about receiving information through social media, but these ideas may come from people who don't truly understand how platforms like Twitter and Instagram work. They allow for more conversation, different views,

and opportunities to correct each other where conventional news stations do not. The rise in popularity of Twitter and Instagram can be extremely beneficial to all generations.