# Understanding the impact of smartphones on Generation Z



A recent article in the Daily Mail highlights the growing concern regarding the impact of smartphones and social media on Generation Z, individuals born between 1997 and 2012. The commentary outlines several notable characteristics of this age group, particularly focusing on their reliance on mobile devices and the subsequent effects on their mental health and social interactions.

The AXA Mind Health Report sheds light on this phenomenon, revealing that 71 per cent of Britons aged 18 to 28 struggle to go longer than two minutes without checking their phones. Additionally, four in ten of those surveyed experience a strong urge to consult their devices even during face-to-face conversations. This behaviour is attributed, not merely to rudimentary manners, but rather to deeper issues. A significant portion of young adults, specifically 63 per cent, confess to having difficulties with in-person interactions, often relying on their phones as a means of escaping social anxiety.

Digital habits have also precipitated various unhealthy behaviours, with one in three participants reporting mental health challenges linked to social media usage, particularly when used prior to bedtime. The trend of "doomscrolling," characterised by the compulsive consumption of distressing content online, has raised alarms, as has the tendency for young individuals to compare their physical appearances to those found in idealised social media portrayals. This has resulted in intensified pressures, particularly among young women, forcing them to confront unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by influencers and peer comparisons.

The article suggests a correlation between dependency on social media and addiction, echoing sentiments shared by critics in the United States who liken heavily-used platforms to "digital fentanyl." There is an underlying concern regarding the neurological ramifications of excessive screen time—broadly suggesting that increased exposure to social media rewires social behaviours, contributing to observed declines in mental health among younger demographics.

Amid these worries, it is noted that Gen-Z was raised in an environment where technology was not just an accessory but integral to daily life. Unlike previous generations, they did not have to adapt to technology but were born into a digitally saturated world, gaining access to information at an early age. While this has provided various advantages in terms of global connectivity and information access, it has also led to insufficient discussions surrounding the potential downsides of ubiquitous screens and social media.

The pandemic magnified these issues, as educational formats shifted primarily to digital frameworks, emphasising the reliance on online platforms at the expense of real-world interaction. As a result, many parents are becoming increasingly concerned about their children's screen time and are attempting to impose restrictions to mitigate negative outcomes similar to those experienced by the current generation of young adults.

A recent incident involving a teacher from Surrey, who was arrested after allegedly confiscating students' iPads, underscores the tensions between parental authority and educational institutions regarding technology use. The narrative suggests that rather than hindering parental attempts to monitor technology access, there is a growing necessity for societal support to assist parents in establishing and enforcing appropriate boundaries.

In light of these developments, there are calls within the educational sector, particularly within Scottish schools, to reassess personal device use during lessons, advocating that only academic tools should be mandated in classrooms.

As the conversation continues to unfold, it appears the future of Gen-Z may hinge upon their ability to navigate this digital landscape, potentially equipping them with the insights necessary for responsible parenting in a tech-dominated age. Therefore, the discourse surrounding the influence of smartphones and social media remains critical as it shapes not only their current experiences but also their future interactions with technology and its implications for subsequent generations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.livenowfox.com/news/gen-z-phone-addiction-bepresent-2024> - This article highlights the growing concern about phone addiction among Gen Z, including the negative impacts on mental health and social interactions. It provides statistics showing that 83% of Gen Z believe they have an unhealthy relationship with their phones.
2. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1178586/smartphone-addiction-by-gen-us/> - This source provides statistics on smartphone addiction across different generations, noting that 56% of Gen Z respondents claimed to feel addicted to their phones, further emphasizing their reliance on mobile devices.
3. <https://virtual-addiction.com/technology-addiction-statistics-2024/> - The article discusses technology addiction statistics, including how over half of teens feel they spend too much time on their phones and how this behavior can lead to negative effects on mental health.
4. <https://www.statista.com/topics/3276/social-media-usage/> - This source provides insights into social media usage, which is relevant to understanding the impact of social media on Gen Z, including comparisons and trends that might exacerbate social anxiety or unrealistic beauty standards.
5. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/04/28/10-key-findings-about-smartphone-ownership/> - Although not directly cited, Pew Research often publishes data on smartphone ownership and usage that could support the narrative about Gen Z's reliance on mobile devices and its implications for their lifestyle and interactions.
6. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.644495/full> - Research articles like those published by Frontiers in Psychology may explore the neurological effects of excessive screen time and social media usage, supporting concerns about addiction and mental health impacts on young generations.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14605183/STEPHEN-DAISLEY-Technology-place-children-raised-mums-dads-not-iPhones-iPads.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data