

Generation Z

Generation Z (also known as **Post-Millennials**, the **iGeneration**, or the **Homeland Generation**) is the demographic cohort following the [Millennials](#). There are no precise dates for when this cohort starts or ends; demographers and researchers typically use starting birth years ranging from the mid-1990s to early 2000s and ending birth years ranging from the late 2000s to early 2010s.

A significant aspect of this generation is its widespread usage of the Internet from a young age. Members of Generation Z are typically thought of as being comfortable with technology, and interacting on [social media](#) websites for a significant portion of their socializing. Some commentators have suggested that growing up through the [Great Recession](#) has given the cohort a feeling of unsettlement and insecurity.

Terminology

Authors [William Strauss and Neil Howe](#) wrote [several books](#) on the subject of generations and are widely credited with coining the term [Millennials](#).^[1] Howe has said "No one knows who will name the next generation after the Millennials".^[1] In 2005, their company sponsored an online contest in which respondents voted overwhelmingly for the name *Homeland Generation*. That was not long after the [September 11th terrorist attacks](#), and one fallout of the disaster was that Americans may have felt more safe staying at home.^[2] Howe has described himself as "not totally wed" to the name and cautioned that "names are being invented by people who have a great press release. Everyone is looking for a hook."^{[1][3][4]}

In 2012, [USA Today](#) sponsored an online contest for readers to choose the name of the next generation after the Millennials. The name *Generation Z* was suggested, although journalist [Bruce Horowitz](#) thought that some might find the term "off-putting", but the name *Generation Z* gained popularity after a 2014 presentation titled *Meet Generation Z: Forget Everything You Learned About Millennials*, by New York advertising agency Sparks and Honey was launched. Some other names that were proposed included: *iGeneration*, *Gen Tech*, *Gen Wii*, *Net Gen*, *Digital Natives*, and *Plurals*.^{[1][15][6]}

Post-Millennial is a name given by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services and Pew Research, in statistics published in 2016 showing the relative sizes and dates of the generations.^[7] The same sources showed that as of April 2016, the Millennial generation surpassed the population of Baby Boomers in the USA (77 million vs. 76 million in 2015 data),^[8] with the Post-Millennials ahead of even the Millennials in another Health and Human Services survey (69 million vs. 66 million).^[9]

iGeneration (or *iGen*) is a name that several individuals claim to have coined. Stanford rapper [MC Lars](#) used the term in his 2006 song "iGeneration", which made it into popular rotation on [MTVU](#).^[10] Psychology professor and author [Jean Twenge](#) claims that the name *iGen* "just popped into her head" while she was driving near [Silicon Valley](#), and that she had intended to use it as the title of her 2006 book *Generation Me* about the Millennial generation, until it was overridden by her publisher. Demographer [Cheryl Russell](#) claims to have first used the term in 2009.^[11] In 2012, [Ad Age](#) magazine thought that *iGen* was "the name that best fits and will best lead to understanding of this generation".^[11] In 2014, an [NPR](#) news intern noted that *iGeneration* "seems to be winning" as the name for the post-Millennials.^[11] It has been described as "a wink and nod to [Apple's iPod](#) and [iPhone](#)".^[11] Statistics Canada has noted that the cohort is sometimes referred to as "the Internet generation," as it is the first generation to have been born after the popularization of the Internet.^[12]

Frank N. Magid Associates, an advertising and marketing agency, nicknamed this cohort "*The Pluralist Generation*" or 'Plurals'.^[13] [Turner Broadcasting System](#) also advocated calling

the post-millennial generation 'Plurals'.^{[14][15]} [The Futures Company](#) has named this cohort "The Centennials".^{[16][17]}

In Japan, the cohort is described as "Neo-Digital Natives", a step beyond the previous cohort described as "Digital Natives". Digital Natives primarily communicate by text or voice, while neo-digital natives use video or movies. This emphasizes the shift from PC to mobile and text to video among the neo-digital population.^{[18][19]}

[MTV](#) has labeled the generation "The Founders", based on the results of a survey they conducted in March 2015. MTV President Sean Atkins commented, "they have this self-awareness that systems have been broken, but they can't be the generation that says we'll break it even more."^[20]

Characteristics

According to Forbes, in 2015 Generation Z made up 25% of the U.S. population, making them a larger cohort than the [Baby Boomers](#) or [Millennials](#).^[33] Frank N. Magid Associates estimates that in the United States, 55% of Plurals are non-Hispanic [Caucasians](#), 24% are [Hispanic](#), 14% are African-American, 4% are Asian, and 4% are [multiracial](#) or other.^[34]

Generation Z are predominantly the children of [Generation X](#),^{[35][36][37]} but they also have parents who are Millennials.^[38] According to the marketing firm Frank N. Magid they are "the least likely to believe that there is such a thing as the [American Dream](#)" because "Generation X, the most influential parents of Plurals (Generation Z), demonstrates the least credence in the concept of the American Dream among adult generations."^[34] According to [Public Relations Society of America](#), the [Great Recession](#) has taught Generation Z to be independent, and has led to an entrepreneurial desire, after seeing their parents and older siblings struggle in the workforce.^[39] [Business Insider](#) describes Generation Z as more conservative, more money-oriented, more entrepreneurial and pragmatic about money compared to Millennials.^[40]

A 2013 survey by [Ameritrade](#) found that 46% of Generation Z in the United States (considered here to be those between the ages of 14 and 23) were concerned about [student debt](#), while 36% were worried about being able to afford a college education at all.^[41] This generation is faced with a growing income gap and a shrinking middle-class, which all have led to increasing stress levels in families.^[42]

Both the [September 11 terrorist attacks](#) and the [Great Recession](#) have greatly influenced the attitudes of this generation in the United States, with the oldest members of Generation Z being children when the 9/11 attacks occurred.^{[43][44]} Turner suggests it is likely that both events have resulted in a feeling of unsettlement and insecurity among the people of Generation Z with the environment in which they were being raised. The economic recession of 2008 is particularly important to historical events that have shaped Generation Z, due to the ways in which their childhoods may have been affected by the recession's shadow; that is, the financial stresses felt by their parents.^[45] Although the Millennials experienced these events during their coming of age, Generation Z lived through them as part of their childhood, affecting their realism and world-view.^[46]

A 2014 study *Generation Z Goes to College* found that Generation Z students self-identify as being loyal, compassionate, thoughtful, open-minded, responsible, and determined.^[47] How they see their Generation Z peers is quite different from their own self-identity. They view their peers as competitive, spontaneous, adventuresome, and curious; all characteristics that they do not see readily in themselves.^[47]

A 2016 U.S. study found that church attendance during young adulthood was 41% among Generation Z, compared with 18 percent for Millennials at the same ages, 21 percent of [Generation X](#), and 26 percent of [baby boomers](#).^[48]

Generation Z is generally more risk-averse in certain activities than the Millennials. In 2013, 66% of teenagers (older members of Generation Z) had tried alcohol, down from 82% in 1991. Also in 2013, 8% of Gen. Z teenagers never or rarely wear a seat belt when riding in a car with someone else, as opposed to 26% in 1991.^[46]

Research from the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) conducted in 2016 found Generation Z youth had lower teen pregnancy rates, less substance abuse, and higher on time high school graduation rates compared to Millennials. The researchers compared teens from 2008 and 2014 and found a 40% drop in teen pregnancy, a 38% drop in drug and alcohol abuse, and a 28% drop in the percentage of teens who did not graduate on time from high school.^{[49][50]}

Technology and social media

Generation Z is the first to have Internet technology so readily available at a very young age.^[51] With the web revolution that occurred throughout the 1990s, they have been exposed to an unprecedented amount of technology in their upbringing. As technology became more compact and affordable, the popularity of smartphones in the United States grew exponentially. With 77% of 12–17 year olds owning a cellphone in 2015,^[52] technology has strongly influenced Generation Z in terms of communication and education. [Forbes magazine](#) suggested that by the time Generation Z entered the workplace, digital technology would be an aspect of almost all career paths.^[41] Anthony Turner characterizes Generation Z as having a 'digital bond to the internet', and argues that it may help youth to escape from emotional and mental struggles they face offline.^[45] According to US consultancy [Sparks and Honey](#) in 2014, 41% of Generation Z spend more than three hours per day using computers for purposes other than schoolwork, compared to 22% in 2004.^[53]

In 2015, Generation Z comprised the largest portion of the U.S. population, at nearly 26%, edging out Millennials (24.5%), and the generation is estimated to generate \$44 billion in annual spending. About three-quarters of 13–17 years olds use their cellphones daily, more than they watch TV. Over half of surveyed mothers say the demo influences them in purchasing decisions for toys, apparel, dinner choices, entertainment, TV, mobile and computers. Among social media, only Instagram is in popularity in the demo.^[54]

In 2015, an estimated 150,000 apps, 10% of those in Apple's [App Store](#), were educational and aimed at children up to college level.^[55] While researchers and parents agree the change in educational paradigm is significant, the results of the changes are mixed. On one hand, smartphones offer the potential for deeper involvement in learning^[55] and more individualized instruction, thereby making this generation potentially better educated and more well-rounded. On the other hand, some researchers and parents are concerned that the prevalence of smart phones will cause technology dependence^[56] and a lack of self-regulation that will hinder child development.^[56]

An online newspaper about texting, [SMS](#) and MMS writes that teens own cellphones without necessarily needing them.^[57] As children become teenagers, receiving a phone is considered a rite of passage in some countries, allowing the owner to be further connected with their peers and it is now a social norm to have one at an early age. An article from the [Pew Research Center](#) stated that "nearly three-quarters of teens have or have access to a smartphone and 30% have a basic phone, while just 12% of teens 13 to 17 say they have no cell phone of any type".^[58] These numbers are only on the rise and the fact that the majority of Gen Z's own a cell phone has become one of this generations defining characteristics. As a result of this "24% of teens go online 'almost constantly'".^[58]

Teens are much more likely to share different types of information, as of 2012, compared to in 2006.^[59] However, they will take certain steps to protect certain information that they do not want being shared. They are more likely to "follow" others on social media than "share" and use different types of social media for different purposes.^[47] Focus group testing found that while teens may be annoyed by many aspects of Facebook, they continue to use it because

participation is important in terms of socializing with friends and peers. [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) are seen to be gaining popularity in member of Generation Z, with 24% (and growing) of teens with access to the Internet having Twitter accounts.^[59] This is, in part, due to parents not typically using these social networking sites.^[59] [Snapchat](#) is also seen to have gained attraction in Generation Z because videos, pictures, messages send much faster than regular messaging. Speed and reliability are important factors in how members of Generation Z choice of social networking platform. This need for quick communication is presented in popular Generation Z apps like [Vine](#) and the prevalent use of [emojis](#).^[46]

In a study performed by psychologists it was found that young people use the Internet as a way to gain access to information and to interact with others. Mobile technology, social media, and Internet usage have become increasingly important to modern adolescents over the past decade. Very few, however, are changed from what they gain access to online.^[60] Youths are using the Internet as a tool to gain social skills, that they then apply to real life situations, and learn about things that interest them. Teens spend most of their time online in private communication with people they interact with outside the Internet on a regular basis. While social media is used for keeping up with global news and connections, it is mainly used for developing and maintaining relationships with people with whom they are close in proximity. The use of social media has become integrated into the daily lives of most Gen Z'ers who have access to mobile technology. They use it on a daily basis to keep in contact with friends and family, particularly those who they see every day. As a result, the increased use of mobile technology has caused Gen Z'ers to spend more time on their smartphones, and social media and has caused online relationship development to become a new generational norm.^[61] Gen Z'ers are generally against the idea of photoshopping and they are against changing themselves to be considered perfect. The parents of the Gen Z'ers fear the overuse of the Internet by their children. Parents have a disliking for the access to inappropriate information and images as well as social networking sites where children can gain access to people from all over. Children reversely felt annoyed with their parents and complained about parents being overly controlling when it came to their Internet usage.^[60] Gen Z uses social media and other sites to strengthen bonds with friends and to develop new ones. They interact with people who they otherwise would not have met in the real world, becoming a tool for identity creation.^[60]

Jason Dorsey, a notable Gen Y speaker who runs the Center for Generational Kinetics, stated in a TEDxHouston talk that this generation begins after 1996 to present. He stressed notable differences in the way that they both consume technology, in terms of smartphone usage at an earlier age. 18% of Generation Z thinks that it is okay for a 13 year old to have a smartphone compared to earlier generations which say 4%.^{[62][63][64]}

Education

According to a [Northeastern University](#) Survey, 81% of Generation Z believes obtaining a college degree is necessary in achieving career goals.^[65] As Generation Z enters high school, and they start preparing for college, a primary concern is paying for a college education without acquiring debt. Students report working hard in high school in hopes of earning scholarships and the hope that parents will pay the college costs not covered by scholarships. Students also report interest in [ROTC](#) programs as a means of covering college costs.^[66] According to *NeaToday*, a publication by the [National Education Association](#), two thirds of Gen Zers entering college are concerned about affording college. One third plan to rely on grants and scholarships and one quarter hope that their parents will cover the bulk of college costs. While the cost of attending college is incredibly high for most Gen Zers, according to *NeaToday*, 65% say the benefits of graduating college exceed the costs.^[66]

Generation Z college students prefer intrapersonal and independent learning over group work, yet like to do their solo work alongside others in a social manner when studying.^[47] They like their learning to be practical and hands-on and want their professors to help them engage with and apply the content rather than simply share what they could otherwise find on their own online.^[47]

"Generation Z" is revolutionizing the educational system in many aspects. Thanks in part to a rise in the popularity of entrepreneurship, high schools and colleges across the globe are including entrepreneurship in their curriculums.^[67]

Employment prospects

According to Hal Brotheim in *Introducing Generation Z*, they will be better future employees.^[68] With the skills needed to take advantage of advanced technologies, they will be significantly more helpful to the typical company in today's high tech world.^[68] Brotheim argues that their valuable characteristics are their acceptance of new ideas and different conception of freedom from the previous generations.

Despite the technological proficiency they possess, members of Generation Z actually prefer person to person contact as opposed to online interaction. As a result of the social media and technology they are accustomed to, Generation Z is well prepared for a global business environment.^[69] Another important note to point out is Generation Z no longer wants just a job: they seek more than that. They want a feeling of fulfillment and excitement in their job that helps move the world forward.^[46] Generation Z is eager to be involved in their community and their futures. Before college, Generation Z is already out in their world searching how to take advantage of relevant professional opportunities that will give them experience for the future.^[69]

In [India](#), a 2016 survey by India's employee engagement and employer rating platform, JobBuzz.in, showed Generation Z professionals started out better in the job market compared to Generation Y.^[70]