2022 Digital Wellbeing Index

Research Findings
METHODOLOGY

9,003 Respondents
12-minute online survey

3 Audiences
Gen Z teens, 13–17
Gen Z adults, 18–24
Parents of 13–19-year-olds

6 Countries
Australia, France, Germany, India, UK, US

Interviews were conducted from 22 April 2022 to 10 May 2022.
1. THE DIGITAL WELLBEING INDEX IS A COMPELLING MEASURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING ONLINE

**Foundation**
The Index drew upon more than four decades of research on subjective wellbeing, adapted for the online environment, and incorporated multi-year studies on online risks conducted by the research team among teens and adults in 34 countries.

**Validity**
The resulting DWB index shows clear relationships between risk exposure, social media and social support assets and current online wellbeing. Four groups were identified based on their wellbeing scores: flourishing, thriving, middling and struggling.

**Multi-dimensional**
The scale shows areas where users are experiencing positive benefits and growth, which can outweigh negative incidents for many.

**Statistically robust**
Items refined through pretesting and post-hoc analyses. The final DWBI scale demonstrated robust statistical properties (e.g. validity, internal consistency).
2. SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN DIGITAL WELLBEING

**Positive influence**
Those who saw social media as a positive influence in digital wellbeing

**Quality over quantity**
Digital wellbeing is more dependent on the nature and quality of your interactions online and less dependent on how much time is spent on social media

**Type of risk matters**
Personally targeted risks exhibit a strong relationship with digital wellbeing, while “normalised” risks show a weak relationship
3. PARENTS ARE GENERALLY IN TUNE WITH THEIR TEENAGERS’ DIGITAL WELLBEING

Regular parent communication about online activities with teens can make a difference

- The ability of parents to accurately estimate the extent of their teen’s digital wellbeing was driven by how regularly the parents checked in

- Teens whose parents regularly checked in had higher digital well-being and retained higher levels of trust from their parents

- Conversely, the subset of parents who did not regularly check in about their teens’ online experiences significantly underestimated teens’ risk exposure (by nearly 20 points).

![Graph showing the comparison between teens' and parents' estimates of digital wellbeing and risk exposure.]

Parents of teens (13–17) correctly estimated their digital wellbeing

Parents who don’t check in significantly underestimated their teenagers’ risk exposure

- Parents estimated risk exposure
  - Teens: 64
  - Parents’ estimate of teen DWBI: 63

- Gen Z actual risk exposure
  - 76%

- Parents estimated risk exposure
  - 57%

19pt. gap!
4. GEN Z ADULTS (18–24-YEAR-OLDS) HAD LOWER DIGITAL WELLBEING THAN TEENS

- Our data likely reflects the unprecedented feelings of uncertainty felt most strongly by Gen Z adults. National surveys consistently report Gen Z adults are doing worse mentally and physically than other demographic groups.

- Compared to teens, Gen Z adults were less satisfied with their life online and reported much lower scores on physical and emotional health.
INTRODUCING THE DIGITAL WELLBEING INDEX

2022 Score 62

Positive emotion: 12
Achievement: 13
Engagement: 13
Relationships: 13
Negative emotion: 11

Base: Gen Z, N=6002
Scores range from 0–100, inventory of items on slide 50
Q5. Which, if any, of the following have happened to you personally ONLINE, on any electronic device during the past three months? Select all that apply.
VALIDITY: DIGITAL WELLBEING RELATIONSHIPS

- Risk
  - Personal
  - Non-personal

- Social media
  - Usage
  - Attitudes

- Support assets
  - Parents
  - School
  - Community
  - Peers

- Health
  - Physical
  - Emotional
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DWBI AND RISKS**

The relationship was dependent on the type of risk

**Strong negative relationships with DWBI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Category</th>
<th>DWBI Struggling</th>
<th>DWBI Flourishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teasing, name calling, purposeful embarrassment</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaming</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaging relationships</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual solicitation</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-harm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts of self-harm</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts of suicide</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fake identity**

Someone impersonated and made false or malicious statements while pretending to be me*

A user pretended to be someone else to try and sell me something or for financial gain *

A user pretended to be someone else to try and establish a relationship with me *

Someone pretended to be a celebrity or represent a brand to entice me to interact with them *

**Weak relationships with DWBI. Have these risks been “normalised?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Category</th>
<th>DWBI Struggling</th>
<th>DWBI Flourishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other risks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake news, misinformation</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted contact</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraband, extremism</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent extremism, content and messaging*</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal drug sales*</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal weapons sales*</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Gen Z, N=6002, * Small samples in the low and very high groups

Q5. Which, if any, of the following have happened to you personally ONLINE, on any electronic device during the past three months? Select all that apply.
EVIDENCE FOR THE NORMALISATION OF RISKS

Reasons not to report an incident

- I just ignore it. It's normal for people to post things some people find offensive (41%)
- No big deal, the person was just expressing an opinion (23%)
- Fear nothing will happen, no serious consequences for the abuser (26%)
- Fear of retaliation (18%)
- Fear I'd get blamed for the incident (17%)

- 64% ignored or brushed off bad behaviour

Base: typically use Snapchat, Instagram and other social platforms N=6087

Q21: What are the reasons you do not or would not report an incident?
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DWBI AND SOCIAL MEDIA

For most, social media had a positive influence on digital wellbeing.

- **Social media has a positive influence on the quality of my life.**
  - Positive: 95%
  - Negative: 43%

- **I cannot live my life without social media.**
  - Positive: 95%
  - Negative: 43%

- **The world would be a better place without social media.**
  - Positive: 33%
  - Negative: 22%

**Q12b:** Which of the following is closer to your view about social media?

**Q26:** How true is each statement for you personally?

Base: Gen Z, N=6002
GEN Z SAW SOCIAL MEDIA AS A POSITIVE FORCE IN THEIR LIVES

78%

of Gen Zers believed social media had a positive influence on their quality of life

• Belief among teens (84%) was significantly stronger than among Gen Z adults (71%)
• Gen Z males (81%) were more likely to believe this than females (75%); this difference held for both teens and Gen Z adults
• Parents' (73%) opinion about social media’s influence mirrored that of Gen Z adults
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DWB & SUPPORT NETWORKS

Broad support networks had a positive impact on DWB

Number of support assets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Assets</th>
<th>Digital Wellbeing Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>Struggling: 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middling: 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thriving: 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flourishing: 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>Struggling: 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middling: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thriving: 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flourishing: 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 12</td>
<td>Struggling: 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middling: 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thriving: 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flourishing: 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Support assets are people who support Gen Zs at home, school, in the community and among friends & peers, must have selected “completely agree” or “agree a lot”

Base: Gen Z, N=6002
ONLINE RISK LANDSCAPE
THREE IN FOUR GEN ZS REPORTED EXPERIENCING A RISK

More than eight in 10 for Gen Z adults

Q5. Which, if any, of the following have happened to you personally ONLINE, on any electronic device during the past three months? Select all that apply

Base: Gen Z, N=6002

Parents reported what risks they believed their children experienced
### RISK DISTRIBUTION: NON-PERSONAL = MOST COMMON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-personal</th>
<th>Threatening behaviour</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fake news or misinformation, 50%</td>
<td>Hate speech, bullying and harassment, threats of violence, 39%</td>
<td>Non-consensual intimate imagery and unwanted sexual attention, 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted contact, 35%</td>
<td>Fake identity</td>
<td>Contraband Extremism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online impersonation, account hijacking, 27%</td>
<td>Extremist content, illegal drugs, weapon sales, 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>thoughts of self harm and suicide, 14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base:** Gen Z, N=6002

Q5. Which, if any, of the following have happened to you personally ONLINE, on any electronic device during the past three months? Select all that apply.
**RISK DETAIL**

**21%** Bullying and harassment
- Disrespecting: 58%
- Teasing, name calling, purposeful embarrassment: 49%
- Trolling: 49%
- Flaming: 31%
- Excluding: 30%
- Damaging relationships: 29%
- Dislike/contempt for females: 28%
- Cyberstalking: 24%
- Doxing: 14%

**19%** Online impersonation
- A user pretended... to try and establish a relationship with me: 49%
- A user pretended... to try and sell me something or for financial gain: 41%
- Someone pretended to be a celebrity or represent a brand: 32%
- Someone impersonated me online and made false/malicious statements: 30%

**12%** Non-consensual intimate imagery
- Unsolicited sexual content: 75%
- Sexual solicitation: 45%
- Revenge porn: 19%

Base: Gen Z, N=6002
Q6A. Experienced non-consensual intimate imagery, bullying, impersonation, self-harm
GEN Z ADULTS EXPERIENCED MORE RISKS THAN TEENS

Q5. Which, if any, of the following have happened to you personally ONLINE, on any electronic device during the past three months? Select all that apply

- Extremist content, 11%
- Threats of violence, 15%
- Self harm, 17%
- Illicit drug/weapon sales, 18%
- Online bullying and harassment, 22%
- Hate speech, 31%
- ID theft, 32%
- Sexual risks, 32%
- Unwanted contact, 35%
- Sexual risks, 33%
- Hate speech, 33%
- ID theft, 33%
- Online bullying and harassment, 34%
- Unwanted contact, 35%
- Sexual risks, 35%
- Hate speech, 35%
- ID theft, 35%
- Sexual risks, 36%
- Hate speech, 36%
- ID theft, 36%
- Sexual risks, 37%
- Hate speech, 37%
- ID theft, 37%
- Sexual risks, 38%
- Hate speech, 38%
- ID theft, 38%
- Sexual risks, 39%
- Hate speech, 39%
- ID theft, 39%
- Sexual risks, 40%
- Hate speech, 40%
- ID theft, 40%
- Sexual risks, 41%
- Hate speech, 41%
- ID theft, 41%
- Sexual risks, 42%
- Hate speech, 42%
- ID theft, 42%
- Sexual risks, 43%
- Hate speech, 43%
- ID theft, 43%
- Sexual risks, 44%
- Hate speech, 44%
- ID theft, 44%
- Sexual risks, 45%
- Hate speech, 45%
- ID theft, 45%
- Sexual risks, 46%
- Hate speech, 46%
- ID theft, 46%
- Sexual risks, 47%
- Hate speech, 47%
- ID theft, 47%
- Sexual risks, 48%
- Hate speech, 48%
- ID theft, 48%
- Sexual risks, 49%
- Hate speech, 49%
- ID theft, 49%
- Sexual risks, 50%
- Hate speech, 50%
- ID theft, 50%
- Sexual risks, 51%
- Hate speech, 51%
- ID theft, 51%
- Sexual risks, 52%
- Hate speech, 52%
- ID theft, 52%
- Sexual risks, 53%
- Hate speech, 53%
- ID theft, 53%
- Sexual risks, 54%
- Hate speech, 54%
- ID theft, 54%
- Sexual risks, 55%
- Hate speech, 55%
- ID theft, 55%
- Sexual risks, 56%
- Hate speech, 56%
- ID theft, 56%
- Sexual risks, 57%
- Hate speech, 57%
- ID theft, 57%
- Sexual risks, 58%
- Hate speech, 58%
- ID theft, 58%
- Sexual risks, 59%
- Hate speech, 59%
- ID theft, 59%
- Sexual risks, 60%
- Hate speech, 60%
- ID theft, 60%

Gen Z adults: Base: Gen Z, N=6002
Teens: Base: Gen Z, N=6002

Largest differences:
- Fake news and misinformation, 56%
- Unwanted contact, 35%
- Spartan RISKS THAN TEENS

Q5. Which, if any, of the following have happened to you personally ONLINE, on any electronic device during the past three months? Select all that apply

- Extremist content, 11%
- Threats of violence, 15%
- Self harm, 17%
- Illicit drug/weapon sales, 18%
- Online bullying and harassment, 22%
- Hate speech, 31%
- ID theft, 32%
- Sexual risks, 32%
- Unwanted contact, 35%
ONE IN SEVEN (14%) OF GEN Zers HAD THOUGHTS OF SELF HARM

49%

FOLLOWED THROUGH ON THEIR THOUGHTS TO COMMIT SELF HARM

- Teens (57%) were more likely to follow through on thoughts of self harm than Gen Z adults (44%)
Q6Da. If it is not too unsettling and you are comfortable responding, which of the following best describes how you hurt yourself or self-harmed. Select all that apply.

- Cutting, 58%
- Stop eating, binge, purge, 54%
- Hitting oneself or an object, 38%
- Hair-pulling, 34%
- Interfering with wound healing, 29%
- Burning, 29%
- Inserting objects into skin, 25%
- Bruising, breaking bones, 24%

Base: Gen Z who followed through on thoughts of self-harm, N=303
ARE HIGH ACHIEVERS MORE LIKELY TO SELF HARM?

Incidence of self-harm decreased as DWBI increased, however…

Among those who followed through

High-achiever pressures?

Thoughts of self harm
Thoughts of suicide

18% Struggling
18% Middling
18% Thriving
18% Flourishing

20% DWBI

9% Thoughts of self harm
5% Thoughts of suicide

61% Struggling
46% Middling
61% Thriving
61% Flourishing

… those with the highest DWBI were the most likely to follow through with self harm

Base: Gen Z who had thoughts of self-harm, N=619
*Small samples (N<90) in the low and very high groups
DWBI AROUND THE WORLD
GLOBAL AVERAGE = 62
THE DIGITAL WELLBEING INVENTORY – 20 ITEMS

**Positive emotion**
- Often felt proud
- Often felt delighted
- I generally felt that what I did online was valuable and worthwhile
- Felt the things I did online gave me a sense of accomplishment and pride
- Have had more good times than bad times online
- Got completely absorbed in what I was doing online
- Often felt really interested in what I am doing online
- Felt excited and interested in things online

**Engagement**
- Was very satisfied with my personal relationships online
- Have friends who really listen to me when I have something to say online
- Received help and support from others online when I needed
- Have people in my life online who really care about me

**Relationships**
- Worried a lot that other people might not like me
- Worried about what other people might be saying about me online
- Often felt lonely
- Often felt left out and not close to anyone

**Negative emotion**
- Stayed informed so I felt in touch with what’s happening in my community and around the world
- Learned how to do things that are important to me
- Was able to grow in my skills and abilities
- Learned things that gave me more self-confidence

**Achievement**
When I was interacting with other people and experiencing things online during the past three months, I...
## Risk Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Account hijacking</td>
<td>Someone used my social media account or email to post or send things that did not come from me. [Includes someone using my phone or account to post messages pretending to be me.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake news or misinformation</td>
<td>I saw or read a news story or learned something online that appeared to be true but turned out to be false and misleading. This includes altered images and videos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate speech</td>
<td>I received or was exposed to speech that attacked a person or group based on factors such as age, gender, national origin, religion, race, disability, pregnancy, veteran status or sexual orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal drug sales</td>
<td>I was sent/exposed to content promoting the sale, distribution or delivery of illegal or counterfeit drugs through the internet or online platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons sales</td>
<td>I was sent/exposed to content promoting the sale, distribution or delivery of illegal or counterfeit drugs through the internet or online platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online bullying and harassment</td>
<td>I have been bullied, harassed, teased or called hurtful names online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online impersonation</td>
<td>I have had experiences where someone approached me using a fake identity online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-consensual intimate imagery</td>
<td>Sexually explicit content produced or distributed without the consent of the people depicted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts of self harm</td>
<td>I have had thoughts about harming myself as a result of interacting online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts of suicide</td>
<td>I have had thoughts about harming myself as a result of interacting online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of violence, 15%</td>
<td>Someone online threatened to harm me, another person or place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted contact</td>
<td>Being personally contacted by someone who obtained my information online that I don’t want to interact with or didn’t expect to hear from. [could include people “following” me online to see my location, what I am doing, who I am with, spam accounts that tried to lure me to follow back, etc.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted sexual attention</td>
<td>I received unwelcomed sexually-oriented teasing, joking or flirting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent extremism or terrorism content/messages</td>
<td>I was sent/exposed to extremist online communications or content that encouraged and condoned acts of violence based on things like religious, political or racist beliefs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Online Bullying and Harassment

**Disrespecting**: Someone dissed or disrespected me online.

**Cyberstalking**: A person tracked or followed me, making me feel very uncomfortable and fearful.

**Damaging my relationships**: Someone tried or succeeded in harming my relationships by spreading rumours or lies.

**Doxing**: A person collected and distributed private personal information about me (e.g. name, age, email, address, phone number, images, etc.) without my permission.

**Excluding**: Someone deliberately left me out of an online group or text/message thread.

**Flaming**: A person sent me angry, hurtful or abusive message(s) or email(s).

**Teasing, name calling, purposeful embarrassment**: Someone teased, called me offensive names or embarrassed me online on purpose.

**Trolling**: Someone deliberately made unsolicited and/or controversial comments to try and provoke an emotional reaction and engage me in a fight or argument.

**Dislike and contempt for females/misogyny**: I received or came across hurtful, hateful or sexist images or content based on my gender.

## Online Impersonation

Someone impersonated me online and made false or malicious statements while pretending to be me.

A user pretended to be someone else to try and sell me something or for financial gain.

A user pretended to be someone else to try and establish a relationship with me.

Someone pretended to be a celebrity or represent a brand to entice me to interact with them.

## Non-consensual Intimate Imagery

**Unsolicited sexual content**: I received or came across unwanted sexual images, messages or videos.

"Revenge porn": Someone posted or shared sexually explicit images or videos of me online without my permission.

**Sexual solicitation**: A person asked me to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk, or to provide personal sexual information, including asking for or demanding nude images.
UNITED KINGDOM SNAPSHOT, DWBI = 62

Flourishing: 9%
Thriving: 43%
Middling: 43%
Suffering: 5%

Any risk (Gen Z): 69%
Personal risks: 54%
Fake news, misinformation: 43%
Unwanted contact: 36%
Threatening behavior: 29%
Sexual risks: 23%
Fake identity: 21%
Contraband, terrorism: 13%
Self-harm: 12%

Relationships with DWBI (Gen Z)

Risks (experienced any risks)

Social media (positive influence)

Support assets (Avg. # of assets, 0-12)

Emotional health (Avg. score, scale 0-7)

Safety feature^2 (Aware not used, used)

Safety resource^2 (Aware not used, used)

1. Support assets at home, school, in the community and peers
2. Feature = Blocked a user
3. Resource = Mental health

Support assets at home, school, in the community and peers

Emotional health

Safety feature^2

Safety resource^2

Daily Snapchat users

Teens (13-17): 39%
Gen Z adults (18-24): 54%
Parents of 13-19: 20%

Teens
Gen Z adults
Parents
Gen Z male
Gen Z female

2. Feature = Blocked a user
3. Resource = Mental health

UNITED KINGDOM SNAPSHOT, DWBI = 62