

Global survey analyzes Gen Z and Millennial's use of media to understand COVID-19 pandemic

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New research reveals while mainstream media remains the main go-to news source for Gen Z and Millennials, young people worldwide are relying on multiple platforms, such as social media, for information on

the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The global survey, conducted in collaboration by the University of Melbourne, World Health Organization (WHO), Wunderman Thompson (WT) and Pollfish, was completed by 23,500 citizens, aged 18 to 40 in 24 countries, between October 24, 2020 and January 7, 2021.

Led by WT and Professor Ingrid Volkmer from the School of Culture and Communications at the University of Melbourne, the survey sought to gain a deeper understanding of how young people were getting their information about COVID-19, who they trusted as sources and their attitudes towards false news. It also aimed to gain a deeper understanding of Gen X and Millennial social networks and the likelihood of them sharing unverified information.

Professor Volkmer said that it was important to engage globally and bring her research expertise as Professor of Digital Communication and Globalization to the WHO.

"We know that in a pandemic, it is vital that citizens can receive accurate and timely information," Professor Volkmer said.

"In a changing [media](#) landscape, however, it becomes important to gain a more nuanced understanding of how specific demographics are finding their COVID-19 information, who they trust and what information they are likely to share with peers and family."

The key insights help shed light on how this demographic behaves, providing valuable insights for how health organizations, governments, media and business can improve their health communications.

Results from the survey revealed that Gen Z and Millennials are most likely to share scientific content on their [social media](#) networks with

43.9 percent of respondents saying that they would share this kind of information.

While survey respondents showed strong awareness of false news, with 51.9 percent of respondents being very aware that COVID-19 information on social media could be misleading, more than half (58.3 percent) said that they are overwhelmed by information and 52 percent have stopped paying attention to COVID-19 news.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (59.3 percent) feel that the media is not telling them everything, and 57.1 percent felt that their government was not giving the full picture on the pandemic.

World Health Organization Technical Officer in the Health Emergencies Program, Sarah Hess, said that young people have had to navigate the proliferation of misinformation that has accompanied the pandemic—misinformation that causes confusion, damages trust and threatens the public health response to COVID-19.

Speaking about the survey, she said: "This ground-breaking research provides insights on young people's concerns during the pandemic and how they are interacting with their digital world to seek COVID-19 information. These outcomes are key to ensuring WHO's communication strategies are relevant, responsive and reach [young people](#), so everyone can have timely access to [accurate information](#) in order to make health protective decisions.

"WHO would like to acknowledge the fantastic collaboration with Wunderman Thompson, University of Melbourne and Pollfish in conducting this critical research as the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer APAC from Wunderman

Thompson, Justin Peyton said: "With COVID vaccines now being made available in different regions, it feels more important than ever that people get [information](#) that is both true and trusted.

"The research here has given us great insight into how trust can be impacted depending on who is delivering the message as well as other factors. I believe and I hope that the significance and scale of this research helps us to find the best ways to connect as the world continues to need trusted voices from partners like the WHO."

More information: More information about the key insights and an interactive dashboard is available on the Social Media & COVID-19 microsite. covid19-infodemic.com/

Provided by University of Melbourne

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