



wattpad brand partnerships 

2019

# Gen Z:

## The Authenticity Generation

**Gen Z has become the single most important consumer group of 2018.**

As millennials age into their 30s, marketers are zeroing in on a new generation that's starting to enter the workforce and gain independent purchasing power in the market.

# Say hello to Gen Z.

Roughly defined as anyone born between the mid-nineties and early 2000s Gen Z represents an even larger swath of the population in America than the next largest group—Millennials— with 61 million Gen Zs in the USA alone. They're the first generation in history to have grown up without ever knowing life before the internet. Gen Z's eldest were 10 when the iPhone hit the market. They've been connected for the entirety of their young lives.

Even the youngest Gen Zs, many still school-aged and living at home, are making massive ripples in the economy—93% of parents say their Gen Z kids influence the household purchases.\*

It feels like just yesterday we were wading through a barrage of millennial think-pieces that miscategorized them as entitled, lazy and narcissistic—and Gen Z appears to be even less understood, often referred to as painstakingly "curated". To others, they're too reliant on their devices. Too detached to engage in traditional pastimes like reading or going to the movies. They don't know a life outside of the internet, so who can blame them? But the reality of this cohort goes so much deeper than the clichés. They crave authenticity. They seek transparency. And they have all the tools to invent the future that reflects the social change they crave. If you want to know what Gen Z is really about, all you have to do is ask them.




# How did we become the Gen Z experts? We talked to 8 thousand of them.

At Wattpad, 90% of our massive audience of 70+ million monthly users, is Gen Z and Millennial.

Every day we look for new ways to connect brands with the audiences they want to reach.

We tap into a combination of machine learning, data science, and human intervention to understand our user behavior, but sometimes, the best way to get to know an audience is to start with a simple conversation. So that's what we did. And after surveying 8,000 Gen Zs, we have a unique insight into what makes their world turn. So who is this burgeoning economic powerhouse, and how do we capture—and keep—their attention? **Get ready to get real.**



## They want real world experiences



### Myth:

Gen Z lives life through their phones.

### Reality:

Gen Z balances a love of social media with a desire to get out there and experience the world.





# 60%

say they love staying  
connected, but don't  
need a million  
devices

# 62%

say they like social  
media, but don't  
need it



# 78%

would rather spend their money  
on an experience than a luxury item\*

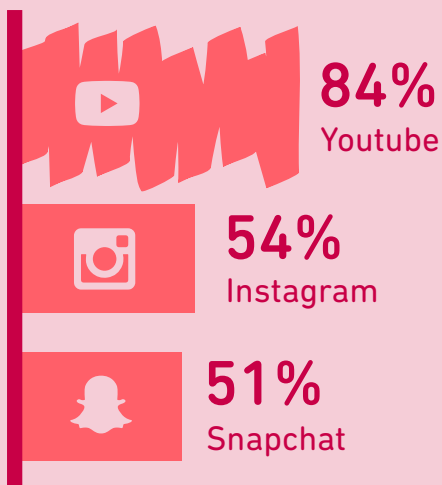
\*Trendera, 2018



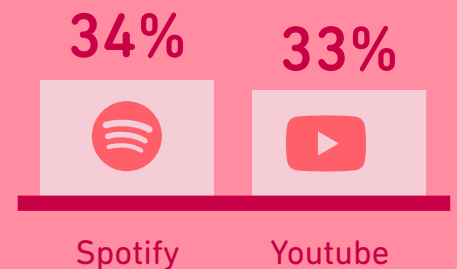
# They're blurring the lines between social and entertainment

Gen Z spends most of their social app time on:

Social apps? Streaming video? Gen Z consumes it all—but video on mobile means that social is becoming entertainment—and entertainment is now more social than ever.



## Top Ways Gen Z Consumes Music:



## Don't stop the pop

When it comes to what Gen Z is listening to, pop ranks #1

Gen Z are self-proclaimed media and entertainment junkies. They're going beyond basic cable and adding more forms of entertainment, like streaming and YouTube, into the mix.





**77%**  
of Gen Z say  
they love  
to read

**83%**  
go to the movies  
1-2 times a month

**59%**  
have basic cable  
in their homes

**41%**  
cut the cord  
and use services like:

**76%**  
Netflix



**28%**  
Hulu



**30%**  
Amazon Prime



**They're  
entertainment  
obsessed**

**93%**  
list entertainment as the category  
they are most interested in

# The Z List: Gen Z heroes

Gen Z marks the first generation that values digital influencers more than any other celebrity. 70% of teen YouTube subscribers say they relate more to YouTube creators more than traditional celebrities.\*

## Zendaya

21, Actress, Singer, Activist



## Malala Yousafzai

21, Activist



## Millie Bobby Brown

14, Actress



## Beth Reekles

23, Author, The Kissing Booth





# They're not a monolith, they're a mosaic

American Gen Zers are more diverse than any previous generation—and that doesn't just mean ethnic diversity. American Gen Zs are also the most sexually-diverse generation.



**1 in 7**

young women  
in the US identify  
as gay or bisexual\*

In America, about  
**1 in every 16**  
Gen Z men  
identifies as  
gay or bisexual\*

\*CNN, 2018

# Wattpad is even more diverse than America as a whole

We over index on US total population with the following groups:

Native American/  
American Indian (+.8%)

African American  
(+3.1%)

Asian/Pacific  
Islander (+1.6%)

Hispanic/Latinx  
(+1.1%)



49%

of American  
Gen Z are kids of color\*

58%

of Gen Z Wattpad users  
identify as people of color





# They didn't start the fire

But they are politically engaged, environmentally-conscious, and outspoken.

More than a quarter of US teens said they've attended protests or rallies or boycotted a company in the last year.\*



## 67%

of teens say they're more likely to purchase from a company that supports a cause versus one that doesn't.\*



# They value self-expression— not status

They're less likely to pay attention to brand names—and they're still young, so price is definitely a factor. When it comes to fashion and beauty, their drivers are more likely to involve self-expression.



## 61%

look for unique pieces that let them express themselves

60%

Don't really pay attention to brand names  
when it comes to fashion and beauty

65%

look for comfortable classics  
in their fashion choices

decide on purchases  
with a parent

make their own  
purchasing decisions

33%

42%

Gen Z is financially literate. They're side-hustling. They, on average, only have a single credit card. They're driven by price. Want them to part with their dollars? Help them make a dollar go further.

71%  
of Gen Z says price is  
the #1 driver of their  
purchase decisions.







# Beauty is a means towards self-expression

Beauty is one of the fastest-growing verticals on Wattpad. But even though our audience values beauty, they also value free expression and beauty in all shapes and forms, shown by the **Free Your Body** movement on Wattpad as well as the popularity of **#BodyPositivity** on the platform.

74%

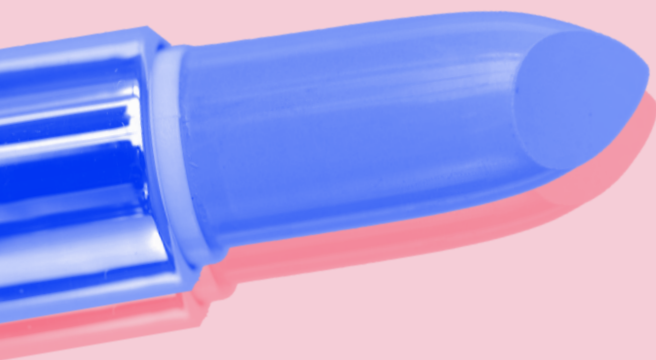
of women on Wattpad are self-proclaimed beauty junkies

76%

of women on Wattpad have purchased beauty products in the past month

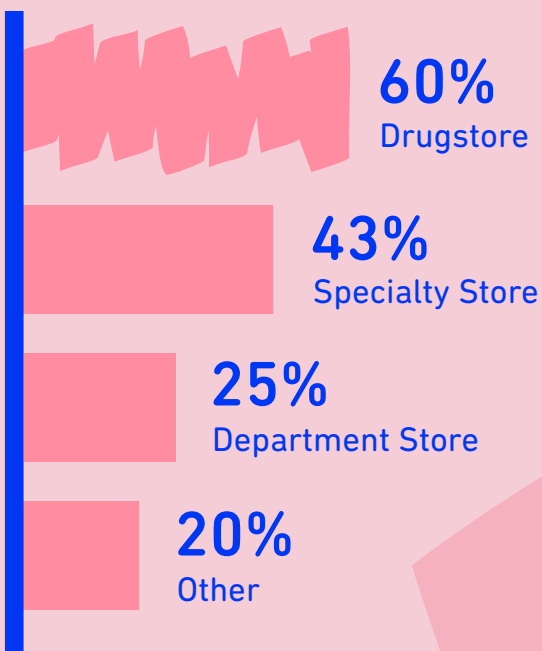
58%

of our Wattpad users shop in store for beauty and personal care products

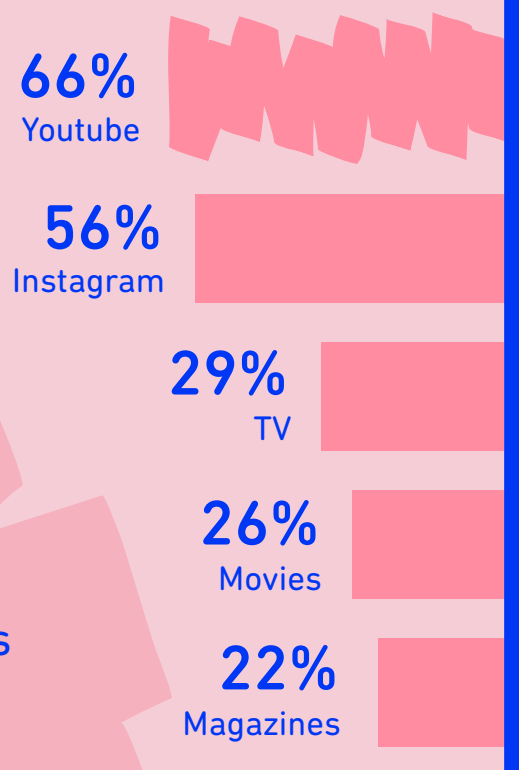




## Where they shop for beauty:



## Where they find beauty inspiration:



**50%**

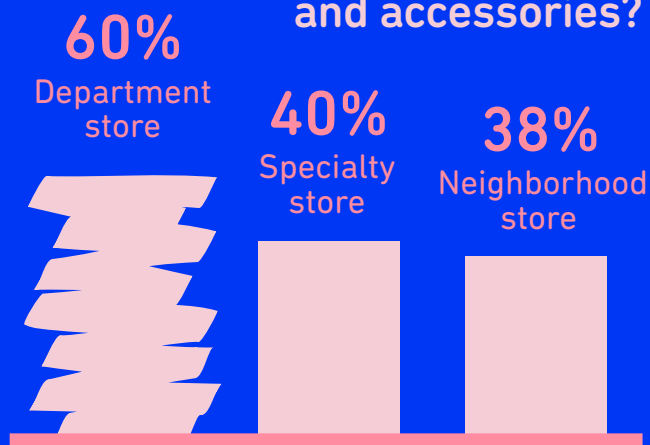
of our Wattpad users  
shop online for their  
beauty and personal  
care products

# Invest in IRL and URL

Gen Z might have grown up digital but that doesn't mean their shopping habits are online only. Gen Z wants it all. Successful retail brands are enabling their IRL and URL shopping.

**56%** shop for clothing and accessories both online and in-store

## Where do they shop for clothing and accessories?





**60%**

of Wattpadders 13-17 make their own purchase decisions when it comes to fashion and accessories

**74%**

of all female (adults) have purchased clothing/accessories within the past month

**65%**

of the Wattpad audience purchases clothes online.

**Fashion = freedom**

Even young Gen Zs say fashion decisions are in their court.

**Fashion is the #1 category** that Wattpadders 13-17 feel they have the most control/influence over



## How this report came together:

Unless otherwise indicated, the data in this report came from research conducted by Wattpad Brand Partnerships in October 2017, when we launched an in-depth digital survey with our users exploring their consumption and purchasing habits. The elective questionnaire was circulated via in-platform messaging to US residents of all ages who are active on the Wattpad platform. We analyzed the data at a random 8,000 sample size, breaking out the results into teen only (13-17), adult only (18+) and adult + teen. The results shared within this report represent responses from the 13-17 age group, with the exception of p. 9, which indexes all survey respondents, and p. 13 (Beauty is a Means Toward Self Expression), which reports on our key learnings from all women-identified survey respondents.

Want to  
reach Gen Z?  
Work with a  
Gen Z-first  
company

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