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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

2023

DECEMBER

dcdx

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WARNING

what you are about to see may shock you.
it may make you feel concerned.
it may make you feel angry, and it may make you feel confused.

it may do any of these things; but it should not make you feel indifferent.

if we want to change Gen Z's relationship with technology, we have to lean into the discomfort, the anger, the shock and the concern.

because change of any kind always starts with understanding.

and to understand, we have to open our minds; to read, to educate, and most importantly, to listen.

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Methodology

For the 3rd year in a row, we analyzed the screen time reports of Gen Z'ers to understand how young people engage with technology.

Submissions were collected from our network of 200,000 Gen Z'ers, who were paid to send video screen recordings of their iPhone screen time settings. All recordings were required to meet the criteria for a full data set and were not accepted as incomplete.

The report reveals unseen details on the time Gen Z spends on their phones, the apps they are using, and the complex relationship they have with their devices. This report helps to paint a clear picture of the future for technology usage behaviors among Gen Z.

157 raw, straight-from-the-iPhone-submissions.

Submissions are from US Gen Z'ers aged 15-27, with full demographics on page 49. The study was limited to participants with iPhones.

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

CONTENTS

ONE: OVERALL

Overall Gen Z Averages
Age and Gender Differences
Extremes and Limits
Year over Year Comparisons

TWO: APPS

Top 10 Overall Apps
Top 6 Profiles
New and Noteworthy

THREE: CATEGORIES

Music and Streaming
Community and Professional

FOUR: NEXT

Closing Thoughts
Demographics
Credits

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GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

GLOSSARY

❶ Weekly Average Screen Time (WAST)

WAST is defined as the average of the time spent per week per person. WAST is used to measure app usage.

❷ Daily Average Screen Time (DAST)

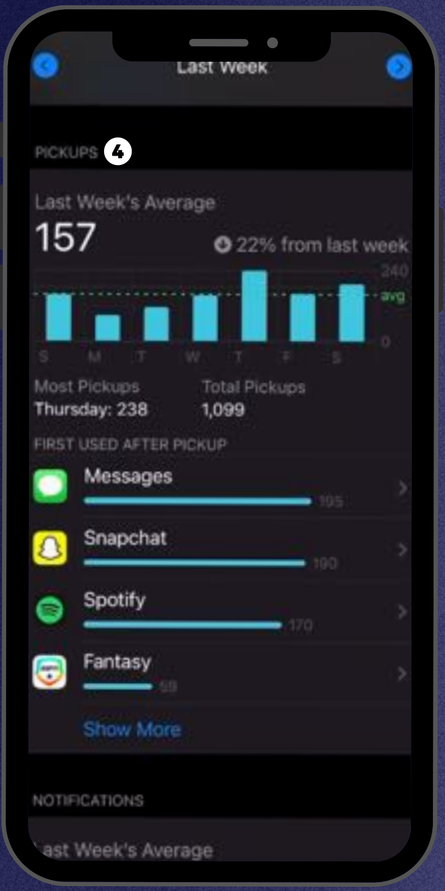
DAST is defined as the average of the time spent per day per person. DAST is only used to describe overall phone usage.

❸ % in Top 10

% in Top 10 is defined as the percentage of submissions in which the application in question was listed in the Top 10 most used apps.

❹ Pickups

A pickup is defined as an action taken to unlock your phone and explicitly interact with it - ie opening an application. Unlocking your phone and closing it without opening an app does not count as a pickup.



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ONE:

OVERALL

- Overall Gen Z Averages
- Age and Gender Differences
- Extremes
- Limits
- Year over Year Comparisons

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Overall Gen Z Screen Time

DAILY AVERAGE SCREEN TIME

7:07:39

+6.5%

from 2022 screen time data

Daily median screen time

6:54:00

from 2022 data **+8.7%**

Weekly average screen time

49:07:37

from 2022 data **+5.4%**

In 2023, Gen Z median screen time increased 8.8%

2023 average daily screen time increased slightly from 2022. At an average of over 7 hours of mobile screen time per day, Gen Z in 2023 was 104% above the global mobile screen time average, and 92% above the US mobile screen time average.

Perhaps more telling of Gen Z's increased phone usage is a median increase of 9%. Not only were the extremes higher, but the distribution of screen times (as seen on the right) also skewed more positively, showing the increasing screen times in the upper quartiles of time spent on mobile devices.

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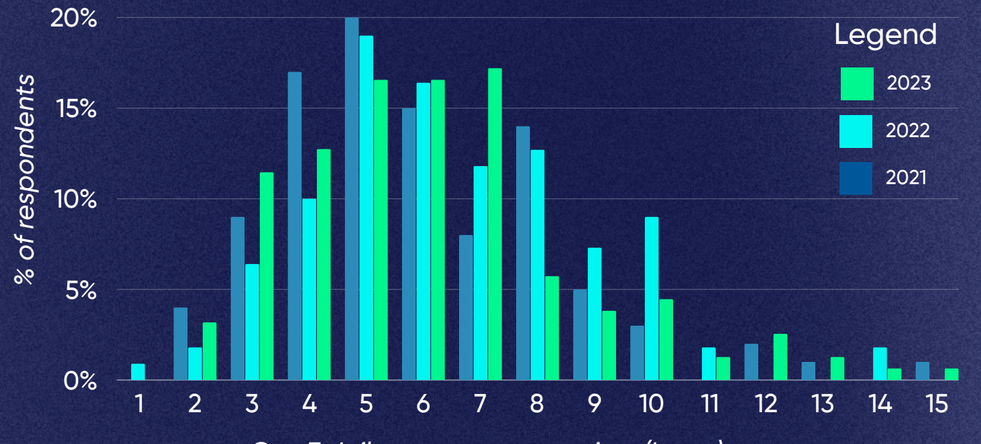
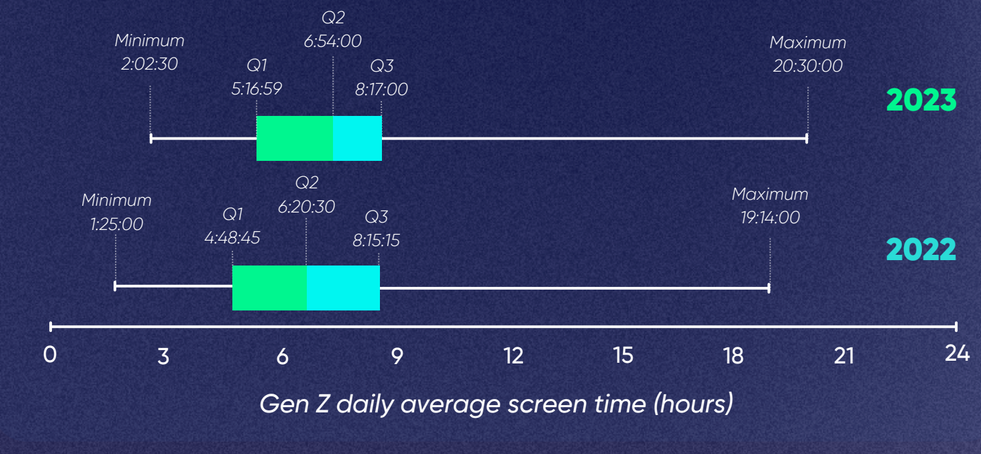
Distribution of Gen Z screen time submissions from 2023



Interquartile Screen Time Ranges 2023 to 2022



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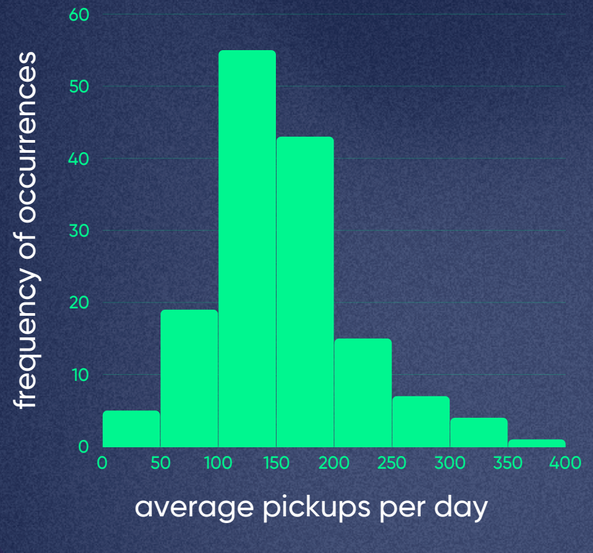
Overall Pickups and Notifications

In contrast to the previous year, there was a decline of 7% in pickups compared to the average number of notifications, which stayed the same year over year. Despite the overall increase in screen time averages, the reduction in pickups and the increase in subsequent screen time per pickups suggests that people are checking their devices slightly less frequently but doing so for longer durations.

PICKUPS

distribution of daily pickup averages



Gen Z daily average

154 -7% *from 2022 data*

Most popular day

FRIDAY: 224

Weekly average

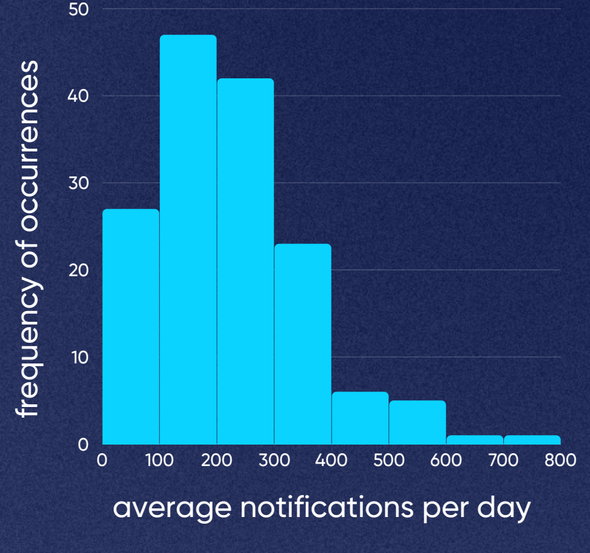
1079 -6% *from 2022 data*

Average screen time/pickup

0:02:46 +15% *from 2022 data*

NOTIFICATIONS

distribution of daily notification averages



Gen Z daily average

221 -0.8% *from 2022 data*

Most popular day

THURS: 234

Weekly average

1548 -0.8% *from 2022 data*

Age Differences

Young Gen Z'ers spend more time on their mobile devices than older Gen Z'ers, yet older Gen Z screen time has also gone up consistently two years in a row. There may be a screen time "plateau" around 7 hours and 30 minutes for younger Gen Z'ers, an average seemingly unaffected by pickup or notification changes. As more and more Gen Z'ers enter the workforce, we'll continue to see the impact of changes in lifestyle to changes in screen time use.

DAST

15-20 year-olds

7:34:55

21-27 year-olds

6:40:44

PICKUPS

15-20

156

21-27

152

NOTIFICATIONS

15-20

231

21-27

210

TOP 3 APPS BY WAST

15-20 year-olds

TikTok, Instagram, iMessage

2022 Top Apps for 15-20

TikTok, Instagram, YouTube

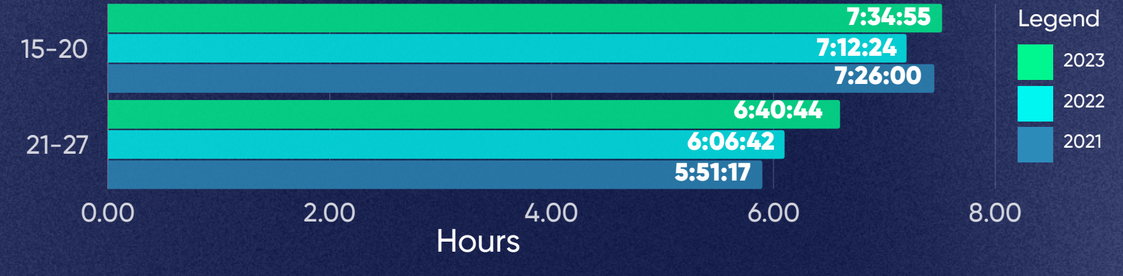
21-27 year-olds

TikTok, Instagram, iMessage

2022 Top Apps for 21-27

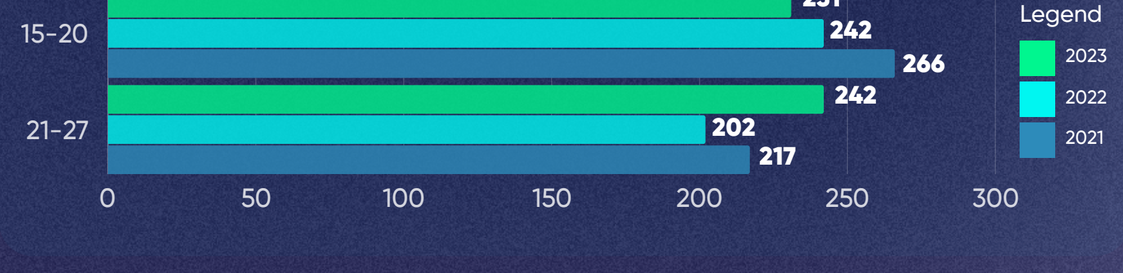
Instagram, TikTok, iMessage

DAILY AVERAGE SCREEN TIME



PICKUPS

NOTIFICATIONS



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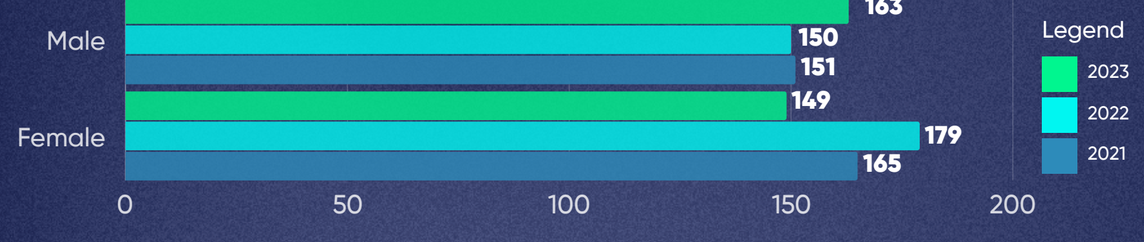
Gender Differences

Note: this comparison is among only male and female identifying participants. non-binary and/or others not identifying as male or female were not included in this gender comparison. For more on this, see the demographics section at the end of the report.

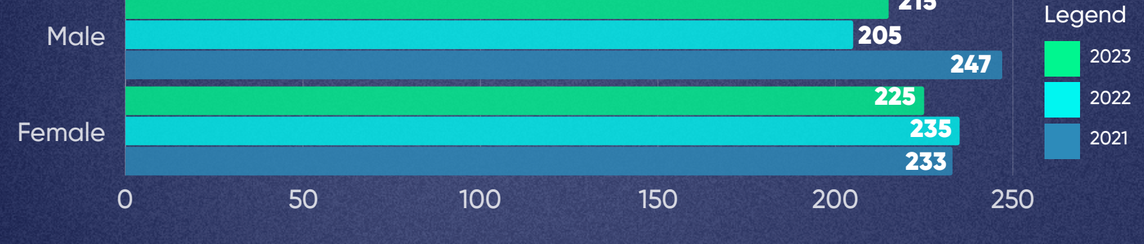
The gender gap in phone usage is widening, with female Gen Z'ers dedicating notably more time to their mobile devices compared to male Gen Z'ers in 2023. However, the lower frequency of pickups among females indicates that female Gen Z'ers spend more extended periods on their devices. The preferred apps among female Gen Z'ers remain consistent, while for males, TikTok has replaced YouTube in the most used apps.

DAILY AVERAGE SCREEN TIME

PICKUPS



NOTIFICATIONS



DAST	PICKUPS	NOTIFS
Male	Male	Male
5:55:27	**163**	**215**
Female	Female	Female
7:48:57	**150**	**226**

TOP 3 APPS BY WAST

Female

TikTok, Instagram, Messages

Female 2022 Apps

TikTok, Instagram, Messages

Male

Instagram, TikTok, Messages

Male 2022 Apps

YouTube, Instagram, Messages

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MAXES AND MINS

The highest and lowest data points in the 2023 submissions.

DAST

Max
20:30:00

Min
2:02:00

PICKUPS

Max
217

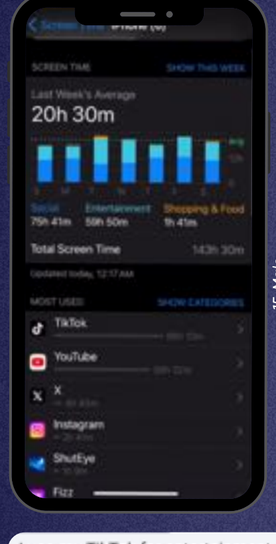
Min
37

NOTIFS

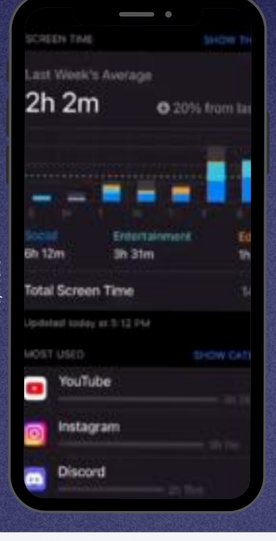
Max
440

Min
57

Screen shots of the extreme submissions from our 2023 data set



18, Female



15, Male

what we know:

20 hours and 30 minutes per day, on average, spent by the Gen Z'er with the highest average screen time in our 2023 data set. Naturally, we probed a bit - was this accurate? How did their screen time get so high? Below, you'll see the response from the participant, who uses TikTok for entertainment on a daily basis "to pass the time" and YouTube to listen to videos to go to sleep. Even if some of the time on screen is spent sleeping (still 66 hours per week on TikTok), the phone is still open, still on, and still connected.

I use my TikTok for entertainment on a daily basis and to pass the time. I use Youtube to listen to videos to go to sleep.

SEMI-EXTREMES EXTREMES

TOP 5% AVERAGES

Average data points from the highest 5% of submissions by screen time.

Avg. weekly screen time
96:03:30

DAST
14:49:45

Daily pickups
142

Daily notifs
274

App #1 - YouTube
Weekly Screen Time
11:19:38

App #2 - TikTok
Weekly Screen Time
8:58:53

BOTTOM 5% AVERAGES

Average data points from the lowest 5% of submissions by screen time.

Avg. weekly screen time
19:56:45

DAST
2:51:00

Daily pickups
101

Daily notifs
115

App #1 - Instagram
Weekly Screen Time
1:28:23

App #2 - Facebook
Weekly Screen Time
0:53:23

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SCREEN TIME LIMITS

Limits are time restrictions placed on screen time through Apple's limits setting.

22%

of Gen Z set limits on their phone usage in 2023.

-26% *from 30% in 2022*

DAST without limits

7:22:36 **+10%** *from 2022 data*

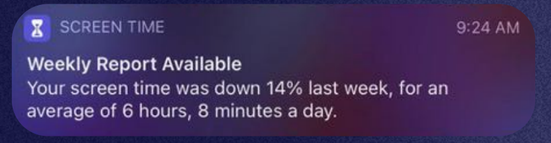
DAST with limits

6:17:27 **-6%** *from 2022 data*

INSTAGRAM	TIKTOK	SNAPCHAT	TWITTER
12% -20% *from 15% in 2022*	10% +42% *from 8% in 2022*	5% -37% *from 7% in 2022*	3% -40% *from 5% in 2022*
% with limits	% with limits	% with limits	% with limits

As screen time continues to rise, it is noteworthy that some of the most frequently used apps are also the ones subject to self-imposed screen time limits. TikTok, the most used app in 2023, also experienced an increase in limits set, possibly influenced by Gen Z'ers being aware of its high usage.

UnLimited



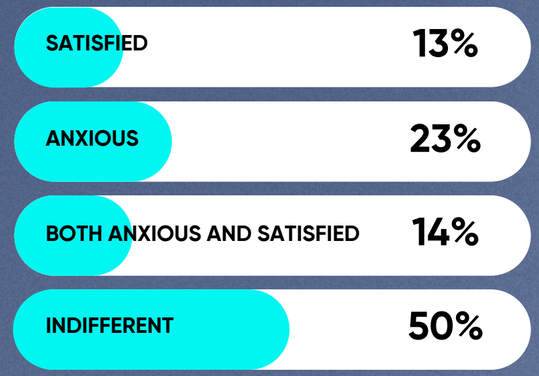
Gen Z'ers that set limits on their screen time devices through Apple's native limit function are spending an average of 1 hour less per day on their devices. Clearly, there is some effectiveness being found in this setting. But while Gen Z'ers may be self-aware around their screen time usage, indifference towards screen time usage is high. 50% of Gen Z'ers report feeling indifferent after seeing their weekly screen time reports.

Apple's native screen time limit feature may have an effect on screen time, but it seems Apple's attempts to increase screen time awareness and decrease usage may be futile - or perhaps ingenuine.

50%

of Gen Z reported feeling indifferent after seeing their weekly screentime report.

After seeing my weekly screen time report I feel...



n=507, from the futurehuman Gen Z Panel by dcdx | June 2, 2023

for more on screen time indifference and "numbing" see our research on Digital Captives

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TWO:

APPS

- Top 10 Overall Apps
- Top 6 Profiles
- New and Noteworthy

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TOP 10 APPS USED BY GEN Z IN 2023: OVERVIEW STATS

An overview of the top 10 most used apps by Gen Z in 2023, ranked by their weekly average screen time.

Applications	*WAST**	*% in Top 10*	*% in Top 3*	*WAST* in Top 3*	*WAST* when #1*

PROFILES NEXT

**WAST = Weekly Average Screen Time*
WAST in Top 3 = Weekly Average Screen Time when the app was in the top 3 most-used apps

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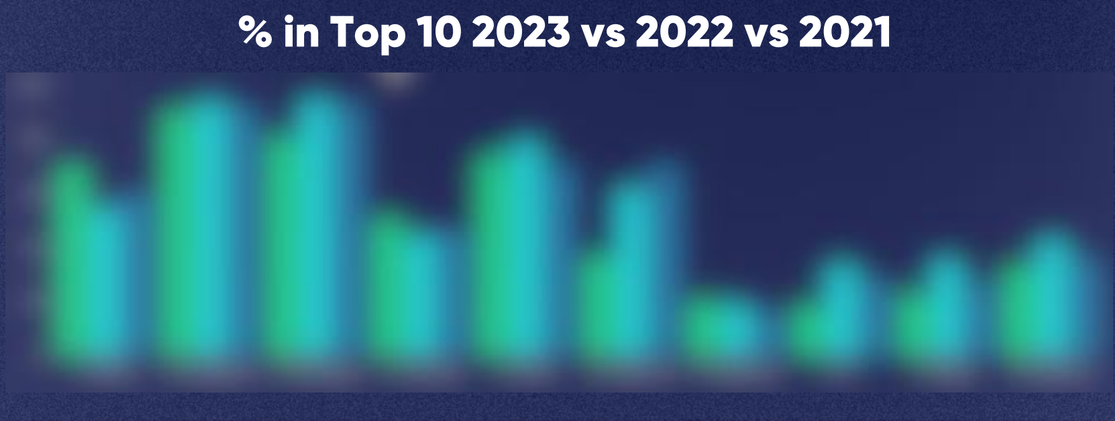
The Social Media Food Chain

Weekly Average Screen Time 2023 vs 2022 vs 2021

% in Top 10 2023 vs 2022 vs 2021



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Overall Gen Z Screen Time Rankings

#1

Rankings

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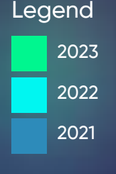
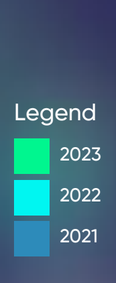
APP PROFILE

Weekly average screen time in hours when...



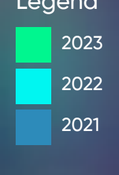
% of time app appeared in user's Top X



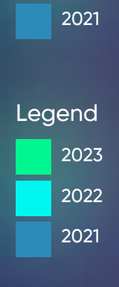
MORE STATS

Average weekly pickups	When in Top 10, % In Top 5
Average weekly notifications	When in Top 10, % In Top 3
Average notifications per pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 2
Average screen time/pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 1

Gen Z Age and Gender Differences:



% in Top 10



% in Top 10

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Legend

- Male
- Female
- 15-20 y/o
- 21-27 y/o
- Overall

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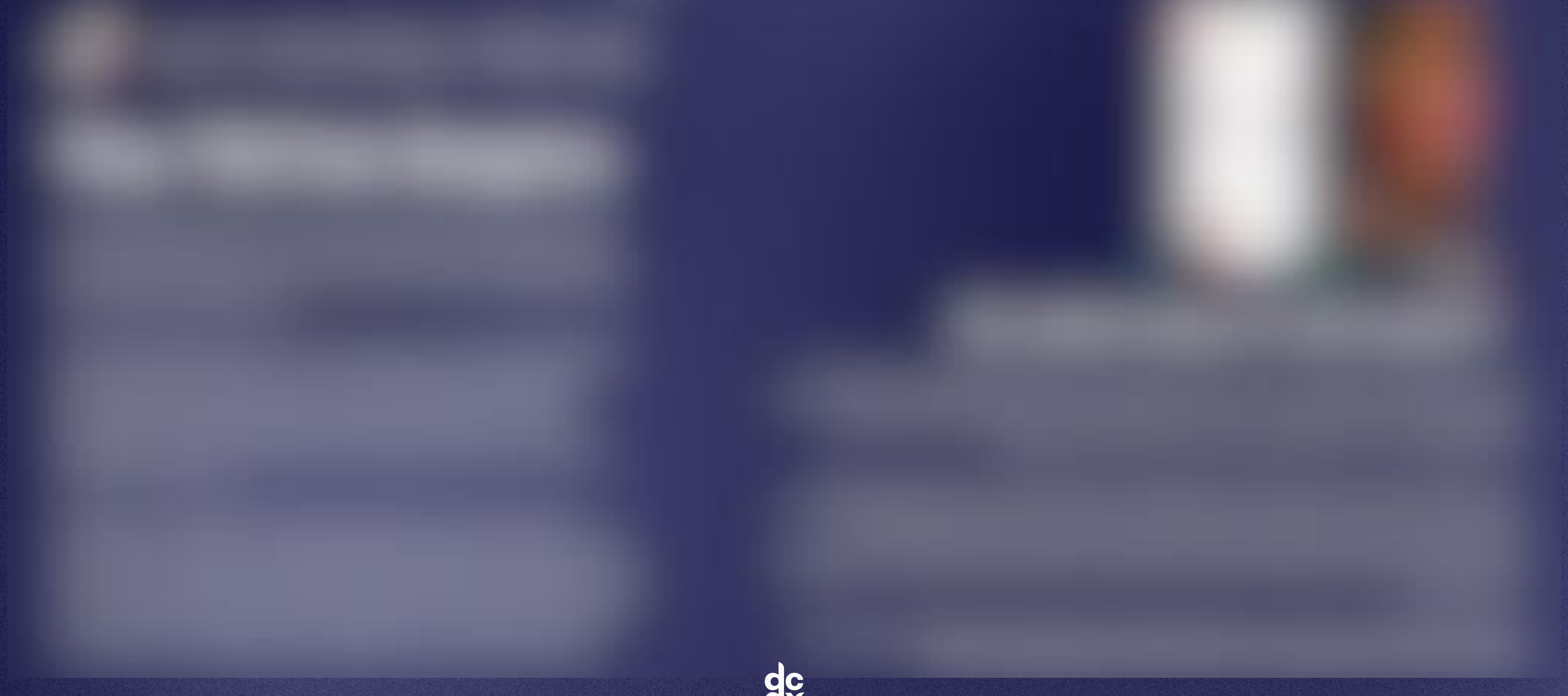

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

Overall Gen Z Screen Time Rankings

#2

Rankings

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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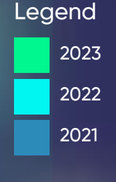
THIRD GEN Z 2023

APP PROFILE

Weekly average screen time in hours when...

% of time app appeared in user's Top X



MORE STATS

Average weekly pickups	When in Top 10, % In Top 5
Average weekly notifications	When in Top 10, % In Top 3
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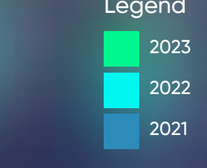
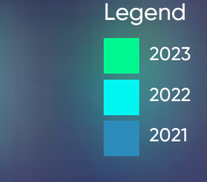
Average screen time/pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 1

Gen Z Age and Gender Differences:



% in Top 10



% in Top 10

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

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Overall Gen Z Screen Time Rankings

#3

Rankings

THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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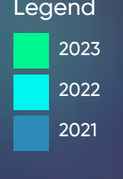
THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

APP PROFILE

Weekly average screen time in hours when...

% of time app appeared in user's Top X



MORE STATS

Average weekly pickups	When in Top 10, % In Top 5
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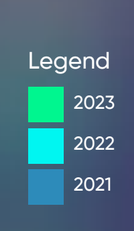
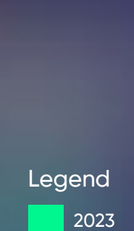
Average screen time/pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 1

Gen Z Age and Gender Differences:



% in Top 10



% in Top 10

THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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Legend

- Male
- Female
- 15-20 y/o
- 21-27 y/o
- Overall

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Overall Gen Z Screen Time Rankings

#4

Rankings

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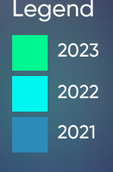
APP PROFILE

Weekly average screen time in hours when...



% of time app appeared in user's Top X

MORE STATS

Average weekly pickups	When in Top 10, % In Top 5
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Average notifications per pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 2
Average screen time/pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 1

Gen Z Age and Gender Differences: YouTube

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

Overall Gen Z Screen Time Rankings

#5

Rankings

THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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APP PROFILE:

Weekly average screen time in hours when...

% of time app appeared in user's Top X

MORE STATS

Average weekly pickups	When in Top 10, % In Top 5
Average weekly notifications	When in Top 10, % In Top 3
Average notifications per pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 2
Average screen time/pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 1

Gen Z Age and Gender Differences:

% in Top 10

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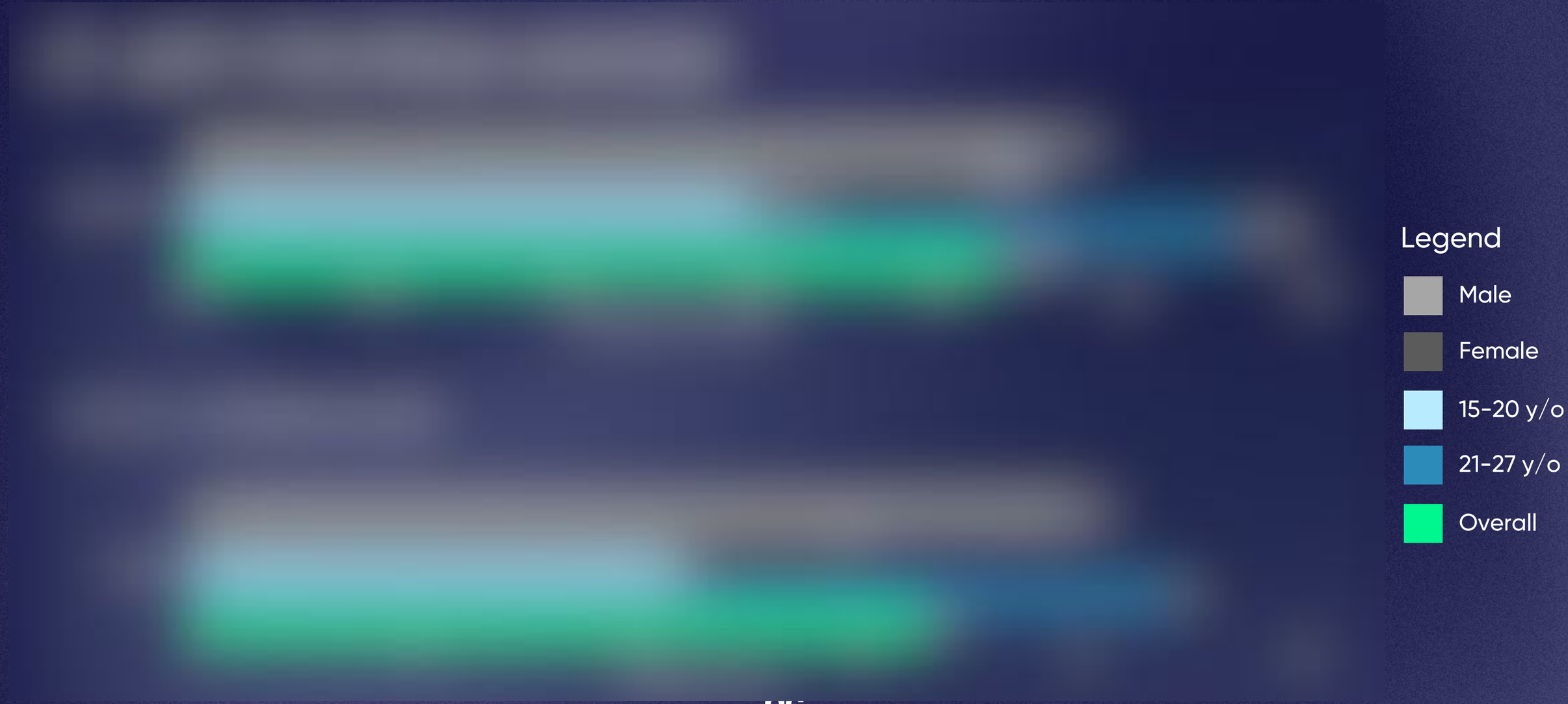

THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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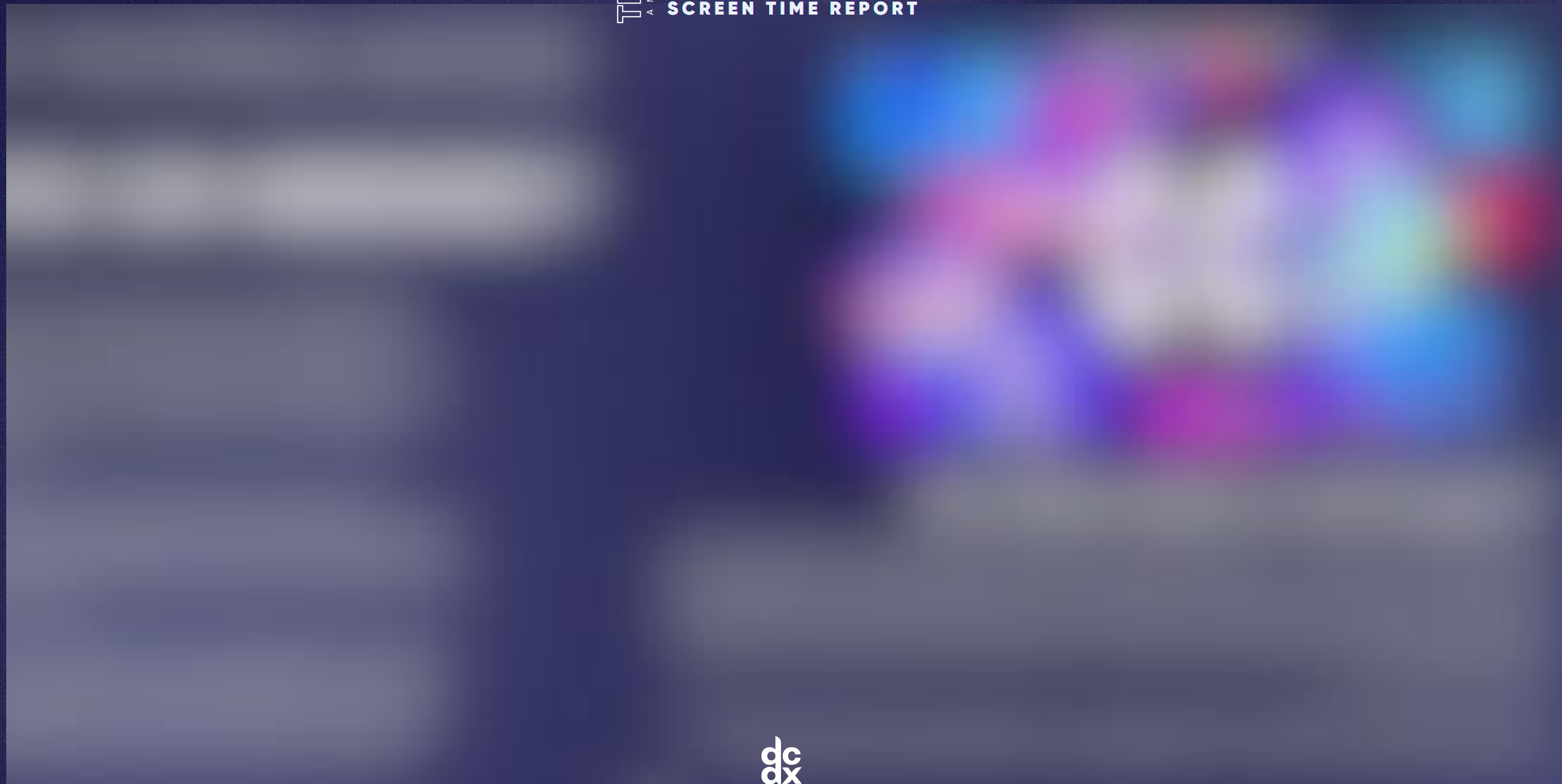
THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT



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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

Overall Gen Z Screen Time Rankings

#6

Rankings

THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z 2023 SCREEN TIME REPORT

APP PROFILE:

Breaking down app use

Weekly average screen time in hours when...

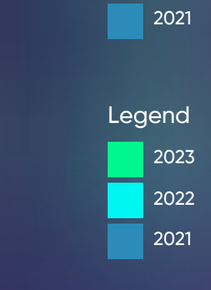
% of time app appeared in user's Top X

MORE STATS

Average weekly pickups	When in Top 10, % In Top 5
Average weekly notifications	When in Top 10, % In Top 3
Average notifications per pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 2
Average screen time/pickup	When in Top 10, % In Top 1

Gen Z Age and Gender Differences: Snapchat

% in Top 10



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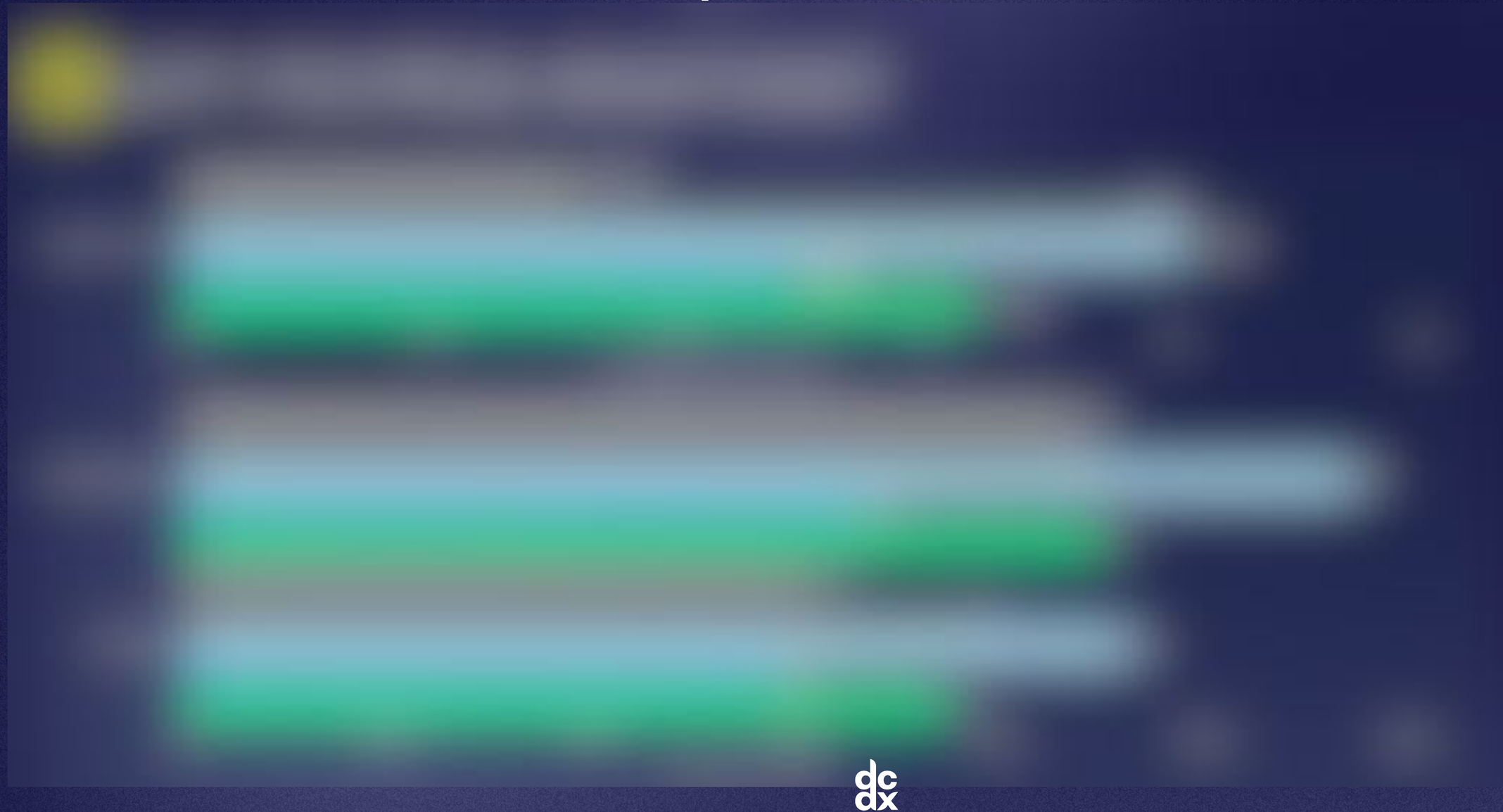

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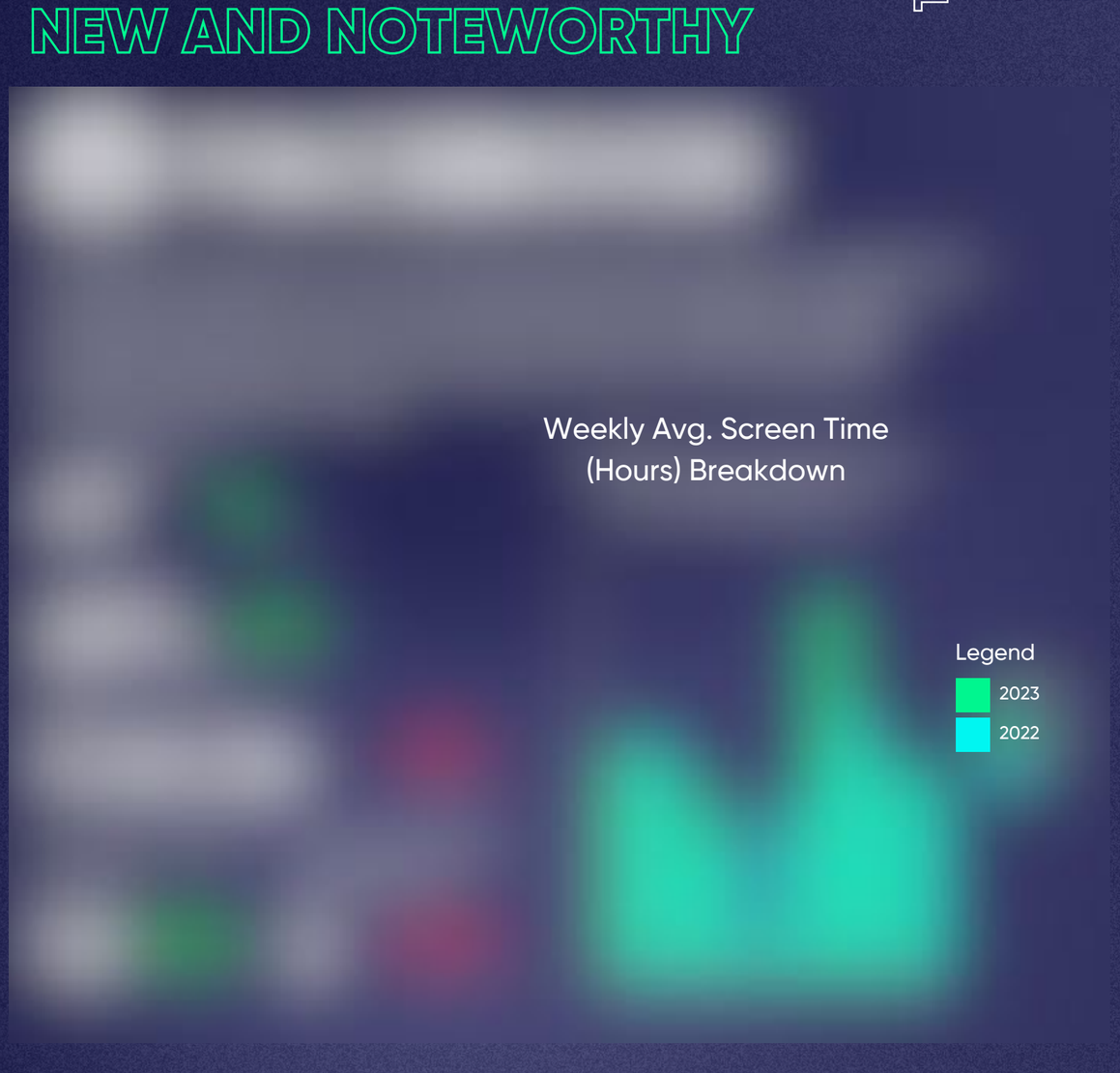
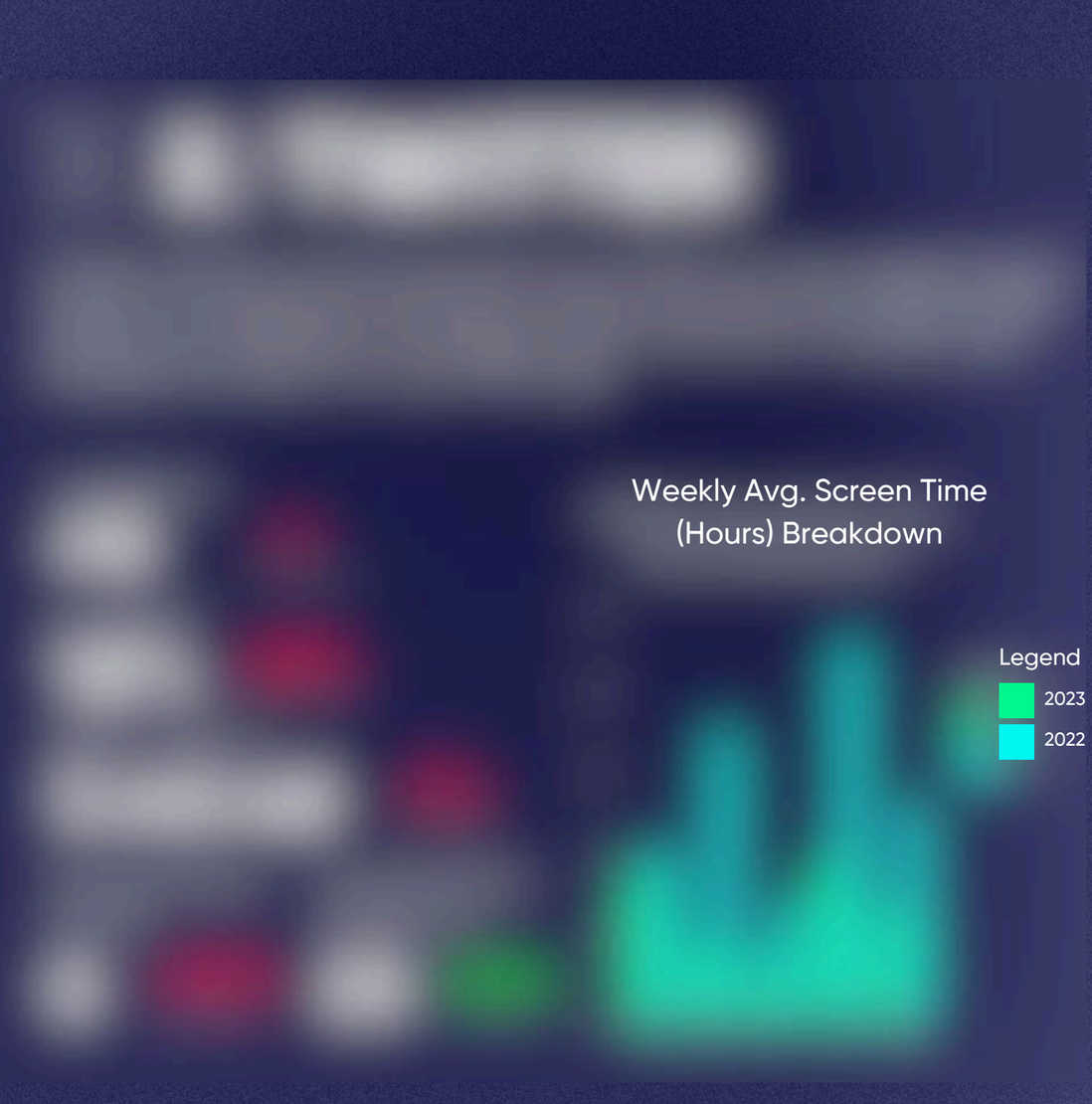
NEW AND NOTEWORTHY





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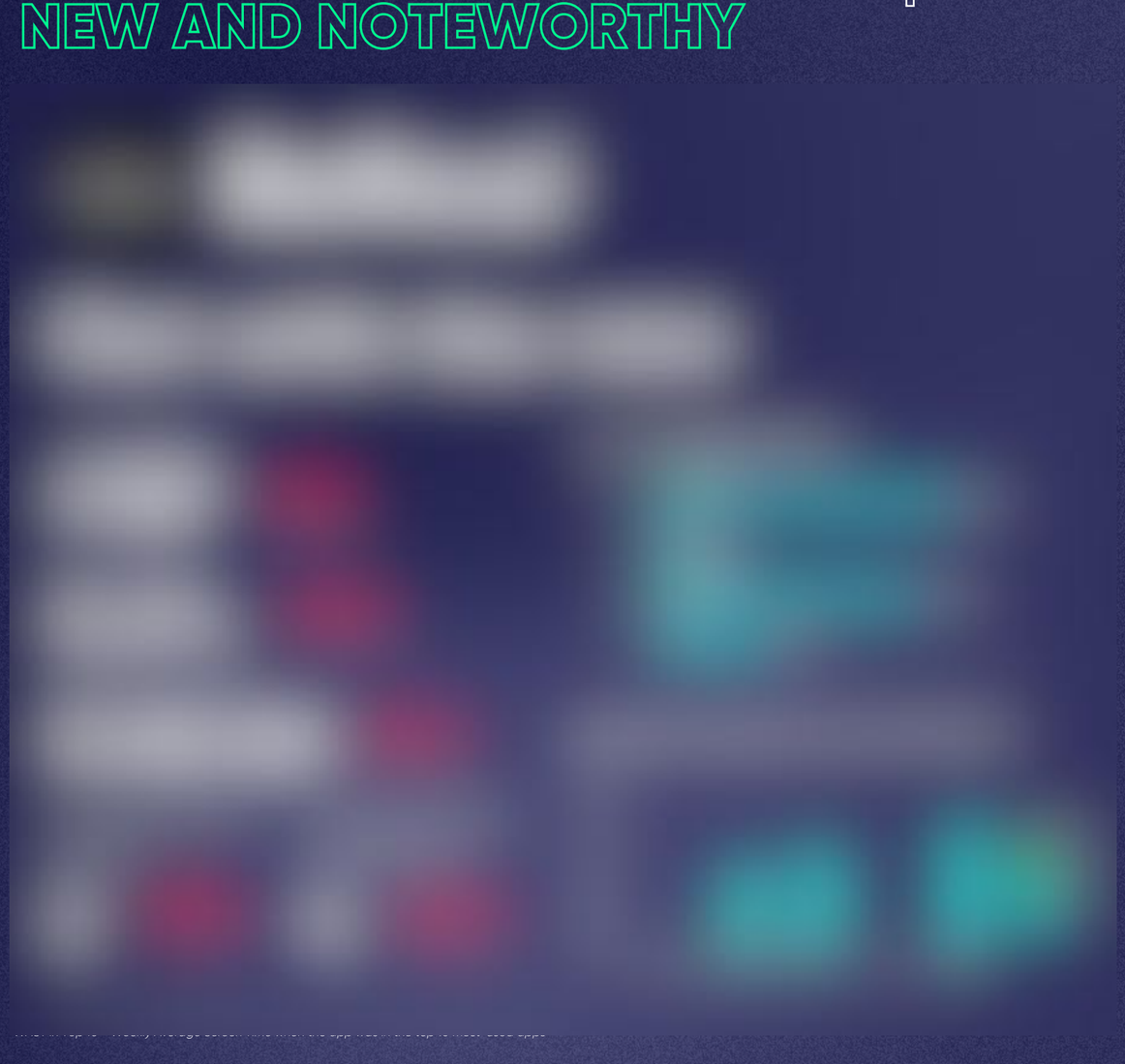
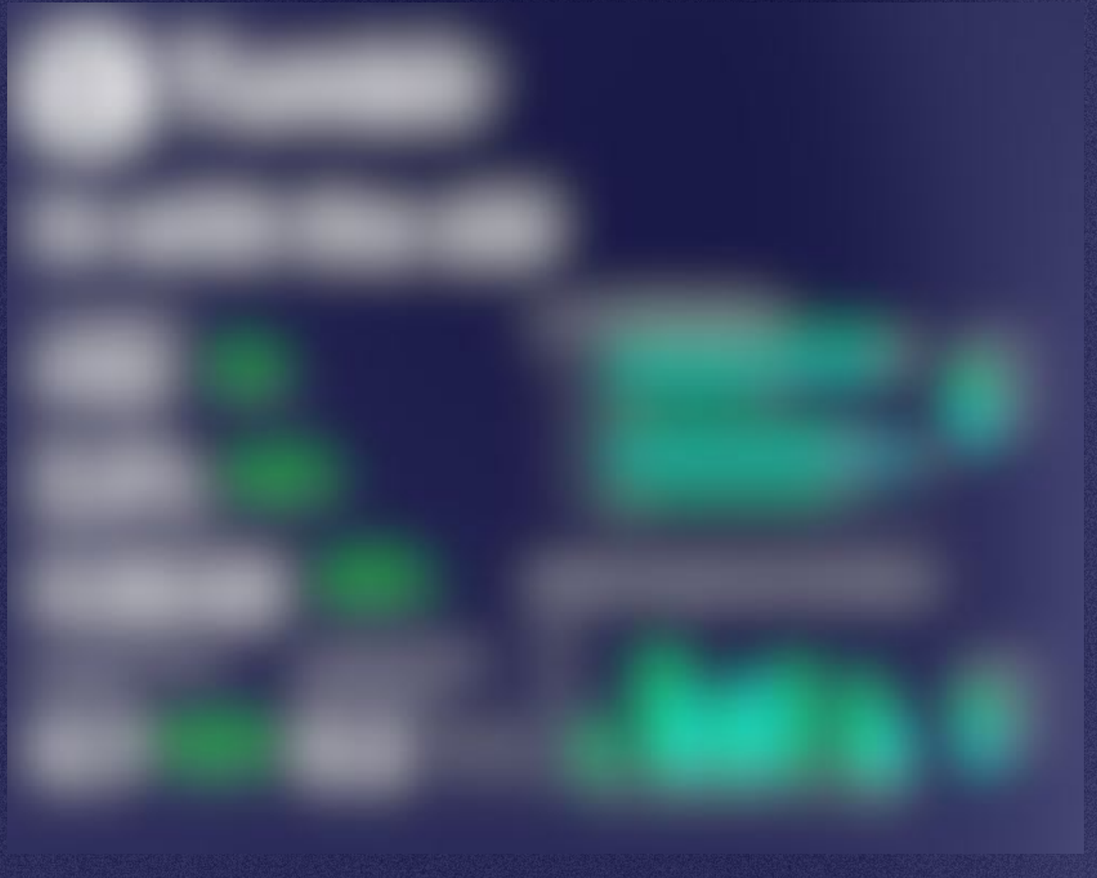
NEW AND NOTEWORTHY





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THREE: CATEGORIES

Music | Streaming | Community | Professional

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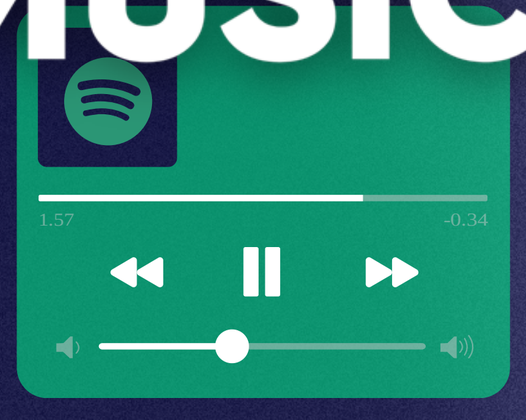
CATEGORIES

MUSIC



*WAST = Weekly Average Screen Time
WAST in Top 10 = Weekly Average Screen Time when the app was in the top 10 most-used apps

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CATEGORIES

STREAMING

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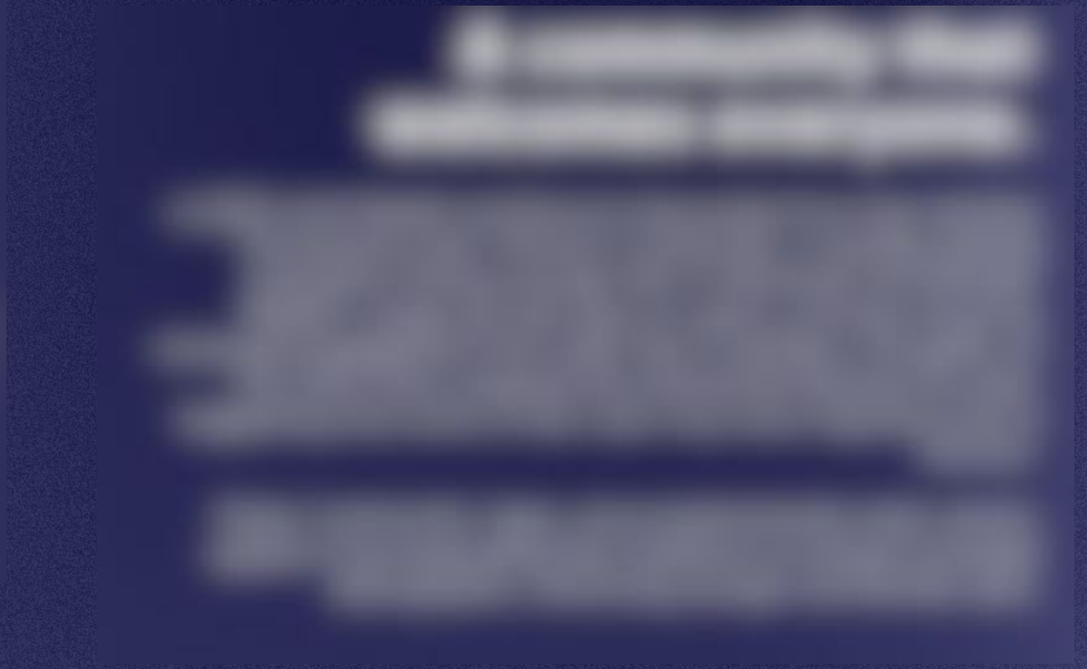
COMMUNITY



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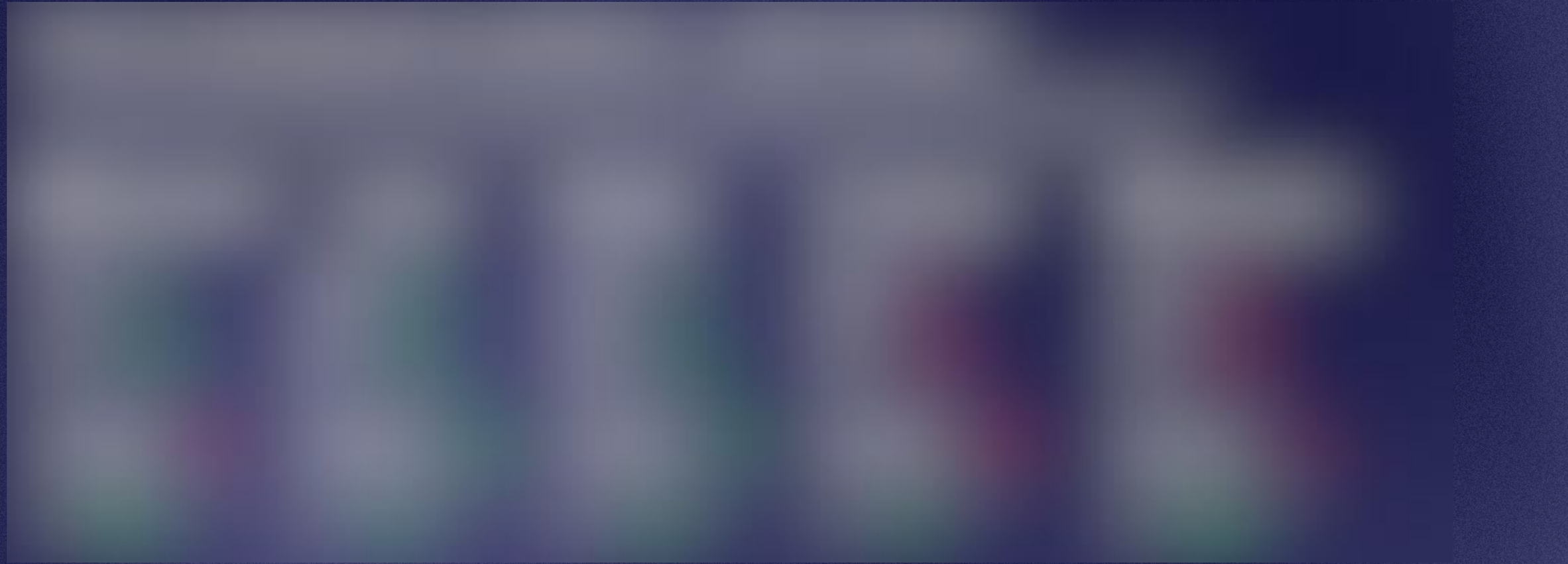
CATEGORIES

PROFESSIONAL



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THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

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FOUR:

NEXT

Closing Thoughts | Demographics | Credits

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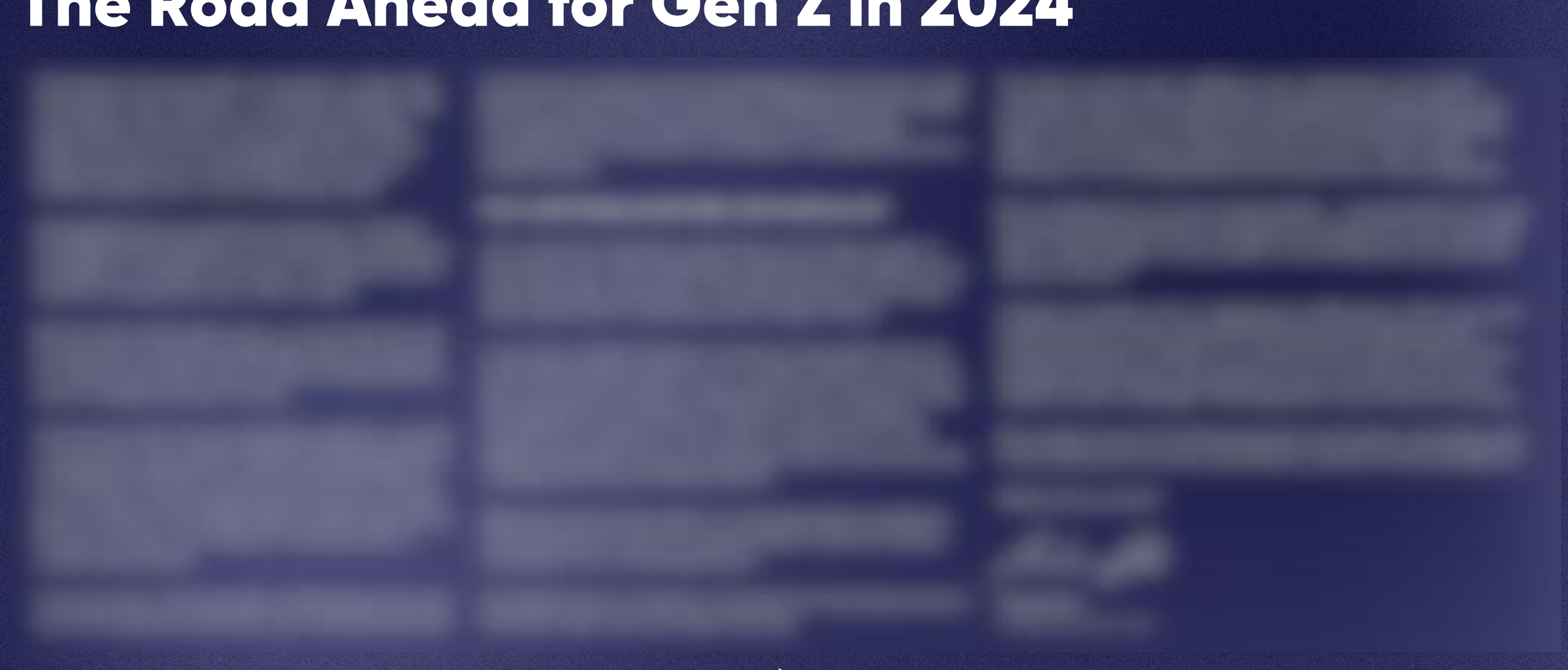
The Road Ahead for Gen Z in 2024



THIRD ANNUAL GEN Z SCREEN TIME REPORT

Demographics

Cross-sectional

Data for the 2023 Gen Z Screen Time report was collected from our futurehuman network of Gen Z'ers, and is considered cross-sectional data. Many participants in this year's screen time study also participated in last year's, but the report is not considered a longitudinal study or meant to examine the continuity in behaviors of individual participants over time.

157 total submissions.

157 participants shared their screen time data over the course of 3 weeks in October of 2023. These 157 serve as the base number for all data points in the report.

All demographic data was self-reported.

gender

Female: 59.9%
Male: 36.9%
Non-binary: 3.2%

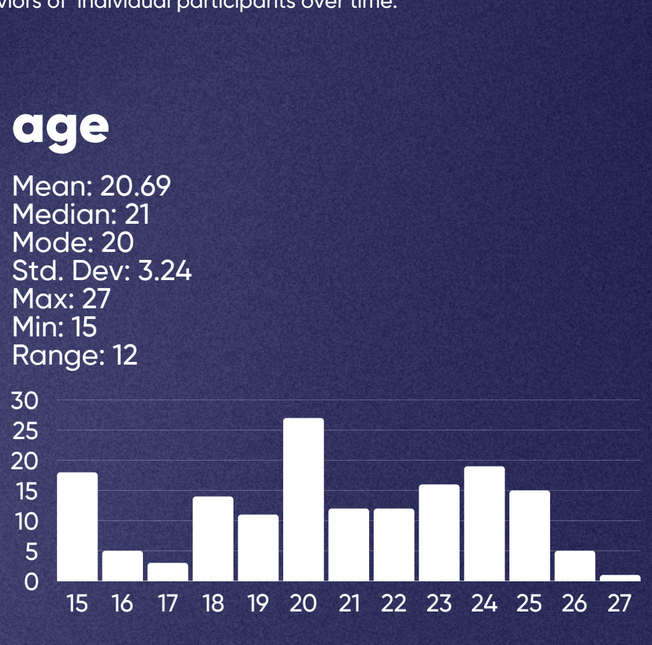
race

Asian or Pacific Islander: 22.3%
Hispanic or Latinx: 26.1%
Black or African American: 20.4%
White: 29.9% | Other: 1.3%

This report includes gendered breakdowns and comparison for apps. While non-binary submissions accounted for 3.2% of our overall entries, they were not counted in the gender comparison data between males and females. Data for non-binary participants was included in all other comparisons for both overall screen time averages, and age breakdowns.

age

Mean: 20.69
Median: 21
Mode: 20
Std. Dev: 3.24
Max: 27
Min: 15
Range: 12



Additional info

The data presented in the year's 2023 Gen Z Screen Time report is a fraction of the entire data set available.

Other categories of information, such as gaming and dating, alongside much more detailed statistics on individual apps, are available upon request.

To contact us for more in depth screen time data, please send us an email by clicking here:

contact here

REPORT CREDITS

This report was developed by the Gen Z research and consulting firm dcdx. The findings and insights are based on a combination of primary and secondary research, and are independent of relationships with previous, current or prospective clients.

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Anna Panetta - Operations, dcdx
Andrew Roth - Founder, dcdx
Natalie Sannes - Research, dcdx
Billy Seguin - Partnerships, dcdx
Mara Stolzenbach - Strategy, dcdx

A big thank you to our tremendously talented team at dcdx that believes so strongly in our vision to make the future human.

Onward we go.

make the future human.

dcdx | 2023

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