

Two Truths and a Lie

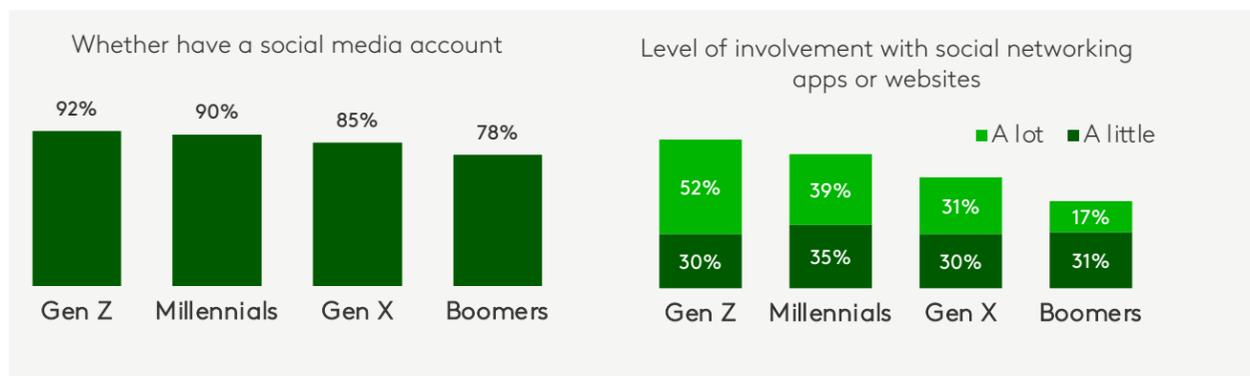
Canadians on Social Media

How do generations differ when using social media?

We play one of our favorite party games with the Canadian public to learn more about their true feelings on social media. Given so much recent discussion about the Canadian government's role in regulating social media platforms and content, the possibility of a Twitter acquisition, and the overall importance of social media in people's lives, we use our Canada MONITOR and Global MONITOR data to separate fact from fiction. Hands up, let's play!

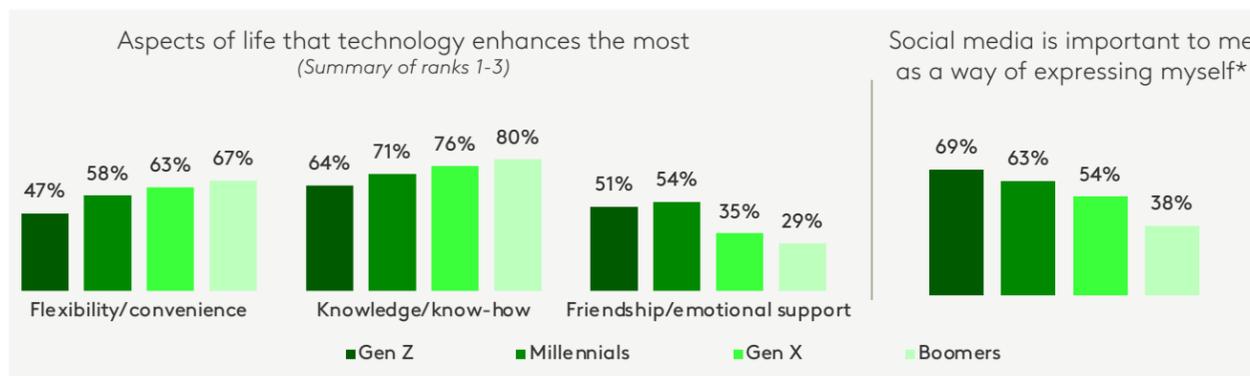
TRUTH: Canada is one of the most socially networked countries ¹⁰⁰

According to Statista, 87% of the Canadian population are active social media users, making it the 11th-highest country in terms of social media penetration. And while the distribution across generations of those with a social media account is remarkably even, most of the involvement and activity is not surprisingly concentrated among Canadian Millennials and Gen Zers.



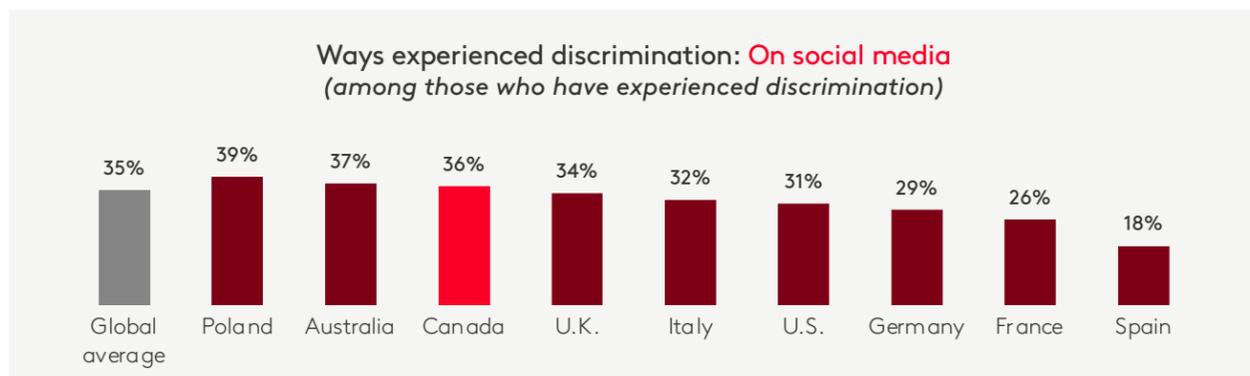
TRUTH: The role of technology in Canadians' lives splits down generational lines ¹⁰⁰

Xer and Boomer reactions to cat memes and dance videos is a bit 😊. Older Canadians look for practical benefits in their relationship to technology and social media, and at-the-ready information and knowledge provide the functional upside of more flexibility and convenience. On the other side of the spectrum, digitally native Canadian Zers and Millennials prize the intangibles of social media and it to develop and express their identities while finding the social and emotional support they need in their lives.



LIE: Canadians have a healthier relationship with social media than most people 🤔

Conventional wisdom would hold that Canadians' cordiality translates to a kinder, gentler social media environment. But the oftentimes toxic tenor of social media knows no borders, and Canadians report experiencing discrimination in the new digital commons at a greater rate than many Western countries. This is perhaps a reflection of Canadians' regard for the coarse discourse and how disagreeable it is to the politeness and diplomatic sensibility that characterize Canadian culture.



The Takeaway

Canadians have embraced the age of social media, but the reasons for it vary, meaning brands can't afford a one-size-fits-all social strategy. In social activations, older Canadians need to see practical and transactional benefits. But younger Canadians are accustomed to relationship-building on social media and are inclined to put more of their identities and opinions out there—to connect with them, brands need to be human, accessible, and empathetic. All while navigating this generational divide, brands also have to be mindful of the fine line between the kind of casual candor that gets likes and follows and the kind of coarse overstep that can remind Canadians of the uglier side of social media.

