

Reddit Audience Spotlight

Gen Z: Finding Fluidity

How Reddit offers Gen Z a safe space to speak freely and be open against a backdrop of cultural conflict.



How to use this deck

The content and sections in this deck can be used separately to tailor your approach to clients who are looking to connect with parents on Reddit

It provides data and insights to answer three key questions:

- 01. What is important to Gen Z when it comes to their online identities, values and aspirations?**
- 02. What does connection mean for this audience group and how does it play out on Reddit?**
- 03. How can Reddit help brands connect with Gen Z?**

118n Data for Markets to customize insights with.

TL;DR

Gen Z are hailed as the generation that'll save us, but that role is often at odds with the realities of modern life.

Reddit gives them a space to open up, and speak freely about their experiences and opinions as they figure out who they are.

Implications

How brands can resonate with Gen Z on Reddit.

- 01. Normalize openness.** This group talks a big game around emotional openness, but many are still pressured to be 'normal'. Resonate by normalising conversations around more stigmatized issues in brand communications.
- 02. Focus on practical benefits.** Gen Z care about a lot of things, but they don't always need brands to take a stand. Listen to what they care about, and focus on the value your brand can authentically add – whether that's promoting causes or just making everyday life easier.
- 03. Put them in the driving seat.** This group are anxious about the future, but feel confident they can figure out how to get where they need to go. Demonstrate how products and services can free up money and time for them to spend on what's important.
- 04. Create opportunities for them to connect.** Gen Z may be extremely online, but they also over-index on reporting feelings of loneliness. Harness the power of fandom as a vehicle for connection by encouraging communities to collaborate.



Gen Z redditors have a better relationship with brands than you might think...

+23%

more likely than the general population to buy from brands they have seen advertised

1-in-2

are loyal to brands they like

59%

mention 'reliability' as a top brand quality, followed by 'authenticity' and 'innovation'

Ethical, engaged, and **set to save the planet**

Gen Z have been hailed— like many young adults before them — as the generation that'll save the world.

This group are proven to be more educated, more ethical, more politically engaged and more socially aware than any prior cohort. And as such, have been tasked with eradicating outdated gender norms, white supremacy and climate change, all while minimising the negative impact of capitalism and — of course — leaving big brands in the dust.

Source: Forbes, FT, The Guardian, Business Insider

Will Gen-Z Save the World?

Young voices grow louder in
company strategies and values

This age group is seen increasingly as driving sustainability — as decision makers and stakeholders

**'Generation sensible' risk missing out on
life experiences, therapists warn**

**Gen Z is leading an evolution in
shopping that could kill brands as
we know them**

Feeling the pressure

Such pressure to be perfect is weighing this audience down. The affiliated stress has been preceded by decades-long wars, always-on information, financial crises and a global pandemic that's stunted their careers.

No wonder this age group reports higher rates of anxiety and depression than any other – leading them to seek ways to escape. While some take pleasure in ephemeral fashion trends or immersive gaming, others find comfort in the cultural norms that they're supposed to be fighting against.

Sources: Deloitte, 2022¹; Razorfish, 2022²

r/AskWomen

Gen Z, what's something you wish others better understood about your generation?

I'm Gen Z. I'm not depressed because I grew up with a cell phone, but I absolutely think the access to information and constant media definitely contributes to my depression and existentialism.



1.5k upvotes

46%

Gen Zs say they are **stressed all or most of the time**¹

77%

US Gen Zs play **video games to release stress and anxiety**²



Embracing contradiction

Against this backdrop, the mindset of today's young adults is defined by internal conflict. They may be equipped with the knowledge of what's right, but they're also weighed down by the realities of modern life.

To cope with such cognitive dissonance, Gen Z are embracing fluidity, creating less static identities that enable them to navigate a world rife with contradictions.

TL;DR? Gen Z are accustomed to internal conflict. They're embracing fluid identities to survive a world rife with contradiction, and coming to Reddit to navigate these tensions without judgement.

Gen Z are defined by internal contradictions that they're coming to Reddit to resolve...

IDENTITY

Emotionally open, but eager to fit in

VALUES

Highly informed, but overwhelmed

ASPIRATIONS

Ambitious, but deeply anxious

CONNECTION

Connected, but not always satisfied



01.

Identity on Reddit

**On Reddit, Gen Z are free to be emotionally open,
without compromising their social standing**

Emotionally open, but eager to fit in

TL;DR? While Gen Z value emotional openness, online they're often pressured to perform. The pseudonymity of Reddit creates a safe space in which they can explore the boundaries of who they are and what's considered 'normal'.

In their late teens and early 20s, Gen Z are at a vulnerable life stage – one that can be socially grueling. And social media isn't always helping.

While emotional safety is a hot button issue for this group, they're not always able to openly explore who they are, who they want to be, and how to navigate their relationships.

Source: Reddit Global, Aug 1 2021 - Jul 31 2022²

+20%

Gen Z are more likely to agree: **'I feel using social media causes me anxiety'**¹

#1

In the past year, **r/Relationship_Advice** was the most popular subreddit where Gen Z posted and self-identified²

r/GenZ

Does choosing not to have TikTok make me less of a Zoomer?

This is not to put down any people who use TikTok or make contact on the app. I'm just asking a genuine question.

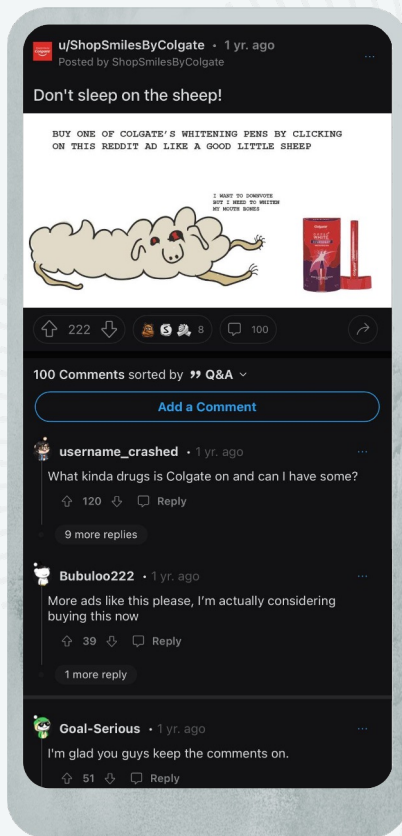


Gen Z come to Reddit to sense-check what's 'normal', without fearing social backlash

Here, this group can be open about what's worrying them – largely due to the fact that they're not obligated to disclose their real identities.

Whether worrying about the future and how much time we have left, or discussing sex, anxiety, periods, love or skincare, on Reddit, no topic is too personal to be off limits.

Sources: GWI, Global, Q1-Q2 2022¹; Reddit Internal, Global, Jun 2022 v. Feb 2022²



+35%

Gen Z redditors are more likely than overall Gen Z to say they're **comfortable talking about their mental health**¹

+195%

rise in mentions of **queer identity** on r/teenagers during Pride Month 2022²

Learn from **Colgate**, who used self-deprecating humour to reflect the radical openness of Gen Z redditors.



The opportunity

Listen in the spaces where Gen Z are talking about the everyday issues they worry about. Resonate by normalizing conversations around these subjects – and especially more stigmatized issues – in brand level communications.

Community Spotlight:

Difficult conversations

r/askparents

r/askparents

How would I tell my mom I want to move out (23F)

I'm 23F, I work full time and make good money. I can afford to live on my own and have decided it will be for the best. I love my mom but I really need the space. I have toured a few places and found one I really like. I want to bite the bullet and go for it but fear the conversation I will have to have.

↑ ↓ Comment Share

Everyday life humour

r/me_irl

r/me_irl

me_irl

Parents: *works harder for kids to have an easier life*

Kids: *lives an easier life*

Parents:



↑ ↓ Comment Share

Finding community

r/bisexual

r/bisexual

What was your "Oh, I'm not straight" moment?

Mine happened when I was 16. My hair tie broke and I was messing with my hair trying to tie it up. My very pretty classmate gave me her hair tie. While doing so she tilted my chin up and said "but you look so much prettier with your hair down".

It hit me, I was definitely not straight

↑ ↓ Comment Share



Thought-Starter

We Can Help You With That

Demonstrate how your product or service can help alleviate some of the pressures that Gen Zs face today.

Using a Promoted Post, showcase how your brand's core value prop can help Gen Zs tackle some of the key challenges in their lives. Think: relationships, school, identity and more.

Don't forget to tap into humour, and demonstrate your knowledge of Reddit like Adobe did for their Creative Cloud Students campaign.





02.

Values on Reddit

Gen Z come to Reddit to find clarity around their values without feeling pressured to perform them.

Highly informed, but overwhelmed

TL;DR? Gen Z aren't just feeling overwhelmed by the volume of causes to support, but also about how to talk about them. On Reddit, they can discuss what they care about candidly.

Gen Z over-index on worrying about everything from inequality to the economy – and with good reason. But with so much information available, it's easy for this group to feel paralysed.

Further, there's growing pressure to perform. Whether round the dinner table or scrolling through social feeds, there are few safe spaces for this group to authentically learn and grow.

Sources: GWI, Global, Q1-Q2 2022¹; Brandwatch, Global, Aug 1 2021 - Jul 31 2022²

36%
of Gen Z redditors
think the climate crisis
will only get worse¹

#8
in the past year,
r/AmITheAsshole was
the eighth most popular
subreddit where Gen Z
posted and self-identified²

r/Relationship_Advice

my entire family is anti-vaxx and it's ruining our relationship

i (f20) have a relatively large family (2 parents (50's), 2 sisters (28, 21) and 5 brothers (28, 22, 18, 15, 14). my boyfriend and i both got our covid vaccines as soon as we could, but no one else in my family has it, and they are VERY against it. my 4 oldest siblings are planning on moving to Mexico to avoid the mandatory vaccine. i disagree strongly with that choice, and i don't think running away is the answer.

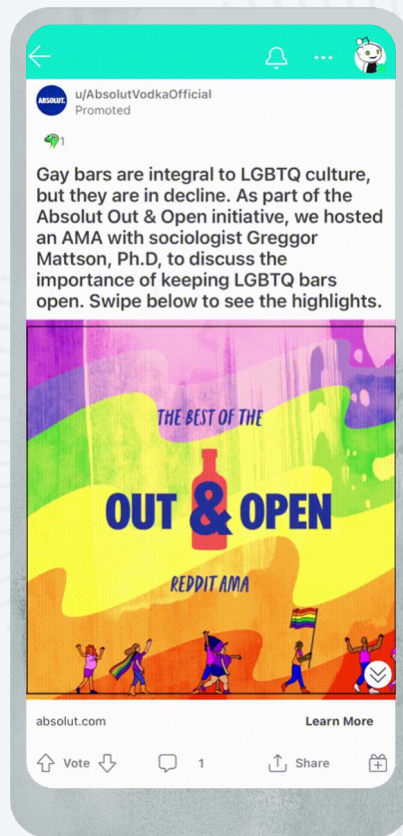


On Reddit, Gen Z can explore their values **without having to perform them**

Reddit is a safe haven, away from empty claims or virtue signaling. Here, Gen Z are able to learn about important issues in an emotionally safe environment, ask questions they may not be able to ask in a public space, and learn from others' experiences, who are also able to share without the necessity of self-disclosure.

It's why subreddits like r/effectivealtruism and r/environment – both of which over-index on Gen Z visits – have seen huge growth in the past year.

Sources: Reddit Internal, Global, Jul 31 2021 - Aug 01 2022 vs. previous period¹; Power of Community, Global, 2022²



+141%

YoY growth of **r/effectivealtruism**, which over-indexes on Gen Z visitors¹

81%

of redditors agree Reddit is where they can **learn about topics they care about**²

Learn from **Absolut**, who raised awareness of, and encouraged empathy for, nuances in queer culture with an informative AMA.



The opportunity

Understand what Gen Z cares about and show up in the context of conversations where they're learning more – without overstepping your bounds as a brand.

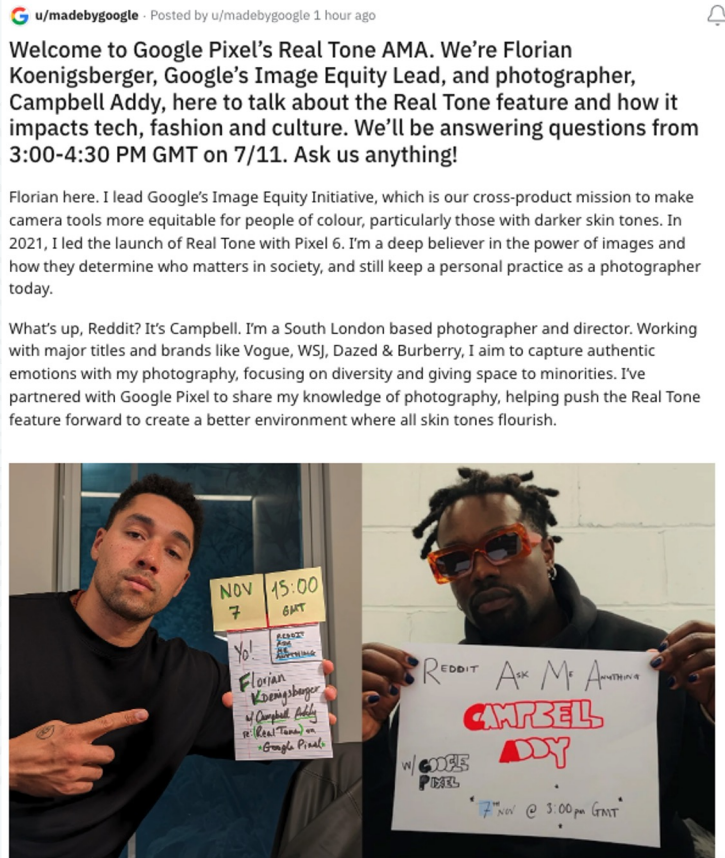
Thought-Starter

Authentic AMAs

Bring in experts for AMAs created specifically for Gen Zs, exploring topics they really care about.

AMAs are long-held Reddit traditions, allowing redditors to ask experts anything and everything about a specific topic.

Why not host an AMA related to a topic that Gen Zs care about, demonstrating how your brand is approaching that issue to facilitate an open conversation?





03.

Aspirations on Reddit

Gen Z are tapping into Reddit's communities to alleviate anxiety and take control of their futures.

Ambitious, but deeply anxious

TL;DR? Amid cultural and economic volatility, Gen Z are seeking security and control. They're looking to Reddit to transform their anxiety into action that will help them achieve their dreams.

Gen Z aren't sure they can achieve their dreams, but they know if they're going to come close, they need to work hard, rather than waiting to see what happens.

It's why they are thinking ahead and getting informed by visiting financial prepping communities like r/FIRE or r/FinancialIndependence.

Sources: Deloitte, 2022

47%

Gen Zs are **worried about their long-term financial future**

43%

of Gen Z have taken on a part- or full-time **job in addition to their primary job**

r/FIRE

My parents never saved and are now totally F'd, despite both at one point making decent money at higher paying jobs. Seeing what they're going through has been the most incentivizing educational thing for me. No way am I going to end up sweating lack of money when I'm old. I behave VERY differently with my money than they did. And they're proud of me because they recognize their huge mistakes.

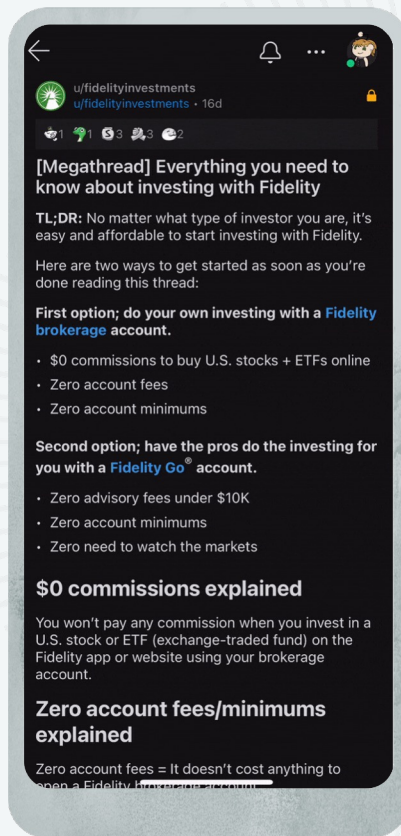


On Reddit, Gen Z are crowdsourcing knowledge to prepare for future

On Reddit, where this group over-indexes on financial savviness, preparing for your future is a practical, action-oriented mindset.

Pseudonymity allows people to be honest about their worries, while subreddits like r/etsysellers or r/entrepreneur offer spaces for them to find motivation through others' wins, and source strategies for hitting long-term savings goals.

Sources: Reddit internal data via Attest, UK, 2022¹;
Comscore, US, 2022²



1-in-2

of UK redditors aged 18-24 have **made a financial decision based on the information they found on Reddit**¹

+110%

US Gen Z redditors are more likely than the general population to visit **business subreddits**²

Learn from **Fidelity**, who made investing feel approachable with a megathread outlining the basics of investment.



The opportunity

Help Gen Z feel in control of their futures by finding practical and realistic ways of supporting their personal, professional and financial growth. Where that's not possible, appeal to Gen Z's pragmatism by focusing on the practical benefits of your products.

Thought-Starter

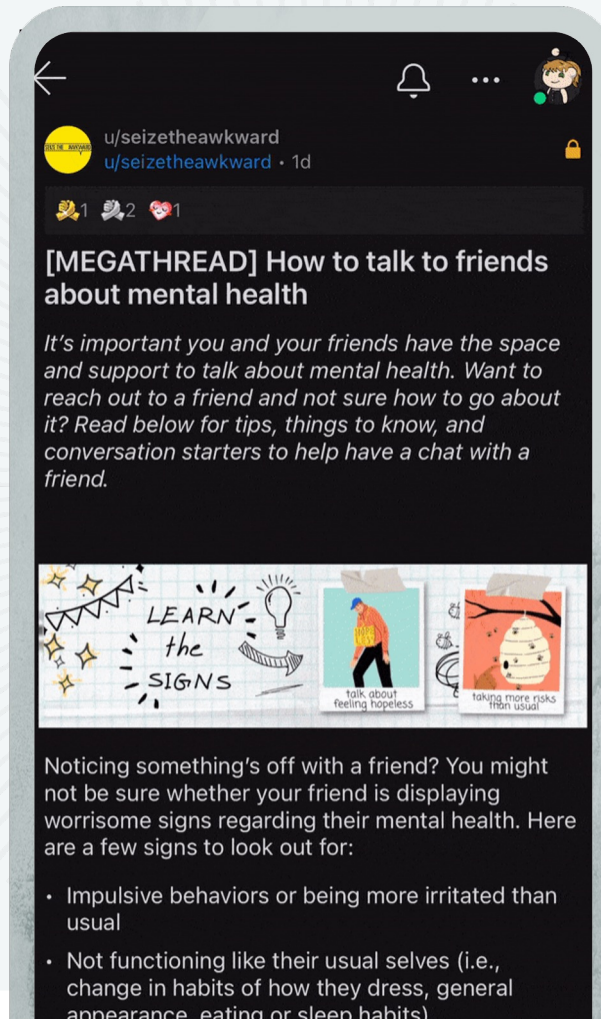
Slay Your Side Hustle

Create a Megathread showcasing all the ways your brand can help Gen Zs slay their side hustles.

Megathreads are bulked up versions of our Promoted Posts, allowing brands to offer a deep dive on their products or services.

Showcase all the ways your brand can help Gen Zs achieve their dreams by highlighting the benefits of your product or service.

Take a page out of Seize The Awkward's Playbook by offering real, practical tips that Gen Zs can actually implement.





04.

Connection on Reddit

On Reddit, Gen Z can find their people through shared passion and purpose.

Connected, but not always satisfied

TL;DR? Gen Z may be hyper-connected, but they're also more likely to feel lonely. Reddit's leaned in communities offer ways to connect more meaningfully.

Gen Z grew up amid a restructuring of the fabric of social culture. Digitisation, populist politics, shifting family values, and more fluid living arrangements have put many Gen Zers on the back foot when it comes to laying social roots.

While the internet may ensure they're more connected, it's also exacerbating this reality: they're more likely than any other generation to frequently feel lonely in their everyday life.

Sources: GWI, Global, Q1-Q2 2022¹; ONS, Oct 2022 - ages: 16-29²

35%

Gen Z worry they **spend too much time on social media**¹

40%

Young people in the UK say they **feel lonely some or all of the time** - more than any other age group²

r/MakeNewFriendsHere

f20 looking for friends who won't ghost me 🤔.

hi i love meeting new ppl & learning them.. overall i'm just looking for good vibes , also just being ourselves.

a bit about me is that i'm introverted, reserved , open minded , non judgmental , empath , unpredictable etc etc.

i'm only looking for platonic friendships.

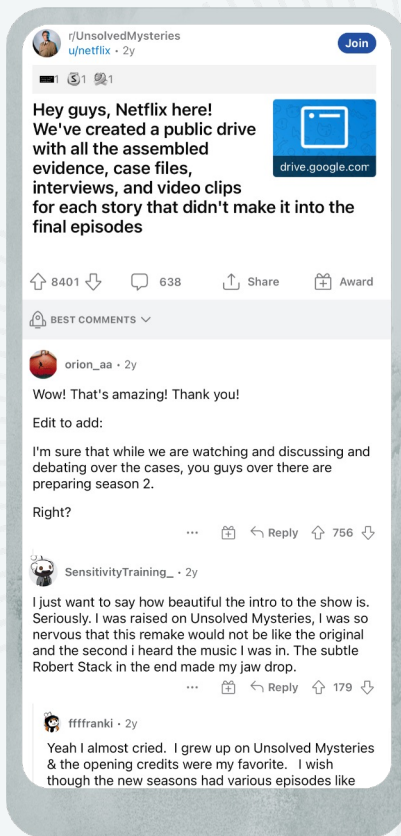


On Reddit, Gen Z connect through shared fandoms that go beyond simply scrolling

Reddit's fan communities are leaned in. They're not just coming together to share memes or track topical conversations in real-time (though there is a lot of that). They're also collaborating: whether crowdsourcing ideas for fan fiction, or mobilizing the community to do detective work around specific brands, franchises or celebrities.

On Reddit, Gen Z are finding real connection to the communities they're a part of, which often translates to offline friendship down the line.

Sources: GWI, Global, Q1-Q2 2022¹; Power of Community, Global, 2022²



1-in-3

Gen Z redditors **joined one or more new communities** on Reddit in the last month¹

61%

of redditors say they've **made friends through communities on Reddit**²

Learn from **Netflix**, who shared a drive of unused evidence from *Unsolved Mysteries* so fans could do their own research as a community.



The opportunity

Celebrate the power of fandom as a vehicle for connection by creating opportunities for Gen Z to co-create – whether through treasure hunt-style challenges, creative competitions or showing up to large-scale collaborative events like r/Place.

Thought-Starter

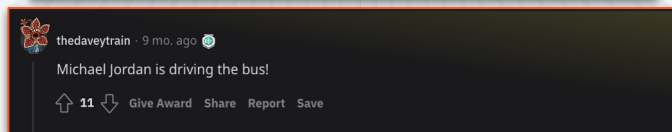
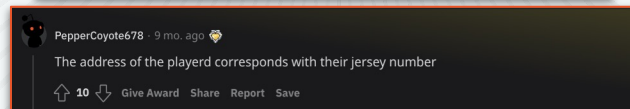
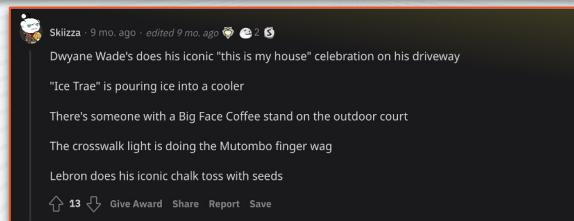
Hidden High Fives

Hide messages of empowerment and encouragement in your ads across Reddit, challenging the Gen Z community to uncover them all.

Across different campaigns and lines of businesses, why not hide feel-good messages for redditors to uncover in your campaign assets?

Take it a step further by using Engagement Prompts to ask redditors to share what they've discovered – allowing the whole community to come together to give each other a virtual high five.

Check out the what the NBA did with Easter Eggs for their 75th anniversary.



Want to learn more?
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