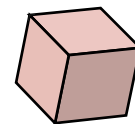


US Media Consumption Report 2021

September 2021



Introduction



When we ran our Media Consumption Report for 2020 in June last year, the country and the world was changing rapidly. The pandemic had closed businesses and halted travel, and the Black Lives Matter protests were triggering a long overdue change to the national debate on social issues.

People everywhere were consuming content in unprecedented levels – there was little else to do during lockdowns. But what's changed a year on? In this report we'll give you the latest data on Americans' media consumption for 2021, and guide brands on how to reach their customers this year and beyond.

What are the highlights from our data?

Streaming overtakes live TV

For the first time since we launched the Media Consumption Report in 2019, the number of Americans streaming TV content (83%) has surpassed those watching live TV (81%)

Decrease in TV bingeing

It's perhaps no surprise to discover that the time Americans spend watching TV has reduced compared with 2020. What is a surprise is that time spent watching TV is also considerably lower than pre-pandemic levels.

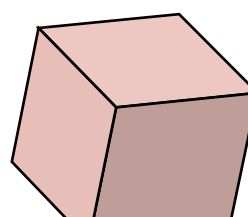
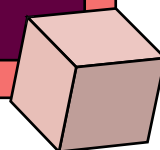
Switching off the news and escaping reality

Our research reveals a collapse in consumers watching TV news, with just under a third (32%) regularly tuning in, compared with 46% in 2020.

In this report, we've broken the data down by age demographic, making it easy for you to see the best ways to access your target audience. Covering everything from printed publications to podcasts, this insight (from 2,000 US working-age consumers) will help guide your media buying across TV, print, audio and digital. And, what's more, you can slice and dice the data to your own specifications in our [interactive dashboard](#).

Use this report to:

- Understand how to capture different demographics
- Help decide where to allocate ad spend
- Anticipate future media trends



A quick look at

US media consumption habits in 2021

Social media

Percentage spending 3+ hours per day

Gen Z: 59%
Millennials: 33%
Gen X: 26%
Boomers: 14%



Live TV

Percentage watching 3+ hours per day

Gen Z: 20%
Millennials: 35%
Gen X: 44%
Boomers: 54%



Streamed TV

Percentage watching 3+ hours per day

Gen Z: 44%
Millennials: 43%
Gen X: 29%
Boomers: 20%



Podcasts

Percentage who listen weekly

Gen Z: 37%
Millennials: 45%
Gen X: 25%
Boomers: 15%



Radio

Percentage who listen daily

Gen Z: 19%
Millennials: 37%
Gen X: 41%
Boomers: 35%



Streamed music

Percentage who listen daily

Gen Z: 60%
Millennials: 43%
Gen X: 29%
Boomers: 13%



Newspapers

Percentage who read weekly

Gen Z: 16%
Millennials: 32%
Gen X: 23%
Boomers: 25%



News websites/apps

Percentage who visit daily

Gen Z: 8%
Millennials: 24%
Gen X: 28%
Boomers: 35%



Magazines

Percentage who read weekly

Gen Z: 17%
Millennials: 31%
Gen X: 21%
Boomers: 19%



Gaming

Percentage who play daily

Gen Z: 82%
Millennials: 81%
Gen X: 73%
Boomers: 61%

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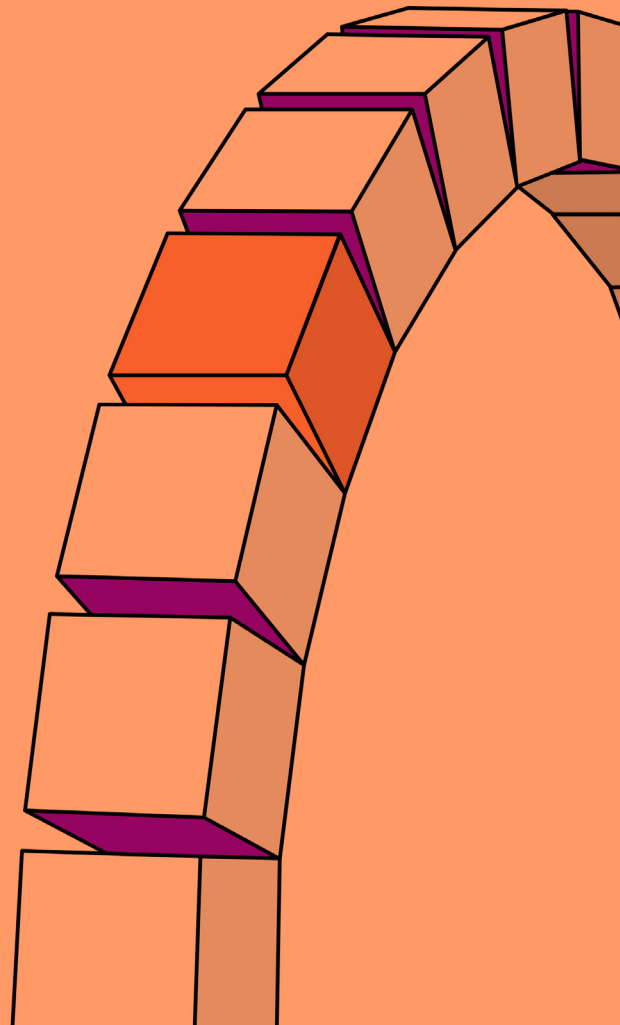
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01

Gen Z

(aged 18-24)



Gen Z watch more streamed TV than any other demographic

Our research shows that Gen Z is doing more Netflixing than chilling – 44% of them stream 3+ hours a day.

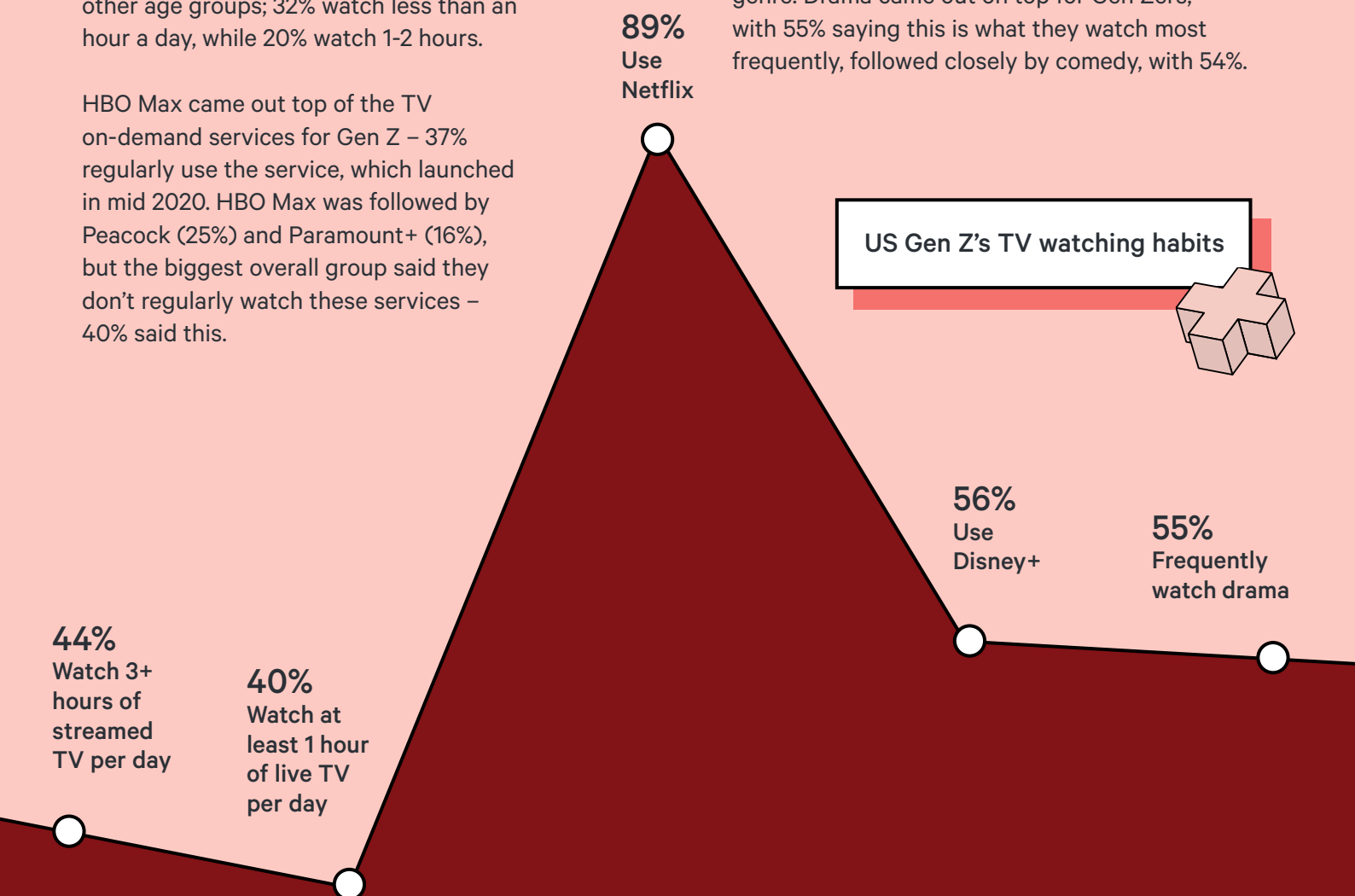
The largest number of Gen Zers said they watch 1-2 hours and 3-4 hours – 29% for each. Meanwhile 15% said they watch at least 5 hours a day. And just 5% said they generally don't watch any on-demand TV.

When it comes to live TV, on the other hand, a sizable 29% generally don't watch any, making them the demographic least likely to watch TV live. Of those who do, their typical viewing time is much lower than other age groups; 32% watch less than an hour a day, while 20% watch 1-2 hours.

HBO Max came out top of the TV on-demand services for Gen Z – 37% regularly use the service, which launched in mid 2020. HBO Max was followed by Peacock (25%) and Paramount+ (16%), but the biggest overall group said they don't regularly watch these services – 40% said this.

Netflix is unsurprisingly the standout winner of the streaming wars in 2021. Not only is it the favored platform for Gen Z (86% use it), it's also the nation's most-used streaming service overall. While Amazon Prime takes the nationwide second spot, it's a relative newcomer that takes the silver among Gen Z – 56% use Disney+, which is particularly impressive when you remember the service only launched at the end of 2019.

Contrary to what their parents might believe, Gen Z is not spending most of its TV time watching reality TV – 35% said this is their most-watched genre. Drama came out on top for Gen Zers, with 55% saying this is what they watch most frequently, followed closely by comedy, with 54%.



Gen Z streams the most music but **hasn't completely given up** on radio

Is listening to the radio still a popular pastime for Gen Z? **The answer is yes!**

US Gen Z's listening habits

Nearly a quarter (24%) of Gen Z say they listen a few times a week and 19% listen daily (although this is the smallest percentage of daily listeners out of all the demographics). Among Gen Z, 15% say they don't listen to the radio.

However, you're still more likely to find Gen Z listening to streamed music than the radio – they listen more frequently than any of the other demographics, with 60% listening daily and 18% a few times a week. Spotify is their music streaming platform of choice (used by 64%), followed by YouTube Music (35%). Out of all the generations, Gen Z is the biggest adopter of Apple Music (33%) and SoundCloud (27%) but the lowest adopter of Amazon Music (13%).

Gen Z has also embraced podcasts (only 32% say they never listen to them). The single largest percentage listen to podcasts a few times a week (14%), but there remains 11% of Gen Z who listen daily.

When it comes to audiobooks, a larger 50% of Gen Z say they never listen to them. And those that do are most likely to say they listen less frequently than once a month (16%). Bucking this trend are the 18% who listen once a week or more.

43%
Listen to the radio
at least a few times
a week

77%
Frequently
stream music

64%
Use Spotify

37%
Listen to podcasts
at least once a
week

Gen Z are still open to paying for content

Young people might not be picking up physical magazines and newspapers in the way they used to, but that doesn't mean they're not paying for content. Gen Z is more likely than average to pay for a digital content subscription – 25% said this, compared to the overall average of 20%.

So what are they reading? Gen Z typically visits news websites a few times a week (14%) or once or twice a week (17%), although they're the least likely demographic to visit daily (8%).

Just 17% of Gen Z read a magazine once a week or more, while 47% never read them. Gen Z is slightly less likely to read physical newspapers than magazines – 16% read one at least once a week, and 57% say they never read them.

US Gen Z's reading habits

16%

Read a newspaper once a week or more

17%

Read a magazine once a week or more

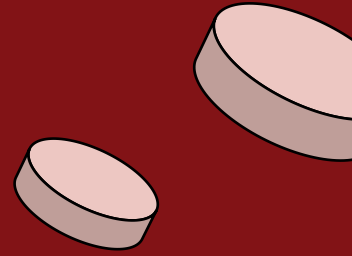
22%

Frequently visit news websites

25%

Have a paid content subscription

Gen Z is now using TikTok more than Facebook



TikTok has come a long way in a short space of time and is now one of Gen Z's most frequently used social media platforms. Second only behind YouTube, 60% of people in this age group visit TikTok daily, which is the highest by a big margin (in comparison, only 28% of Millennials use TikTok daily). On the other hand, they're the least likely demographic to visit Facebook daily (28%).

Instagram remains popular among Gen Z, with 56% using it daily, followed closely by Snapchat (52%). Much like TikTok, Snapchat sways massively Gen Z – while 52% use Snapchat daily, just 29% of Millennials do the same.

Twitter and Pinterest are used by Gen Z at much lower levels (25% visit Twitter daily and 21% visit Pinterest daily). LinkedIn is one of the platforms Gen Z is least likely to use (60% never use it), although 16% say they visit once a week or more.

Clubhouse is the least used platform for Gen Z. Currently, 22% of Gen Z say they're using Clubhouse,

second only to Millennials, 30% of whom use the burgeoning platform.

Meanwhile, Gen Z is the most likely demographic to be using Twitch, which specialises in streaming gaming content – 26% use it once a week or more. And their love of gaming can be seen in the amount of time they dedicate to it; 82% say they play games on a daily basis. They're most likely to say they play for 1-2 hours (21%) each day.

And Gen Z can't be beaten on their consumption of social media – they're most likely to say they scroll for more than four hours a day (33%), which is way more than any of the older demographics.

US Gen Z's social media and gaming habits

59%
spend 3+ hours on social media daily

62%
use YouTube daily

61%
use TikTok daily

82%
play games daily

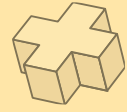
02



Millenials

(aged 25-40)

Millennials spread TV viewing across live and streamed



Millennials show more love for live television than their younger counterparts, watching for longer periods of time. The single largest percentage say they watch live television for 1-2 hours per day (21%), closely followed by the 20% who watch 3-4 hours per day.

They consume a similar quantity of on-demand TV, with 27% watching 1-2 hours per day and 43% watching 3+ hours. Like Gen Z, Millennials are avid users of Netflix (74%), while 60% use Amazon Prime Video and 46% use Disney+.

As with Gen Z, HBO Max leads the TV on-demand services among Millennials – 45% regularly use it. And Millennials are the least likely generation to use TV on-demand services generally, with just 29% saying they don't regularly use them.

Millennials' genre of choice is comedy – 53% said they watch this most frequently. Drama and crime came a close second and third, with 47% and 44% respectively.

US Millennials' TV watching habits

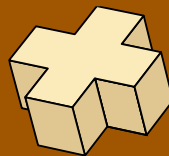


74%
Use
Netflix

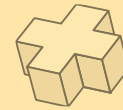
56%
Watch at
least 1 hour
of live TV
per day

54%
Frequently
watch
comedy

43%
Watch 3+
hours of
streamed TV
per day



Millennials **plump** for podcasts



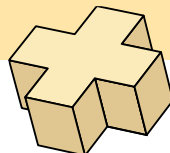
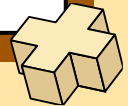
It's Millennials who lead the podcast charge, with 15% listening daily and 45% listening at least once a week. Meanwhile 34% said they never listen to podcasts.

Audiobooks are less popular, with 41% of Millennials saying they don't listen to them. Of those that do, 29% listen at least once a week.

When it comes to music streaming, Millennials fall behind Gen Z – 43% listen every day and 25% listen a few times a week. Spotify and YouTube Music are almost neck and neck with Millennials – 43% use Spotify and 42% use YouTube Music. And it's Millennials who fly the flag for Amazon Music – 29% use it, more than any other demographic.

Meanwhile, Millennials listen to the radio more than Gen Z (although not as much as other demographics). 36% listen every day and a further 25% listen a few times a week.

US Millennials' listening habits



45%
listen to
podcasts at
least once a
week

43%
use
Spotify

68%
frequently
stream
music

61%
frequently
listen to the
radio

Millennials read magazines more than other demographics

You might imagine it's Boomers and Gen X who are mad for magazines, but it's actually Millennials. Of all four generations, 31% of Millennials say they read magazines weekly, compared to just 21% of Gen X and 19% of Boomers.

Meanwhile, 36% are accessing magazine content at least once a week through a website or app.

Millennials are also the top newspaper readers in the US – 32% read them weekly and 13% daily. Somewhat unsurprisingly, more Millennials get their news online, with 60% using news websites or apps weekly, and 24% using them daily.

Nearly half (49%) of Millennials are paying for content – 29% have a digital subscription and 20% have a subscription to a physical publication.



49%

Have a paid content subscription

47%

Frequently visit news website

31%

Read a magazine once a week or more

32%

Read a newspaper once a week or more

US Millennials' reading habits.

Millennials are Facebook and LinkedIn power users

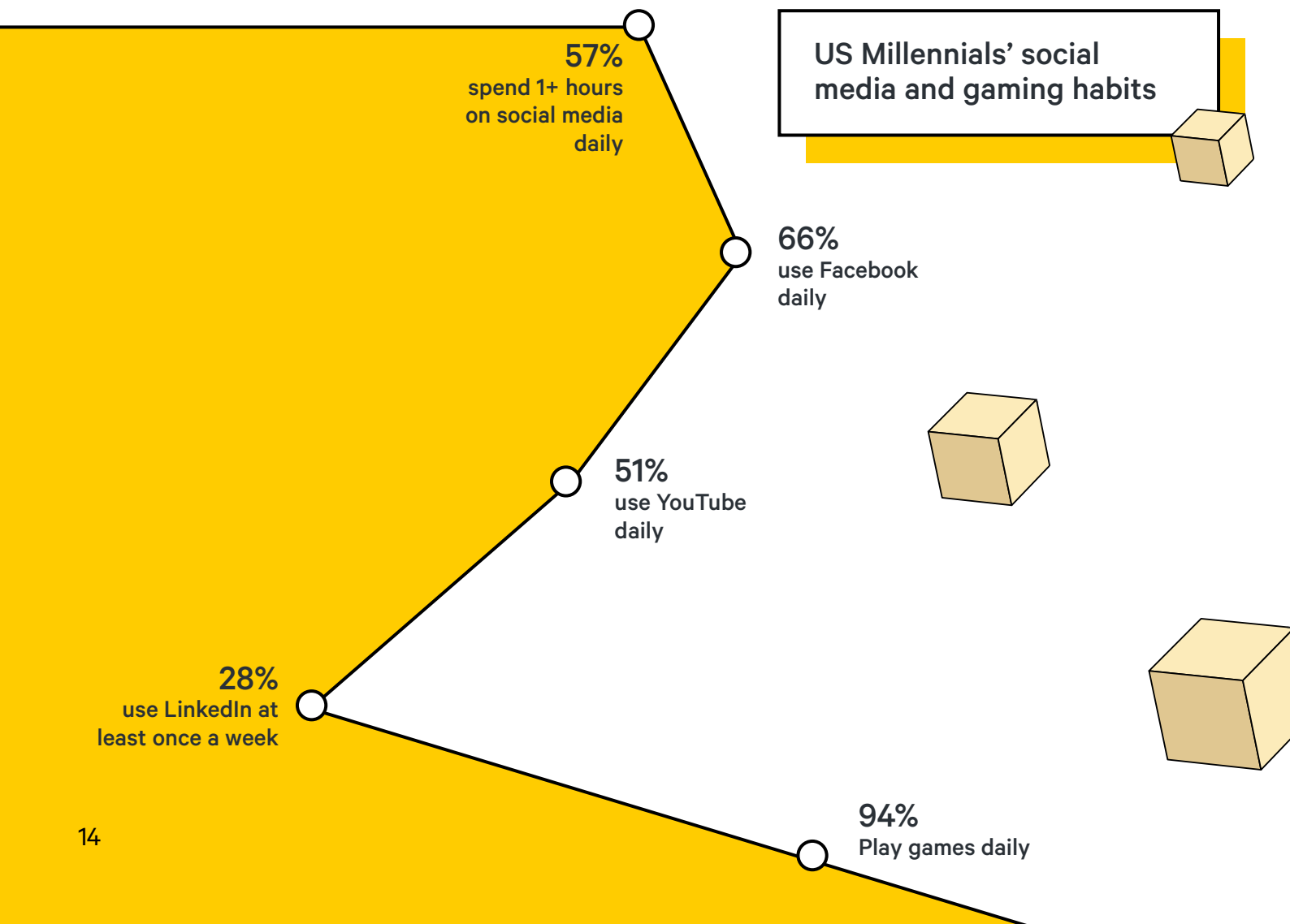
There's a lot of talk about Facebook's dwindling popularity among young people, but our data reveals Millennials are still the biggest group of the platform's daily users – 66% log on every day. Millennials are also the LinkedIn power users, with 28% using it weekly – this compares to just 16% of Gen X and 16% of Gen Z.

YouTube is the second most popular platform among Millennials, with 51% using it daily and a whopping 82% weekly. Just 5% said they never use the video site. Taking third position is Instagram, with 44% of daily Millennial users.

Clubhouse, a relative newcomer to the social media landscape, has its biggest audience in Millennials. One fifth (20%) of 25-40-year-olds use the social audio platform, compared to just 8% of Gen Xers and 11% of Gen Zers.

Overall, the single largest percentage of Millennials (25%) say they spend between 30 minutes to one hour per day on social media, but 57% spend more time than this.

When it comes to gaming, the single largest percentage spend between 1-2 hours playing a day (22%), while 23% play for longer.



03

Gen X

(aged 41-56)



Gen Xers are the biggest fans of live TV

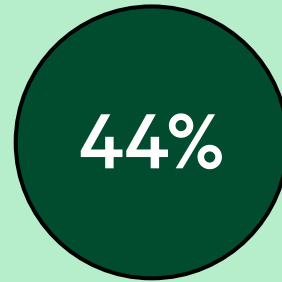
Watching live TV is still a big part of life for those in the Gen X age bracket – they're most likely to say they watch more than 6 hours a day (14%). And they're on a par with Boomers in the overall live TV figures – 61% watch up to 4 hours a day.

Gen Xers are almost three times more likely than their Millennial counterparts to generally not watch any streamed TV (21%), but the second largest percentage watch 3-4 hours a day (17%). A further 16% watch an hour or less each day.

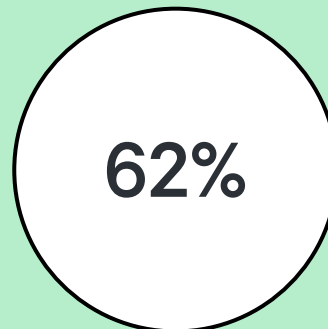
When it comes to streaming providers, Gen X isn't as wedded to Netflix as younger people – 65% subscribe, compared to 73% of Millennials. Amazon Prime still performs well, with 54% of Xers using it, and Disney+ has captured 30% of the demographic.

TV on-demand services showed less emphatic results among Gen X. The biggest group (27%) use Peacock, closely followed by the 24% who use HBO Max. A chunky 48% said they don't regularly use TV on-demand services.

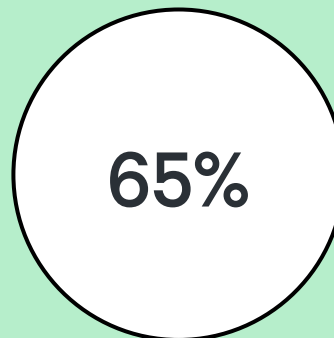
Like Millennials, they're most likely to be found watching comedy (53%), with drama coming in second (46%). Gen X is the only generation to watch more news and documentaries than others, with 35% and 36% for each respective genre.



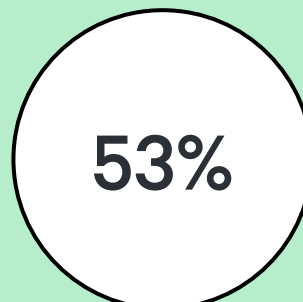
watch 3+ hours of live TV per day



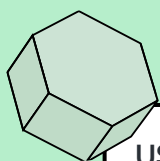
watch at least 1 hour of streamed TV per day



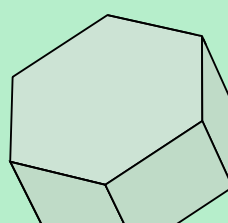
use Netflix



frequently watch comedy



US Gen X's TV watching habits

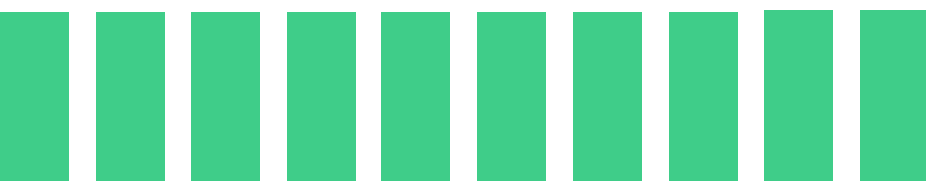


Gen X **top** the radio charts

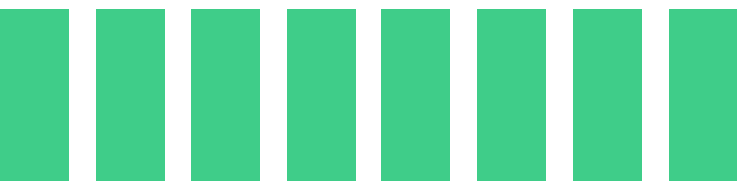
Of all the demographics, Gen Xers are most likely to be daily radio listeners (41%). And with a further 35% listening to radio at least once a week, it makes it more popular than streaming music – 29% of this age group stream music daily, while 30% listen at least once a week.

If they're listening to streamed music, it could be on a number of platforms as they show less devotion to Spotify – while 28% do use Spotify, YouTube Music is most popular, garnering 29% of Gen X listeners. Meanwhile 25% use Amazon Music and 22% don't regularly stream music.

Gen X is more likely to listen to podcasts than audiobooks – 61% say they never listen to audiobooks, while a lesser 51% say the same about podcasts. And they're more likely to listen to podcasts frequently – 25% listen at least once a week versus 15% of people who listen to audiobooks weekly.



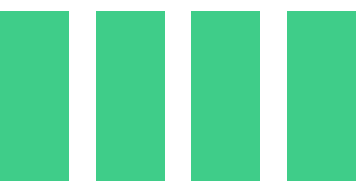
65%
frequently
listen to radio



50%
frequently
stream music



28%
use Spotify



25%
listen to podcasts at
least once a week

**US Gen X's listening
habits**

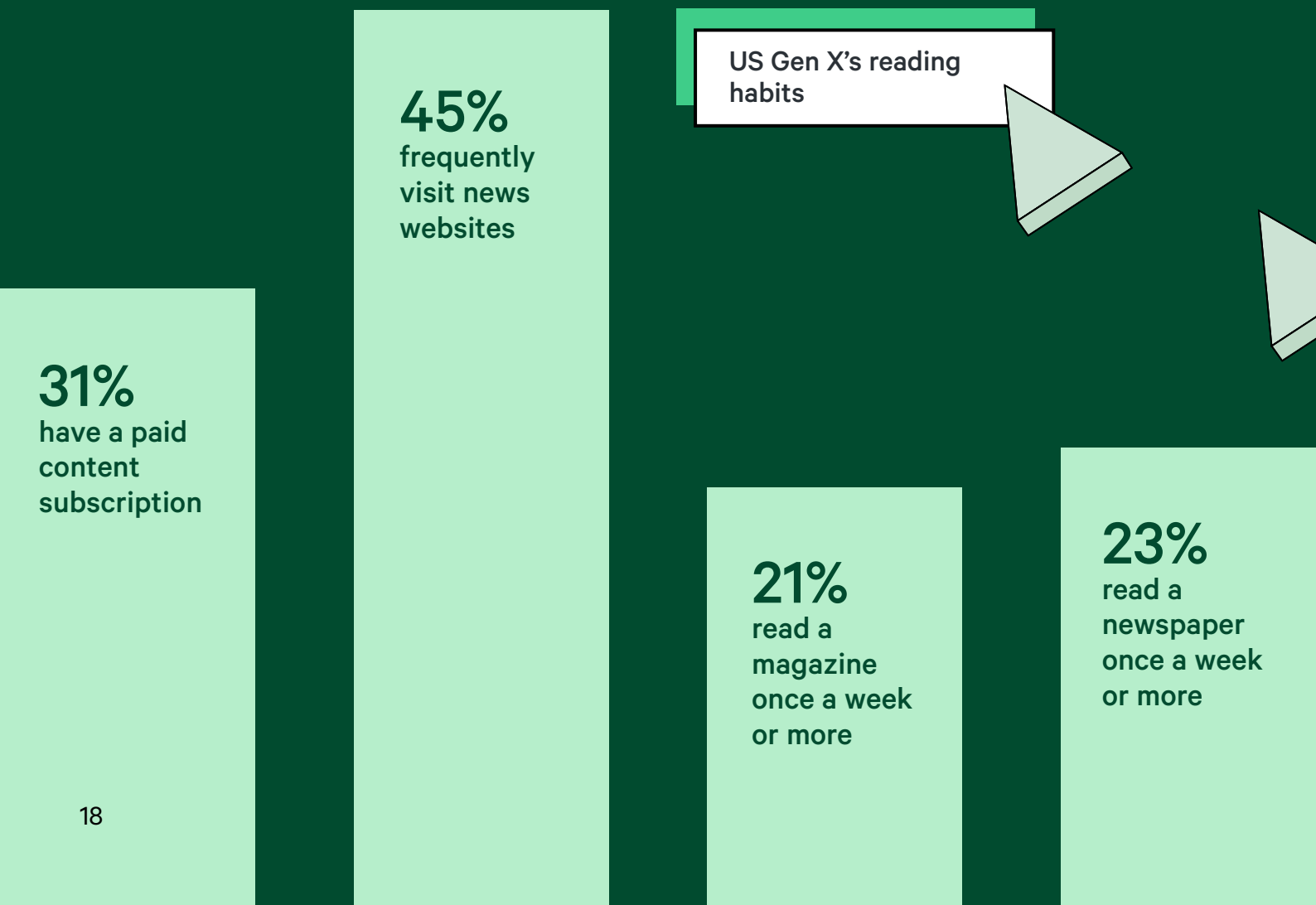
Gen X has ditched physical publications in favour of digital

Perhaps surprisingly, Gen Xers are less likely to be regular readers of physical newspapers and magazines than Millennials. In fact, Gen Xers are also more likely than Millennials to say they don't read printed publications at all (47% never read a newspaper and 36% never read a magazine).

With that said, there remains 23% who read a newspaper at least once a week and 21% who pick up a magazine weekly.

Gen X is certainly very interested in current affairs, it's just that they prefer to consume their news digitally. Out of all the demographics, Gen X is second most likely, only behind Boomers, to access news websites frequently – 28% visit daily and 17% a few times a week.

Meanwhile, they're far less likely to visit magazine websites or apps – 44% say they never visit them, although 23% say they visit at least once a week. Interestingly, despite this demographic's appetite for consuming news online, only 14% of Gen X is paying to access digital content. And slightly more have a subscription to a physical publication (17%).



Gen X is flying the flag for Facebook

For brands wishing to target Gen X, they really need look no further than Facebook. After Millennials, this demographic is the biggest user of the platform, with 62% using it daily and a further 10% using it a few times a week.

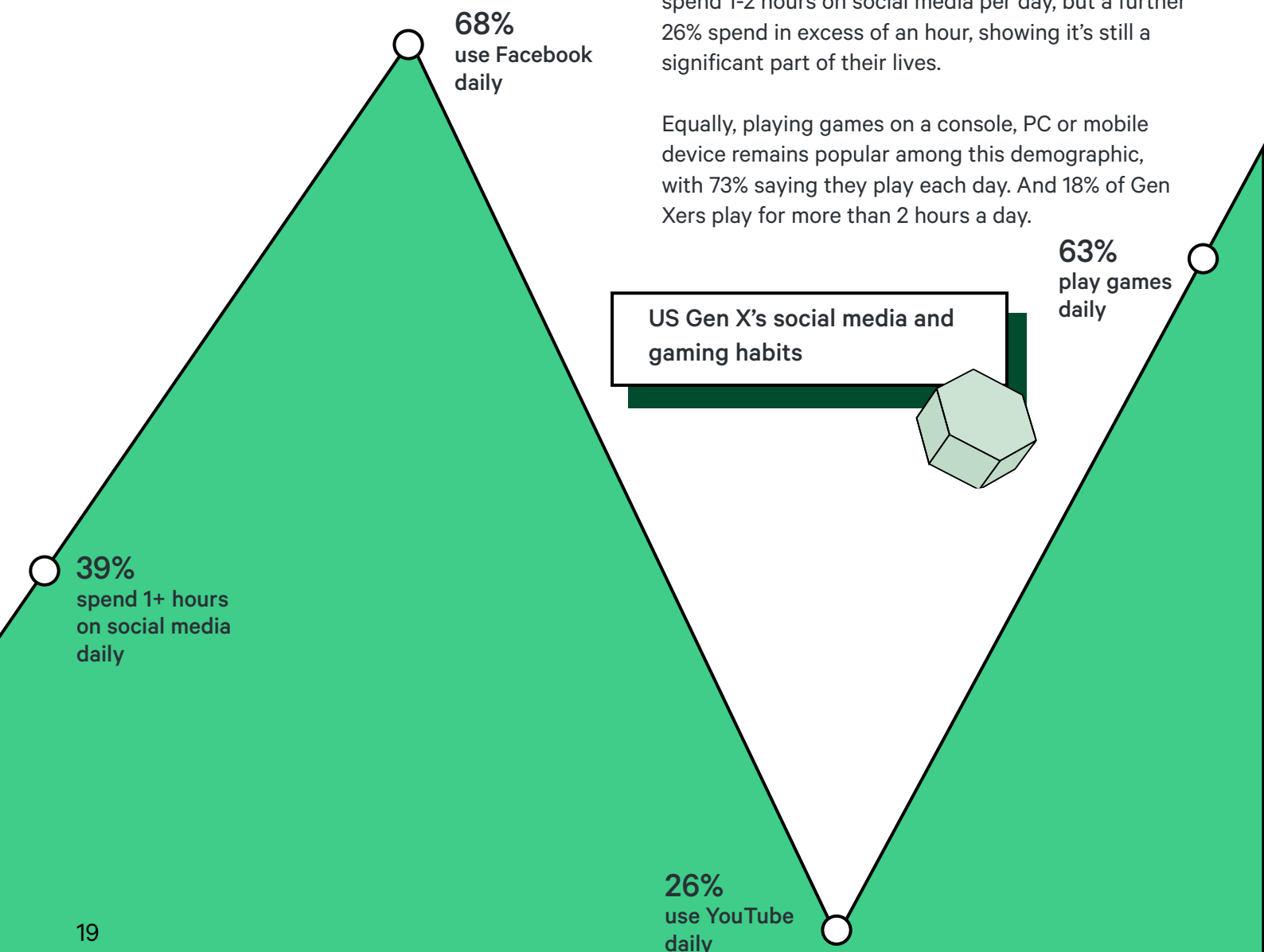
It blows their usage of any other social media platforms out of the water, with daily usage of the top three closest competitors at 42% for YouTube, 26% for Instagram and 15% for Twitter. We see a far lower adoption of TikTok among Gen X – 63% say they never use it (although those that do are using

it fairly frequently), while they're not using Snapchat much either (64% don't use it).

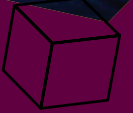
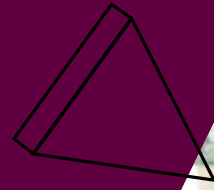
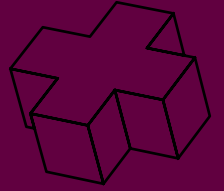
Gen X's usage of LinkedIn is also low (second lowest behind the Boomers), with 60% never using the professional networking platform and only 11% using it frequently. Pinterest is only a little more popular than LinkedIn, but Clubhouse is the least popular of the established social platforms (89% don't use it).

Overall, usage of social media among Gen X is a little lower than their Millennial counterparts. The single largest percentage of people in this age group (26%) spend 1-2 hours on social media per day, but a further 26% spend in excess of an hour, showing it's still a significant part of their lives.

Equally, playing games on a console, PC or mobile device remains popular among this demographic, with 73% saying they play each day. And 18% of Gen Xers play for more than 2 hours a day.



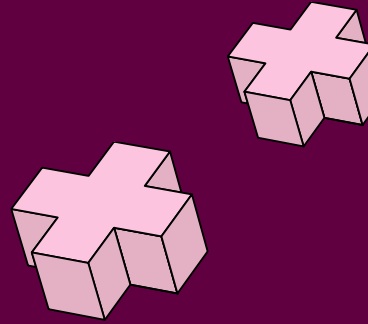
05



Boomers

(aged 57-65)

Boomers watch more live TV than any other demographic



Ask a Boomer how long they spend watching live television each day and they're most likely to say between 3-4 hours (28%). A further 26% watch five hours or more of live TV, highlighting the strength of the medium for accessing consumers in this age group.

By contrast, 36% of Boomers say they generally don't watch streamed TV. Those that do are most likely to watch 1-2 hours a day (28%).

In terms of paid-for services, Netflix is most prevalent among Boomers (53%), followed by Amazon Prime Video (46%) and Hulu Live (18%). Disney+ comes in just after Hulu with 17% of Boomers signing up.

After Gen Zers at the other end of the age spectrum, Boomers are the second biggest consumers of drama – 52% say this is the type of programme they watch most frequently. But news is their genre of choice, with 55% saying they watch this most frequently, far above any other generation.

Surprisingly, Boomers are the least likely generation to watch documentaries – 27% said this is their favorite. Meanwhile, out of all the age groups, they're the biggest consumers of game shows (23%), second biggest for sports (26%) and lowest consumers of comedy (44%) and reality TV (23%).

US Boomers' TV watching habits



54%
watch 3+
hours of live
TV per day

48%
watch at
least 1 hour of
streamed TV
per day

52%
frequently
watch drama

Boomers have their radio listening locked down



65%
frequently
listen to radio



29%
frequently
stream music



21%
use Youtube
music



15%
listen to podcasts at
least once a week

US Boomers' listening habits

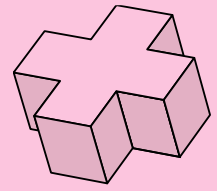
Just like their younger counterparts in Gen X, Boomers are frequent radio listeners, with 42% tuning in daily and 30% a few times a week. A further 8% listen once or twice a week.

Streaming music is a far less popular activity, with 40% saying they never do it, more than any other age group. Meanwhile, 13% stream music daily and 16% once or twice a week.

It's a tight race at the top of the Boomer streaming charts, with YouTube music taking the number one spot (21% regularly use it), followed in joint second by Spotify and Amazon Music (both on 16%). Other music streaming platforms like Apple Music, Google Play Music and SoundCloud barely get a look in.

Boomers are the least likely demographic to have adopted audiobooks or podcasts, with 77% and 60% respectively saying they never listen to them. The single largest percentage (15%) say they listen to podcasts less frequently than once a month, but a collective 15% listen at least once a week. Audiobooks get even less attention from Boomers, with only 7% listening weekly.

Boomers are switching to digital news



As we discovered earlier, Millennials are the top Newspaper readers in the US. Boomers are still in the game, with 25% picking up a paper weekly. That breaks down into 9% reading daily, 7% a few times a week and 9% once a week.

Boomers' appetite for news can be seen in how often they access news websites and apps; 35% say they use them daily, while 16% visit a few times a week.

Physical magazines are less popular among Boomers – only 19% read a magazine at least once a week. Only Gen Z reads fewer magazines. And 30% of Boomers say they never read a magazine. The same goes for magazine websites and apps – 47% never access them and 18% do so less than once a month.

Boomers are also the least likely demographic to pay for digital content subscriptions – just 10% say they have a subscription to a digital publication, however 21% have a subscription to a printed publication.



US Boomers' reading habits



31%

have a paid content subscription

51%

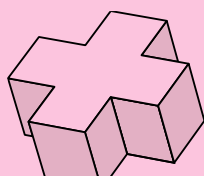
frequently visit news websites

19%

read a magazine once a week

25%

read a newspaper once a week or more



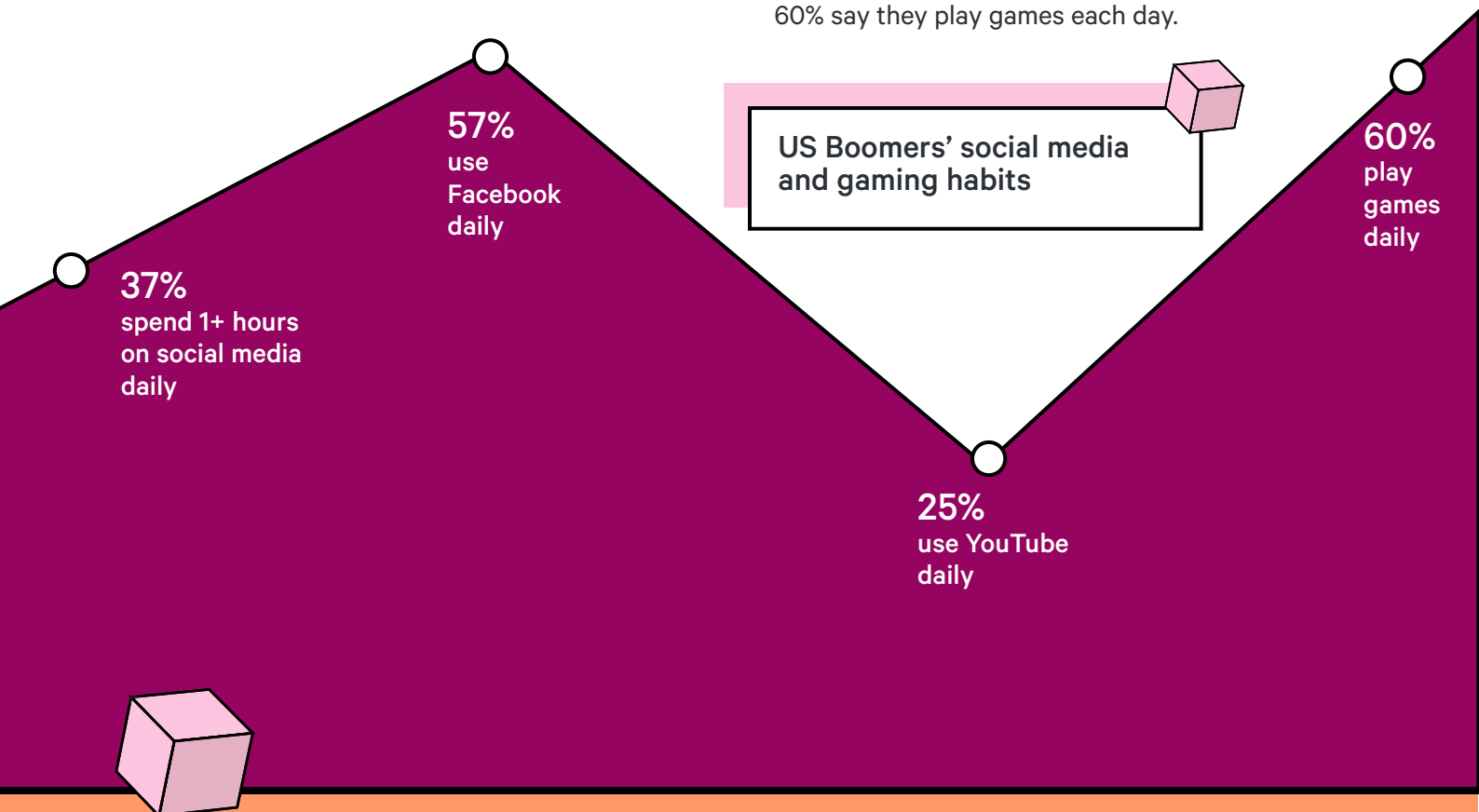
Boomers spend the least amount of time on social media

Boomers' social media consumption is significantly lower than all the other demographics. The single largest percentage (27%) say they spend less than 30 minutes on social media each day, while a further 13% say they generally don't use it at all.

Boomers' appetite for news can be seen in how often they access news websites and apps; 35% say they use them daily, while 16% visit a few times a week.

When they are online, they're most likely to be scrolling Facebook – 70% visit the platform frequently. In comparison, only 16% frequently visit Twitter, 17% Instagram, 10% LinkedIn and 14% Pinterest, while platforms like TikTok and Snapchat have even lower usage.

And although Boomers spend the least amount of time on YouTube out of all the demographics, they do still use it quite frequently, with 25% using it daily and 18% a few times a week. Meanwhile, Boomers are by no means strangers to gaming – 60% say they play games each day.



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