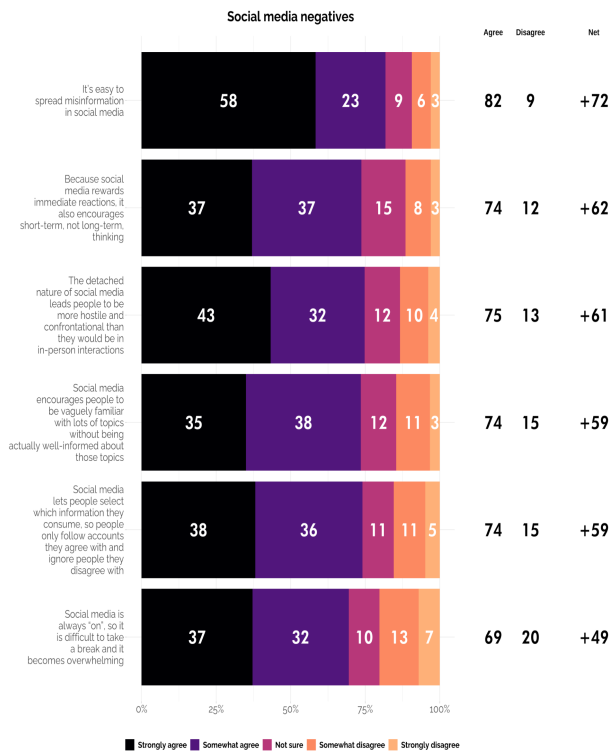


Young Americans and Feelings Toward Social Media

Young people are sophisticated users of social media who both enjoy the positive side of social media and keep their eyes open to the dangers of these platforms. Young people are aware of the risks of social media, and worry about how it may affect their day to day lives, but nonetheless view it as a useful way to build communities and stay connected.

Importantly, young people have said their trust in large social media companies is low. While many believe young people are glued to their phones, they are also wary of its use. The Sine Institute youth survey found that social media platforms are the least trusted of a variety of civic institutions. Young people overwhelmingly express concern about the dangers of social media from misinformation to the sheer overwhelming volume of “experiences” it provides.¹

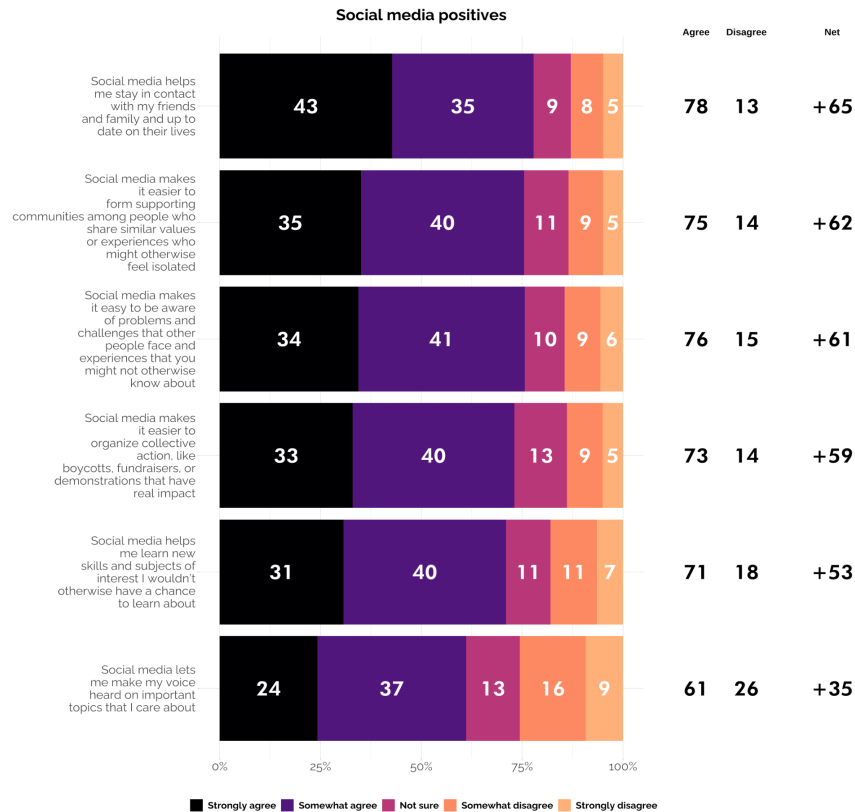


YouGov

At the same time, young people view social media as a powerful organizing tool that can be leveraged for good, including forming communities of support, spreading awareness of issues that might otherwise be overlooked and even as a forum to pursue political and social change. In fact, fully 73 percent of young people explicitly list organizing to have political impact as one of the values social media presence provides, 75 percent say it has helped them form supportive communities, 76 percent say it builds understanding of other people’s challenges and problems, and 61 percent say it gives them a voice on issues and topics that they care about.²

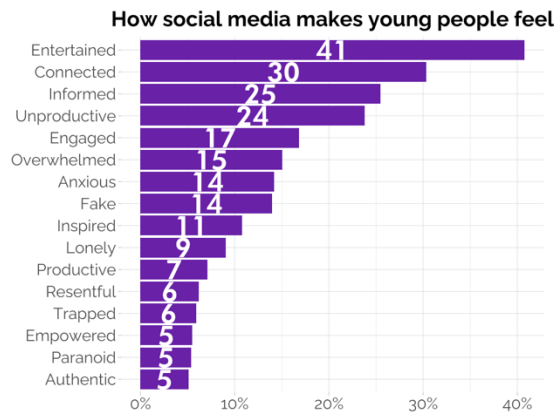
¹ For more, refer to question 11 of the survey documentation.

² For more, refer to question 13 of the survey documentation.



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The survey asked young people to choose up to three among a set of adjectives to describe how social media made them feel.³ The results demonstrate the conflicted nature of young peoples' relation to social media. About 41 percent agreed that social media made them feel "entertained" and 30 percent that it made them feel "connected," and 25 percent agreed it made them feel "informed." But 24 percent also worried it made them feel "unproductive." About as many reported it made them feel "overwhelmed" (15 percent), "anxious" (14 percent), or "fake" (14 percent) as said it made them feel "engaged."



Now, please think of social media. Which of the following adjectives describe how social media makes you feel? Please select up to three.

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Young people are conflicted about the role social media plays in their lives. They believe social media has clear value in keeping people connected, allowing them to organize and helping them to be informed about things they might not otherwise know. They also believe it can be used to spread misinformation and disinformation, and that keeping up with social media can be overwhelming and time-consuming.

³ For more, refer to question 55 of the survey documentation.