

Is TikTok Really That Big of a Deal for Brands?

SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH SURVEY 2019





Intro

When Chinese video app TikTok was released to the international market in September of 2017, it seemed as if it was going to be a force to be reckoned with. Bringing in more than \$600 million in revenue¹ and being the third most-downloaded app on iTunes in the first quarter of 2019², brands are starting to think about how to use the app, and short-form mobile videos in general, to reach their marketing goals.

To provide the best service and insights, HYPRBrands conducted a 315-person, United States-based survey in October 2019 to take a deep dive into how average consumers are using TikTok and other social media apps. 90% of our survey respondents were between ages 14–30; 43% were male and 56% female, with 1% preferring not to identify their gender. The platforms we included in the survey were:



1. <https://www.marketingcharts.com/digital/social-media-108342>

2. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/29/how-chinese-apps-like-tiktok-have-been-catching-on-with-us-consumers.html>

User Survey

We asked social media users to share how they used each platform and how much time they spent on each per day, and then we asked open-ended questions about why they use each platform and what content types they associate it with. Of those surveyed across ages, **61.9% didn't use TikTok at all.**

Respondents overwhelmingly prefer Instagram (29%) and YouTube (23%) as their favorite social media networks, with Facebook (21%), Snapchat (16%), and Twitter (14%) also ranking highly. **However, for the youngest slice of Gen-Z, the usage data shifts dramatically.**

61.9%

of everyone surveyed didn't use TikTok at all

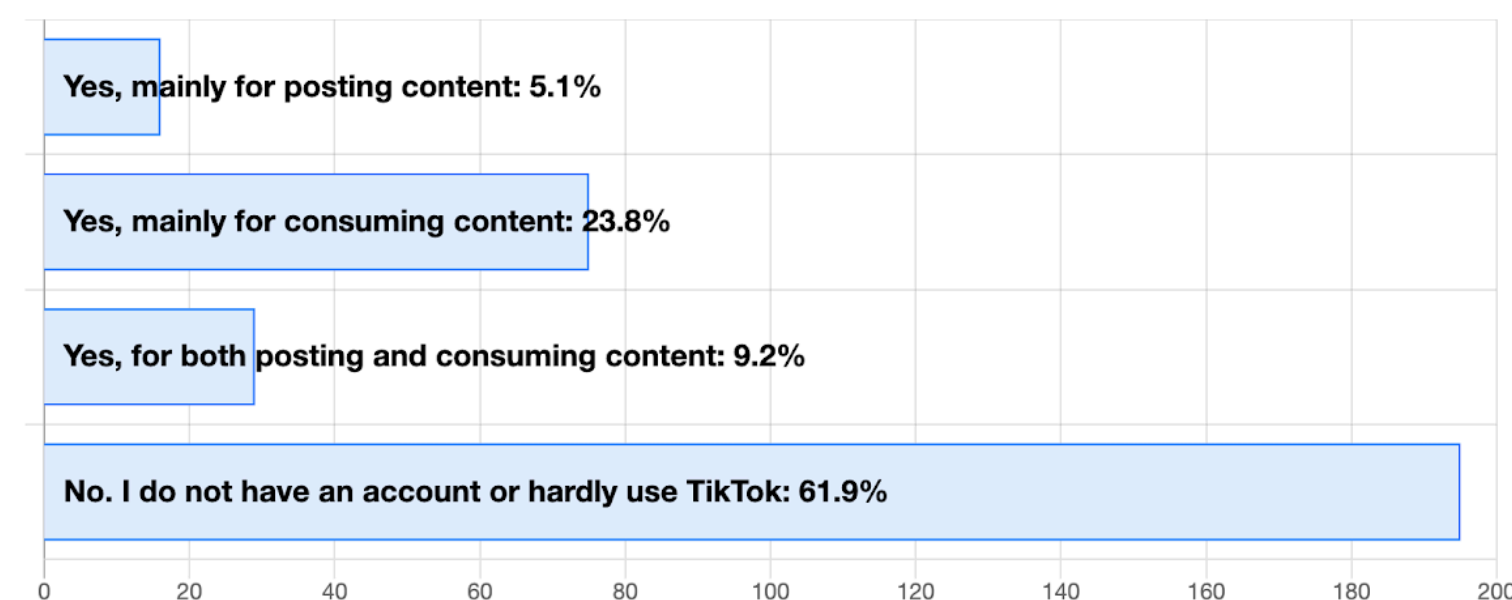
65.0%

of those age 14-18 use TikTok for posting and/or consuming content

Any age:

Q3: Do you use TikTok?

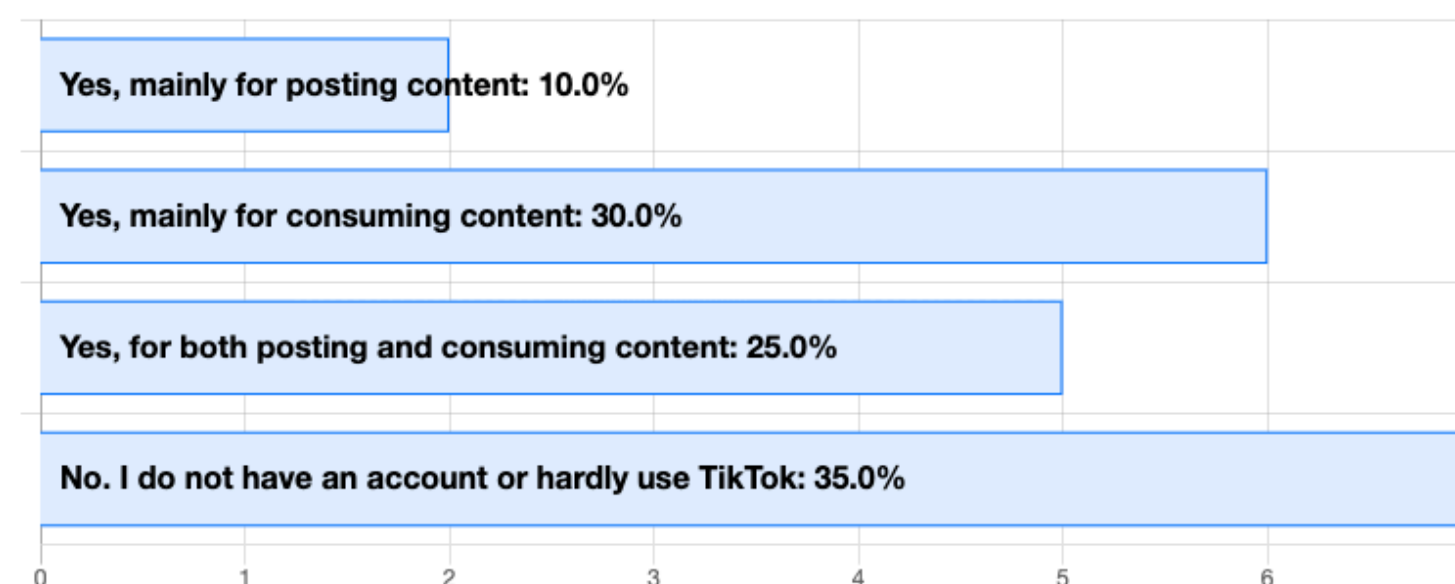
Multiple Choice



Ages 14-18:

Q3: Do you use TikTok?

Multiple Choice



What's your favorite social network and why?

A 19-year-old female from Fayetteville, Arkansas, commented that she prefers Instagram “because I enjoy posting content on there the most and I love how the platform is set up to view pictures and profiles.” On YouTube, an 18-year-old male commented that he likes that he “can be entertained one minute and educated the next.”

"YouTube because I can be entertained one minute and then educated the next. It's a very diverse platform."

18 Male
User rejected locations services

← →

"Instagram because I enjoy posting content on there the most and love how the platform is set up to view pictures and profiles."

19 Female
Fayetteville, AR

← →



YouTube

Daily use

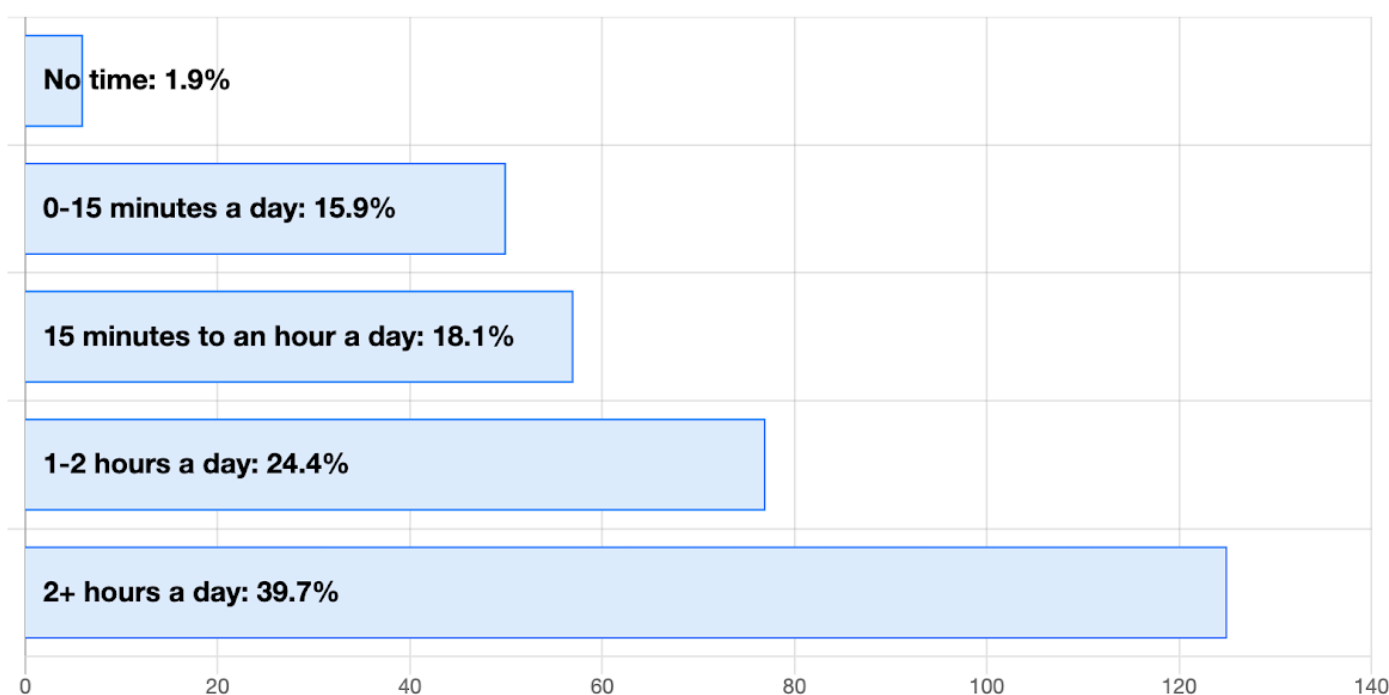
Even though the social media landscape is diverse and constantly changing, traditional social media networks are still winning out when it comes to how users spend their time. Of those surveyed, only 1.9%

reported spending no time on YouTube, with 64.1% spending 1 to 2+ hours a day on the platform. **The big takeaway here? Everyone seems to be on YouTube, and brands should take note in their influencer selections.**

64.1%
spent 1-2 hrs a day on Youtube

Q10: How much time do you spend on Youtube?

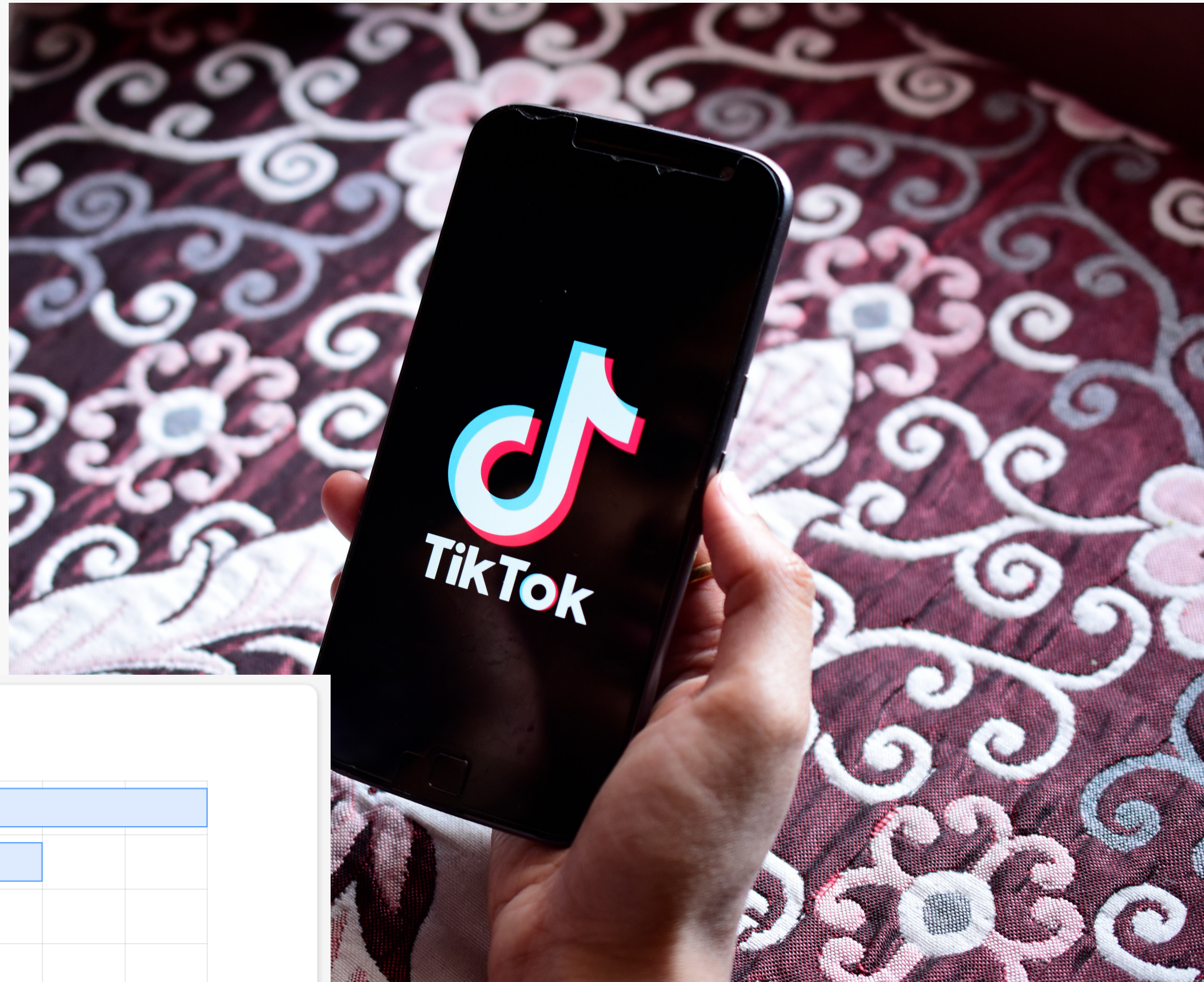
Multiple Choice



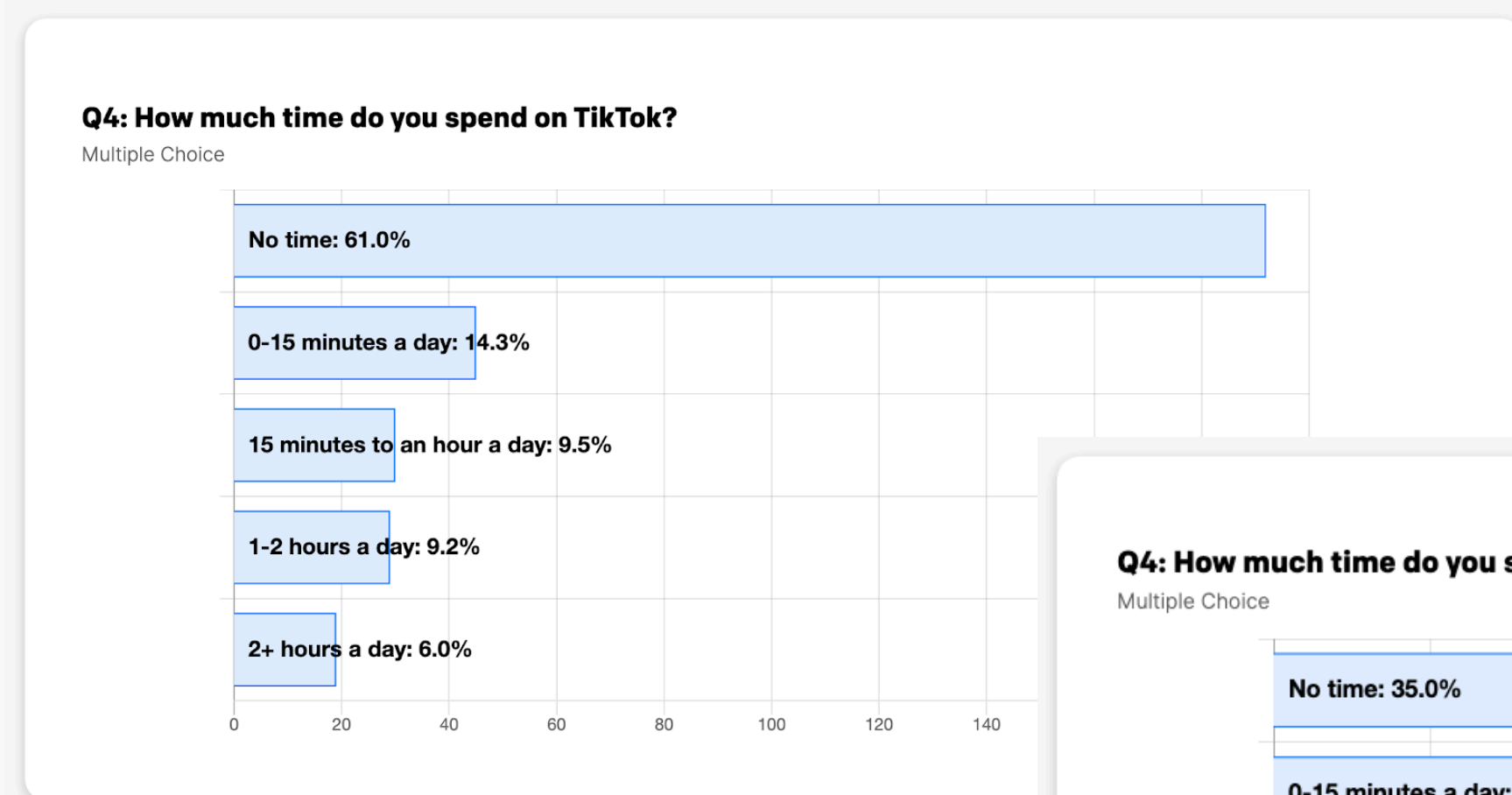
Daily Use

Tik Tok

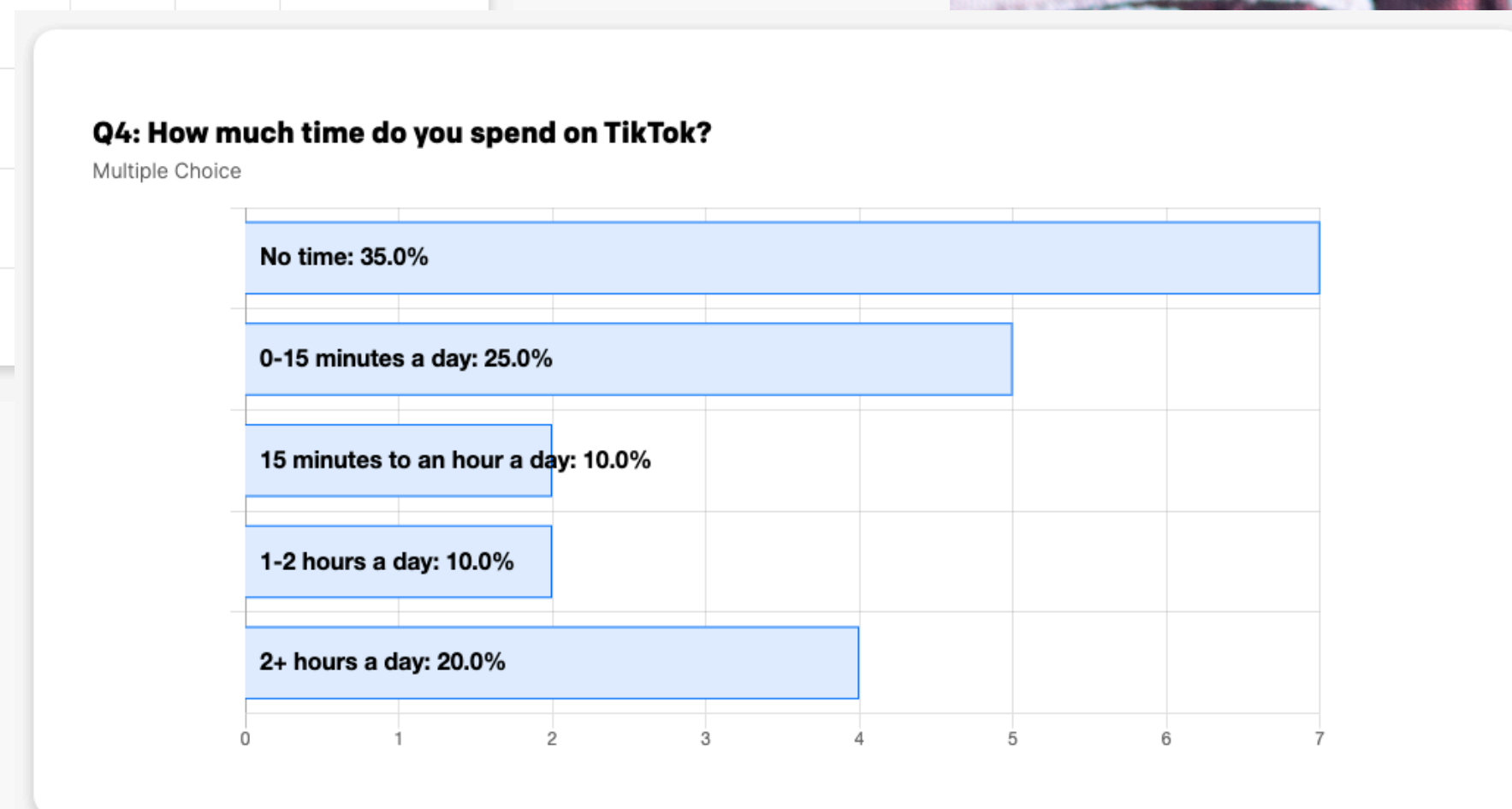
Comparatively, only 15.2% of the people who used TikTok at all reported spending 1 to 2+ hours on the platform, with the majority spending 15 minutes or less. **However, for the age range of 14-18, the percentage of power users increased, though the majority are spending fewer than 15 minutes a day on the platform.**



Any age:



Ages 14-18:





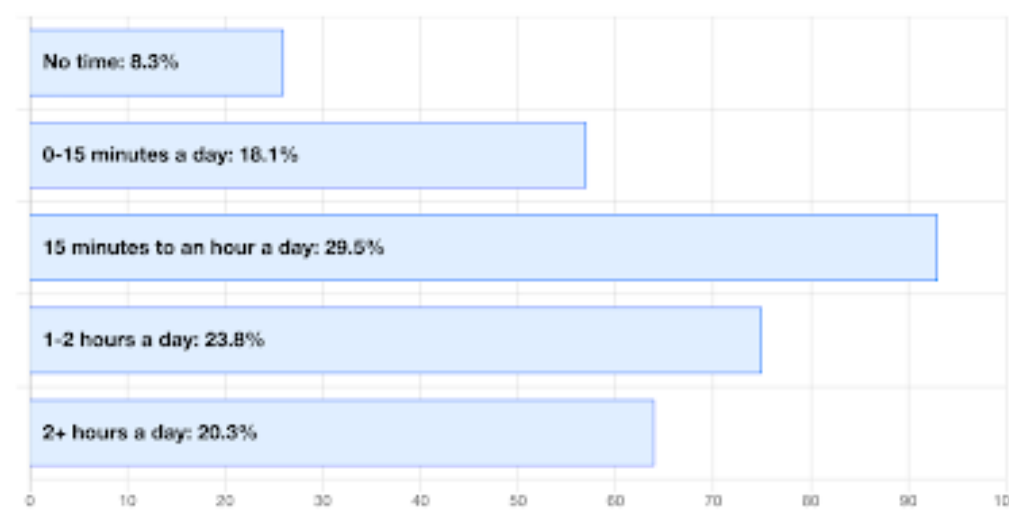
Daily Use

Other Apps

As far as other apps go, 44.1% of users report spending 1 to 2+ hours a day on Instagram, followed by 35.5% for Snapchat, 33.6% for Facebook, and 22.5% for Twitter. The only apps TikTok beat out in time spent were Pinterest, with 10.8% reporting that they spend 1 to 2+ hours per day on the platform, and Twitch, with only 9.5%.

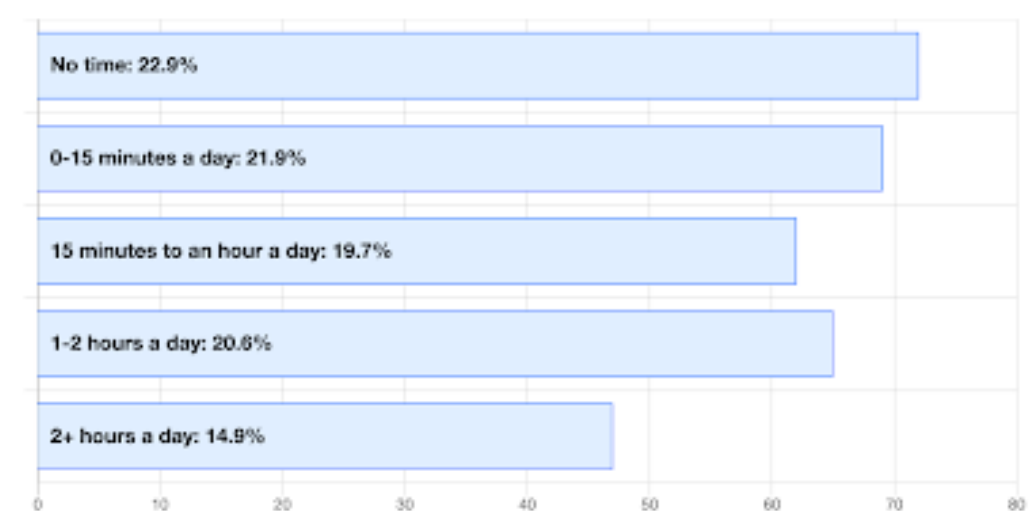
Q2: How much time do you spend on Instagram?

Multiple Choice



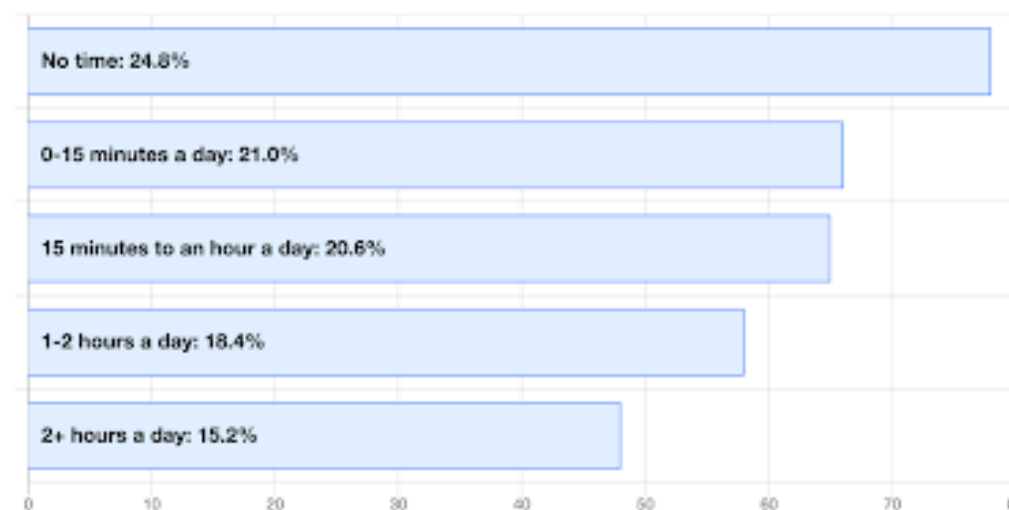
Q6: How much time do you spend on Snapchat?

Multiple Choice



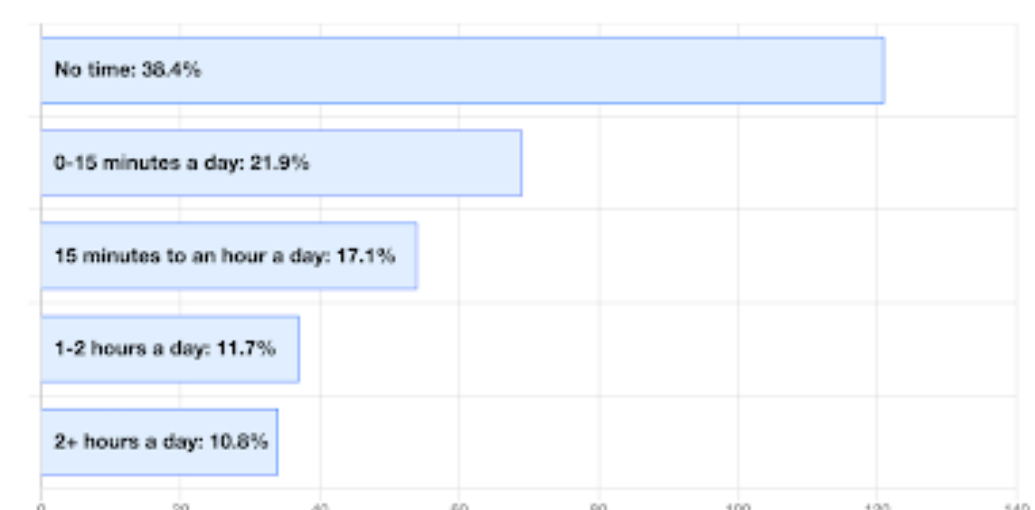
Q8: How much time do you spend on Facebook?

Multiple Choice



Q16: How much time do you spend on Twitter?

Multiple Choice



Daily Use

Leaders



A 25-year-old female in Ashland, Oregon, commented, "I get most of my entertainment from YouTube. I follow many YouTube vloggers and watch their videos everyday [sic], similar to watching a new TV episode." An 18-year-old male noted, "I associate YouTube with getting entertainment because there are endless videos about anything and everything." The takeaway? Educational, engaging content is still king on YouTube. And influencers can be the best way to create that kind of content with an engaged audience.

"I use YouTube the most of getting entertainment. There is a great variety of entertainment on the platform. Also, I think the YouTube recommendation algorithm has been doing good as of recently."

19 Male
Russellville, AR

← →

"I watch a lot of YouTube everyday. It is definitely my go to for entertainment. Not interested in tv or cable. "

22 Male
Cleveland, OH

← →

Education

YouTube

In addition to where users went for entertainment, we also asked where they went for education. While many mentioned that they didn't use social media for educational purposes, 50.7% of users reported going to YouTube for education, with terms like "videos" (62 times), "learn" (61 times), and "Pinterest" (42 times) also coming up in the free-response field.

A 23-year-old male from Davie, Florida, noted that he goes to YouTube because "If there's anything you possibly wish to learn, there is a video on it posted most likely. If there isn't, you'd get a ton of views being the first to do so." An 18-year-old female in Kaisariani, Athens, commented on YouTube's education-specific vertical. "I associate YouTube most with education, because none of the others even come close to YouTube Education. It's the only site that I know of that has a sub-site for edu. I use it for LSAT prep and math help."



"YouTube. If there is anything you possibly wish to learn, there is a video on it posted most likely. If there isn't, you'd get a ton of views being the first to do so. "

23 Male
Davie, FL



"I associate YouTube most with education, because none of the others even come close to YouTube Education. It's the only site that I know of that has a sub-site for edu. I use it for LSAT prep and math help. "

18 Female
Kaisariani, Athens



Education

Pinterest

When it comes to Pinterest, a 27-year-old female in Hudson, Texas, said, "Pinterest has a lot of great info and it's generally easy to find. The pictures or posts are always linked to pages to view further." A 29-year-old female in Hesperia, California, noted, "Pinterest is the most educational because it has ideas and tips on there from all over the world." **72% of males surveyed don't have a Pinterest account, while only 21% of females don't have an account.**

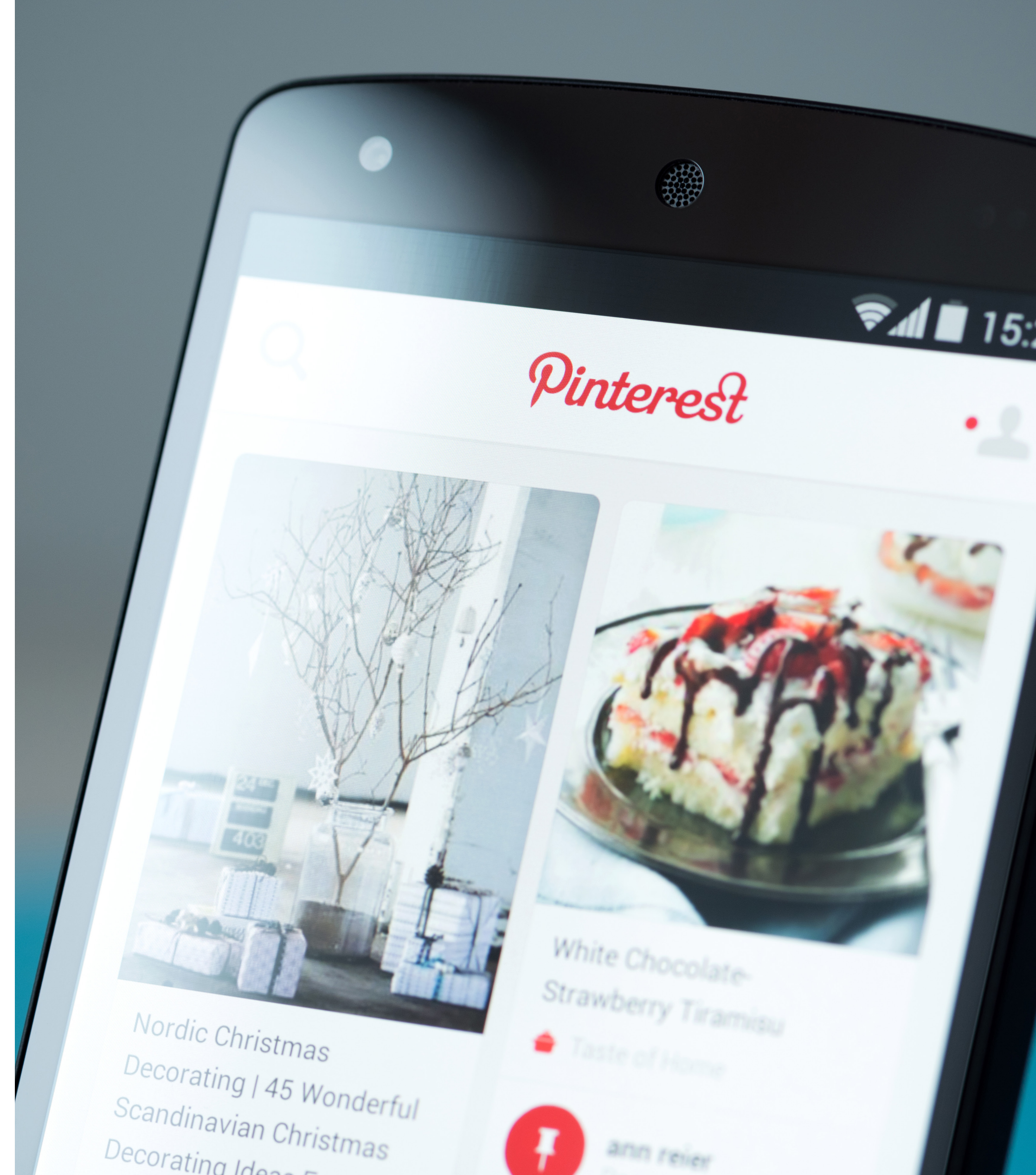
"Pinterest is the most educational because it has ideas and tips on there from all over the world."

29 Female
Hesperia, CA



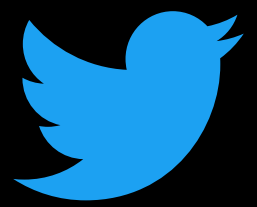
"Pinterest has a lot of great info and it's generally easy to find. The pictures or posts are always linked to pages to view further."

27 Female
Hudson, TX



News

Leaders



48%

of users get news from Twitter



28%

of users get news from Facebook

We also asked users which social network they most associated with getting news. It was close, but users reported turning to both Twitter (48%) and Facebook (45%). A 19-year-old female from Fayetteville, Arkansas, noted on both platforms, "I get a lot of news from Twitter and Facebook. A lot of news on Twitter you can get straight from the source

if the group or person has an account. News from Facebook is sometimes untrustworthy and checking sources is always a must." On Twitter, an 18-year-old male from Pflugerville, Texas, said, "Twitter has an entire section dedicated to accurate news. It's also a great way to get reactions to breaking events from musicians, athletes, entertainers, etc."

Overrated

Apps the users elected as being the most “overrated.”

On a more sobering note, when asked which social network was the most overrated, the answer wasn't as polarizing—and our survey population is clearly skeptical about the merits of social media platforms and apps in general. Users commented on apps that seem like they're life-changing when they're not, on apps being boring and a waste of time, and more. One 18-year-old from Raleigh, North Carolina, even said, “We waste our lives on pointless things.”

To go deeper into the numbers, 31% of our survey respondents said Twitter was the most overrated, while 30% said Facebook, 21% said Instagram, and 17% said Snapchat. On the flip side, only 0.4% said TikTok, 0.3% said YouTube, 0.2% said Twitch, and 0.2% said Pinterest.

While TikTok, Twitch, and Pinterest have lower user numbers and hours spent when compared to the other networks based on our research (so the low percentage of users who find the apps overrated makes sense), **it's interesting that YouTube is the only social network with a high number of reported users, a high number of hours spent, and a low number of users who believe the social network is overrated.**

An 18-year-old female in Lowell, Massachusetts, said “Facebook is overrated because it is outdated. The app doesn't have updates or change much about it, while other apps keep up with trends and technology to keep consumers interested.” A 25-year-old female said, “Twitter or TikTok. Twitter is all people trying to make themselves look better than they are in person. TikTok is for little kids and is a big bullying platform.”



"Facebook is overrated because it is outdated. The app doesn't have updates or change much about it, while other apps keep up with trends and technology to keep consumers interested. "

18 Female
Lowell, MA



"Twitter or tik tok. Twitter is all people trying to make themselves look better than what they are in person. Tik tok is for little kids and is a big bullying platform. "

25 Female
User rejected locations services



Conclusions

Overall, this study shows that for brands making strategic marketing decisions, **TikTok isn't corraling the impressive attention of other platforms, yet—and those who use it don't spend much time on it, with the exception of the very young**, who often aren't the ones with expendable income to spend on brands. (Which isn't to say this dynamic won't change in the coming years.) The key question becomes: Will Gen-Z TikTok power users be tastemakers, or is it a passing trend? For a safer bet, **YouTube is a widely lauded platform** where brands should be focusing heavily, if they aren't already.

Instagram is also still considered the #1 used platform by one-third of social users, although some question its authenticity and merits. Brands should continue taking note as they shape their creative for the platform. And **Twitter and Facebook don't fall far behind, although they should consider user expectations for news-based content** (perhaps representing an opportunity for B2B brands?).

Obviously, where you invest your marketing dollars depends on your audience, but this research shows that the biggest bang for your buck will likely come from Instagram,

To use any original research shared in this survey or for collaborations using HYPR data, you must reach out to info@hyprbrands.com or call us at 212-266-0067. We'll be happy to chat!

