

MEDIA

FROM GEN Z, TO GEN Z
THE PACE OF PROGRESS : GEN Z EDITION

PRESENTED BY
dentsu X IMAGEN INSIGHTS

TRENDS



INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2023, dentsu released [The Pace of Progress](#), our annual media trends report where we cover the opportunities, challenges, and intricacies of ten trends expected to shape the media landscape in 2024, from generative AI taking center stage in our lives, to the race to monetization of tech platforms, to the rise of integrity economics.

These trends will influence each of us, as consumers and marketers, differently.

We wanted to dig deeper into how these trends will play out for Gen Z. We partnered with Imagen Insights, a research company specialized in Gen Z qualitative insights, to directly ask Gen Z about our trends. We captured their insights and what they mean for brands in this addendum report.

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PART 01

GENERATIVE AI TAKES CENTER STAGE

Generative AI is probably the most disruptive technology breakthrough of the last decade, a seismic shift with waves having far reaching impact across industry and society. This technology has the potential to enhance our cognitive capabilities and allows us to solve problems in new ways, as consumers and marketers.

While Gen Z recognize the technological prowess of generative AI applications, they also have reservations about what it means for creators, privacy and human relations.

WHAT GEN Z SAY ABOUT GENERATIVE AI TAKING CENTER STAGE

“I recently saw an AI Instagram model who looked just like a real human, but was AI generated. The more the use of AI becomes normal, and the more people learn how to create things like this, the more unreal information will become.”

Male, 21, Euskirchen, Germany
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

60%

of Gen Z in Germany state that technological progress and innovation are essential for our society

Source: CCS, November-December 2023, dentsu

AI is already improving my job, particularly in copywriting. It shortens the time I spend writing and it improves my grammar. I also sometimes ask ChatGPT to create graphs for me instead of me spending time creating pivot tables and then charting the data.

Non-binary, 26, Stockholm, Sweden
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

“The upcoming technologies would never be like human touch or interaction. Any feedback or concerns from customers cannot be fixed on the spot.

Yes, technology makes things more efficient, and every company wants to get ahead of the curve, but businesses need to be careful when integrating these technologies.”

20, Female, Lincoln City, OR, USA
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

54%

of Gen Z in France say they worry about how their personal data is being used by companies

Source: CCS, November-December 2023, dentsu

74%

of Gen Z in Singapore declare that technology is important to them for being productive (e.g., managing diary, to-do lists)

Source: CCS, November-December 2023, dentsu

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BRANDS

As marketers look toward the possibilities offered by generative AI to design campaigns that better engage Gen Z audiences, they should keep in mind the following considerations:

Understand

Beyond understanding the capabilities and limitations of generative AI applied to marketing (i.e., the efficiency value for business), you must understand how your Gen Z audiences use generative AI in their own lives to make their daily tasks quicker or enhance their creativity (i.e., the user value for audiences). This includes understanding the reservations they have around the training data used as inputs.

Upskill

While as a marketer you cannot control a generative AI model yourself (i.e., the algorithm), you can fully control how you prompt the model to make the most of its capacities, and how you weave its outputs in your existing marketing strategy and

operation engine. This requires upskilling marketing teams, from learning advanced prompting to evaluating the relevance and accuracy of outputs. Active human supervision is paramount to making sure campaigns don't amplify bias or appear out of touch with Gen Z expectations.

Test

The generative AI landscape moves fast, with new models and applications popping every day. Don't delay experimenting with generative AI to see how it can work for your brand in practice, as it is already in many of the apps used by the Gen Z audience.

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**Josie Clark,
Brand Manager, Heineken UK**

Everyone is a bit wary of change, but generative AI is something to embrace as long as we're using it carefully and are vigilant about the biases that lie in the data.

**Tyler Christian,
Gen Z Culture & Engagement Advisor, dentsu**

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Generative AI is the cherry on top – not the cake. Marketers need to genuinely understand how people perceive their brands and feel about their brands: you can't get that only through inputs into ChatGPT.

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**Soji Sonibare,
Imagen Insights & Co-Founder of Nourishment**

Generative AI is a great way for Gen Z content creators to deliver what they envision even if they don't have the strongest creative skills – yet we must protect original art.



PART 02

THE RACE TO MONETIZATION

As digital advertising spend is expected to grow by a mere 6.3% three-year compound annual growth rate between 2024 and 2026, digital platforms have engaged in a more aggressive race to monetization, striving to maximize the value of their services, content, data, and ad offering.

Gen Z have grown up with these platforms and are torn between the convenience of accessing this abundance of content and services and the tradeoffs they represent in terms of attention and personal information.

WHAT GEN Z SAY ABOUT THE RACE TO MONETIZATION

68%

of Gen Z in the United States declare that they are happy to watch advertisements online if it means that they can access interesting material for free

Source: CCS, November-December 2023, dentsu

“The type of ads that get my attention are ones in GRWM (Get Ready With Me) videos. The ads, although not completely in my face, are very catchy and show how the product was used without me even realizing I was watching an ad.”

Female, 21, Birmingham UK
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

“It is so difficult to differentiate between platforms that I understand if you have no previous knowledge about any of them you choose one without taking into account which one you simply want.”

Male, 19, Olesa de Montserrat, Spain
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

“I believe that when you sign up for a social media website, or any website in general, you are giving the platform permission to use your data for advertising marketing and possibly even selling it to other companies. I’ve accepted this as a reality of today’s world but still try to protect my data.”

Male, 23, Bozeman, MT, USA
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

58%

of Gen Z in Hong Kong declare that they always set the highest privacy settings on their social media sites and apps

Source: CCS, November-December 2023, dentsu

44%

of Gen Z in Australia are comfortable with companies/apps/devices using their data to create better experiences (e.g., product recommendations from digital assistants)

Source: CCS, November-December 2023, dentsu

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BRANDS

As the media landscape becomes more competitive and more reliant on user data and identity, brand marketers need to be mindful of Gen Z's views and should:

Respect

Gen Z audiences are willing to share their data when they can see a reason for it and can see a clear value exchange. When designing experiences or personalizing messages, try to ask for minimal data, enough to create something relevant and delightful, but not so much as to seem overbearing or disrespectful.

Demonstrate

Gen Z have grown up with tech and social platforms. They are aware of the benefits and risks of giving access to their data. Be transparent in how data is being used and show how it provides a benefit. Maybe offer an insight into the value of the content or service that is being provided, how it was made, or what thinking has gone into the process.

Enable

This generation loves to consume content, to be inspired and to be involved. Permit and encourage Gen Z audiences to co-create and engage with micro-influencers to help the brand to find a role within groups and communities, and develop an authentic life of its own.

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Tyler Christian,
Gen Z Culture & Engagement Advisor, dentsu

Will I go to TV prison for letting a friend watch a show with my streaming password? There's a balance to maintain: if I share my data with a service, I should be able to easily share my experience with friends.

Soji Sonibare,
Imagen Insights & Co-Founder of Nourishment

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Brands want to make Gen Z fall in love with them, but they can't do this if they prevent us from engaging in the ways we've used before.

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Josie Clark,
Brand Manager, Heineken UK

Co-creation is key for Gen Z. We expect to see ourselves in content, from ads to influencer campaigns, and it's crucial for brands to include us in a genuine and authentic way.



PART

03

INTEGRITY ECONOMICS

As we navigate a world of rising temperatures, mounting concerns on AI's effects on society, and increasingly polarizing events and culture wars, growth cannot only be defined as immediate financial performance for brands. It encompasses their wider contribution to society.

Gen Z, one of the most diverse generations yet who grew up in a digital world and amid the climate emergency since their childhood, are in a unique position to act as agents of change.

WHAT GEN Z SAY ABOUT INTEGRITY ECONOMICS

“Brands aren’t transparent about their efforts in media campaigns. While I don’t expect any brand to put paragraphs of information on advertisements or social media, a simple link to their website would do. There they can have multiple pages of explanations/graphics/evidence of their efforts to reduce their carbon output.”

Female, 21, London, UK
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

“Digital safety is a very important element for me when choosing to support a brand because of its connections to areas such as job, career and private life.”

Male, 23, Braunschweig, Germany
Source: Imagen Insights Gen Z Community Member

39%

of Gen Z in the United States state they have actively started using a brand because of the company’s social or political stance

Source: CCS, November–December 2023, dentsu

65%

of Gen Z in Italy declare it is important to them that companies provide information about how their products are made (e.g., workers’ conditions)

Source: CCS, November–December 2023, dentsu

47%

of Gen Z in Australia say they are cynical about companies who say their products and services protect the environment

Source: CCS, November–December 2023, dentsu

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BRANDS

Softer metrics like diversity, inclusion, and sustainability resonate with the Gen Z audience. To make sure they keep the younger consumers on their side, marketers should take these considerations into account:

Listen

Keep an ear to the ground to stay in touch with the issues that affect and concern Gen Z, not only as consumers but also as citizens. Give them a chance to have a say in campaigns. This audience is very vocal and know how to amplify messages effectively online. The brands that can demonstrate they are listening and acting authentically will reap big rewards.

Be open

Mirror the diversity of the Gen Z audience, be accessible and open. An inclusive brand is one that does not exclude anyone. It is open to comment, criticism, and new ideas, wherever they come from.

Be authentic

There is a lot of cynicism and skepticism from Gen Z around how brands communicate. Be willing to own your failings and imperfections, whether today's or those in the past. This generation wants honesty, and wants others to admit mistakes and move on, showing improvement over time. This can be a vital part of what a brand is and what it stands for, with full transparency.

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Soji Sonibare,
Imagen Insights & Co-Founder of Nourishment

No one is asking brands to be perfect, but to provide honest and genuine responses to what we care about. If brands deliver that transparency, Gen Z will better engage with them over time.

Josie Clark,
Brand Manager, Heineken UK

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If brands are talking about causes Gen Z care about, which they should be, it's important to do this in an authentic way. For example on the Strongbow brand accessibility and inclusion is crucial focus for us but it's a journey. It's good to remember small steps can build an authentic picture that consumers can recognize.

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Tyler Christian,
Gen Z Culture & Engagement Advisor, dentsu

The best way to truly win over Gen Z and not simply become a commodity brand in their eyes is to give them value first, from entertainment to information to monetary value, rather than asking something from them.

Methodology

The report is based on [The Pace of Progress: dentsu 2024 Media Trends](#), the annual media trends report by dentsu.

Additional quantitative insights have been sourced in November-December 2023 from CCS, dentsu's proprietary ecosystem of consumer data, analytics and tech.

Additional qualitative insights have been sourced in November-December 2023 from Imagen Index. The Imagen Index is a self-serve dashboard that enables agencies and brands to gain qualitative insight from Gen Z within minutes..

Press Inquiries

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About dentsu

Dentsu is the network designed for what's next, helping clients predict and plan for disruptive future opportunities and create new paths to growth in the sustainable economy. Taking a people-centered approach to business transformation, we use insights to connect brand, content, commerce and experience, underpinned by modern creativity. As part of Dentsu Group Inc. (Tokyo: 4324; ISIN: JP3551520004), we are headquartered in Tokyo, Japan and our 72,000-strong employee-base of dedicated professionals work across four regions (Japan, Americas, EMEA and APAC). Dentsu combines Japanese innovation with a diverse, global perspective to drive client growth and to shape society.

<https://www.dentsu.com/>

<https://www.group.dentsu.com/en/>

About Imagen Insights

At Imagen Insights we pay our Gen Z community to provide feedback and insights for brands, closing the gap between brands and their target audience via our two technologies. We enable our clients to crowdsource qualitative and quantitative feedback, ideas, and insights from our communities via our Imagen Index, within minutes, and our Platform Briefs offering, within 72 hours. Brands like Amazon Prime Video, Apple, Google, Nike, PepsiCo, and Unilever use our Imagen Index to search for any keyword or topic and instantly see daily updated qualitative insights from our global Gen Z community.

Website: [Imageninsights.com](https://imageninsights.com)

Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn/TikTok: [@ImagenInsights](#)

Threads: [@101660057](#)

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