



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on June 2, 2018

Pew Survey Shows Facebook is Losing Teen Users

Social media giant Facebook — still reeling from the Cambridge Analytica scandal — is losing ground among the most Internet-connected generation ever, according to a recent survey. The platform held the top spot with a 71 percent share among teens aged 13-17 in a 2014-2015 Pew survey but has slid to fourth place in that same age group in the most recent survey holding a mere 51 percent share.



While concerns over privacy in general and the Cambridge leak in specific appear to have little to do with the downward trend among young people, it does not bode well for the beleaguered company; Many teens are just not interested in Facebook, preferring YouTube (85 percent), Instagram (72 percent), and Snapchat (69 percent). The end result is that Facebook's user base is aging.

If the trend of teenage users abandoning the platform continues, the company could — within a few years — find itself considered irrelevant to anyone under 30. More evidence of that is seen in a recent report by the research firm eMarketer, which said that Facebook is on schedule to lose two million U.S. users under 24 years old by the end of 2018, replacing those losses with users over 24. So, Facebook — still the world's most popular social media platform with around two billion users — is holding on to an older demographic while losing teens.

Since — with the conspicuous exception of those few “social media moms” everyone knows — most people 30 or older spend less time on social media than do teens, the trend could mark the beginning of the end of Facebook's reign.

Teen trends have always been a source of amusement for the generations that came before them. Baby Boomers once made jokes about not being able to recognize their teens unless they had a phone up to their faces; but today's teens hardly use their phones as phones — preferring text and social media to communicate.

In fact, the recent Pew survey shows that 95 percent of the teens who participated said that they use smartphones and 45 percent percent said they are “almost constantly” online. But while the lion's share of them are on other social media platforms, a large number of them are not on Facebook. What a difference three years can make.

Monica Anderson, lead author of the report, said, “The social media environment among teens is quite different from what it was just three years ago. Back then, teens' social media use mostly revolved around Facebook.” She went on to say, “Today, their habits revolve less around a single platform. At the same time we've seen this shift, teens are more digitally connected than ever.”

Another Pew report from March also shows that Facebook's gains in older users is what is holding the platform together, stating:

Facebook remains the most widely used social media platform by a relatively healthy margin: some 68% of U.S. adults are now Facebook users. Other than the video-sharing platform YouTube, none of the other sites or apps measured in this survey are used by more than 40% of Americans.



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But since the report also shows that most social media consumers are younger, the downward trend in young Facebook users is likely concerning to Facebook. The study says:

As was true in previous Pew Research Center surveys of social media use, there are substantial differences in social media use by age. Some 88% of 18- to 29-year-olds indicate that they use any form of social media. That share falls to 78% among those ages 30 to 49, to 64% among those ages 50 to 64 and to 37% among Americans 65 and older.

The most recent report also shows that among teens, “there is no clear consensus” about social media’s “ultimate impact on people their age.” It goes on to say:

A plurality of teens (45%) believe social media has a neither positive nor negative effect on people their age. Meanwhile, roughly three-in-ten teens (31%) say social media has had a mostly positive impact, while 24% describe its effect as mostly negative.

So, while teens aged 13-17 cannot agree on the positive or negative impact of social media, the vast majority of them are daily users of some type of social media platform. And for nearly half of them, that platform is not Facebook.

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