



GEN Z REPORT 2022

What Digital Natives Want



Gen Z now has \$360 billion in disposable income¹. Let that sink in...

The last few years, our annual reports have followed Gen Z and their journey to maturity. This digital-first generation is finally coming into their buying power and will make up 27% of the workforce in just three years². Their influence is impacting the economy, culture, and media.

In June 2020, interest in “Gen Z” finally surpassed “Millennials” in Google Search, and

has continued to grow. Consumer behavior has drastically changed in the last two years — online shopping has become the norm and 37% of Gen Z regularly shop online as a form of entertainment, more than any other activity³.

Gen Z's influence is here to stay, how will you stay in step with the future of consumer behavior?

“Consumers do not behave the way they used to — how, where, and what they shop for has changed and will continue to shift as younger generations come into buying power and especially as we continue to navigate the events of the last few years.”

— LAIA PESCECETTO, VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING, TELMAR⁴

Search Traffic⁵

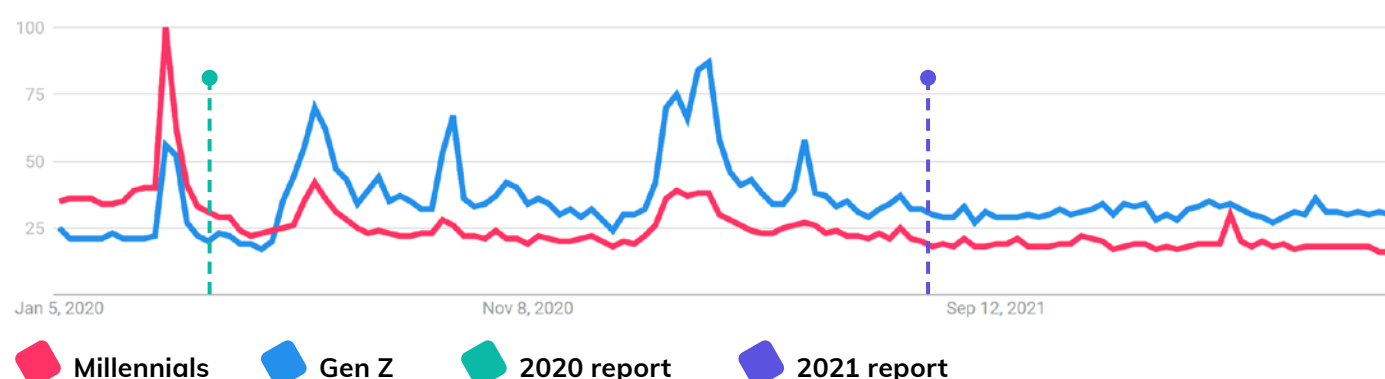


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Holding onto Gen Z's Attention

Gen Z is known for having a short attention span of eight seconds (compared to twelve seconds for Millennials)¹.

This digital-first generation has a lot of distractions online, how will you catch and hold onto their attention?

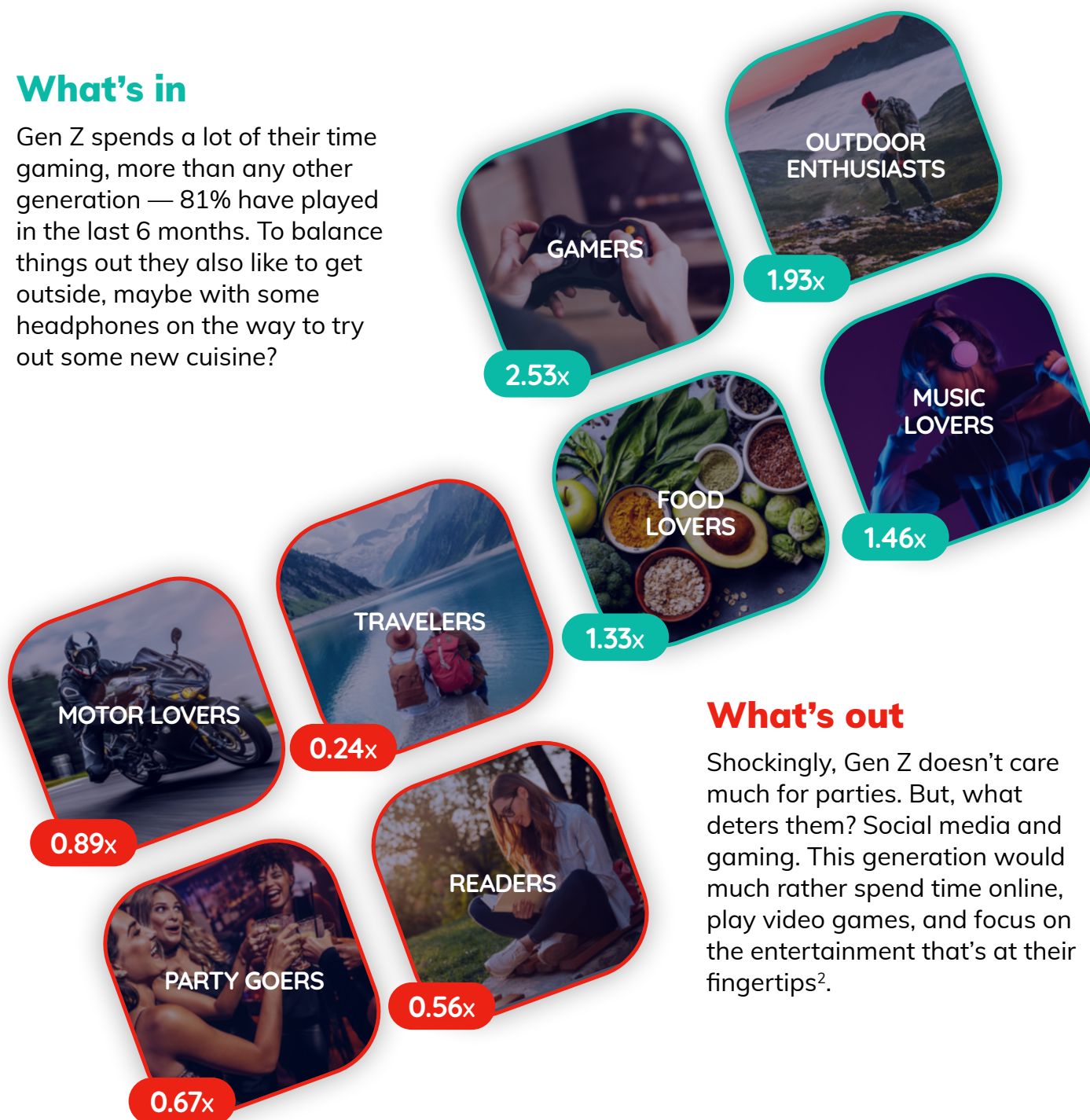


HOLDING ONTO GEN Z'S ATTENTION

What's In & What's Out

What's in

Gen Z spends a lot of their time gaming, more than any other generation — 81% have played in the last 6 months. To balance things out they also like to get outside, maybe with some headphones on the way to try out some new cuisine?



What's out

Shockingly, Gen Z doesn't care much for parties. But, what deters them? Social media and gaming. This generation would much rather spend time online, play video games, and focus on the entertainment that's at their fingertips².



The above affinity scores index the interest of a specific audience (in this case, Gen Z) against the average U.S. adult, based on online engagement. 1.00x would represent average interest. You will see these scores throughout the report.

HOLDING ONTO GEN Z'S ATTENTION

What's old is new again

Consumers are looking for comfort in these uncertain times — Gen Z has embraced a very specific era of nostalgia that is impacting all aspects of how they buy products and consume media.

This forward-thinking generation is looking backwards: 1990s and Y2K culture, technology, media, and fashion are back in style. Gen Z was born between 1997 and 2012, so many of them don't remember or weren't alive for the early 2000s... but they love the fashion trends of that era.

Marketers have started to use **Nostalgia**

Marketing¹ to appeal to Gen Z and win back their lost Millennial customers. Brands like Gap, Victoria's Secret, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Hollister Co. have started to use this marketing strategy to evolve and connect with younger audiences.

50%

of Gen Z buys the brands they grew up with².

Gen Z's top nostalgic interests

#1 MTV



#6 Halo



SOUTH
PARK

#2 South Park

Harry Potter

#7 Harry Potter

#3 Spongebob



#8 iCarly



VANS

#4 Vans

glee

#9 Glee

#5 Hot Topic



#10 Parks & Recreation



HOLDING ONTO GEN Z'S ATTENTION

Top purchase considerations

Gen Z vs Millennial Considerations



Gen Z



Millennials

More likely to purchase if you support a cause they like

43% ————— **39%**

Prefer brands they grew up with

50% ————— **45%**

Often seek advice before purchasing

48% ————— **44%**

Tend to make impulse decisions

46% ————— **42%**

Like to connect with brands through social networking sites

33% ————— **29%**

Gen Z obviously loves shopping online, specifically on Instagram.

60%

of U.S. Gen Z shoppers use Instagram to discover new brands and products¹.



HOLDING ONTO GEN Z'S ATTENTION

Cause-driven & discerning customers

Top social issues for Gen Z

1 Human Rights, Ethnic & Identity Groups

2 Charity, Philanthropy & Poverty

3 Medical & Health Organizations

4 Religion & Beliefs

5 Environmental Organizations

53%

of Gen Z uses
social media to
support the causes
they care
about¹



Gen Z is filled with activists; this generation especially cares about the future of our world. 59% of Gen Z is willing to pay more for a product that is safe for the environment and 43% expect the brands they buy to support social causes¹.

Brands like Patagonia, Allbirds, and Seventh Generation were all built on ethics. They are focused on being sustainable, environmentally responsible, and eliminating their carbon footprint. By being transparent with your business practices, younger consumers will remember your values and be more inclined to purchase your products.

HOLDING ONTO GEN Z'S ATTENTION

Gen Z's five personas 2022 Edition

We selected these five personas to give you different perspectives on this connected generation.



Fashion Foodies

- Fast Food
- Unisex Clothing
- Digital Games
- Women's Clothing
- Coffee and Tea



Competitors

- Team Sports Leagues
- Digital Games
- Sports Events
- Athletic Apparel
- Fast Food



Activists

- Charity, Philanthropy & Poverty Organizations
- Animal Wellness Organizations
- Action & Adventure Games
- Animated Shows
- Record Labels



Dedicated Gamers

- Digital Games
- Game Platforms
- Consumer Electronics
- Video Game Companies
- Software



Entertainment Fanatics

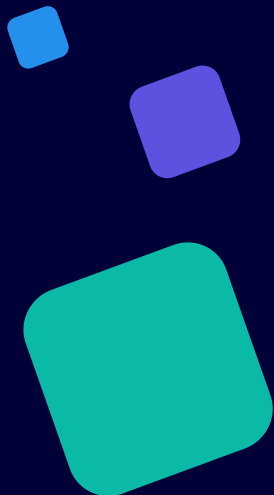
- Podcast Influencers
- Online Celebrities
- Romance Shows
- Video Game Companies
- Women's Clothing

A Generation Under the Influence

If we asked you to share the first words that came to mind after hearing “Gen Z,” we’d bet money that “influencer” would be one of your first answers.

It’s impossible to separate Influencer marketing from the connected generation. Thanks to their one-to-one relationship with many content creators, they feel more connected and are more likely to follow the lead of the people they follow.

Luckily, you can use that borrowed influence to reach them.



A GENERATION UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Who's influencing Gen Z?

This year's ranking leans heavily on musicians, not surprising considering Gen Z is nearly 1.5x more likely to be music lovers. Kim Kardashian is the only reality show influencer to make it on this list, but we also found that Gen Z is nearly 1.5x more likely to engage with her apparel brand SKIMS on social media.

This list would differ from a list of, say, the top 10 most followed Instagram accounts, because it's focused only on Gen Z's favorites. This list is also very nostalgic. Gen Z grew up with many of these musicians and clearly still listens to their music today.

Similarly, your audience has its own specific list of favorite influencers, and a tool like Helixa can help you take a more targeted and strategic approach to influencer marketing.

40%

of Gen Z learns about new products they're interested in buying from influencers' social media posts¹

Rank	Name	Age	Reach	Category
1	Drake	35	47.4%	Musician
2	Kanye West	45	46.9%	Musician
3	Taylor Swift	32	44.8%	Musician
4	Ariana Grande	28	43.4%	Musician
5	Rihanna	34	40.4%	Musician
6	Katy Perry	37	39.4%	Musician
7	Kim Kardashian	41	39.4%	Reality Show Influencer
8	Miley Cyrus	29	38.2%	Musician
9	Justin Bieber	28	36.4%	Musician
10	Selena Gomez	29	36.3%	Musician



The list is sorted by reach and filtered by an affinity of 1.20x and up.

Who's influencing Gen Z?

These are the influencers engaging Gen Z online.



Fashion Foodies

- Drake
- Ariana Grande
- Selena Gomez
- Miley Cyrus
- Justin Bieber



Competitors

- Drake
- LeBron James
- J. Cole
- Kendrick Lamar
- Kanye West



Activists

- Ariana Grande
- Drake
- Emma Watson
- Miley Cyrus
- Demi Lovato



Dedicated Gamers

- PewDiePie
- Drake
- Tyler, the Creator
- Kendrick Lamar
- J. Cole



Entertainment Fanatics

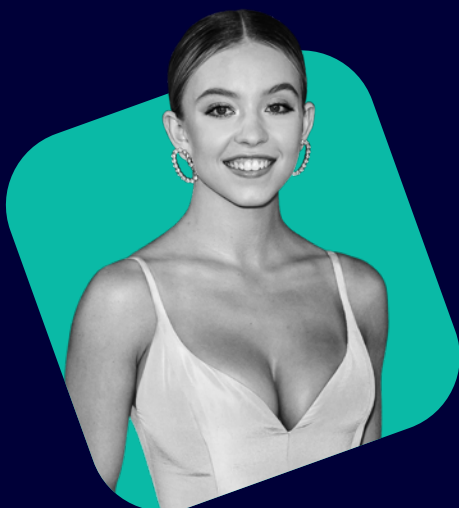
- Ariana Grande
- Selena Gomez
- Demi Lovato
- Drake
- Miley Cyrus

Note: the list is sorted by reach and filtered for an affinity of 1.20x and up

A GENERATION UNDER THE INFLUENCE

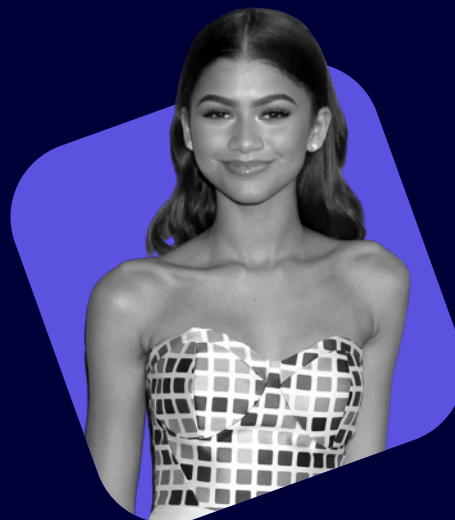
Gen Z shapes pop culture

The Gen Z drama, Euphoria debuted their second season this year and Gen Z went crazy for it. Stars from the show, Zendaya and Sydney Sweeney have a lot of influence; combined, they have almost 160 million followers on Instagram.



Sydney Sweeney

Gen Z - **63%**
Millennials - **21.5%**
Gen X - **7.4%**
Baby Boomers - **8.1%**



Zendaya

Gen Z - **54.9%**
Millennials - **23.8%**
Gen X - **12.2%**
Baby Boomers - **9.1%**

The coming-of-age show also dominated TikTok this year with countless videos featuring Cassie's infamous line "I have never ever been happier!"

TikTok users have also been emulating the fashion seen on the show, the "Euphoria High" trend. The videos usually entail creators wearing glitter and rhinestone makeup and vibrant Y2K-themed outfits¹.

Low-rise jeans, polos, halter tops, and velour

tracksuits are coming back. More and more Gen Z influencers are dressing like the characters from Euphoria, like Emma Chamberlain, Hailey Bieber, Dua Lipa, and Addison Rae. Rae even partnered with Pandora Jewelry to promote their new collection filled with 2000s style silver charm bracelets, necklaces, and rings.

Gen Z is pushing boundaries and bringing old trends back into the mainstream. Even if you don't market to Gen Z directly, that's reason enough to pay attention.

Where Gen Z shops...

These are the retailers engaging Gen Z online.



Fashion Foodies

- Victoria's Secret
- Nike
- Forever 21
- VS Pink
- Jordan



Competitors

- Nike
- Jordan
- Adidas
- Finish Line
- Under Armour



Activists

- Nike
- Victoria's Secret
- Forever 21
- H&M
- Jordan



Dedicated Gamers

- Nike
- Jordan
- Adidas
- Finish Line
- Vans



Entertainment Fanatics

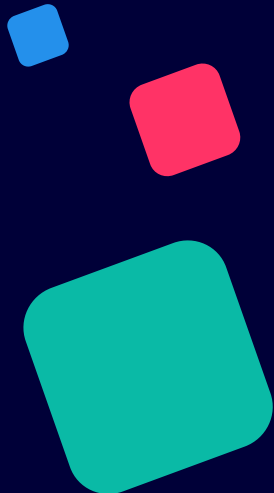
- Victoria's Secret
- Forever 21
- Nike
- H&M
- Hot Topic

Note: the list is sorted by reach and filtered for an affinity of 1.20x and up

Where to Find Gen Z

Content is everywhere. Gen Z's interests are quite wide-ranging, as a generation, and spread across various formats, creators, and channels.

However, most still have favorites they return to again and again. We've included this generation's top shows, websites, and games to get you started.



WHERE TO FIND GEN Z

When they're streaming...

Gen Z is estimated to watch at least 3 hours of streaming content per day² and 39% is subscribed to 3-4 streaming services³.

"Gen Z are ramping up in **buying power and influence**, reshaping the foreseeable future of how consumers buy, sell and discover new brands."

— LAIA PESCECETO, VP OF GLOBAL MARKETING, TELMAR¹

Gen Z's top shows

- #1 **Pretty Little Liars**
- #2 **Rick and Morty**
- #3 **American Horror Story**
- #4 **SportsCenter**
- #5 **Stranger Things**
- #6 **Teen Wolf**
- #7 **South Park**
- #8 **Spongebob Squarepants**
- #9 **The Office**
- #10 **Victorious**

67%

of Gen Z think
subscribing to
streaming services
is totally worth the
money⁴

42%

of Gen Z subscribes
to streaming services
just for the original
programming⁴

WHERE TO FIND GEN Z

When they're streaming...

These are the shows engaging Gen Z online.



Fashion Foodies

- Pretty Little Liars
- American Horror Story
- Teen Wolf
- Rick and Morty
- SpongeBob SquarePants



Competitors

- SportsCenter
- College GameDay
- First Take
- Rick and Morty
- South Park



Activists

- Pretty Little Liars
- American Horror Story
- Stranger Things
- Rick and Morty
- Game of Thrones



Dedicated Gamers

- Rick and Morty
- South Park
- Sportscenter
- The Walking Dead
- Family Guy



Entertainment Fanatics

- Pretty Little Liars
- American Horror Story
- Stranger Things
- Teen Wolf
- Rick and Morty

Note: this list is sorted by affinity

WHERE TO FIND GEN Z

When they get online...



Gen Z's top websites

- #1 [UberFacts](#)
- #2 [IGN](#)
- #3 [WorldStar](#)
- #4 [Men's Humor](#)
- #5 [Twitch](#)
- #6 [Common White Girl](#)
- #7 [Smosh](#)
- #8 [Bleacher Report](#)
- #9 [Lost in History](#)
- #10 [Nike.com](#)

97%

of Gen Z say they use social media as their top source of shopping inspiration¹

68%

say going online is one of their favorite things to do²

WHERE TO FIND GEN Z

When they get online...

These are the websites engaging Gen Z online.



Fashion Foodies

- UberFacts
- Common White Girl
- WorldStar
- Lost in History
- Smosh



Competitors

- Bleacher Report
- Nike.com
- WorldStar
- Barstool
- Uber Facts



Activists

- UberFacts
- IGN
- Men's Humor
- Common White Girl
- Texts From Last Night



Dedicated Gamers

- IGN
- Twitch
- GameSpot
- Smosh
- WorldStar



Entertainment Fanatics

- UberFacts
- Common White Girl
- IGN
- Smosh
- Vevo

Note: the list is sorted by reach and filtered for an affinity of 1.20x and up

Gaming on a Whole New Level

Gaming is not just a hobby anymore, it's a lifestyle.

The eSports and gaming market is worth \$198.4 billion¹ and has more than 2.7 billion players².

This past year, gaming has seen a plethora of new partnerships. From fast food chains to sports apparel to car manufacturers to luxury brands. Everyone is trying to get a slice of the gaming pie.



GAMING ON A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

Connecting through gaming

These are the games engaging Gen Z online.



Fashion Foodies

- Fortnite
- Call of Duty
- Pokémon
- NBA 2K
- Overwatch



Competitors

- Fortnite
- NBA 2K
- Call of Duty
- Pokémon
- Apex Legends



Activists

- Pokémon
- Fortnite
- Call of Duty
- Overwatch
- Fallout



Dedicated Gamers

- Call of Duty
- Pokémon
- Fortnite
- Destiny
- Overwatch



Entertainment Fanatics

- Pokémon
- Call of Duty
- Fortnite
- Overwatch
- Destiny

Note: the list is sorted by reach and filtered for an affinity of 1.20x and up

GAMING ON A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

The gaming ecosystem

By 2027 gaming is expected to reach a value of **\$339 Billion¹**

Gen Z's favorite game publishers

- #1 Rockstar Games
- #2 Ubisoft
- #3 Electronic Arts
- #4 Bethesda
- #5 Naughty Dog

Gen Z's favorite eSports teams

- #1 OpTic Gaming
- #2 FaZe Clan
- #3 MLG
- #4 100 Thieves
- #5 Cloud9

Gen Z's favorite games

- #1 Action & Adventure Games (No. 1: Pokémon)
- #2 Shooter Games (No. 1: Call of Duty)
- #3 Sports Games (No. 1: NBA 2K)
- #4 Role Playing Games (No. 1: Fallout)
- #5 Strategy Games (No. 1: Minecraft)



GAMING ON A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

High fashion getting in on the action

High fashion retailers like Gucci, Balenciaga, Burberry, Louis Vuitton, and more are getting into gaming.

In 2019, Louis Vuitton partnered with Riot Games¹ to create a physical and digital clothing line and a branded travel case for the “League of Legends” Summoner’s Cup, the \$2.2 million prize for the most-watched esports tournament.

This year, Gucci has really made their mark in the gaming world. The brand started their

gaming academy² to help aspiring amateurs become pros, opened a digital town³ on the popular online game platform, Roblox, and collaborated with Xbox⁴ to create co-branded controllers, consoles, and carrying cases.

It’s no secret why high fashion brands are now getting into the game. These industries have the power to benefit from each other: fashion can reach new audiences while gaming can gain more popularity through trendy partnerships.

With younger audiences spending a lot of their time in digital spaces, brands need to embrace this and be where the next generation of buyers are.



[LEARN MORE](#)

Wrapping Up

“

“Helixa helps us discover **unexpected audience insights** that inform unique media plans and shape tailored strategies for our clients.”

- DCMN

“Working with Helixa helps us produce some of the **most strategic work** we’ve done to date, and it is a testament to its ease-of-use.”

- Rauxa

”

Your fans are unique...

Our goal with this report was to give you a clearer, data-supported view of Gen Z — and give you a head start over the competition who are slow to take this generation and their buying power seriously.

But general insights only get you so far. As you saw with the five Gen Z personas, things can change a lot once you start getting specific.

To understand your audience, you need insights that center your audience. We can help.

...and so is Helixa

Helixa is a data-driven, audience intelligence platform that helps media companies, brands and their agencies identify new opportunities and pathways to growth.

The results are incredibly nuanced, timely and meaningful insights that inform creative, planning, and execution to reach your target audiences.

If you’re ready to spend less time searching, give us a call.

[SCHEDULE A DEMO](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

Insights in minutes, not hours

Methodology

Helixa transforms real-time social media interactions of millions of consumers and applies ethically designed machine learning algorithms to create connections and form personas that reflect consumer interests and lifestyles.

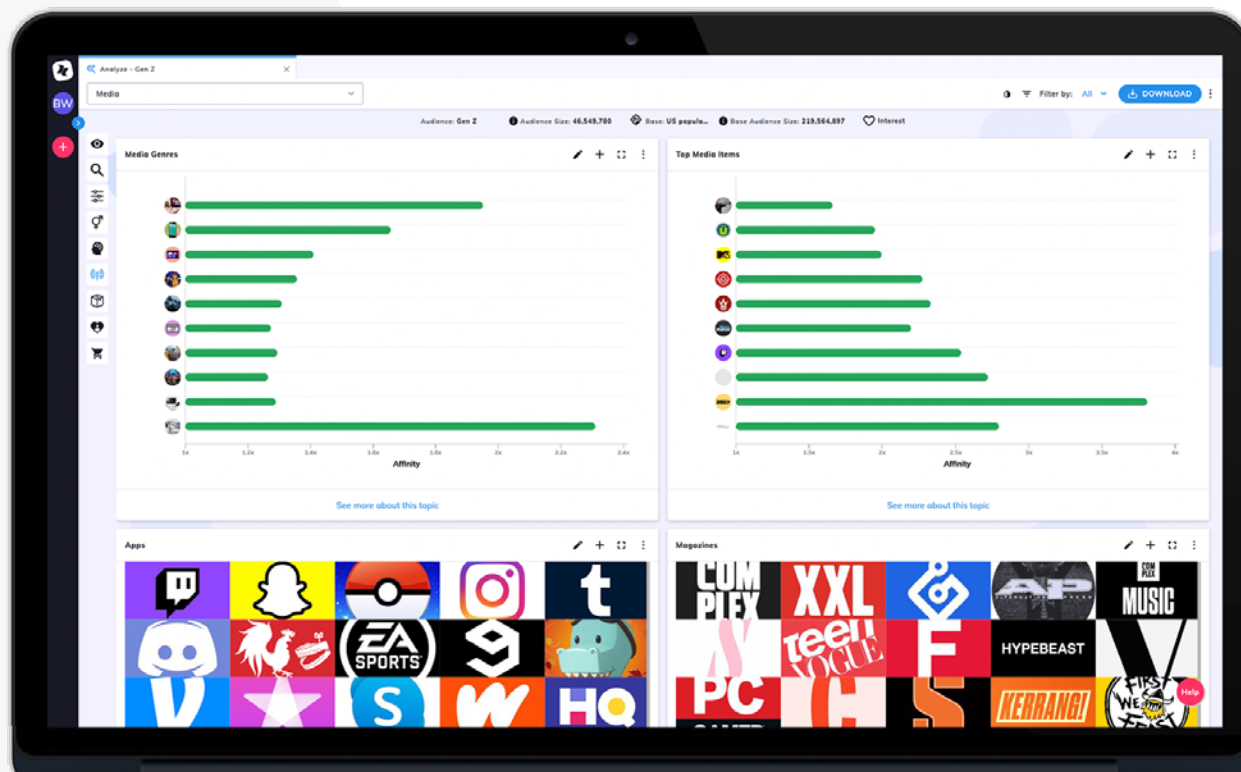
Our consumer data is calibrated against the latest U.S. Census studies (ACS and CPS) to ensure that all the analyses reflect a picture of the real world. Our goal is to create the

most accurate representation of the U.S. consumer.

We also overlay the survey data from MRI and Simmons Research to provide a deeper understanding about the American consumer's consumption habits, opinions and attitudes.

The analysis for this report was conducted using Helixa Discovery in Q2 2022 using the Gen Z demographic category as the audience.


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Additional Resources

All uncited data was gathered using the Helixa Discovery platform:

Helixa Discovery Platform - Interest and Affinity Graph 2022

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- 1: Bloomberg 2021, "[Gen Z Has \\$360 Billion to Spend, Trick Is Getting Them to Buy](#)"
- 2: World Economic Forum 2021, "[Chart: How Gen Z employment levels compare in OECD countries](#)"
- 3: Forbes 2022, "[From Baby Boomers To Gen-Z: Why Every Generation Is Turning To Marketplaces In The Changing Post-Pandemic Economy](#)"
- 4: Street Fight 2022, "[How to Respond to Inflation's Impact on Consumer Behavior](#)"
- 5: Google Trends, 2022

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- 1: IAB UK 2020, "[The Rise of Short-Form Video & the Gen Z Social Revolution](#)"

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- 1: Newzoo 2021, "[Gen Z Gamers: Key Insights](#)"
- 2: The Guardian 2018, "[Generation Z: 'We have more to do than drink and take drugs'](#)"

What's old is new again - pg. 5

- 1: Helixa 2020, "[Nostalgia Marketing: How Brands Can Make A Comeback with Gen Z](#)"
- 2: Helixa Discovery, MRI-Simmons USA 2021 - Helixa Total Consumer View; Insights Fusion 1

Top purchase considerations - pg. 7

- 1: Glossy 2021, "[How Gen Z is using Instagram to shop](#)"

Cause-driven & discerning consumers - pg. 8

- 1: Helixa Discovery, MRI-Simmons USA 2021 - Helixa Total Consumer View; Insights Fusion 1

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- 1: Morning Consult, "[The Influencer Report: Engaging Gen Z and Millennials](#)"

Gen Z shapes pop culture - pg. 12

- 1: Paper Magazine 2022, "[School's in Session: A Lesson in 'Euphoria High' Style](#)"

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- 1: Street Fight 2022, "[How to Respond to Inflation's Impact on Consumer Behavior](#)"
- 2: Geek Vibes Nation 2022, "[The Truth About Millennial And Gen Z TV Viewing Habits](#)"
- 3: Morning Consult 2022, "[How Gen Z Streams TV Around the World](#)"
- 4: Helixa Discovery, MRI-Simmons USA 2021 - Helixa Total Consumer View; Insights Fusion 1

When they get online... - pg. 17

- 1: Forbes 2021, "[Gen Z And The Rise Of Social Commerce](#)"
- 2: Helixa Discovery, MRI-Simmons USA 2021 - Helixa Total Consumer View; Insights Fusion 1

GAMING ON A WHOLE NEW LEVEL - PG. 19

Gaming on a Whole New Level - pg. 19

- 1: Mordor Intelligence 2021, "[Gaming Market - Growth, Trends, COVID-19 Impact, and Forecasts \(2022-2027\)](#)"
- 2: Forbes 2021, "[The Future Of Fashion And Gaming: E-Commerce](#)"

The gaming ecosystem - pg. 21

- 1: Mordor Intelligence 2021, "[Gaming Market - Growth, Trends, COVID-19 Impact, and Forecasts \(2022-2027\)](#)"

High fashion getting in on the action - pg. 22

- 1: The Washington Post 2021, "[Gaming is entering its fashion-forward phase](#)"
- 2: Marketing Dive 2022, "[Gucci seeks next generation of esports talent with gaming academy](#)"
- 3: Marketing Dive 2022, "[Gucci opens persistent digital space on Roblox](#)"
- 4: Gucci 2022, "[Xbox by Gucci](#)"