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Age limits for social media use?

Social Media is a new world of social interactions that individuals of all ages and backgrounds engage with. Generation Z came of age at a time when platforms like Facebook, Twitter (aka X), Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok were becoming our new tools of communication, interaction, and knowledge production. Millennial parents across the globe are social media users, and while many believe in digital rights, many are concerned about the adverse effects of social media on their Gen Alpha children. To deepen this debate, we invited Gen Z, who have the most experience using social media at a young age, to weigh in. What's at stake is not banning social media platforms, but rather setting age restrictions that ensure that only adolescents 18 or older can use these websites.

Social media is an amazing source of information, creativity, relationships, and intercultural exchange. But it can be dangerous for children and young adolescents. Therefore, some [American](#) and [Australian lawmakers are suggesting age minimums on social media use](#). We need similar legislation here in Nebraska. In the USA, [suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death](#) amongst adolescents and people in the age groups 10-24. The mental health effects of social media affect everyone, but hit the youths specifically hard, leading the US Surgeon General [to issue an advisory](#) about social media and its mental health effects on youth in 2023. Young people are especially vulnerable because they are still developing their sense of self, and therefore cyberbullying ([which 1 in 5 high school students face](#)) affects youths harder, causing eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and [suicidal ideation](#). We are not asking to ban the platforms, we are just demanding the delay of youths' exposure to them by law, let's delay the exposure to cyberbullying and hate until they are ready. That's you, Team 1.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROS AND CONS

Social media is a term used to describe a wide range of online platforms and activities where people can communicate and share information, ideas, photos, and videos.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Anyone can publish their thoughts online2. It is a free source of information3. It can help us make friends4. Allows for dissent5. It allows the truth to get out6. It is an educational tool	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It can lead to addiction2. It can increase online bullying3. It can lead to body image issues4. It can spread misinformation5. It can cause sleeplessness6. It can increase stress



American youths face a lot of challenges nowadays, but why do we keep focusing on social media like it's the source of all evil? There is consensus in the scientific community that social media has lots of benefits to adolescents, not only harms. In fact, [social media has multiple positive effects on the youth and their mental health](#), including allowing them the space to form friendships and relationships online, when they might be suffering from loneliness in real life. [Multiple studies](#) have shown that marginalized youths find mental health support and connection in online spaces: LGBTQ+ youth and adolescents from racial and ethnic minorities turn to online spaces to find the connections and relationships that



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help them to cope with their stress and marginalization. [Survey research points](#) to similar patterns, most of the youth across the board report positive impacts of social media on their lives outweighing any negative impact. Why should we ban social media use for all these young people then? There are other options: parents need to be more involved in the children's lives and in how much time they allow them on social media. Law enforcement and social media companies need to do better about punishing any cyberbullying and closing these accounts. Don't cut off this lifeline for many of our youth! That's you, Team 2.