



Forces of Change

Issue 3 • June 2018

NET *Persuasion*

CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE ON SCREENS OF NET ATTENTION



WELCOME

Welcome to the third report in our series, “Imagine: Forces of Change.” Last year, we focused on the changing dynamics of media consumption and the challenges they created for brands.

In our first report, “[The Unreachables](#),” we tackled the issue of the supply/demand imbalance within traditional linear TV. Demand for video inventory had reached all-time highs, but ratings on linear TV continued to fall. Through custom quantitative and qualitative ethnography studies, we found traditional measurement solutions were too heavy on linear TV and missing the mark—a full 66% of Millennial and Gen X video consumption was taking place in mobile and OTT environments that were not universally tracked. As every marketer knows, what can’t be measured can’t be planned for or targeted against.

The findings from our first report signaled a need for brands to double down on their digital (especially mobile) investments, but something troubling was happening there, too. In our [second report](#), we identified a phenomenon we called “[Negative Reach](#),” in which marketing to people alongside questionable content was actually making them *less likely* to consider or purchase a product, the very opposite of any marketer’s aim. Fraud via bots and inventory spoofing, along with growing

viewability concerns, only exacerbated the problem. In that report, we laid out five steps for brands to address the challenge of Negative Reach, from deploying both human and technological safety mechanisms to championing the adoption of ads.txt.

Now that we have identified the new formats and screens of content consumption, as well as the inherent challenges of these marketplaces, we’ve set out to illuminate the path forward for brands. **In short, how can brands foster persuasive experiences across these screens of Net Attention?**

This is the topic of our third report, “Net Persuasion.” In the pages that follow, we build on the findings of our first two reports to ask the questions:

- Is something fundamentally different about the way people consume content within in-app environments?
- Does mobile app behavior vary by age?
- Are people addicted to their apps?
- What kind of advertising works on screens of Net Attention?

To answer these questions, we partnered with OMG Rise to conduct a statistically significant quantitative study in which 1,000 respondents, representative of the U.S. population, self-reported their mobile app usage across multiple app types, as well as their motivations in doing so. We also collected the same participants’ actual smartphone app usage data (with their permission) through a mobile meter installed on their smartphone for a three-month period.

We then took our research one step further, conducting a statistically significant, census-representative

neurological study in which our neuroscience research partner monitored ~100 participants’ nonconscious (including biometric, eye-tracking and facial coding metrics) responses while exposed to advertising in a traditional linear TV environment and also in a mobile app environment.

The results are pretty eye-opening, for brands and our society alike:

- The average smartphone user—from Gen Z to Baby Boomers—spends five hours a day in apps, checking them an average of 88 times a day
- We engage with apps virtually every hour we’re awake throughout the day—and this also holds true across generations
- Weekly time spent within apps varies by app category, but usage frequency is high across the board, ranging from an average of 10 sessions for news, travel, health, food and dining apps to 105 sessions for social media apps
- Mobile in-app experiences are 2X more physiologically engaging than linear television experiences
- Mobile in-app ads can build brand equity; 58% of respondents recognized brands from immersive video units, while 40% of respondents recognized brands from native video units
- The content, context and *format* of an ad matter on these screens of Net Attention—consumers’ biometric intensity decreases while watching a TV ad, remains neutral when exposed to native units, but *increases* in negative emotional reactions when interrupted by mobile takeover units

Though we anticipated some of these learnings, these statistically significant behavioral and neurological findings give us confidence to forge ahead. Brands can run the risk of alienating consumers by delivering the right message at the *wrong time*, or by being *contextually irrelevant* within these platforms, eroding brand equity.

In the near term, we’re helping our clients who use social platforms for reach and tonnage reevaluate their cost basis, since some of these impressions may be delivering less value than previously thought—or even having a negative impact on their brands. By “going dark” on these platforms for a time, we’re able to see their actual impact on the business and recalibrate accordingly.

For clients who use social platforms for engagement, we’re helping them shave off less effective targets in order to reinvest that budget into production designed for screens of Net Attention, making every impression more valuable.

In the long term, one thing is clear: Creative, media, publisher and brand must sit at the table together to align message with format and design the future of persuasive advertising on these screens of Net Attention. As we discover in these pages, coming together may be the only way to break through with consumers.



Scott Hagedorn
CEO
Hearts & Science



4



Forces of Change

Issue 3 • June 2018

BY THE NUMBERS

NET *Persuasion*

People have a finite amount of attention, and the attention they give media is shifting from traditional channels like linear television to screens of **Net Attention** like mobile apps.

The screens of Net Attention generate greater **biometric intensity** among consumers—and create a unique force multiplier opportunity for marketers.

So how can marketers foster persuasive brand experiences across the screens of Net Attention? *And what's at stake if they get it wrong?*

QUANTIFYING NET ATTENTION

PEOPLE SPEND



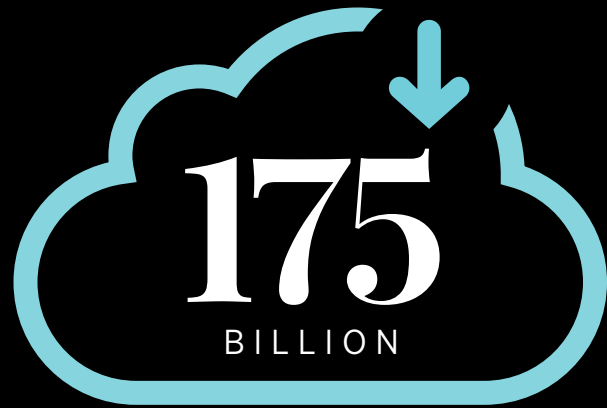
PEOPLE INTERACT WITH APPS

88 times PER DAY¹

AND IT'S TRUE ACROSS GENERATIONS—
not just among younger audiences¹:

GEN Z (13–21 YEARS OLD)	MILLENNIALS (22–37 YEARS OLD)	GEN X (38–53 YEARS OLD)	BOOMERS (54–72 YEARS OLD)
5 HOURS EVERY DAY ACROSS ALL APPS	5 HOURS EVERY DAY ACROSS ALL APPS	5 HOURS EVERY DAY ACROSS ALL APPS	5 HOURS EVERY DAY ACROSS ALL APPS
88 TIMES PER DAY	103 TIMES PER DAY	88 TIMES PER DAY	67 TIMES PER DAY

THE GLOBAL APP ECONOMY IS LARGE AND GROWING:



APP DOWNLOADS

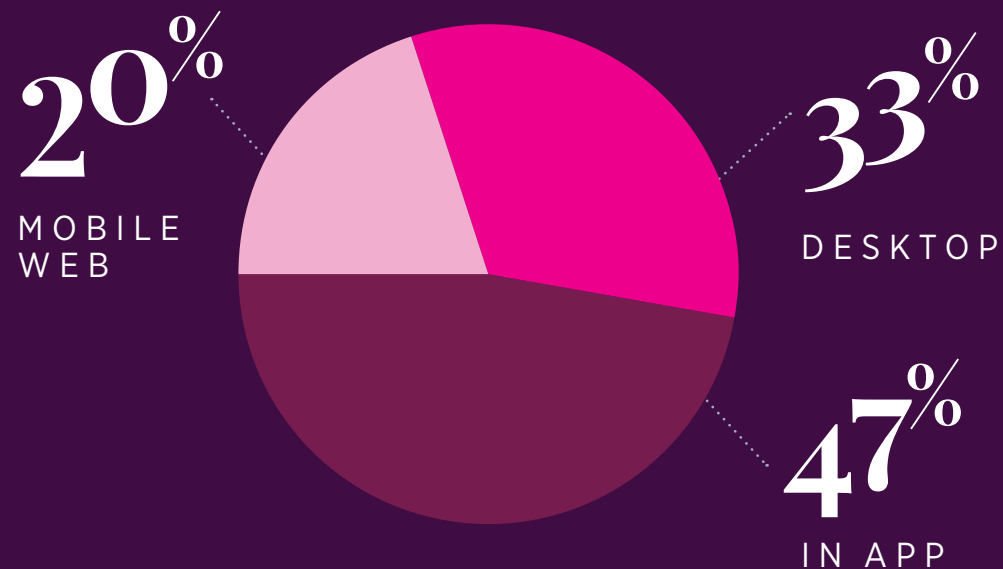
BY CONSUMERS IN 2017,
UP 60% SINCE 2015¹



SPENT IN APPS

BY CONSUMERS IN 2017, AND 2/3 OF RETAIL
E-COMMERCE PURCHASES NOW OCCUR ON
MOBILE, NEARLY HALF IN APPS²

RETAIL E-COMMERCE TRANSACTION SHARE IN NORTH AMERICA³

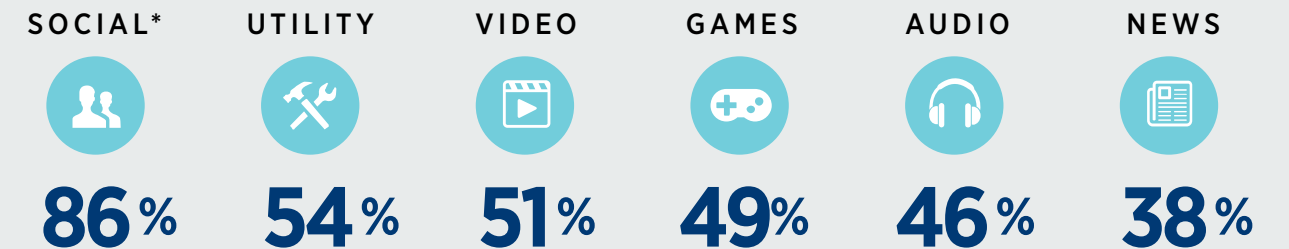


% OF TOTAL
BY CHANNEL/
DEVICE
Q1 2018

We asked people what types of apps they most frequently use. And then we tracked what they actually did on their phone (*with their permission, of course!*). It turns out people are pretty spot on about their own activity.

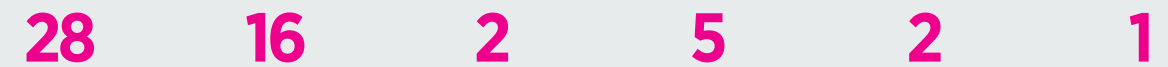
Top 6 Frequently Used App Types⁴:

ONCE A DAY OR MORE



Behavioral Data:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF APP INTERACTIONS PER DAY



*INCLUDING TEXT AND VISUAL MESSAGING APPS

THROUGHOUT THE DAY, PEOPLE ARE *constantly*
SPENDING TIME WITH THESE SCREENS⁴:



The **first thing I do when I wake up**
in the morning is check my apps

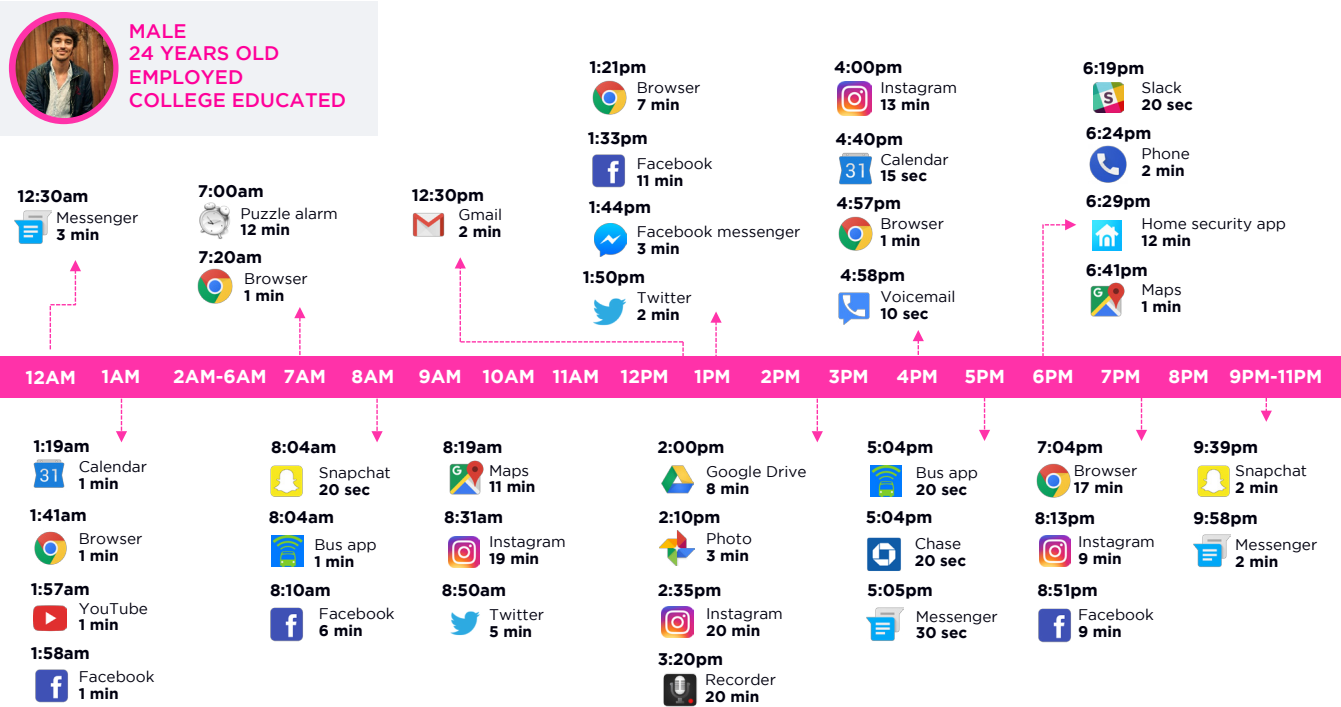


I check my apps
during meals



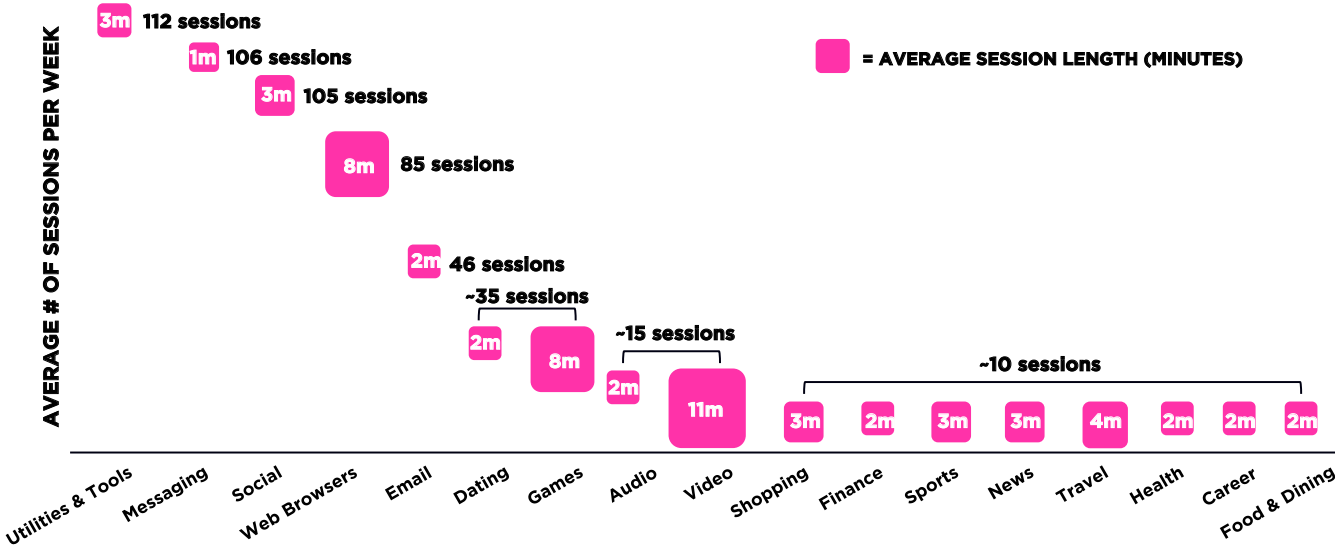
The **last thing I do before I go to**
sleep at night is check my apps

HERE’S THE ACTUAL APP ACTIVITY OF A 24-YEAR-OLD MAN IN OUR STUDY¹:



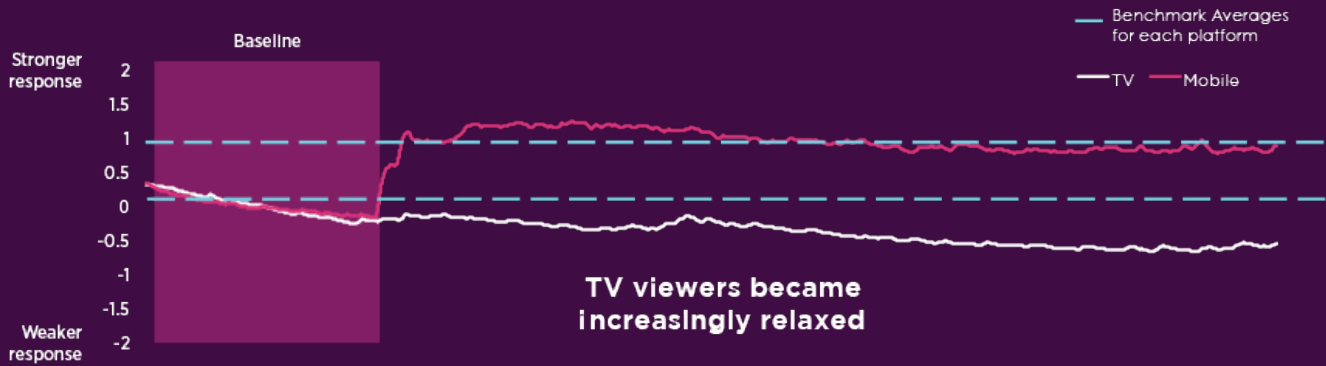
BEHAVIORAL DATA SHOWS FREQUENT APP USAGE ACROSS ALL APP TYPES ON A WEEKLY BASIS¹

Session times and volumes vary based on the type of app. Here’s a snapshot:



MOBILE EXPERIENCES DRIVE **2X MORE BIOMETRIC INTENSITY** THAN WATCHING TV

BIOMETRIC RESPONSE—10 MINUTES²



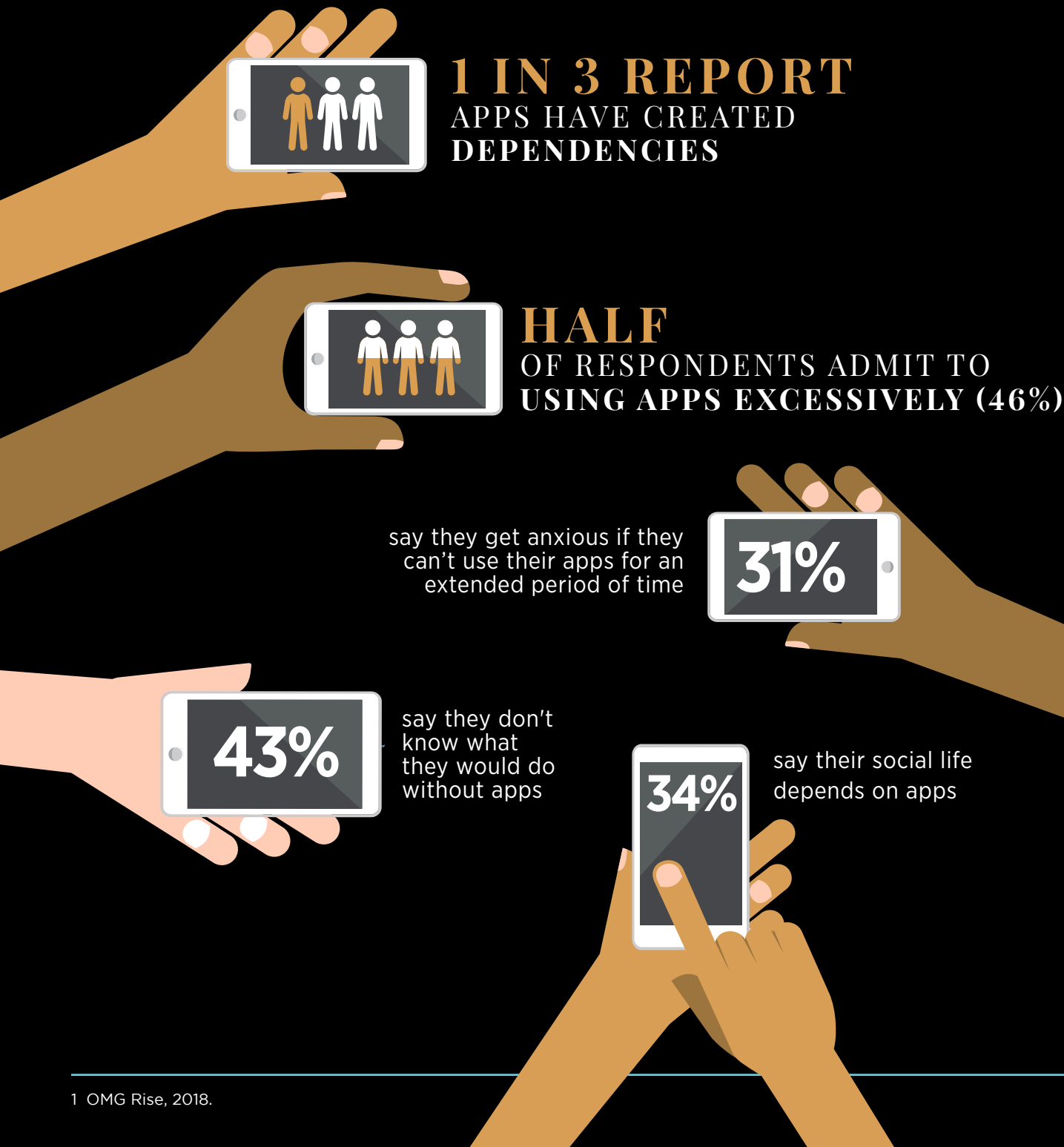
The top ad-supported app categories range from an average of **10 SESSIONS PER WEEK** for news, finance, and travel to **105 SESSIONS PER WEEK** for social media

Watch out for frequency:

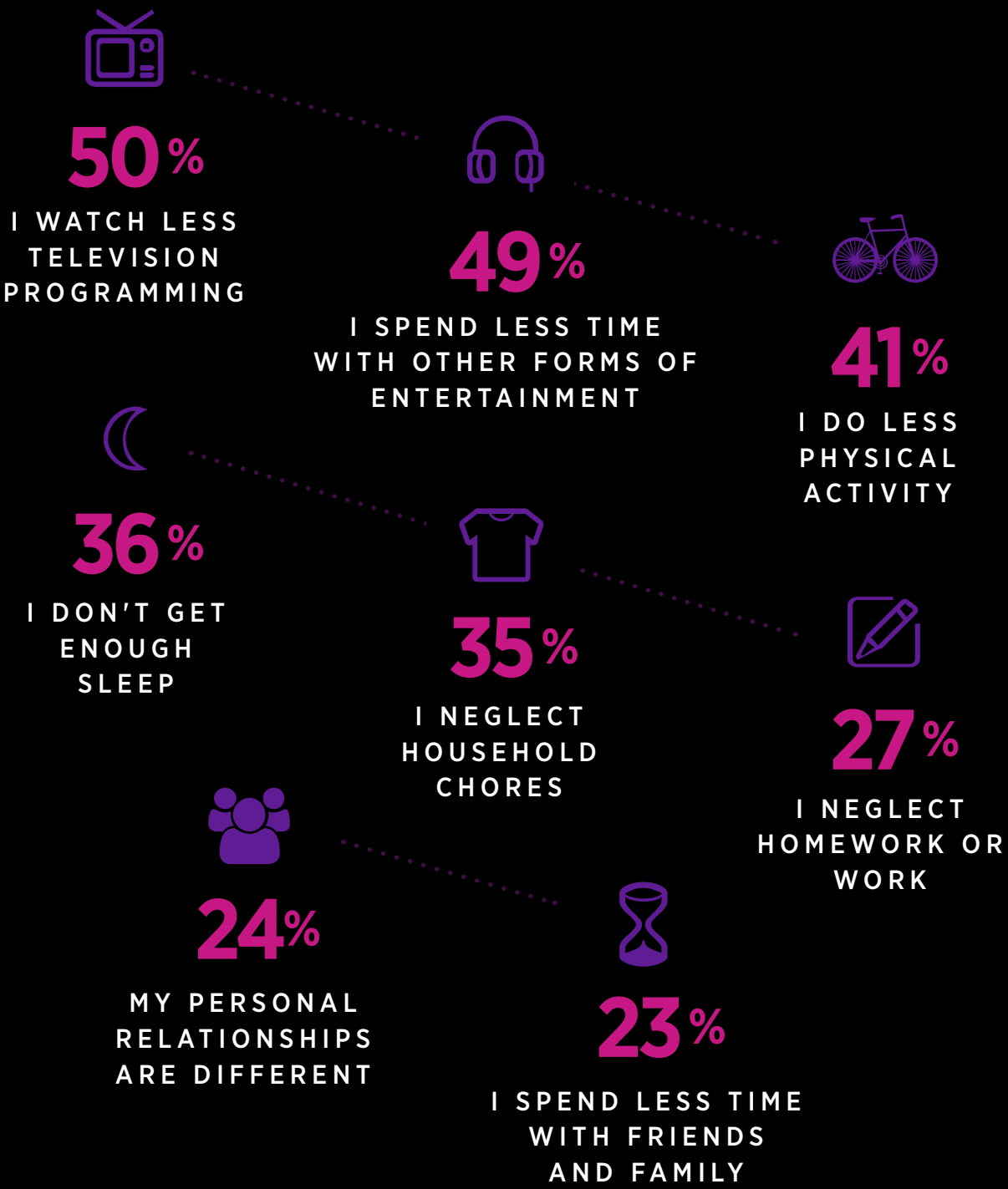
If you’re marketing in these environments, you risk over-messaging to consumers

1 OMG Rise, 2018; 2 MediaScience, 2018.

BUT APP DEPENDENCE ALSO HAS A DARK SIDE—FOR OUR RELATIONSHIPS, OUR HEALTH AND OUR SOCIETY¹



**BECAUSE OF THE TIME I SPEND
USING APPS...**



¹ OMG Rise, 2018.

So now that we have a handle on how pervasive the app landscape of Net Attention is, the question remains:
How can brands break through to persuade audiences in these immersive environments?

Full-screen takeover ads generated higher recall than in-feed ads, but **negative emotion** spiked over time during full-screen takeover ads—and these ads were deemed more **intrusive, invasive and interfering** than in-feed ads.

Brands run the risk of alienating consumers on screens of Net Attention if they are ***contextually irrelevant***.

38%
OF PEOPLE

are OK with seeing
ads in mobile app
environments¹

77%

WILL SKIP AN AD, IF POSSIBLE¹

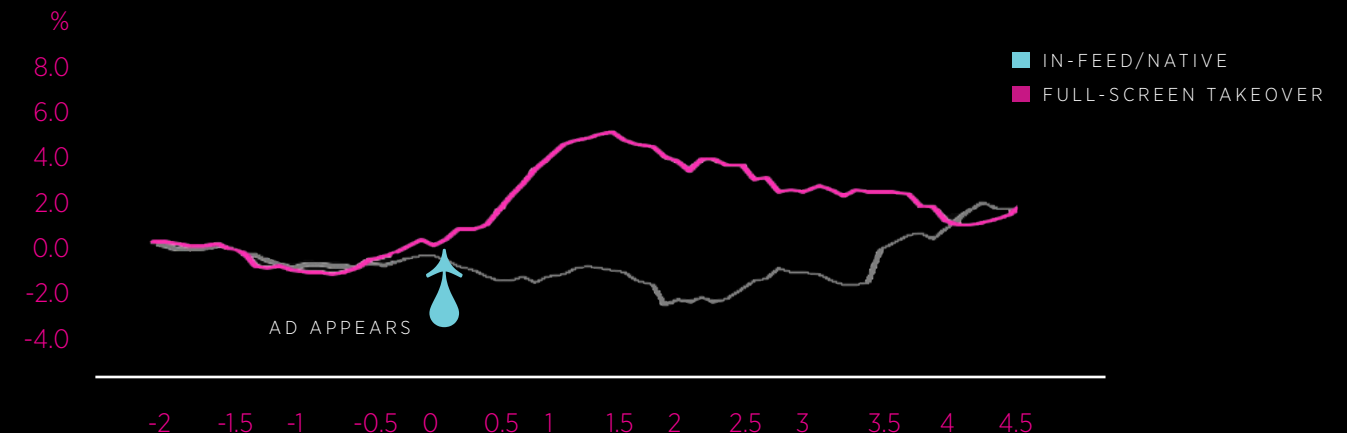
*Users watched **less than half** of video ads when they appeared as skippable full-screen takeovers²*

49%

**DO SOMETHING ELSE
WHILE THEY WAIT FOR
THE AD TO GO AWAY¹**

INTERRUPTING THEIR EXPERIENCE COMES AT A PRICE:

NEGATIVE FACIAL RESPONSE²



In-app ads can be effective in building brand experiences:

58%

OF RESPONDENTS
RECOGNIZED BRANDS FROM
IMMERSIVE VIDEO UNITS²

40%

OF RESPONDENTS
RECOGNIZED BRANDS FROM
NATIVE VIDEO UNITS²

Three Things Brands Must Do to Be Persuasive in Environments of Net Attention'

BRANDS MUST:

1 Grant Control

74% are OK with ads that allow them to control their experience or reward them (e.g., earn points, unlock exclusive content or ad-free experiences for a set amount of time)

2 Go Native

61% are OK with ads that match the look and feel of the content

51% are OK with ads that occur as breaks in podcasts read by the host

3 Be Relevant

58% are OK with ads that are sponsored posts from people they follow

55% are OK with ads that are personalized based on search history or things they have liked or purchased

BEHIND THE NUMBERS



Pamela Marsh, Ph.D.
Managing Director,
Primary Research
OMG Rise

"Our quantitative survey provided insight into people's awareness of and attitudes about their app experiences: **There is a dependence on apps. People believe they are dependent on apps and that this dependence is a constant throughout their day. They admit that their habitual usage of apps is replacing the time they**

used to devote to TV viewing and even to their personal relationships and their health.

The **behavioral data** we collected confirmed that people, regardless of generation, spend five hours every day across all apps, and interact with them 88 times per day, from the time they wake up until the time they go to sleep.

This provides a huge window of opportunity for advertisers to be seen. But just because people habitually use apps doesn't mean advertisers should habitually place ads. Less would be more in this environment. Advertisers can run the risk of oversaturating the app

environment, especially when their ads appear in apps of the same genre. And while people told us (via quantitative data) they could have an aversion, in general, to ads in apps, they also told us this aversion would not necessarily extend to the brand or the app itself.

Our **neuroscience research** phase explored this finding further: **We found that certain ad formats work better than others but that, overall, app environments are two times more physiologically engaging than traditional TV viewing.** In the mobile app environment, full-screen takeover ads received significantly more visual attention than in-feed ads, but they also received higher negative nonconscious emotional reactions. **People just don't like relinquishing their control of what they can—and don't want to—see.**

So it becomes a balancing act between frequency and format: More frequency with in-feed and native formats and less frequency with full-screen takeovers? Or does the higher attentiveness and recall that full-screen ads generate outweigh the negative feelings they generate, which might dissipate over time? **The right balance likely varies for each brand, campaign and objective—but finding it is key to success."** ¹

Ethical DESIGN

An interview with Tristan Harris

There's a dark side to mobile app dependence and it's impacting our relationships, our physical and mental health and society at large. To understand the origins of the crisis surrounding the screens of Net Attention, and what can be done to change course, we sat down with Tristan Harris, the Founder of the Center for Humane Technology and former Design Ethicist at Google. Below are edited excerpts from our conversation.

Hearts & Science: How did you start the Center for Humane Technology?

TRISTAN: I was a design ethicist at Google, studying what it means to ethically influence the thoughts of two billion humans. I realized that no matter what choice Google makes, it's going to steer two billion people's attention one way or another. And I got very concerned about that, so I left Google to raise a public conversation about it. We started the Center for Humane Technology to bring all sorts of former technology insiders—people who understand how this is built and why we need to change it—to create public awareness and offer recommendations for how to change the current situation.

Our research found that people are spending five hours a day on mobile apps. Does that surprise you?

It's not surprising at all that people are spending five hours a day consuming information on smartphones. The thing about smartphones is that whenever there is a moment of boredom or anxiety, it's never been easier to run away from ourselves. A smartphone puts a new choice on life's menu that any single moment in your day is going to be sweeter, more productive, more entertaining than just the discomfort of being with yourself.

Do you think people are addicted to mobile apps?

I think the word "addiction" gets thrown around a lot in terms of how apps are designed. It's not about addiction, though; it's about the ability to implant itches inside of a human animal. If right after you turn off your alarm in the morning, which you have to do, you see the Facebook or Twitter icon in your app switcher, that's turning a pretty pure interaction of turning off the alarm into something that's like having a casino right next door to your daily life.

Each of these apps is built to be persuasive. That's because it's a race for attention—there's only so much attention out there, and whether you're just a politician or you're an app developer or you're a TV channel, you're still competing for this one raw resource.

What's at stake if we don't change the status quo?

The future doesn't look good if we continue going down the road we're on, which is to say if the goal of every technology platform is to get better at competing for people's attention. I think it's going to have consequences across every area of society, from mental health and children to loneliness, public health, democracy and elections. This system is increasingly out of control. It's going to take a lot to fix it.

You've identified four levers of change that could help change the path on which we're headed: a cultural awakening, companies, employees and government. Why those four, and what can each do?

The first lever is what we call creating a cultural awakening. With tobacco, for example, we all thought smoking was totally normal, and then we did a total 180, and said, "Oh my god, how could we all just be part of this? This isn't good for us." I think social media is going to be looked back on the same way. We'll wonder, "How did we ever just create this behavior modification machine, this matrix where two billion human animals are getting dosed with social validation every 15 minutes?"

The second lever is employee engagement. The fastest way to change a company's behavior is to have their own employees say, "Gosh, I don't want to do this anymore. I don't want to be in the business of just stealing people's time and attention."

The third lever is government pressure, or basically congressional hearings, which, so far, have been fantastic for generating lots of media attention. The threat of regulation has caused some companies to start to shift some of their behavior.

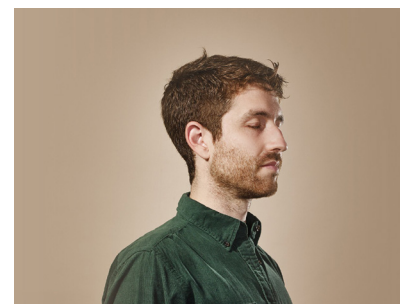
The fourth lever is the technology companies themselves. We want to inspire them to create an alternative. We don't want to just take down technology and imply it's all bad. Rather, we want them to recognize there is a different way to do it that actually respects and honors human beings. Recently, Google launched the [Google Digital Wellbeing](#) initiative, which makes the Android phone more respectful of people's attention, including things like batching and digesting notifications and turning your phone grayscale late at night, since we know that blue light kind of messes up our circadian rhythm. This is a significant step, but it's a baby step forward because these companies have been trapped in a race to the bottom for who can get people's attention.

How do designers make their apps so engaging? What are the tricks and techniques?

How do I know when to stop drinking a glass of wine? Well, there's like a bottom to the glass of wine, right? So when the bottom hits, my mind wakes up, there's a stopping cue and I have to ask myself, "Do I want more wine?" It's a conscious choice.

But if I wanted you to keep consuming the wine and not think about it, I might put a tube at the bottom, making a bottomless glass of wine that kept giving you more wine, and was always filled up somewhere in the middle, so you're just sipping without really thinking about it. That's an example of a manipulative technique that, say, Instagram uses when they want you to keep scrolling. They just make it refill from the bottom, so you never know when it's going to end.

Another example is the slot machine, which produces a "variable schedule" reward. You pull a lever, or in the case of an app, you pull to refresh, and then you have an infinite supply of your friends' activity and their lives. I can supply you with a new random dose of rewards, whether it's your friends having fun without you or some articles they posted. It's unpredictable. Every single time you




Tristan Harris
Founder
Center for Humane Technology

check there's going to be something new. We have an infinite supply of novelty, and so we've maximized the ambient supply of casinos and slot machines—right in your pocket—and it's affecting a whole generation.

It's never been easier for hundreds of millions of teenagers to see photo after photo after photo of their friends having fun without them. It's always true that our friends, somewhere, somehow, may be having fun without us. But having that in the primary stream of your attention is now a new norm. The people who are designing that experience can choose whether or not they want to maximize fear of missing out or minimize fear of missing out.

How should brands think about connecting with users in these environments?

My colleague from Oxford and Google studied "ethical persuasion," which is when the goals of the persuader are aligned with the goals of the persuaded. The question to ask is, "Are you helping us want what we want to want? Or are you going after the things that work on us?" As consumers start to become aware that they're being manipulated, it's going to turn into a race to the top for who can care most about people's well-being, and that's going to become the currency of success. The brands that value our well-being and help us achieve our goals are going to be the ones that do the best. 

iGEN: PHYSICALLY SAFER, MORE MENTALLY *Vulnerable*

Jean M. Twenge PhD
author of *Generation Me*

iGen
Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*

*and What That Means for the Rest of Us

When San Diego State University professor Dr. Jean Twenge looked at today's teenagers, she found something startling: They are physically safer than previous generations but significantly unhappier. The reason? Smartphones and social media. We sat down with Dr. Twenge to discuss the findings of her [new book](#), iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Teens are Growing up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood—and What That Means for the Rest of Us, as well as how people and brands can work to fix the problem. Below are edited excerpts from our conversation.

Q What is iGen, and what did you learn about what makes them unique?

A iGen is the generation born 1995 and later. They're the first generation to spend their entire adolescence with smartphones, and that's had ripple effects across many areas of their lives.

I've been working on generational differences for about 25 years since I was an undergraduate myself. Around 2011 or 2012, I started to notice unusual trends in the generational data. Usually, generational differences take a decade or two to roll out. Around that time, however, I started to see sudden spikes in loneliness and symptoms of depression. And that happens to be the year that smartphones became common. That's when the percentage of Americans who owned a smartphone crossed 50%. It was adopted faster than any other technology: five years from its introduction to market saturation. Over that same time period, for teens, social media moved from something that was optional to virtually mandatory.

That made me wonder, what was really going on here? The big picture is that as teens spent more time on digital media, they also started to spend less time with their friends, face-to-face, and less time sleeping. And that is not a good formula for good mental health and happiness. The teens who spend a lot of time on digital media are less likely to be happy. But unfortunately, that's exactly what iGen does.

What else are you seeing in your research? Does screen time affect other aspects of their lives?

Today's teenagers aren't as likely to go out without their parents as previous generations of teenagers, but that doesn't mean that they're hanging out with their parents palling around. It means they're in their room on their phones.

iGen is growing up more slowly compared to previous generations. By the time they're 18, they're less likely to have a driver's license, less likely to go out without their parents or date or drink alcohol or have sex. These are all things that adults do and children don't. They're taking longer to grow up. And many parents will say, "Well isn't that a good thing? They're not having sex or drinking alcohol; isn't that fantastic?" Sure, it is, but it's an interesting trade-off. On one hand, they're physically safer because they're not having sex and drinking alcohol and driving cars. But on the other hand, they're spending their time in a way that's not conducive to good mental health. So they are physically safer but more mentally vulnerable.

It's part of a bigger cultural story in which people live longer, take longer to finish their education, have fewer children and nurture them more carefully. It's what we call a "slow life strategy," which began with Millennials in the 90s. But it accelerated with iGen, because when you have Snapchat, you don't need to get your driver's license and drive to your friend's house

and hang out—or at least that's how they perceive it. They can communicate with their friends as much as they want without having to go out or drive or hang out and drink alcohol. But there's something fundamentally different between scrolling through Instagram and posting something and waiting for likes versus hanging out with your friends and having a conversation.

Is this problem limited to younger people? Or does smartphone and social media use affect older generations, too?

It's a little harder to say. We don't have as much data on older generations, but the data we have suggests that the decline in mental health trends are showing up for young adults as well. For example, 18 to 24-year-olds are also showing increases in depression. The increases are not as pronounced as they are for teens, but they're still present.

Is there anything to be done? How can we buck the trend?

I actually am pretty optimistic that we can see change around smartphone use. In the end, this really is a good-news story. A lot of the causes of depression and unhappiness are out of our control. There's a genetic predisposition, there's trauma, there's abuse, and there's just bad stuff that happens to people.

But how you spend your leisure time? That's in your control. We have some work to do about that, but I'm optimistic



Dr. Jean Twenge

that if we have both teens and adults thinking about how they're using their time, we can see a change in smartphone use. Use that phone for what it's good for—it can help you find your way around and look up a little information or text a friend about when it'd be best to get together. But then put that phone down and go and live your life.

How can parents help encourage their children to use their devices more responsibly?

I have three kids myself, and I have learned over the years one of your biggest roles as a parent is to set limits. You tell your kids when to go to bed and you make them healthy meals and say that they have to eat dinner before they get dessert and that, no, you can have two cookies, but you can't have three cookies—and you definitely can't have six cookies. It's the same thing with screens.

Parents have a responsibility to make sure that their kids are using devices in a responsible



A way. For high school students, let's say 14 years old and up, they might have their own smartphone, but you can put an app on it to make sure that they're not on it eight hours a day, that they limit their use to about two hours a day or less, which is what the research seems to suggest as a healthy limit.

What role can brands play in supporting that change?

Smartphone manufacturers are in a good place to start. Google and Samsung and Apple, for example, might actually sell more products and have a better public image if they made it easier for people to manage their time on their phones. I think that's particularly true when it comes to instituting parental controls so children and teenagers learn how to use their devices more responsibly. Smartphone manufacturers' business model is that you buy the phone, and that's where they get most of their profit. It's okay if you buy the phone and you don't spend all of your waking hours on it. Google already came out with some new controls—well, more like suggestions—for Android devices, to gray out the screen to remind you it's bedtime.

I think it can be taken a step further, especially for young kids where it doesn't just gray the screen but, rather, turns the device off and into a brick, because that's what you often need with kids in that age group. But for an adult, having a reminder is at least a place to start. It's going to be a much harder sell of course for Facebook and Snapchat because for them, the more

time people spend on the apps, the more money they make. So I don't know if we'll see change from that quarter. It'd be wonderful if we did, but I think that the smartphone manufacturers themselves are probably the best place to start in terms of lobbying or just asking them to institute better controls. 📵

“

There's something fundamentally different between scrolling through Instagram and posting something and waiting for likes versus hanging out with your friends and having a conversation.



Q & A

The Best Story Wins: STORYTELLING ON THE SCREENS OF NET ATTENTION



An Interview with Matthew Luhn



Marketers understand the power of storytelling—but what does it take to craft a story that keeps viewers at the edge of their seats? And how do you do it on a screen that fits in the palm of your hand? To find out, we spoke with Matthew Luhn, former Lead Pixar Storyteller and author of [The Best Story Wins](#). Below are edited excerpts from our conversation.

Q LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING. WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF A GOOD STORY?

A For thousands of years in storytelling, there have always been two things that are consistent in any story: a hero on a journey and a story structure with a beginning, a middle and an end. Whether it's Spielberg, Shakespeare, Socrates or Pixar, those are the elements of storytelling that keep coming up over and over again.

WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT ABOUT THE CHARACTERS?

When I'm putting together a story, I know that I need the audience to like the main character—even if the main character is conceited or arrogant. How do you do that? Well, we call it "saving the cat." We have the hero do an act of kindness to a lower-status character within the first couple of minutes. You can see your protagonist steal some bread, like in the movie *Aladdin*, but then when he hands the bread to an orphan, we like the character and we root for him. It's because they're doing an act of kindness.

On the reverse, if you want people to not like your character, your villain, then you want to see them do the opposite. When we first see Darth Vader in *Star Wars* in 1977, we see him actually kill one of his own soldiers in the first few minutes of the film. And what does that do? We hate that guy! And this isn't just for entertainment—this is for business as well. A company or leader often uses this "save the cat" technique by demonstrating acts of kindness like donating time and money to environmental and social issues, which creates an authentic bond with their current and future customers.

SO HOW SHOULD BRANDS THINK ABOUT CREATING HEROES IN THEIR MARKETING?

A lot of business leaders often think of themselves as the hero, but they need to think of the client—their audience—as the hero. They're the ones who want to reach a goal. They have obstacles, and they want to go through a change. The role of the business leader is to be the mentor—the Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're going to provide a tool for them, like a lightsaber, to help them reach their goal and overcome their obstacles. This "lightsaber" could be a better pair of jogging shoes that helps them reach their goal of staying fit and healthy or a car with better gas mileage that helps them save money.

HOW DO YOU CAPTURE AN AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION AND TELL STORIES THAT CONNECT WITH THEM ON A DEEPER LEVEL?

When I'm thinking about how to capture an audience's attention, I know that in the very beginning, I only have about eight seconds to be able to engage them, to be able to hook them. Eight seconds. I mean, my response was just eight seconds there. How can you do that? Well, it's by coming up with something in the very beginning that is unusual or unexpected or lands people in an action or conflict. Something unusual like, "What if superheroes were banned from saving people?" Within eight seconds, that's the pitch for *The Incredibles*, right?

HOW DOES THAT TRANSLATE TO A 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL, OR TO A SOCIAL POST?

You still have a hero, a goal, obstacles and change—whether it's a 90-minute film or in a 30-second ad, or even in a single tweet or Instagram post. The length probably has the biggest effect on how we design the story. You can't share an entire story in eight seconds, but you can create a hook that entices them to want to hear your story—even if the story is only going to last 30 seconds.

What brands need to do is ask how they can get people to feel the message instead of *telling* them the message. It's just like when you're watching a movie: You don't want to be told the theme. You don't want a character in the film, like in *Finding Nemo*, to come forward and say, "You know, if you try to control your family and be overprotective, you'll just drive them away." People hate that, when you state the theme in a story. The same thing goes for business when you state the mission statement. It makes people feel like they're students in school. It kills the authenticity.

YOU'VE SPOKEN ABOUT THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS THAT OCCUR WHEN A STORY MOVES A VIEWER. CAN YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT?

Sure. Happy moments release dopamine, and sad moments that take you down release serotonin. With serotonin, there's sadness and grief, but serotonin also creates empathy with the audience, which gets them rooting for the characters on screen. We pepper in funny moments throughout the story, which release oxytocin and lighten the mood. The last chemical to think about is cortisol, which is released when we are mad or angry. You really want to avoid cortisol as much as you can—unless you want someone to come off as a villain, like maybe your competitor! (Laughs)

OUR RESEARCH FOUND THAT PEOPLE OF ALL AGES ARE SPENDING FIVE HOURS A DAY ON MOBILE APPS, AND MANY FEEL DEPENDENT ON THEM. WHY DO YOU THINK WE'RE SO GLUED TO OUR PHONES?

We love being entertained, whether it's through a book, a movie or watching sports, because we end up enjoying the release of those chemicals, the dopamine rush. Every time someone likes you [on social media], or somebody is following you, it's a little bit of a dopamine rush.

HOW SHOULD BRANDS THINK ABOUT CONNECTING WITH USERS IN MOBILE ENVIRONMENTS?

When you're on the internet and an ad pops up, it does the same thing that we have done in storytelling when we want to create a hook. It is unexpected and definitely gets our attention. When I have an ad pop up and it's not something that has anything to do with me, that will make me mad. It releases a bit of cortisol, and those little releases of cortisol can really turn you off and make you want to disengage and leave. But, if the brand does have something that interests me, and hooks me, then that's a good thing. 📌

“

A lot of business leaders often think of themselves as the hero, but they need to think of the client—their audience—as the hero.



24

i M A G I N E
Forces of Change

Issue 3 • June 2018

IN CLOSING

The Way FORWARD

People have a finite amount of attention, and it is increasingly being spent in mobile apps. With this increased usage comes a unique opportunity for brands to connect with consumers in new, innovative ways—or run the risk of alienating consumers if they get it wrong.

Mobile apps are an integral part of daily life, with smartphone users of all ages spending five hours daily on apps, checking them an average of 88 times.



Scott Hagedorn
CEO
Hearts & Science

“Nearly two-thirds of the people that we studied, what’s the first thing they do in the morning before they’ve had their coffee or the last thing they do at night before they turn the lights out? They check their apps.”

There’s a dark side to this app dependence, too, and it’s affecting entire generations.



Tristan Harris
Founder
Center for Humane Technology

“The thing about smartphones is that whenever there is a moment of boredom or anxiety, it’s never been easier to run away from ourselves. A smartphone puts a new choice on life’s menu that at any single moment in your day is going to be sweeter, more productive, more entertaining than just being with the discomfort of being with yourself.”



Dr. Jean Twenge
Author and Professor
San Diego State University

“The big picture is that as teens spent more time on digital media, they also started to spend less time with their friends, face-to-face, and less time sleeping. And that is not a good formula for good mental health and happiness.”

Brands must be relevant and native in their execution. While intrusive formats like full-screen takeovers generate higher recall, they also generate negative emotional reactions among viewers.



Pamela Marsh, Ph.D.
Managing Director,
Primary Research
OMG Rise

“People just don’t like relinquishing their control of what they can—and don’t want to—see. So it becomes a balancing act between frequency and format. The right balance likely varies for each brand, campaign and objective—but finding it is key to success.”

Whatever the format, brands must have a compelling story and a hook that is unexpected and catches a viewer's attention.



Matthew Luhn
Author
The Best Story Wins
& Former Lead Storyteller
Pixar

“You still have a hero, a goal, obstacles and change—whether it’s a 90-minute film or in a 30-second ad, or even in a single tweet or Instagram post. The length probably has the biggest effect on how we design the story. You can’t share an entire story in eight seconds, but you can create a hook that entices them to want to hear your story—even if the story is only going to last 30 seconds.”

To succeed, brands must be format-aware, taking into account an app’s context and use case when developing their message. To accomplish this, media and creative must come together alongside the brand and publishers to ensure that ads add to the experience.



Susannah Keller
Executive Vice President
Global Account Director
BBDO

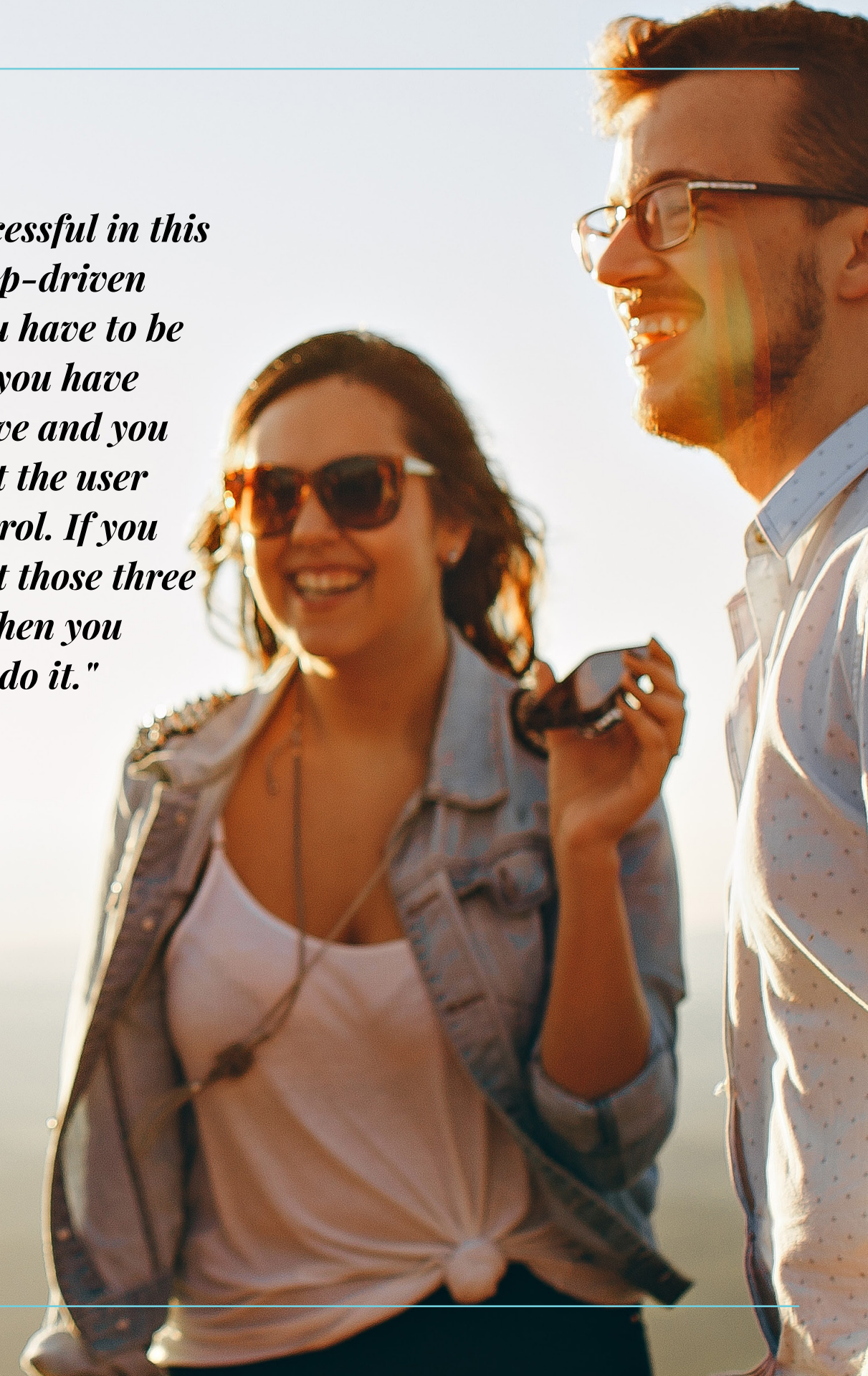
“It’s even more important now that media, creative and brand are sitting together at the beginning of the process because people are going to apps for very specific reasons. And we need to make sure that the content that we’re putting out there is delivering on the context of the app, that it’s entertaining, that it’s adding value to consumers’ experiences. Brands have to go native. Content and platform have to work together so they’re enhancing the experience for the consumer. Media and creative have to come together in the process in order to deliver on that.”

We hope you have enjoyed this discussion of Net Attention and Net Persuasion. As always, we welcome you to join the conversation with your thoughts and feedback using #forcesofchange and invite you to learn more about this and other Forces of Change content at hearts-science.com/forcesofchange.

“

To be successful in this mobile app-driven world, you have to be relevant, you have to be native and you have to let the user be in control. If you don’t meet those three criteria, then you shouldn’t do it.”

Scott Hagedorn
CEO
Hearts & Science





LEARN MORE

To learn more about this and other Forces of Change shaping our industry, visit www.hearts-science.com/forcesofchange, and share your thoughts and feedback with [#forcesofchange](https://twitter.com/forcesofchange).

