

A whitepaper by



Consumption of Communication



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Section 1: Consumption of communication platforms and apps

- 92% of people use a modern technological platform or app to communicate daily.
- Millennials spend 35% more time on communication platforms daily than those aged 35 and over and 70% more time than those aged 45 and over.
- Users spend an average of 11.3 hours per week on WeChat, making it the most time-consuming platform.
- Viber is the most-checked communication platform, with an average of 2,157 checks every year.
- 40% of Facebook users check the social platform at least five times per day.

Section 2: Workplace consumption of communication platforms and apps

- One in four millennials say their job would not exist or would have to change dramatically without the use of modern communication platforms.
- 40% of people say communication at work is now easier thanks to modern communication platforms.

Section 3: New communication platforms vs traditional methods

- Over 50% of people feel some level of reliance on technology to communicate. This increases to 75% for millennials.
- Millennials are more likely to use instant messaging, social media and share photos via apps over similar, more traditional methods.
- Almost three-quarters of millennials turn to technology to have a conversation with friends, share an image, share news or have a group conversation.

ABOUT OUR DATA

Technology shapes our lives in a number of ways, and communication is one of the most prominent. But to what extent do modern communication platforms and apps determine the way we communicate today, and have they already overtaken their traditional alternatives as the go-to method?

To answer these questions, we surveyed 2,000 Americans on their use of the following 23 modern communication platforms and apps:

Twitter	Facebook	LinkedIn	Google+
WeChat	Reddit	Instagram	Snapchat
Flickr	Tumblr	Skype	FaceTime
Google Hangouts	join.me	GoToMeeting	Facebook Messenger
WhatsApp	Viber	Tinder	Match.com
OkCupid	Bumble	happn	

We've also gathered data on workplace usage of these technologies to see how companies have adopted new methods and how that has impacted employment and communication in the office.

Finally, we learned more about our reliance on technology when communicating in the modern world, whether or not users believe our dependence is too strong, and what impact that is having on communicating as a society.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRAVIS MAY CEO OF TOLLFREEFORWARDING.COM



Drawing on his knowledge of telecommunications and years of experience in the industry, Travis May founded TollFreeForwarding.com with the idea of offering U.S. Toll Free Numbers to overseas businesses.

Today, the company has over 25,000 customers and has expanded into toll free and virtual phone numbers in over 125 countries.

“As a company which strives to help businesses communicate with their customers, understanding the choices we make when communicating is of vital importance. Here, we wanted to not only understand that, but also learn how new generations entering the workforce may alter the communication landscape.”

This whitepaper provides insight for people in Human Resources, Management, company owners and Marketing and Sales, helping you grasp how people, armed with greater options than ever before, choose to connect with one another. Observing how people communicate with each other in different scenarios can this help inform your business when deciding how you choose to communicate with customers.

Not only can help businesses develop their marketing strategies when finding new customers, but it can be used to shape the way businesses harness technology to increase productivity and communicative efficiency in the workplace.”



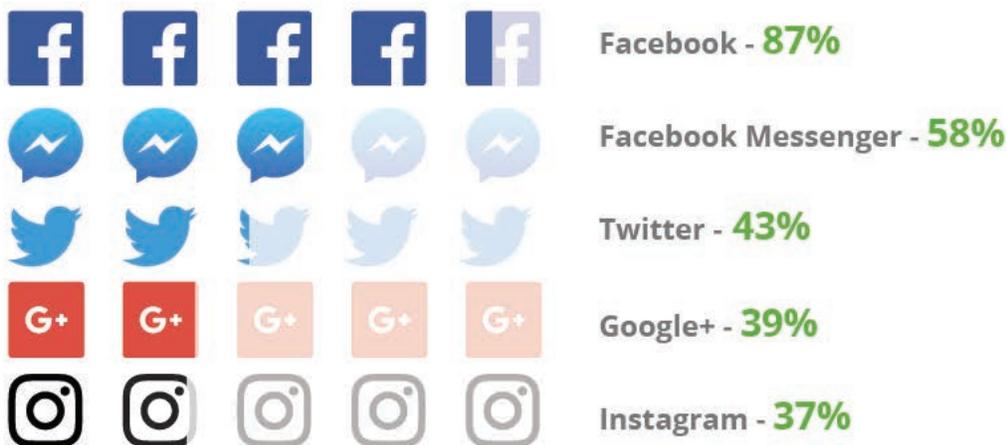
SECTION 1: USING TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS TO COMMUNICATE

DAILY USE OF COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Our statistics reflect the level of saturation technology has when communicating every day. Less than 8% of total respondents said they don't use any of the 23 communication apps or platforms listed in our survey.

Of those who do, almost two-thirds use one to four platforms daily. Social media platforms were found among the most popular for daily use.

THE MOST COMMONLY USED PLATFORMS DAILY

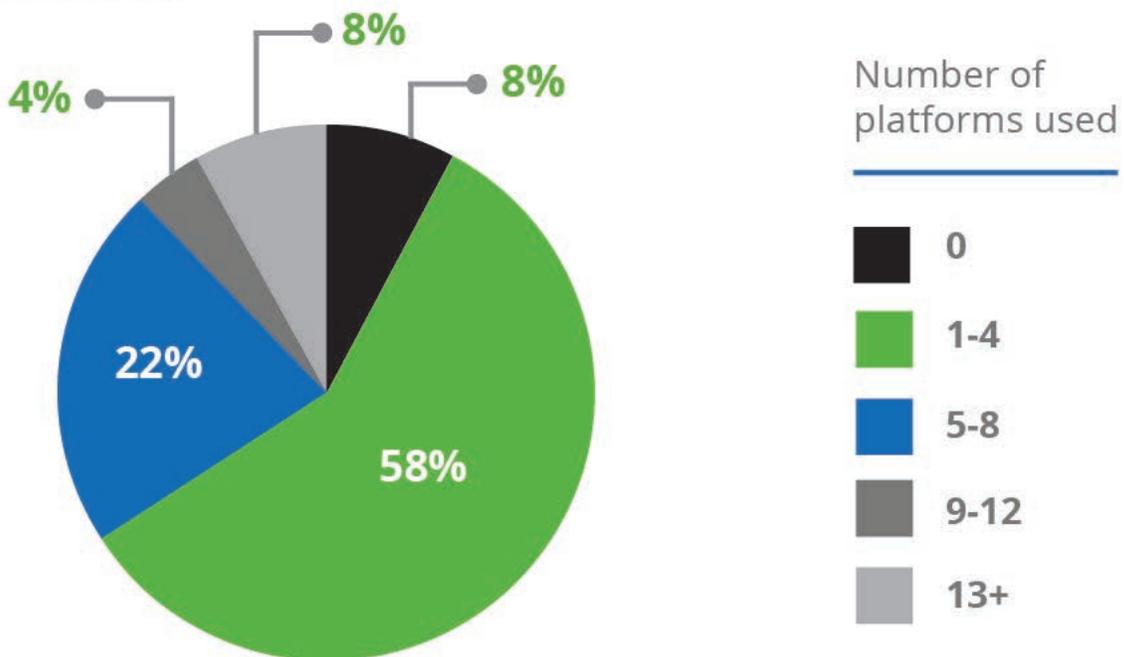


Facebook's claim that over 2.2 billion users interact with their platform every month (Q4 2017 statistics from [Statista](#)) aligns with its position as the most regularly used platform—followed by its messaging app, Facebook Messenger.

Social media platforms rated highly throughout, including that of Google+. Overall, Google's platform is our 4th more commonly used, but a clear generational shift is in place. Look just at millennials, and rival platforms such as Facebook (91% daily use), Instagram (68%) and Snapchat (52%) see higher use than Google+ (44%).

Social media platforms have become a significant cog in our daily lives, giving us a feeling of connectivity with friends past and present and allowing us a simple platform for communication. It's no surprise to see so many of us using them every day.

THE NUMBER OF COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS PEOPLE USE DAILY



The average number of communication platforms used daily is 3.6.

TIME CONSUMPTION

We also asked respondents how much time they spend on accessing each platform daily.

THE MOST TIME-CONSUMING COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS



For the 9% who use WeChat daily, the average time consumption equates to 11.3 hours of their week and 24.5 days of their year. Chat apps are the most time-consuming apps: WeChat, Viber and WhatsApp all appear in the top 10. Joining them are dating apps, including Bumble, Tinder and OkCupid (1 hour 28 minutes).

NUMBER OF CHECKS PER DAY

Our smartphones allow us to carry these communication platforms in our pocket, leading to a modern technological urge to check them frequently.

Platform	Times checked daily
Viber	5.91
Bumble	5.78
Join.me	5.76
OkCupid	5.72
WeChat	5.72
Tinder	5.72

Chat app Viber has 5.91 average checks daily, which translates to 2,157 checks over the course of a year.

Couple the popularity of platforms with the number of times we check them, and you begin to get an idea of how integral they are to our daily lives.

For example, of those who use Facebook daily, 40% are compelled to check it at least five times a day. It's a similar story for other social media. 42% of Snapchat users check their accounts at least five times a day, while the rates are also high for Instagram (34%) and Twitter (27%).

Matt Johnson, a Professor of Psychology at [Hult International Business School](#), confirmed what triggers compulsive behaviour when it comes to technology:

“There are lots of factors which compel this kind of compulsive behavior. The strongest I think has to do with the way the device delivers pleasure experience. Pleasure is inextricably linked to our behavior. Naturally, we’re likely to engage in behaviors which will maximize rewards, and minimize harm.

Each time we open our social media feed, we pull on the social media slot machine. We anticipate it to be generally rewarding - we see a new video, we find out our friend is getting married - but the degree of pleasure is unpredictable and random.

Because the content and degree of pleasure is invariant, we’re unable to ever establish its

true value to us. This invariance keeps us guessing, maintaining our levels of dopamine at a high level, making us feel compelled to come back again and again."

CATEGORIZING PLATFORMS

Grouping platforms together gives us a level of insight into how we use them in different ways.

Chat apps such as WeChat, Viber and WhatsApp score highly for the amount of time users spend on them and the number of times they are checked every day. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are among the most popular for daily use, but their use is much less intensive, with less time consumed and fewer checks per day.

Dating platforms also take up a lot of our time and attention. It's [estimated](#) that as many 40 million people use online dating services in the U.S., and our research suggests these services are some of the most used of any modern communication platform.

Bumble, for example, is the third most time-consuming platform and second most-checked platform among our list of 23.

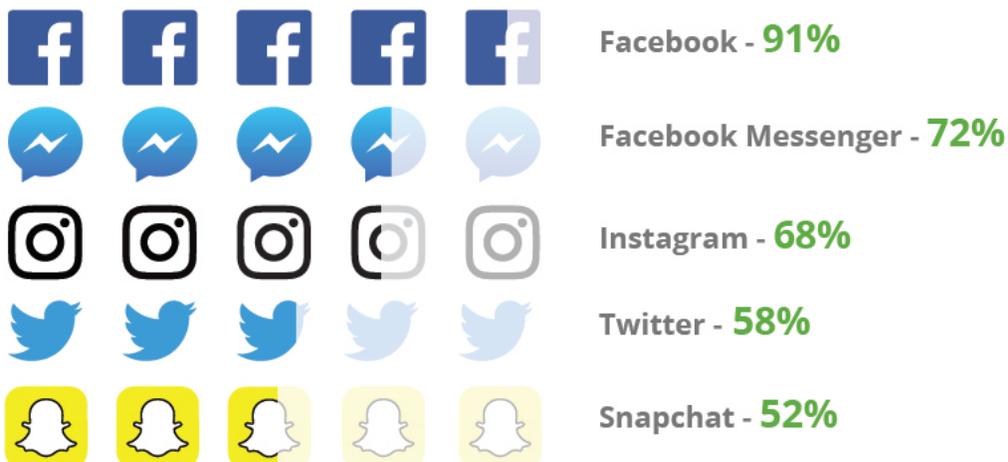
HOW DIFFERENT GENERATIONS CONSUME COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Break down the data by age range, and a clear generational shift appears on which platforms are consumed more and the amount they are consumed daily.

PLATFORM USE

Focus just on millennials (aged 18–34), and while the most popular platforms are relatively similar, the rate of their use takes a jump.

THE MOST POPULAR APPS FOR MILLENNIALS



TIME CONSUMPTION

Millennials, who have adopted these platforms at an early age, are spending more of their day using these platforms online than older generations.

TIME CONSUMPTION BY AGE



They also spend as many as 200 hours per year more on online communication platforms than those aged 55 and over, an increase of 70%.

NUMBER OF CHECKS PER DAY

It's a similar story when reviewing how often millennials are checking their chosen platforms.

Platform	Number of checks daily
Whatsapp	6.1
Snapchat	5.94
Viber	5.92
Join.me	5.79
Instagram	5.68

Their adoption of new technologies and the targeting of this generation by these platforms raises the bar when it comes to spending more time communicating online.

We asked communication experts how tech impacts the way we correspond with one another. Michelle Kubot, marketing director at Ambrosia Treatment Centers and a licensed psychologist, pointed out the dramatic impact tech is having on how we speak to one another:

“While we can communicate faster and more cost-effectively than ever, the nature of communication has changed dramatically. Language has evolved to further expedite and shorten communication (think “lol”).

“We also have so many more choices in how we communicate. We can chat, call, text, post or tweet instead of actually meeting in person. We can rely on Google instead of asking an expert, friend or co-worker.”

Dr. Tim Lynch, president of [Psychsoftpc](#), gave his thoughts on how deep-rooted technology is in our daily lives:

“IT socializes us into a pattern of communication that mirrors technology itself.

In other words, the more we use tech to communicate, the more we communicate like the tech we use. We prefer short direct answers, we want answers right away, we become impatient with others, we hate small talk and we prefer to use tech to communicate rather than talking, even if the person is in the same room.”

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESS

As our statistics show, these platforms are an accepted part of our daily routines, taking up a large portion of our attention every day. It’s inevitable that this can lead to distractions; social networks in particular offer us a break from our professional lives. Which leads to the question of what business should do to minimise distractions?

As a means of reducing this, businesses are working social media policies into their employment contracts, which outline a usage policy during working hours. Elsewhere, IT departments use restrictive access to limit the use of social media for those who have no professional need for it.



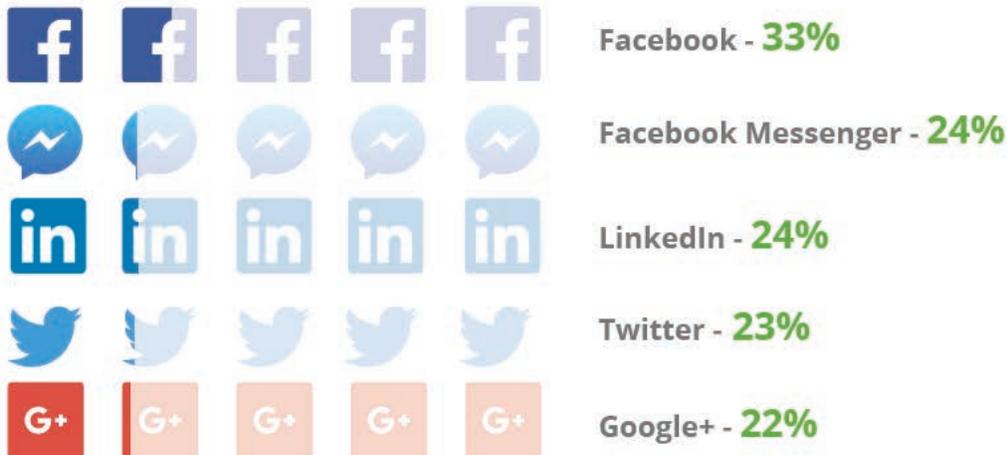
SECTION 2: COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

As people adopt new methods of communication in their personal lives, we see companies assimilate with daily life and adopt that technology for use in the workplace. We asked respondents how many had already done so.

DAILY USE OF APPS FOR WORK PURPOSES

While the number of people using social media platforms at work is significantly lower than those using them for personal use, social media apps still make up the top five most used apps.

MOST COMMONLY USED PLATFORMS FOR WORK PURPOSES



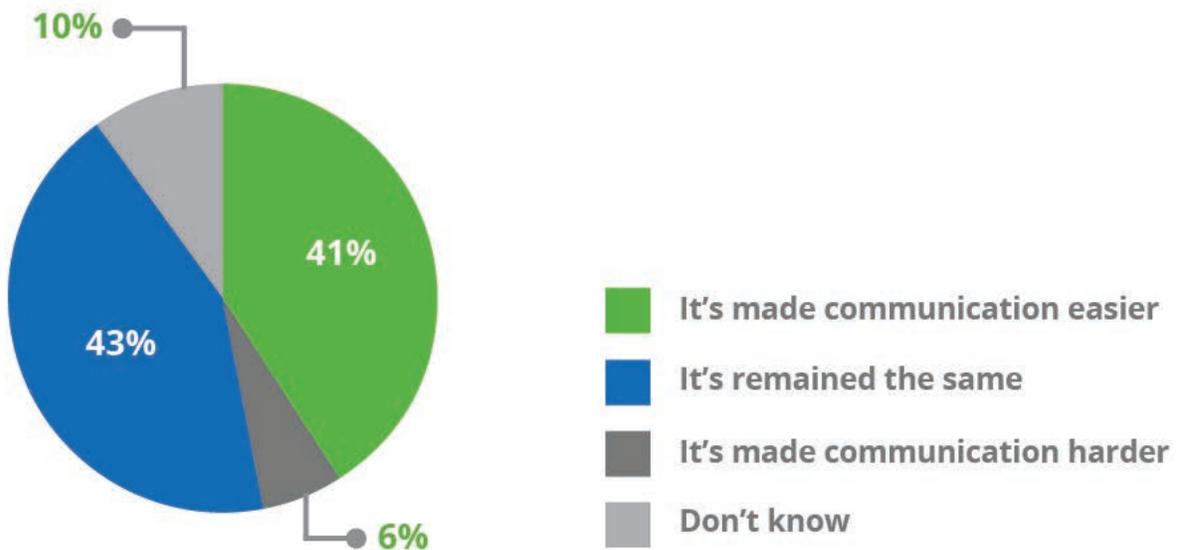
Over the past decade, social media has become a key facet of marketing for many companies. Given the high number of daily users as displayed in Section 1, companies

are putting greater efforts into meeting their customers where they like to communicate.

THE EFFECTS TECH HAS HAD ON COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

As technology becomes a more vital cog in communicating both with customers and with colleagues, the competencies required to roll them out and use them effectively increase. We asked respondents if they felt that technology was improving communication in their workplace.

HOW HAS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE PLATFORMS AND TECHNOLOGY IMPACTED YOUR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN YOUR JOB?



At 41%, a significant number of people believe these platforms are improving workplace communication. But with 43% stating no change, new forms of technology such as instant messaging and video conferencing still have some way to go toward providing a better solution than traditional methods.

We asked business owners and executives what impact communication technology has had in their workplace. CEO at [Don't Pay Full](#), Andrei Vasilescu, pointed out how video conferencing has helped his business:

"Most business meetings are taking place without spending a single penny for traveling and required arrangements. Since establishing communications and executing interactions have become so easy and fast, businesses are getting greater levels of productivity from their employees."

Steven Pritchard, founder of [Cuuver.com](#), also pointed out how small companies are benefiting from new communication technologies:

“Small businesses are now able to collaborate with people from across the world, who they previously wouldn’t have been able to work with as they would’ve had to travel the world every time they needed to work with each other. This has opened up a range of opportunities for new collaborations and business ventures for small businesses, which were previously unthinkable.”

But Curtis Boyd, director of operations at [Future Solutions Media](#), did point out a factor companies must now consider:

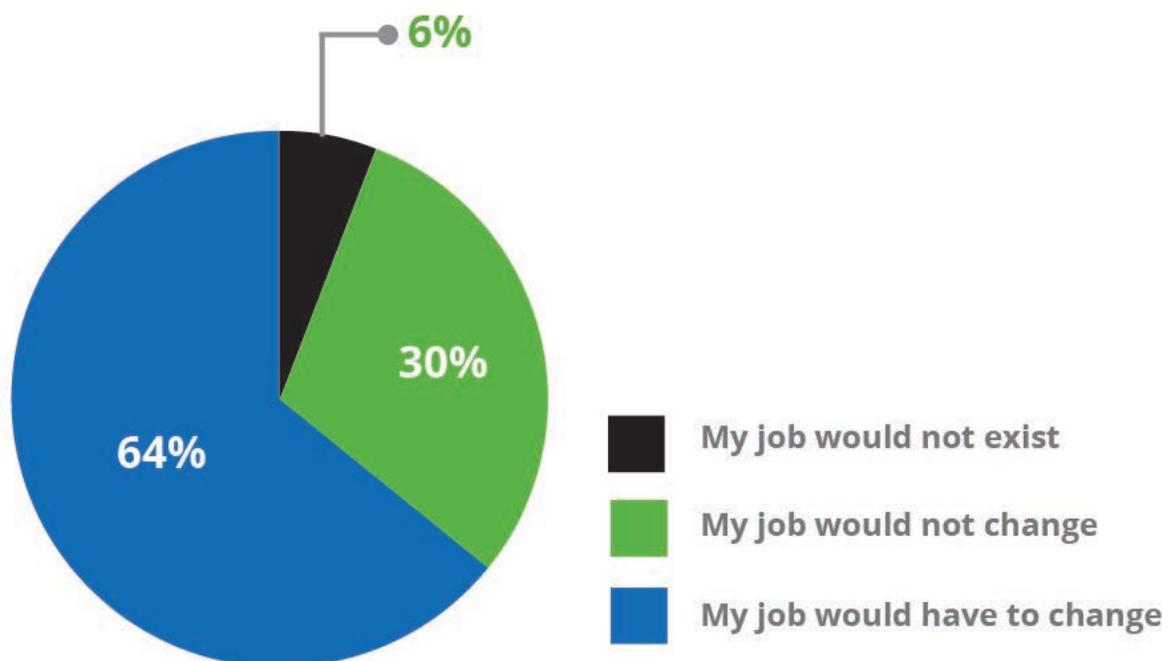
“It has made it harder to communicate for new hires as there is a learning curve to this software. Once properly trained and assimilated the software does make work life much easier.”

HOW JOBS WOULD CHANGE WITHOUT THESE PLATFORMS

The skillset of the workforce is undergoing a technological challenge. As companies look to take advantage of the communication benefits technology can bring to customers and colleagues domestically and internationally, the necessity of employees being proficient in their use increases. Many industries and roles within industries would not exist without the introduction of these platforms — particularly social media platforms.

We asked respondents how their job might change if these platforms no longer existed.

HOW DIFFERENT WOULD YOUR JOB BE WITHOUT THE USE OF THESE PLATFORMS



HOW DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS USE APPS IN THE WORKPLACE

Compare data around the workplace by age range and a clear generational shift appears. We see greater levels of technological use from millennials (18–34) when compared with Generation X (34–55) and those older than 55.

	18-34	35-54	55+
Facebook	45%	35%	16%
Facebook Messenger	37%	26%	7%
LinkedIn	28%	25%	12%
Twitter	33%	25%	5%
Google+	28%	24%	8%

As many as 45% of people said they use Facebook at work daily, in addition to a number of other social media platforms such as Instagram (37%), Twitter (33%) and Snapchat (32%).

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESSES

As Section 1 displayed, younger generations are consuming more of their time digitally. The challenge for businesses is adjusting marketing techniques to find customers where they like to communicate.

Businesses have been adopting social media as a marketing channels for many years now - but making a success of it is a new challenge altogether. Businesses need to harness the skillset of the millennial generation, who have adopted these platforms from a young age, to understand how and why change is being driven towards online platforms.

Millennials are also more positive about the impact technology is having on communicating at work.

	18-34	35-54	55+
It's made communication easier	56%	38%	31%
It's made communication worse	6%	8%	3%

It's remained the same	30%	43%	57%
Don't know	8%	11%	9%

54% said these platforms are making communicating easier, an increase of 14% over the overall figure and 19% higher than those aged 35 and over.

	18-34	35-54	55+
My job would not exist	8%	7%	1%
My job would have to alter dramatically	19%	13%	3%
My job would alter slightly	25%	17%	14%
My job would not change	48%	63%	82%

Millennials are engaging more with modern communication trends than older generations, emphasizing the need for employees to upgrade their skillset. A greater proportion of millennials believe modern technology platforms form an intrinsic part of their job to the extent where it might not exist without them.

Similarly, companies need to adapt their practices to fit with the expectations of millennials. Their comfort in using these platforms to communicate can be harnessed to bring greater efficiencies to the workplace.



SECTION 3: NEW COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS VS. TRADITIONAL METHODS

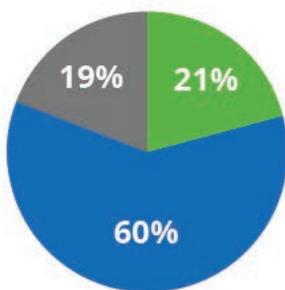
New methods of communication occur to challenge that of more engrained technology, but how quickly are we adopting them, and which methods do we prefer?

FAVORING NEW TECHNOLOGY OVER TRADITIONAL

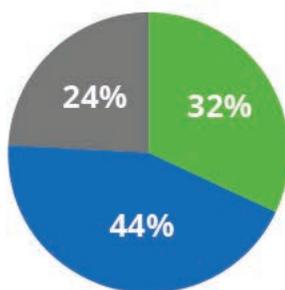
Placing two similar methods next to one another, we asked respondents which they would be more likely to use.

HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO USE THE NEWER TECH PLATFORMS OVER TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS?

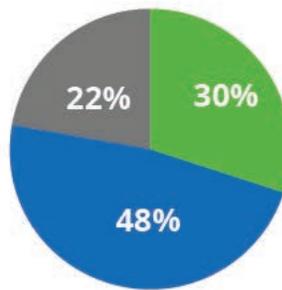
Likely **Unlikely** **Neither likely nor unlikely**



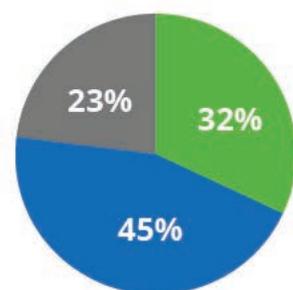
Video conferencing over telephone



Instant messaging over texting



Social media over email



Sharing photos via apps over face-to-face

Based on the responses, “traditional” forms of communicative technology, such as using a telephone and texting, are still preferred over their modern equivalents.

Still, a portion of respondents have turned to instant messaging over texting (32% quite likely or very likely), social media over emailing (30%) and sharing photos via apps rather than face to face (32%).

We also gathered data on which platform (if any) people would choose when undergoing a certain activity.

Activity	Technology platform or app	None of these
Having a conversation with a friend	64%	36%
Sharing an image with someone	61%	39%
Sharing news with someone	61%	39%
A group chat with friends	49%	51%
Having a conversation with a client	30%	70%
Having a conference call with a client	28%	72%
Having a conversation with a colleague	32%	68%
Having a conference call with colleagues	28%	72%

Breaking down the activities by where they take place, i.e., professional or personal scenarios, and you’ll find a greater use of technology in personal settings.

Over one in four people go on Facebook to have a conversation with a friend, with another 17% using Facebook Messenger. Similarly, Facebook is preferred when sharing an image (36%) and sharing news (38%). In comparison, when it comes to work-related activities, many choose not to use modern forms of technology at all.

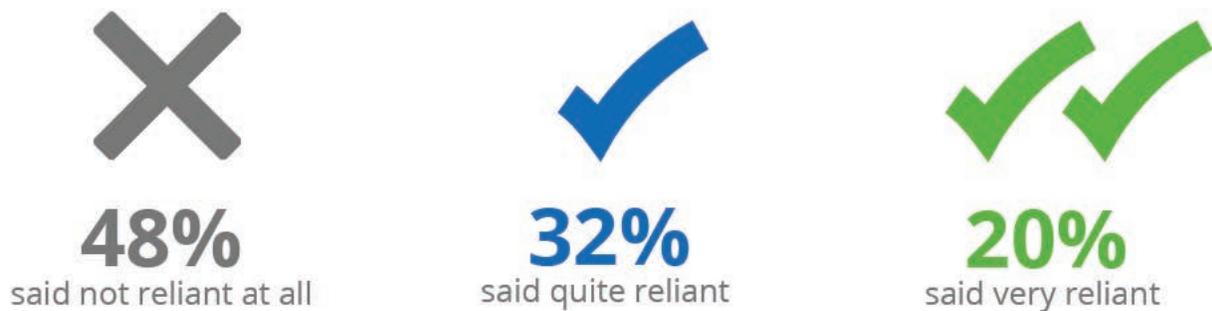
Over two-thirds of people wouldn’t use any of our 23 technology platforms when having a conversation with a client (70%), having a conference call with a client (72%), having a conversation with a colleague (68%) or having a conference call with a colleague (72%).

As we’ve seen from sections one and two, the workplace is slower to adapt to communication trends than individuals are in their personal lives.

OUR RELIANCE ON TECH TO COMMUNICATE

As technology is such a regular part of communication, we asked respondents if they felt they were too reliant on these platforms.

HOW RELIANT WOULD YOU SAY YOU FEEL YOU ARE ON USING THESE PLATFORMS TO COMMUNICATE?



Over half of respondents feel some level of reliance on these apps and platforms to communicate, with one in five saying they felt very reliant.

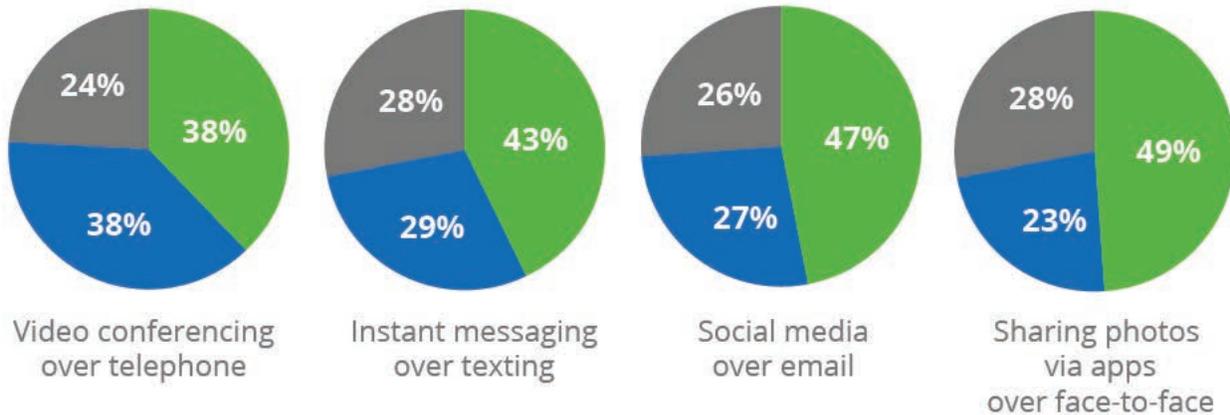
WHICH METHODS DIFFERENT GENERATIONS PREFER

As has been the case throughout our research, an obvious generational shift toward more technology is in place.

That trend is continued here, as more millennials state their preference of new methods of communication over more traditional ones.

HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO USE THE NEWER TECH PLATFORMS OVER TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS? – MILLENNIALS

■ Likely
 ■ Unlikely
 ■ Neither likely nor unlikely



Even practices like texting and emailing are already being phased out by younger generations. More millennials said they were likely to use instant messaging over texting (44%), social media over of emailing (46%) and share a photo via an app rather than face to face (48%).

The same patterns emerge when you compare which age groups would choose technology during particular activities.

Activity	Technology platform or app	None of these
Having a conversation with a friend	75%	25%
Sharing an image with someone	76%	24%
Sharing news with someone	76%	24%
A group chat with friends	70%	30%
Having a conversation with a client	45%	55%
Having a conference call with a client	47%	53%

Having a conversation with a colleague	50%	50%
Having a conference call with colleagues	47%	53%

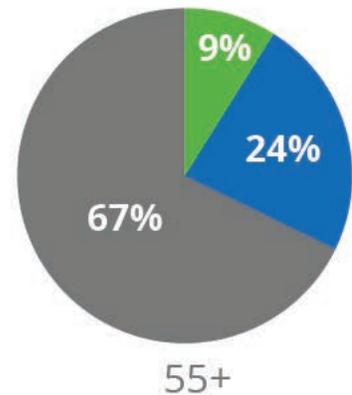
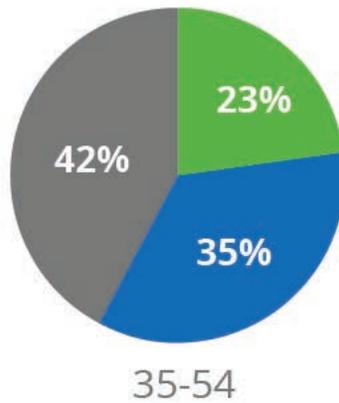
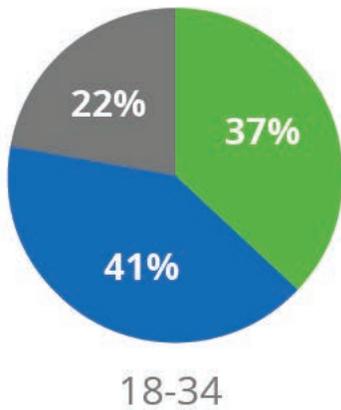
In each typical activity presented, millennials returned lower levels of “None of these/ N/A,” reinforcing their preference to use modern platforms for everything from having a conversation with a client to having a group conversation with friends.

Almost three-quarters (73%) use one of the 23 platforms to have a conversation with an individual friend, and there are similarly higher statistics for sharing an image with someone (73%), sharing news (72%) and having a group conversation with friends (70%).

As the likelihood of use rises, so too does the feeling of reliance on these platforms.

HOW RELIANT WOULD YOU SAY YOU FEEL YOU ARE ON USING THESE PLATFORMS TO COMMUNICATE? – BY AGE

■ Very reliant
 ■ Quite reliant
 ■ Not reliant at all



As many as three-quarters of millennials felt some level of reliance on technology to communicate, and one in three felt very reliant.

Technology is deeply ingrained in communication among young people. With these platforms now well-established, millennials can adopt them as standard from a young age. We asked communication experts what effects this is having on society at large.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESS

Ultimately, people turn to these platforms as they offer an enhanced means of communicating in the digital age. From a business perspective, not taking advantage of this could be affecting several areas of your business.

Messaging and video conferencing apps such as Skype and Google Hangouts allow for remote working and, as our business experts reveal below, collaborations that were never possible before. Social media allows for a greater level of customer service and a new way to sell.

The workplace is behind the curve when adopting tech, particularly with a view to improving communication amongst colleagues. Given the rate of adoption in younger generations, and their preference over traditional methods, every business could look to introduce more use of these platforms.

[Scott Amyx](#), author of *Strive: How Doing The Things Most Uncomfortable Leads to Success*, gave us his thoughts:

“It doesn’t take too long to realize the fundamental shift technology has had on human behavior. No matter which city that I am in, the behavior on a metro or train is the same — heads down, engrossed in their smartphones.”

“Social media and various chat and photo-sharing apps such as Instagram, Snapchat and others are reminding people young and old what they are missing in their lives, which in turn is leading to a broader societal ‘misery’ effect.”

Michelle Kubot of Ambrosia Treatment Centers also pointed out the negative impact our consumption of communication technology can have:

“Privacy, safety, and full-fledged technology addictions are the leading concerns when it comes to communicating via technology. Technology has evolved faster than police, politicians, psychologist or parents can keep up. The research in this field is in its infancy. What is clear is that using technology to communicate can make us more disconnected.”

Kubot continues, stating that technology isn’t the problem, but the solution:

“While the future sounds bleak, technology is also the answer. With more awareness of the harms, more researchers studying the topic and more good guys building firewalls, parental controls and other safety tools, we can take advantage of all the upside of quick, efficient communication through technology.”

KEY FINDINGS

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- Millennials spend 35% more time on communication platforms daily than those aged 35 and over and 70% more time than those aged 45 and over.
- Users spend an average of 11.3 hours per week on WeChat, making it the most time-consuming platform.
- Viber is the most-checked communication platform, with an average of 2,157 checks every year.
- 40% of Facebook users check the social platform at least five times per day.

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- One in four millennials say their job would not exist or would have to change dramatically without the use of modern communication platforms.
- 40% of people say communication at work is now easier thanks to modern communication platforms.

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- Over 50% of people feel some level of reliance on technology to communicate. This increases to 75% for millennials.
- Millennials are more likely to use instant messaging, social media and share photos via apps over similar, more traditional methods.
- Almost three-quarters of millennials turn to technology to have a conversation with friends, share an image, share news or have a group conversation.

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