

## **Most Teens Check out of Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat for a Week**

NEW YORK, New York — The common stereotype of teens has them glued to their phones 24-7. Whether it's Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram or other platforms, teens love social media. But a new survey has found that nearly 60 percent of teens in the U.S. have taken a break from social media, and the bulk of them even did so voluntarily.

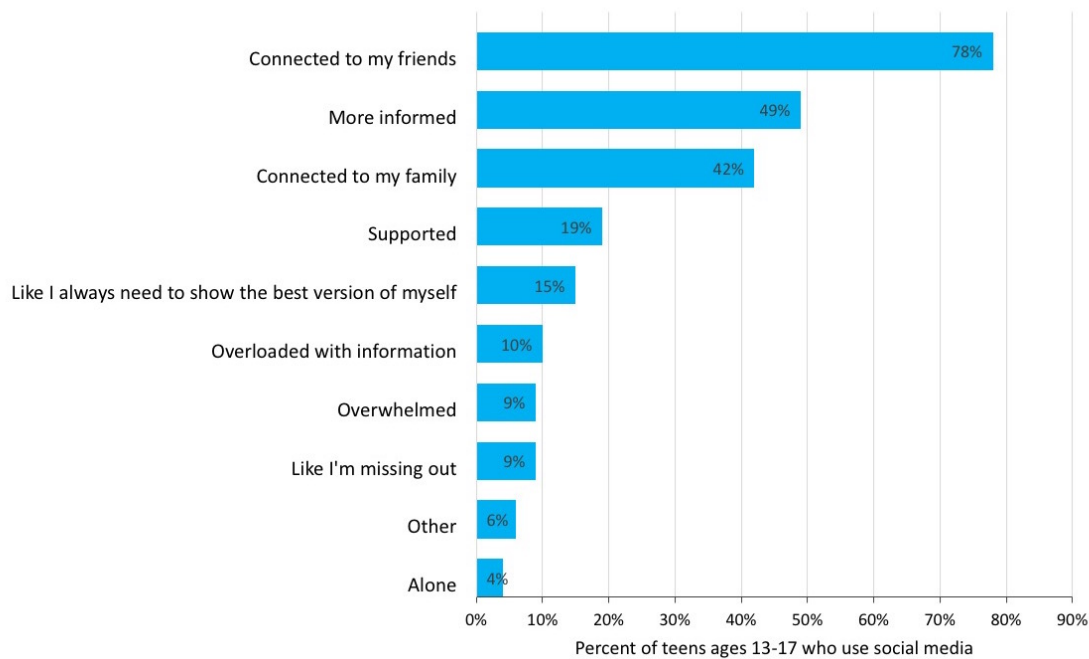
The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research spoke to teens ages 13 to 17. The poll found that most teens enjoy the connection with friends and family that social media provides. A much smaller number of teens find it brings negative emotions. They feel that social media can make them feel overwhelmed or like they always need to show their best selves.

The survey, released last week, found that teens' social media breaks are typically a week or longer.

### **For Some, It Is A Choice**

Teens were allowed to write down a few reasons for their social media breaks. Nearly two-thirds of teens who took a break said it was for a voluntary reason. Amanda Lenhart, the lead researcher and an expert on young people and technology use, said she was surprised by this. It goes against the common idea that teens are "handcuffed" to their social media accounts.

### Social media makes me feel...



Teens said there are many reasons why they use social media. Here is how they say it makes them feel. Data: AP-NORC.

Today's teenagers might not recall a time before social media. MySpace was founded in 2003. Had it survived, it would be 14 years old today. Facebook is a year younger, and Instagram launched in 2010. Though many adults can easily remember a time without social media, kids who grew up with it cannot.

There were several voluntary reasons for teens' breaks. This included 38 percent who took a break because social media was getting in the way of school or work. Nearly a quarter said they were tired of "the conflict and drama," and 20 percent said they were tired of having to keep up with what's going on.

### Disconnecting From Friends Is Hard

Nearly half of teens who took a break did so involuntarily, meaning they did not choose the break. This included around 4 out of every 10 teens who said it was because their parents took away their phone or computer and 17 percent who said their phone was lost, broken or stolen.

The involuntary break "is sort of its own challenge," Lenhart said. "They feel that they are missing out, detached from important social relationships (as well as) news and information."

About 35 percent of teens surveyed said they have not taken a break, citing such worries as missing out and being disconnected from friends. Some said they need social media for school or extracurricular activities.

"I like to see what my friends and family are up to," said Lukas Goodwin, 14, who uses Instagram and Snapchat every day. He said he took a break from Instagram "a few years ago" but not recently. Now, he says, "I wouldn't want to take a break from them."

### **Most Return To Their Accounts**

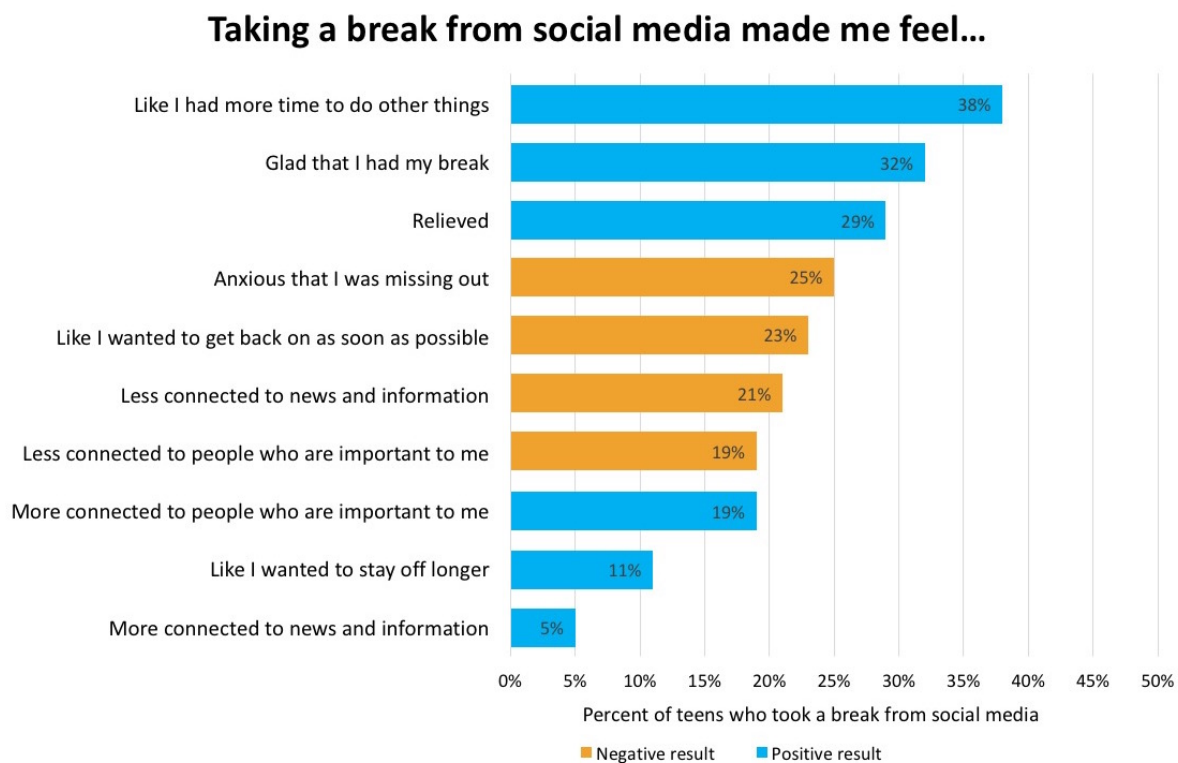
The survey had a number of other interesting findings.

It found that lower income teens were more likely to take social media breaks than wealthier teens. Their breaks also tended to last longer. The study points out that teachers who use social media in the classroom need to understand that not every teen is online and connected all the time.

Also, boys were more likely to feel overloaded with information on social media. Girls were more likely to feel they always have to show the best version of themselves.

Teens who took breaks typically did so across the board, checking out of Facebook, Snapchat and all other services all at once. They were no more or less likely to take breaks from social media based on the type of services they use.

Finally, although they were happy to be away from social media for a bit, most teens said after they returned to social media, their lives went back to how they were before.



Teens shared how they felt during their break. Many teens were glad they took a break. Data: AP-NORC.

<https://newsela.com/read/teens-break-social-media/id/30004/>