

JWT

FEAR OF
MISSING OUT
(FOMO)

March 2012 Update

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A note to readers: To make the report easy to navigate, we’ve added hyperlinks to the Table of Contents, so you can jump immediately to the items that most interest you (or, alternatively, you can read the material straight through).

This is a report from JWTIntelligence. Go to [JWTIntelligence.com](https://www.jwtintelligence.com) to download this and other trend research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We're in a FOMO state of mind, and it isn't pretty. That's Fear Of Missing Out, for those unfamiliar with the acronym. Quiet nights in are turning into nerve-racking and unproductive hours spent refreshing newsfeeds. We get too many emails with offers on everything from designer duds to soap, yet we can't bring ourselves to unsubscribe. We go to parties but keep our gaze affixed to our phones, checking email, texts and posts.

Today we are exposed more than ever before to what others around us are doing, and we're filled with a gnawing uncertainty about whether we've made the right choice about what to do or where to be—not just in a given moment, but in stages of our lives as well. And our friends aren't helping, touting their every FOMO-worthy move in real time.

We've always had a fear of missing out, but it's exploding with the onset of real-time, location-based and social media tools. This report identifies which cohort is most prone to FOMO and how they respond to it, spotlights how FOMO is manifesting in the zeitgeist, and looks at the wide-ranging potential for brands seeking to tap into FOMO.

METHODOLOGY

This report serves as an update to our May 2011 trend report titled *Fear Of Missing Out*.

All of our trend reports are the result of quantitative, qualitative and desk research conducted by JWTIntelligence throughout the year. Specifically for this report, we conducted a quantitative study in the U.S. and the U.K. using SONAR™, JWT's proprietary online tool, from Jan. 19-24. We surveyed 768 Americans and 502 Britons aged 18-plus (data are weighted by age and gender); we also polled 110 teens aged 13-17 residing in the homes of adults surveyed.* (For year-over-year data, we used content from a survey we conducted in the U.S. and U.K. from March 4-15, 2011, in which we polled 1,024 adults and 87 teens.) In addition, we interviewed experts and influencers in technology and academia (two interviews were conducted this year, and three in 2011).

EXPERTS AND INFLUENCERS**



BIANCA BOSKER,
senior technology editor,
The Huffington Post



PRIYA PARKER,
founder, Thrive Labs



VICTORIA CLARK,
co-founder, TimeRazor



MARC A. SMITH,
sociologist and chief social scientist,
Connected Action Consulting Group



DAN HERMAN,
CEO, international strategy
consulting firm Competitive Advantages

*Throughout this paper, "adult Millennials" refers to respondents aged 18-34.
"Teen Millennials" refers to those aged 13-17.

**See Appendix to learn more about these experts and influencers.



FOMO

Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) is the uneasy and sometimes all-consuming feeling that you're missing out—that your peers are doing, in the know about or in possession of more or something better than you. FOMO may be a social angst that's always existed, but it's going into overdrive thanks to real-time digital updates and to our constant companion, the smartphone.

Once social media makes people aware of things to which they otherwise might never have been privy, it can spark a sense of vicarious participation or motivate real-world behavior. Conversely, it can be a curse, fostering anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.



FOMO is the sometimes energizing, sometimes terrifying anxiety that you are missing out on something absolutely terrific. It could be a TV show, it could be a party, it could be a gadget, it could be that really good burrito from the food cart. The important thing to keep in mind with FOMO is that it's not just a state of mind; it is also a physical reaction. So as a FOMO sufferer, I can report sweating, itching, pacing and compulsive refreshing of my Twitter feed.”

—BIANCA BOSKER, senior technology editor, The Huffington Post

FOMO (cont'd.)

The acronym is infiltrating vocabularies as more than just an amusing expression. FOMO encapsulates an increasingly pronounced phenomenon in the age of social media—an ageless concept that’s reached a tipping point. With 845 million-plus active users on Facebook, not to mention Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and other social platforms, today’s unprecedented awareness of how others are living their lives is predisposing more and more people to FOMO.

While the fear of missing out has always been essential for marketers to understand, it’s grown more significant for brands, since today’s intensified FOMO drives behaviors on social media sites and, subsequently, real-world consumer actions and self-perceptions.

FOMOLGY EXAM ROOM



FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out): Constant anxiety over missing out on something important. The patient may not actually know of anything specific he or she is missing but can still possess a fear that others are having a better time.

Symptoms: Procrastination, indecision, anxiety, shortness of breath, pacing, racing heart, nail-biting, hair-twisting

Treatment: FOMO treatments vary by patient, ranging from De-Teching to logging onto Facebook.

Side effects: More FOMO



DRIVERS

Radical Transparency meets Life in Real Time: Social media, mobile devices and location-based tools are facilitating conspicuous living, with people clamoring to show and tell all as it's happening. The Web has become a constantly updating stream of real-time information, conversation, memes and images. And the proliferation of smartphones means this stream is seamlessly accompanying more people around the clock and in almost any given location.

Real-time radical transparency is cultivating a more mass culture and shifting perceptions of both “private” and “current,” moving life into the “open” and “now.”

Digital natives: Our survey findings show that FOMO is most apparent among adult and teen Millennials, as they've been using FOMO-inducing tools from a young age. They're on sites like Facebook more than any other generation, and the Web is a goes-without-saying part of life that's automatically configured into their “real” lives (see Appendix, Figures1D-F).

While FOMO may be most relevant to younger, social media-hooked generations, it is trickling up to older cohorts as they continue to adopt social tools.

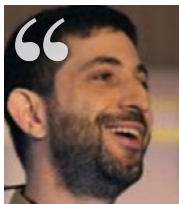
DRIVERS (cont'd.)

Social one-upmanship: In broadcasting their behaviors online, people consciously or unconsciously engage in social one-upmanship (“I’m more witty, worldly, in-the-know, on-the-go, etc.”), instilling a sense of missing out in others.

Just over three-quarters of respondents to JWT’s survey said they feel people use social media to brag about their lives, a sentiment that rang especially true among the younger generations. At the same time, people are constantly checking up on their friends, setting themselves up for FOMO. Of adult Millennials we surveyed, 56% said sites like Facebook bring out the stalker in them (see Figure 1A; for country breakdowns, see Appendix, Figures 1G-H).

Hashtag-friendly events: People all over the world are making their social networks aware of where they are and what they’re doing. Events like Davos, Coachella, SXSW and TED have elicited hashtags galore, with some bragging about being there and those not in attendance expressing FOMO.

Social media feeding into relative deprivation: Relative deprivation is a sociological term that refers to the dissatisfaction people feel when they compare their positions to others and grasp that they have less. When we glean information through social media, we compare it with our own experiences. Today we have access not only to Dad’s tweet about the awesome lobster pasta he whipped up last night but to a behind-the-scenes view of the rich and famous. Social media brings us closer to other echelons yet simultaneously back down to reality.

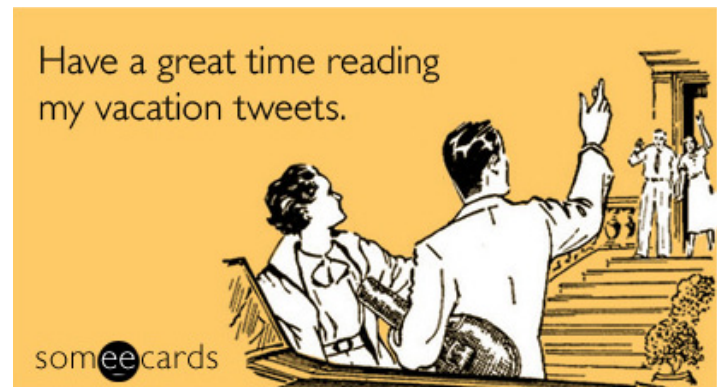
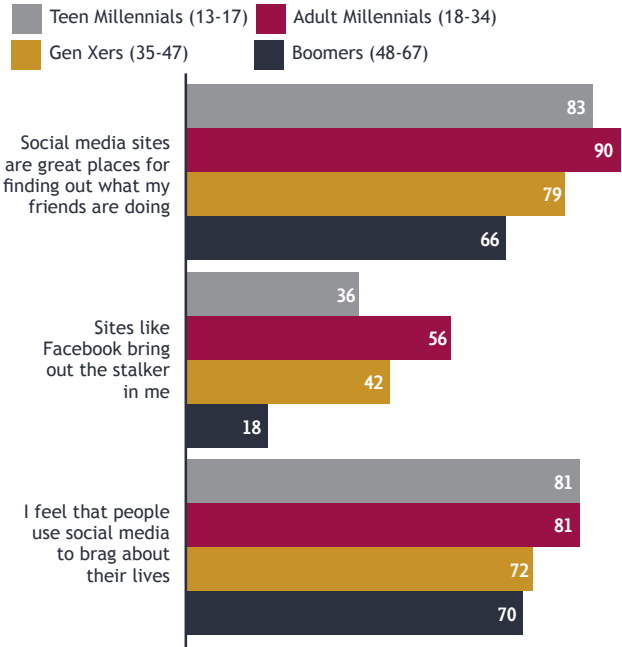


“Those who used to dine behind thick stone walls and had caviar now do so, tweet about it and can be seen by those sitting down to dinner at Chipotle.”

—MARC A. SMITH, sociologist and chief social scientist, Connected Action Consulting Group

FIGURE 1A:
Attitudes toward social media (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following



DRIVERS (cont'd.)

But the tweets most likely to escalate FOMO are not from Ashton Kutcher or Lady Gaga but from peers—people are more susceptible to relative deprivation when they see that those with whom they compare themselves are engaging in enviable experiences.

The impact of this goes beyond social activities in real time; it stretches to self-perceptions and how people formulate longer-term goals. Nearly 6 in 10 survey respondents told us it's important for their Facebook, Twitter or other social media profiles to convey a certain image; approximately two-thirds of teen and adult Millennials felt this way. (See Figure 1B; for country breakdowns, see Appendix, Figures 1I-J). This statement holds true for American men more than women, with 57% agreeing compared with just under half of women.

Life in overdrive: too much to do, read, buy, watch, etc.:

People like to be in the know (83% of our respondents said as much; see Appendix, Figures 1K-M, and Figures 1N-P for what they like to be in the know about), which is harder than ever to achieve with exponentially more video to watch, information to read, goods to sift through, etc. It's next to impossible not to miss out on something.

Just over half our survey respondents said they never have ample time or energy to delve into topics or endeavors and often only get to skim the surface of new interests. This is especially true among adult Millennials (66% in agreement) and Gen Xers (60%). People are snowed under with information, especially the hyper-connected adult Millennials: 55% said they're overwhelmed by how much they need to digest to stay up to speed. Teens and Gen Xers don't fall far behind, with 48% feeling the same.

Constant planning and iCal-ing make people want to say yes to everything for fear of missing out. The result: 77% of adult Millennials and 70% of Gen Xers said they often think they can squeeze more than is really possible into their day. (See Figure 1C; for country breakdowns, see Appendix, Figures 1Q-R.)

FIGURE 1B:
Social media and self-image (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who agree with the following

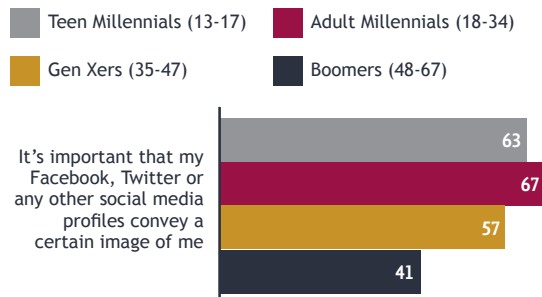
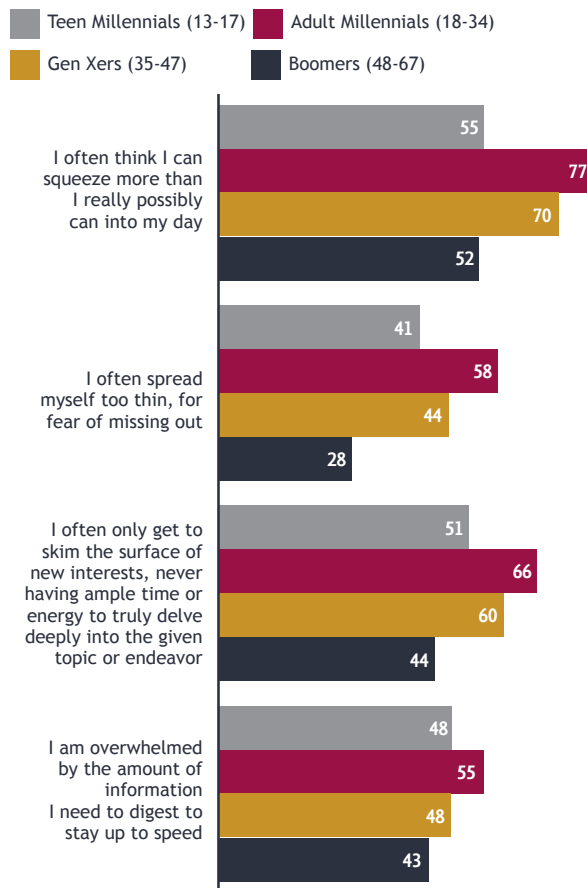
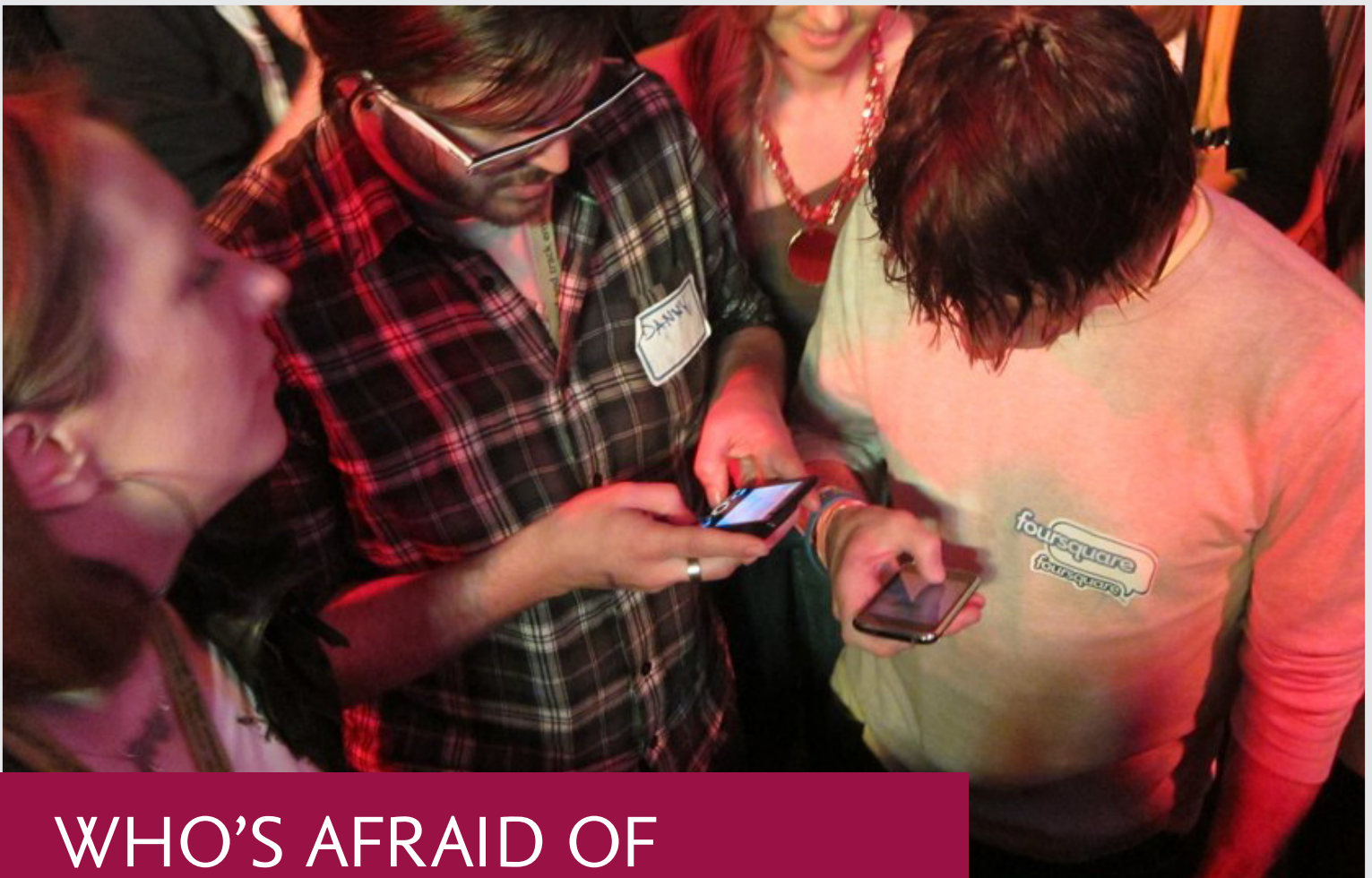


FIGURE 1C:
Life in overdrive (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following





WHO'S AFRAID OF MISSING OUT?

Fear Of Missing Out spans generations and cultures. Who can forget getting grounded and missing the high school dance? What parent doesn't want to see their children produce grandkids aplenty? No teenager wants to be the last of his friends to get a cell phone, and it's hard to spend a Friday night working when you can see your friends checking into bars on Foursquare. FOMO means something different to everyone.

While just 8% of our survey respondents had heard of the term, many displayed clear signs of social media-induced FOMO—most notably the constantly connected Millennials.



FOMO is a shared experience, and we're all suffering from it. And it's kind of an embarrassing thing to suffer from, right? No one wants to admit that they suffer from FOMO. And yet to live particularly in this society, at this time, this country, it's almost impossible not to suffer from FOMO unless you're wearing blinders."

—PRIYA PARKER, researcher and founder, Thrive Labs, an organization that helps build Millennial leaders

WHO'S AFRAID OF MISSING OUT? (cont'd.)

The young and the fearful: Once FOMO was explained in our survey, as many as 70% of adult Millennials said they can completely or somewhat relate to the expression. British Millennials stand out, with nearly three-quarters reporting that they can completely or somewhat relate to FOMO. Nearly 4 in 10 young people say they experience FOMO often or sometimes.

FOMO among teens seems to be on the rise. Teen Millennials are the second most likely cohort to relate to the concept, at 65%, up nearly 10 percentage points since our 2011 survey. And 40% of teen Millennials say they experience FOMO often or sometimes, up from just over a quarter last year.

Some Gen Xers can also relate to FOMO (51%), with 25% saying they experience it at least sometimes, up from 18% last year. Again, British respondents stand out, with 62% saying they can completely or somewhat relate to FOMO, compared with 46% of American Gen Xers. (See Appendix, Figures 2C-E.)

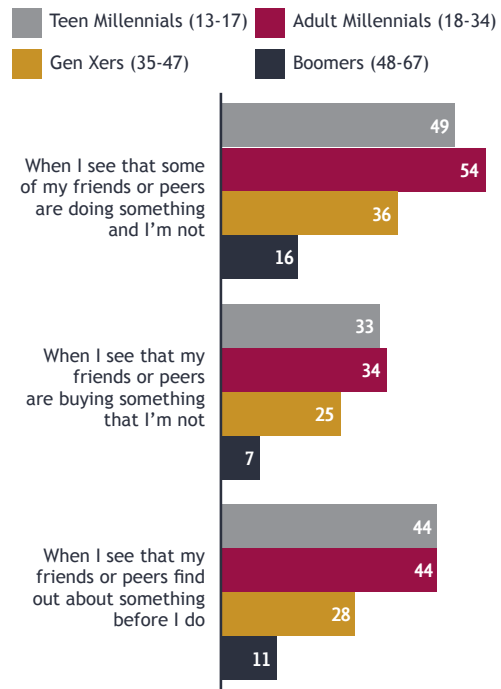
When it comes to social media specifically, all Millennials feel more left out than any other generation when they learn their friends are doing something they're not, buying something they're not or finding out about something sooner than they do. (See Figure 2A; for country breakdowns, see Appendix, Figures 2F-G.)

It's no surprise that Millennials, a generation shaped by online tools and social media, are most closely linked with FOMO—they're the most exposed to what their network of peers is doing. On Facebook, this cohort is by far the most active when it comes to posting about what they're doing and who they're with, uploading photos, commenting on friends' posts, checking their newsfeeds, shopping and telling their network about new purchases or finds (see Appendix, Figure 1D).



FIGURE 2A:
FOMOfeed (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who would feel very or somewhat left out on social media in the following situations



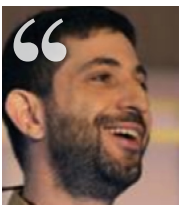
FOMO Op: Young people are teasingly reminding absent friends that they're missing out on something by posting photos in which they spell out "FOMO" with their arms.

WHO'S AFRAID OF MISSING OUT? (cont'd.)

Millennials appear fairly well aware of the FOMO-inducing impact of their online behavior. They are the most likely to say it's easy to feel left out on a site like Facebook (54%), and 47% say social media has amplified any fear of missing out they might have. They are also most likely to feel uneasy or nervous upon learning through social media that friends are doing something they're not (nearly half report these feelings). Again, Gen Xers aren't immune from FOMO, with 51% saying it's easy to feel left out on a site like Facebook, and 44% pointing to social media as amplifying their FOMO. (See Figure 2B; for country breakdowns, see Appendix, Figures 2H-I.)

Millennials' link to FOMO is in part a function of their age and life stage: This is a more narcissistic time that's focused on defining identity and exploring others'; Millennials tend to look to others to influence their opinions and decisions; and this generation in particular belongs to expansive networks that include both real- and virtual-world friends, both of which they solicit for advice.

FOMO might be about fear, but Millennials aren't afraid of facing it—they embrace the good, the bad, the ugly and everything in between and readily recognize what FOMO does to them. Indeed, when experiencing FOMO, they are more likely than any other generation to go to Facebook, the foremost FOMO perpetrator, to help alleviate it (see Appendix, Figures 2J-L). What might seem like a vicious circle is in fact how Millennials cope with radical transparency and real-time information—they face it head-on.



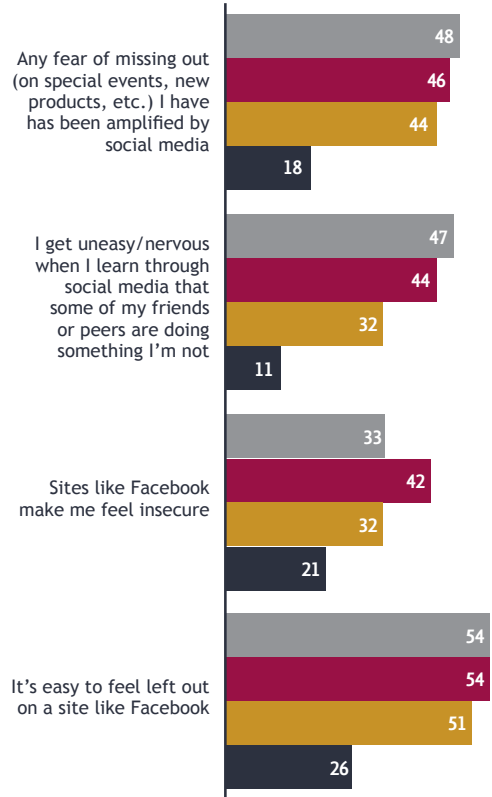
“ Younger people are more engaged in identity formation than older people. They may be more open to the experience of FOMO because they are engaged in relative deprivation. Younger people have fewer resources to consume identity-forming products and experiences while simultaneously having the most time and desire for them.”

—MARC A. SMITH, sociologist and chief social scientist, Connected Action Consulting Group

FIGURE 2B:
Social media's effect on FOMO (U.S. and U.K.)

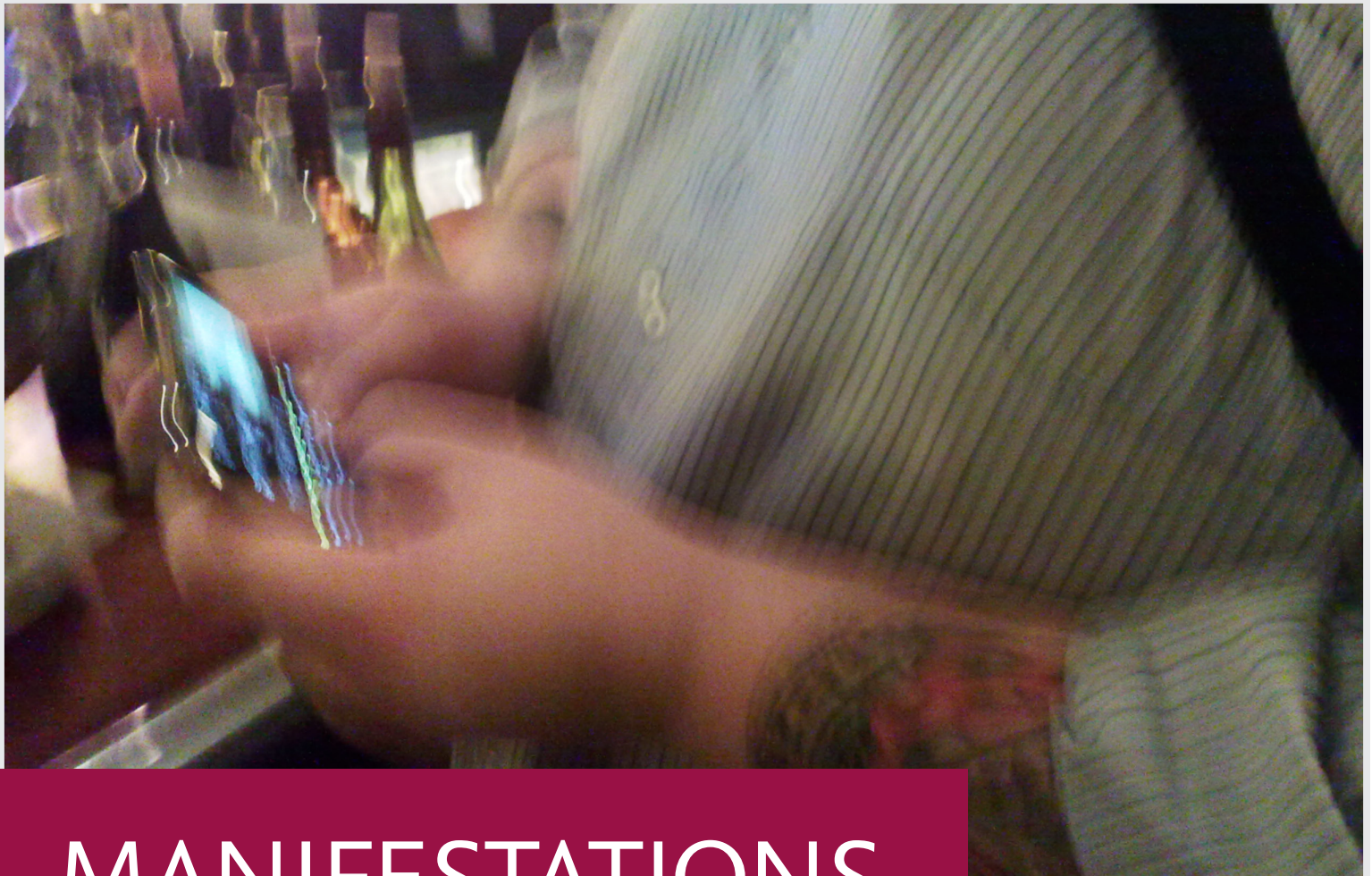
Percentage who agree with each of the following

Teen Millennials (13-17) Adult Millennials (18-34)
Gen Xers (35-47) Boomers (48-67)



MAN'S BEST FRENEMY?

Overall, American men appear to be more prone than women to feelings of missing out via social media: 38% said they feel somewhat or very left out when they see via social media that their peers are doing something they're not, compared with 26% of women. American men are also more likely to feel they're missing out when seeing via social media that friends or peers are buying something they're not or finding out information before they do. (See Appendix, Figure 2M.)



MANIFESTATIONS

Growing media buzz: While the expression “FOMO” goes back some time—marketing strategist Dan Herman began conducting studies on it in the mid-’90s—media and other online buzz around it has been building in the past year or two. SFGate.com’s Mark Morford called FOMO “a niggling madness,” in mid-2010, and attention has continued to mount as FOMO-inducing hashtag-friendly events like TED, SXSW and Davos draw larger and more connected crowds.

Huffington Post senior technology editor Bianca Bosker told us that when she learned of FOMO, she thought, “Yes, I finally have an alliterative, two-syllable acronym to describe this panic I feel on the weekends.” In April 2011, *The New York Times*’ Jenna Wortham deemed FOMO “emblematic of the digital era,” describing a night when her phone relayed social media notifications while she was relaxing at home: “Suddenly, my simple domestic pleasures paled in comparison with the things I could be doing.”

Self in the U.S. discussed how “to fight that FOMO feeling” in December, while *Cosmopolitan* in Australia published a FOMO self-help feature in March 2011. Meanwhile, social media consultant and blogger Annie Stamell has humorously called FOMO an “epidemic,” and Hunch and Flickr co-founder Caterina Fake described it as “an age-old problem, exacerbated by technology” in a blog post. FOMO “has morphed—in our modern, multi-media, multi-tasking, multi-choice age—into a full-blown psychological condition,” wrote Rosie Boycott in *The Daily Mail* last year.

MANIFESTATIONS (cont'd.)

Brands leveraging FOMO: Marketers have always warned consumers not to miss out on products and deals; now we're seeing more brands tapping into anxiety over missing out on experiences and the inability to do everything and be everywhere. Marketing campaigns are both inducing consumer fears of missing out and positioning products as tools for preventing FOMO and keeping up with the fast pace of life.

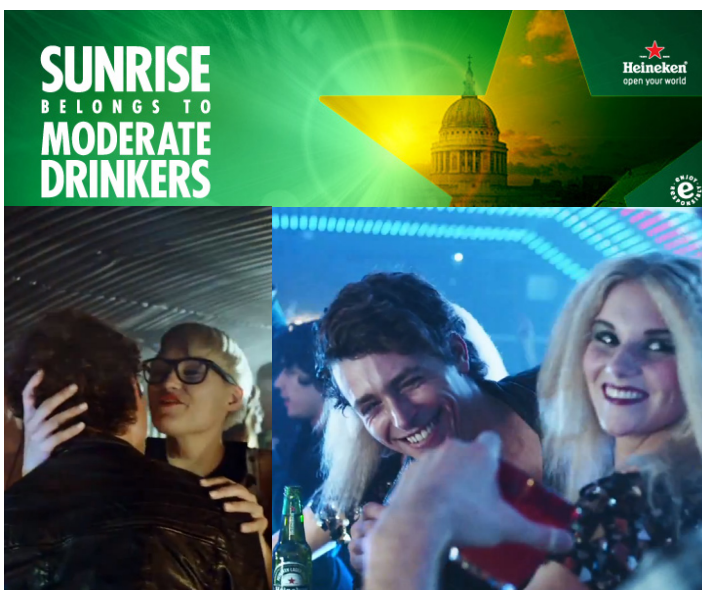


- **Smirnoff, “Be There”:** Launched in 2009, this campaign relies on the heightened appeal of FOMO-inducing, “you had to be there” experiences. Ads depict underground parties or slightly illicit activities (e.g., partying in an abandoned subway tunnel). Smirnoff has also hosted contests—usually aimed at generating the most off-the-wall event or project ideas—as well as large-scale, one-of-a-kind events, most notably the Nightlife Exchange Project, intended to up the jealousy quotient among those stuck at home refreshing their newsfeeds. The effort kicked off in 2010 when groups in 14 countries swapped the best elements of their after-hours culture and grew bigger in 2011 with 50 countries swapping nights and a partnership with Madonna. Attendees talked about the amazing time they had on blogs, Facebook and other online outlets.



“ If you weren't at one of Smirnoff's ravishing Nightlife Exchange Project parties, then where the bloody hell were you?”

—MICHELLE WILDING,
“Smirnoff Nightlight Exchange Party, Bangalore,”
Lost at E Minor Blog, Dec. 8, 2010



- **Heineken, “Sunrise”:** This global campaign, which launched in 2011 with the tagline “Sunrise belongs to moderate drinkers,” pushes responsible drinking by tapping into FOMO rather than outlining the potentially brutal consequences of over-indulging. An 85-second video shows a man drinking responsibly at an epic Heineken-sponsored party; while some partyers appear to become incapacitated, he has fun all night, eventually leaving to enjoy the sunrise with a sexy woman on his arm (celebrity DJ Audrey Napoleon). A social media component encourages all-night partyers to “Tweet your sunrise and celebrate with the world.” Here, drinking too much means missing out on the best parts of a great night out. The message is that while a few beers can help fuel the fun times, any more than that puts you at risk for dropping out of the festivities too soon.

MANIFESTATIONS (cont'd.)

- **Apple, FaceTime:** Apple provides a very actionable way for consumers to alleviate FOMO by inviting them to be there via FaceTime with loved ones and friends, no matter where they are geographically. In one 2010 spot, a father on a business trip sees his son crawling; in another frame, a young man stationed in the army is able to virtually accompany his pregnant wife to her sonogram. Now if that doesn't tug at your FOMO-riddled heartstrings, we're not sure what will.



- **Duracell Powermat, "Stay in Charge":** In a sarcastic and comical November 2011 spot for this wireless charging device, viewers see four down-and-out folks suffering from FOMO due to dead mobile phones. A fictional doctor explains that FOMO is a "very real problem affecting thousands of people every day" and touts Duracell Powermat chargers as a way to "end FOMO by keeping your phone alive and keeping you connected with the world, wherever you are, at any time." The social media component featured a series of videos in which victims of "epic power failure" spoke about missing out on something great (a hot date, an apartment viewing, etc.). Consumers were also encouraged to submit their own "epic power failure" on the brand's Facebook page.



- **AT&T, "Don't be left behind":** U.S. mobile provider AT&T has been advertising "the nation's fastest mobile broadband network" and 4G services as a means of ensuring customers never miss out. In one spot a man stumbles on an office gathering that he seemingly wasn't invited to. "Everyone's eating tacos outside Bill's office? Do you think that's some information I'd like to know?," he half-jokingly says while holding his boring lunch. He blathers on resentfully, only to finally get a phone message: "Taco Party outside Bill's office! Right now!" In another spot a group of business road-warriors simultaneously receive an email via their phones. Each waits patiently for it to download, except for the one with an AT&T smartphone, who instantly bursts into laughter. An awkward silence is finally broken by the same hysterical laughter as the others finally see the message. The tagline? "Don't be left behind."

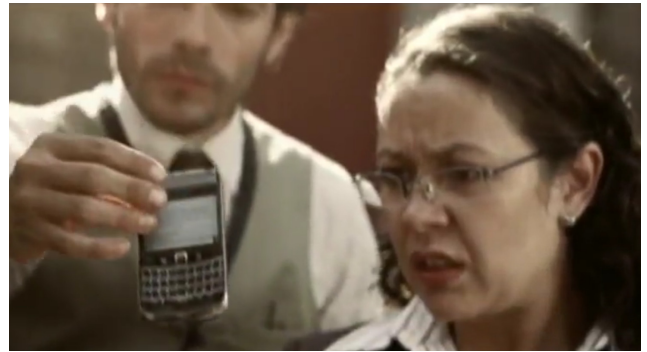
Brands countering FOMO: Some marketing campaigns are tapping into the countertrend to the FOMO-fueled race to keep up: a growing desire to slow down, focus on one task and savor the moment. Instead of helping consumers stay ahead of FOMO, these efforts focus on considering what's really important in life.

- **Road Safety Council of Western Australia, "Enjoy the Ride":** This 2011 campaign ambitiously aimed to "redefine the way Western Australians think about speeding, creating a cultural shift and real behavioural change to a more relaxed, considered and purposeful way of life." The spot warns that "Humans just aren't designed to go that fast," observing that slowing down means "we may do fewer things, but what we do, we do well." The message for the FOMO-inclined: Your life may be enriched if you purposely miss out on some things.



MANIFESTATIONS (cont'd.)

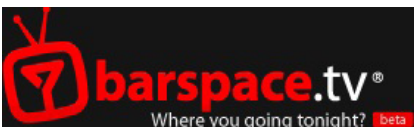
- **Nescafé, “Wake up to life”:** A 2011 Mexican commercial for Nescafé addresses anxiety about faltering relationships due to the hectic speed of existence. The spot opens in the midst of a traffic jam. People scurry around a plaza, scarcely paying attention to their surroundings. A hypnotist waves a time-stopping pocket watch and the crowd freezes. “There are always magic things in front of us. Sometimes we’re simply not paying enough attention to take notice of them,” says the voiceover as the enchanter navigates through the paralyzed crowd, manipulating the pedestrians’ stances along his way. Passing a mom preoccupied with her BlackBerry, for example, he moves her closer to her daughter and positions the pair for a photo. The daughter’s bored face morphs into a smile. Viewers are invited to see what they typically miss while speeding through life preoccupied with everyday concerns.



- **Nestea, “Welcome to this moment”:** In this 2011 campaign out of Spain, Nestea uses the tagline “Welcome to this moment.” We see a kissing couple, a mom, a mountain climber and a picnicker getting distracted by everything from electronic devices to a squirrel. “The key for enjoying life is putting all our attention in each moment, to enjoy it like it deserves,” says the narrator as a woman throws her partner’s phone away and he joins her in drinking an iced tea at a picnic. The spot illustrates the desire to simply slow down and be more fully present, both for loved ones and for personal fulfillment.

FOMO-combating apps: Some apps can help combat FOMO by giving users real-time information about what their friends are up to and what’s happening around them. Of course, these apps run the risk of creating FOMO for those who can’t take part in the action.

- **Color:** The much-hyped 2011 startup has relaunched as an app that allows mobile users to share live 30-second broadcasts of their lives to Facebook and friends’ phones. Those who can’t be there in real life can share in brief, intimate moments of friends’ lives.



- **Barspace.tv:** Also available as an app, Barspace.tv provides live feeds from participating bars, allowing viewers to see how many people are at a particular spot and what they’re up to in real time. It’s available in U.S. cities including Boston, New York, Seattle and San Francisco. Bar hoppers can see what’s going on at

several places simultaneously and zero in on the most promising scene. But it could also feed the FOMO of those stuck elsewhere—much like social media, which both alleviates and drives FOMO.

- **TimeRazor:** Armed with \$3.4 million in funding, TimeRazor is an upcoming service that explicitly promises to relieve FOMO with the tag “Never miss out.” By using predictive technology to help users discover interesting things they want to do while juggling what they need to do, TimeRazor will bring “a sense of serendipity back to a highly scheduled world,” according to a press release. Launch partners include local retail properties, sports teams and big brands including L’Oréal and Marriott Renaissance Hotels.



There is a real struggle with people doing what they want to do versus what they have to. There’s this need to balance that. ... People really want to be proactive, and they would love some sort of predictive technology, but as a result they’re checking their email and social feeds more often and just feeding the animal. They’re being more reactive when they think they’re trying to be proactive. And that contributes to the vicious [FOMO] cycle.”

—VICTORIA CLARK, co-founder, TimeRazor

MANIFESTATIONS (cont'd.)

Digital rudeness: FOMO helps drive our addiction to texting, checking social media and other digital habits, since we don't want to risk missing out on the most current bits of information. Instead of being fully present at social situations or during events, people are absorbed in their mobile devices, inducing FOMO in others.

As noted in *The New York Times*, Anthony De Rosa, a social media editor at Reuters, received a huge round of applause at a SXSW panel last year after urging, "When people are out and they're among other people, they need to just put everything down. It's fine when you're at home or at work when you're distracted by things, but we need to give that respect to each other back." Rampant rudeness inspired the project My Phone Is Off For You, which encourages people to wrap their phones in a "phonekerchief" that blocks service.



FOMO in entertainment:

- ***How I Met Your Mother*, "The Curse of the Blitz":** This curse—i.e., being the one who's never around when fun or amazing stuff happens (often right after one leaves)—is well-known by fans of the American sitcom. The character who is cursed with being the Blitz is consumed with FOMO, always trying to make sure not to miss out on the next cool thing. In one clip, Barney (Neil Patrick Harris) agonizes over missing events, including a coin toss that defies the laws of physics.
- ***Portlandia*, "Did You Read?":** In one bit from this IFC sketch series with Fred Armisen and musician Carrie Brownstein, the two try to one-up each other with the things they've read. They cite magazines and newspapers, fortune cookies and the Bible, until their rapid-fire volley winds up in a race for reads the other hasn't yet seen, including the phone book across the street.



Higher TV ratings: Social TV—real-time tweets and status updates about major live events, such as the Super Bowl or Grammy Awards—appears to be stimulating viewership. For instance, Super Bowl ratings have been steadily mounting over the past few years (spiking to 111 million in 2011 and slightly beating that record this year), a pronounced uptick that coincides with more widespread social media use. In fact, social TV analytics company Bluefin Labs reported 12.2 million mentions of the game, up from 1.8 million in 2011. FOMO may be a key to the phenomenon; those who had minimal interest in watching these events before are now more likely to feel out of the loop if they don't tune in and stay abreast of the hot conversation topics.





WHAT IT MEANS

As adoption of social media, location-based tools and mobile devices continues to surge, so too will FOMO, as well as FOMO-awareness. For brands, this has powerful potential. FOMO has the potential to drive spending, since it heightens participation on social media platforms and motivates consumers to do more.

On social media, FOMO helps fuel a craving to not only become part of the conversation online and not miss a moment of it but to do things that will induce FOMO in others and, of course, spread the word about it all. This in turn drives consumer awareness and inclination to buy in. FOMO about a concert? “I’ll buy that overpriced ticket on StubHub.” FOMO about the latest designer jacket popping up in everyone’s photos? “I can’t afford it, but I’ll search out a good knockoff.”

Conversely, FOMO can be quite paralyzing—people can become caught up in their fears, unable to decide just what they should be doing at any given moment. And FOMO sufferers are often so distracted from the here and now that they fail to fully experience the moment and appreciate whatever it offers.



“The fear of missing out might become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The futile attempt to exhaust all available options can lead us to not realizing any option at all and to missing all options altogether.”

—DAN HERMAN, CEO, international strategy consulting firm Competitive Advantages

WHAT IT MEANS (cont'd.)

Teens and young adults are most susceptible to and cognizant of FOMO, but they're not necessarily trying to mitigate it. They will be particularly receptive to messaging and strategies that tap into FOMO and will welcome solutions, even when they didn't know they needed them.

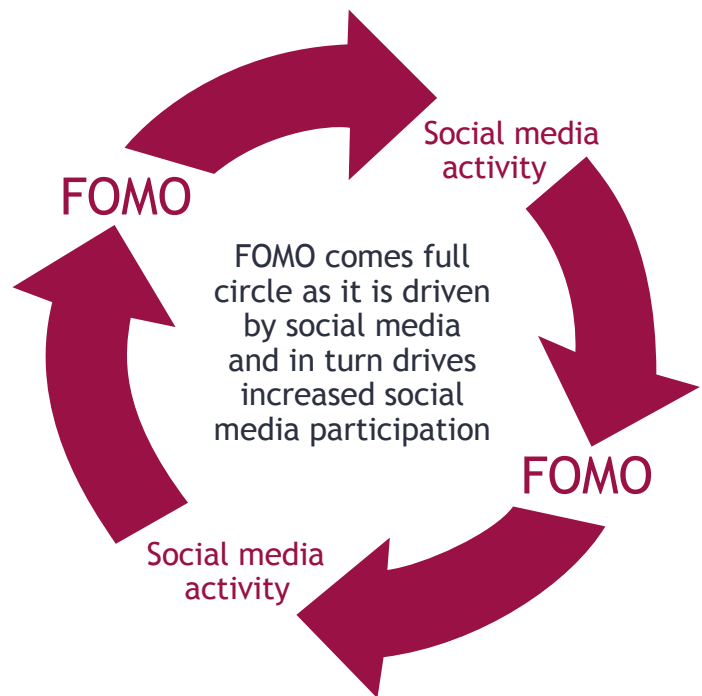
Brands have many opportunities to fine-tune messaging, offers, contests and more to tap into fears of missing out. Although there's no cure for the common FOMO, brands can focus on easing it, escalating it, making light of it, turning it into a positive and helping people to live with it.

One tactic for marketers is to help ease anxiety around FOMO. Brands can assure the afflicted that they're not missing out on much after all; those offering simple pleasures, for example, can convey that stepping back from the fray rather than following the crowd can be a smarter choice. Another tactic is to explain that the brand's offering is just as fabulous as whatever's inducing FOMO, pointing out how and why it delivers similar or better satisfactions.

Alternatively, a brand might offer tools for avoiding FOMO to consumers who act on their feelings rather than festering in them. Going to the hottest restaurant in town and afraid of missing out on the menu's best options? An app like Foodspotting provides tips and recommendations from other diners. (Indeed, real-time tools can create FOMO, but they can also help people circumvent it.) Or brands can address or encourage people to join in on the things that make them feel left out or show consumers how to get a taste of what they're missing (e.g., with more affordable or more convenient choices).

Brands can also offer exclusive, unique or over-the-top experiences likely to inspire FOMO in nonparticipants. Or messaging can escalate FOMO in order to motivate desired actions. Millennials especially tend to share openly and likewise check on what everyone else is up to, no matter how FOMO-inducing. Brands can facilitate this by providing platforms for showing and telling.

There are various ways for brands to tap into the social currency that notable experiences provide social media participants: contextual advertising on social networks (since consumers are motivated to "get in on the action" after reading about friends' activities); incentives for name dropping in photo tags, check-ins and the like through



“We’ve always had this fear of missing out, but what’s different is that now these tools give us a sense that we can actually do something about it and catch what’s going on in real time so that we don’t miss out on it.”

—BIANCA BOSKER, senior technology editor, The Huffington Post



There’s starting to be a sense of irony in the relationship to technology. ... As one of my interviewees put it, once we have language for something, it takes the power out of it. We now use ‘FOMO’ in a slightly ironic way: ‘Oh, I’m suffering from so much FOMO,’ and everybody laughs. And so there’s a consciousness developing that this isn’t necessarily a good thing, which often leads to ways of dealing with it.”

—PRIYA PARKER, researcher and founder, Thrive Labs, an organization that helps build Millennial leaders

WHAT IT MEANS (cont'd.)

programs like Facebook's Sponsored Stories; or simply making direct connections between the brand's offering and its potential cachet on social media.

Note that when tapping into FOMO, marketers must retain some sensitivity—this state of mind can be a sore spot for many consumers. So while FOMO has great potency as a marketing tool, it also has the potential to twist the knife for those especially sensitive to it. The appropriate tone will depend greatly on the audience and the category.



You're seeing a lot of experiential marketing going on. Brands want to be able to touch people in real time and create something that's memorable. Ideally people talk about it beforehand, they talk about it while they're there, but then people after the fact say 'I missed out on that Mountain Dew concert. That sucks.' Then if they find out Mountain Dew is doing something in the future, they're excited to see it, because it's only offered in that short window.

"Brands are asking, 'How can we do smart cross-platform activities that are time-sensitive so we can tap into that FOMO mentality but then also give consumers something that leaves them with a great brand experience?' So you're talking about it after the fact and almost creating FOMO, right?"

—VICTORIA CLARK, co-founder, TimeRazor, an app to alleviate FOMO



APPENDIX:
MORE ABOUT OUR
EXPERTS/INFLUENCERS

APPENDIX: MORE ABOUT OUR EXPERTS/INFLUENCERS



BIANCA BOSKER, senior technology editor, *The Huffington Post*

Bosker oversees and contributes to *The Huffington Post*'s Tech section, which she helped launch in 2009. Her work has appeared in publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *The Oregonian*. She is the co-author of a book on the cultural history of bowling, *Bowled Over: A Roll Down Memory Lane*, and is at work on a second book, *Original Copies: Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China*. She graduated from Princeton University and lives in New York City.



VICTORIA CLARK, co-founder, *TimeRazor*

TimeRazor is a “new product dedicated to you Never Missing Out.” In a past life, Clark worked with well-known business-to-consumer brands on their digital marketing. Today, she observes and documents all aspects of FOMO for *TimeRazor*'s FOMO blog. If you don't want to miss out, you can follow her on Twitter @NotVicki.



DAN HERMAN, CEO, international strategy consulting firm *Competitive Advantages*

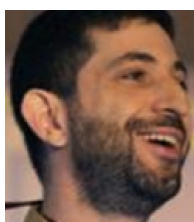
Herman began studying FOMO in the mid-'90s. Now, in conjunction with his consulting practice, he is a seminar leader, workshop moderator and a keynote speaker. He has written numerous articles and academic textbook chapters, and has published three books, which have been translated into several languages. *Outsmart the MBA Clones* was published in the U.S. by Paramount Books; the forthcoming title *Think Short: Creating and Launching Innovations That Fly* will serve as the textbook for Herman's Think Short methodology.



PRIYA PARKER, founder, *Thrive Labs*

As founder of *Thrive Labs*, Parker works with companies and leaders to zero in on their core purpose and build out smarter strategies. Drawing on 10 years of work in government, social enterprise and Track II diplomacy in the U.S., India and the Middle East, she designs visioning and innovation labs that help organizations grow from the root.

Parker is an expert in residence at the Harvard Innovation Lab and serves as faculty for the MIT Sloan Innovation Period and Mobius Executive Leadership. A social entrepreneur, she co-founded the international Sustained Dialogue Campus Network for universities engaged in transformative dialogue to develop future leaders. She speaks on vision and the Millennials, most recently at TEDxCambridge.

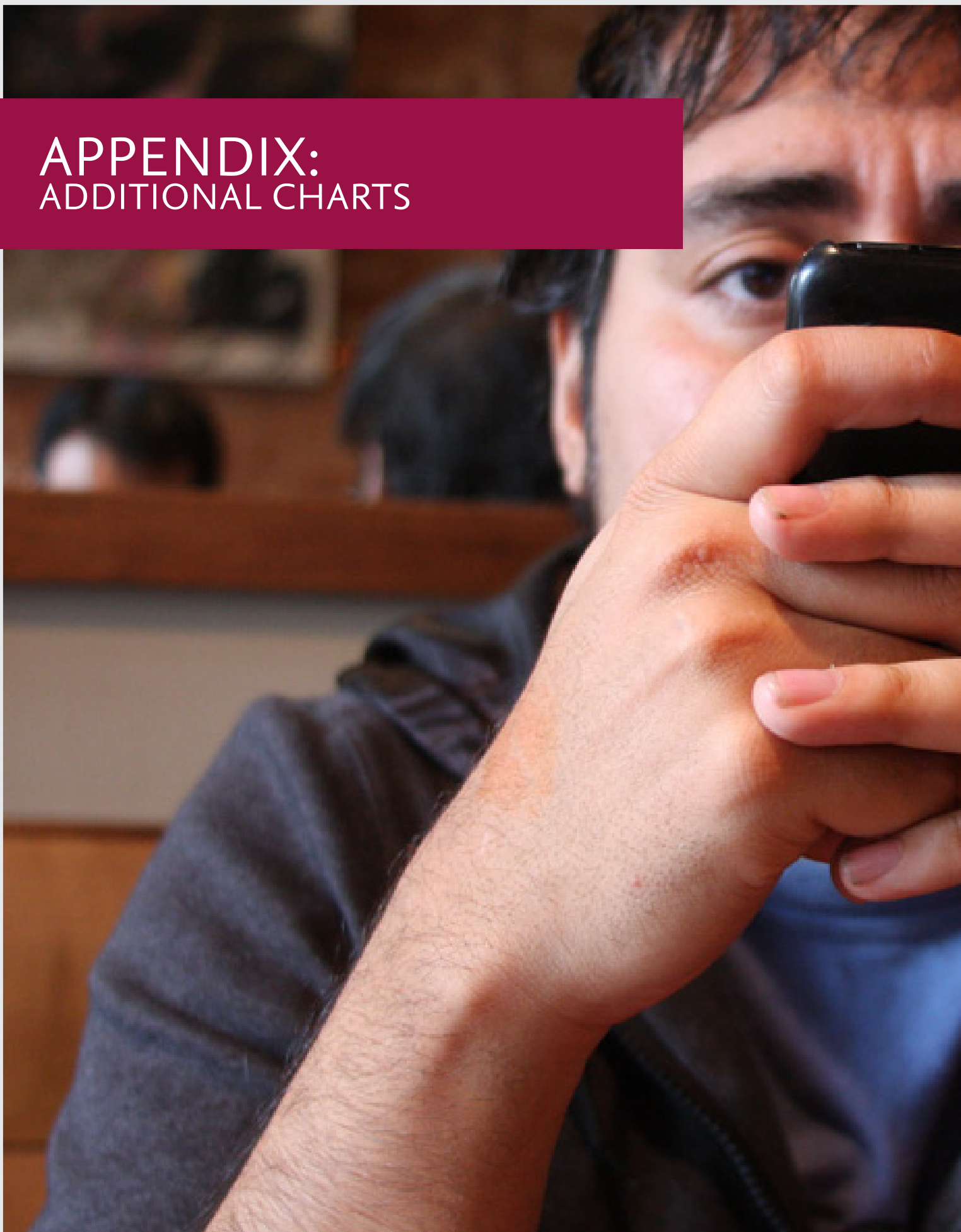


MARC A. SMITH, sociologist and chief social scientist, *Connected Action Consulting Group*

Smith specializes in the social organization of online communities and computer-mediated interaction. He founded and managed the Community Technologies Group at Microsoft Research and led the development of social media reporting and analysis tools for Telligent Systems. He currently leads the *Connected Action Consulting Group* in Silicon Valley.

Smith is also a co-founder of the Social Media Research Foundation, dedicated to open tools, open data and open scholarship related to social media, and contributes to its NodeXL project, which adds social network analysis features to the Excel spreadsheet. He is co-editor of *Communities in Cyberspace* (Routledge), a collection of essays exploring the ways identity, interaction and social order develop in online groups.

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS



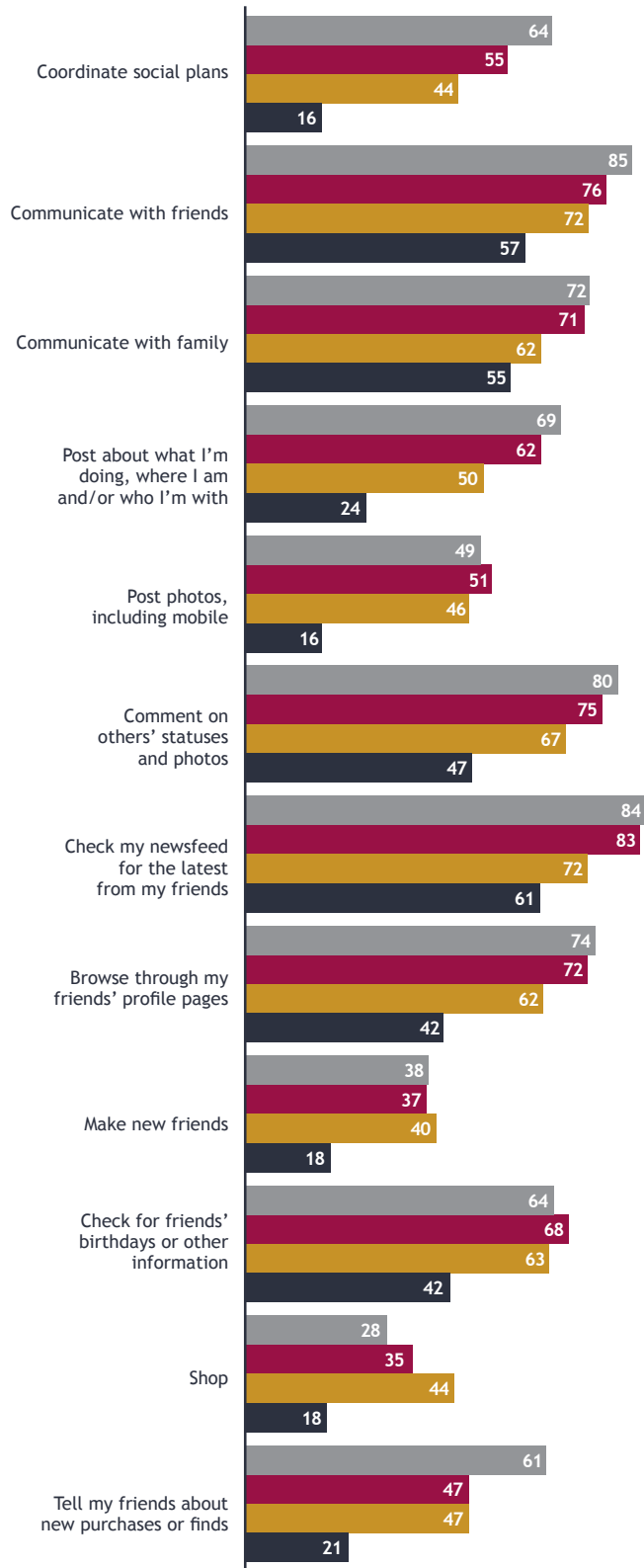
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1D:

Activities on Facebook (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who do each of the following at least once a week on Facebook

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

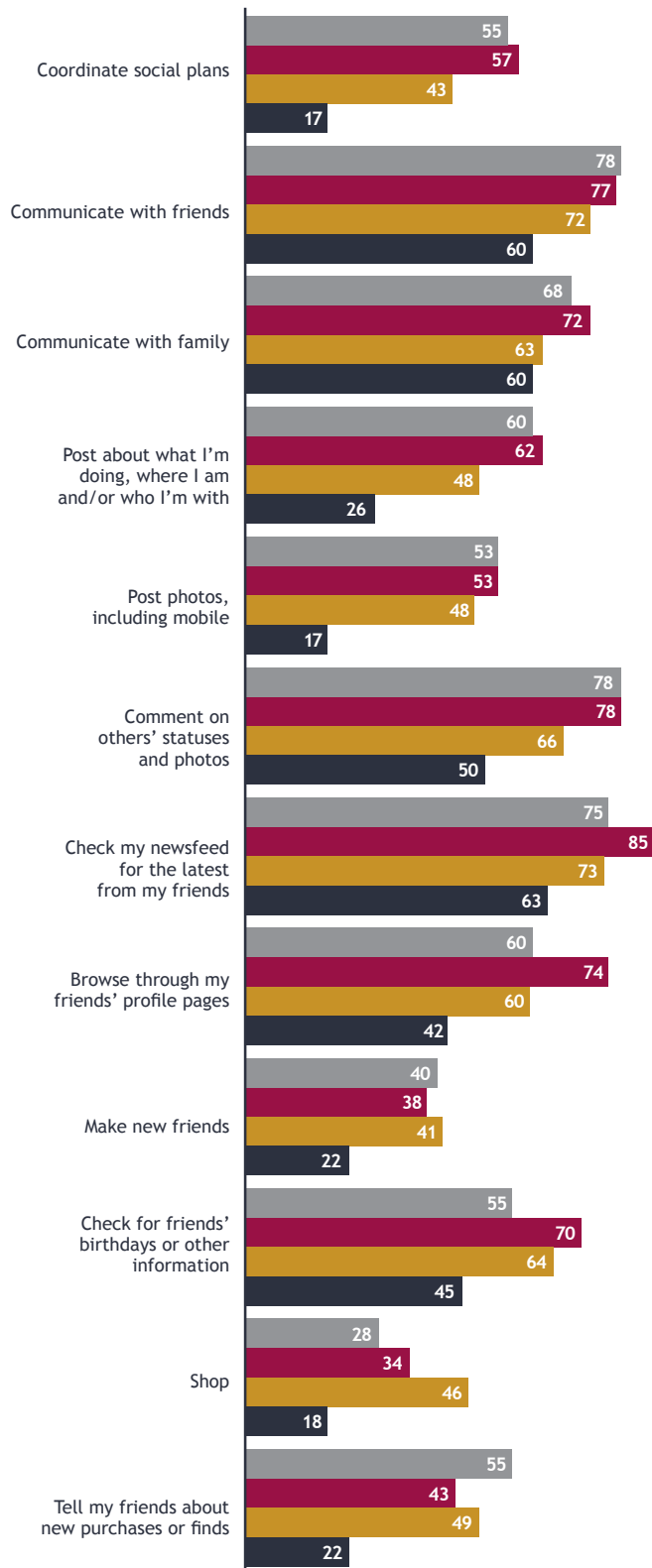
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1E:

Activities on Facebook (U.S.)

Percentage who do each of the following at least once a week on Facebook

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

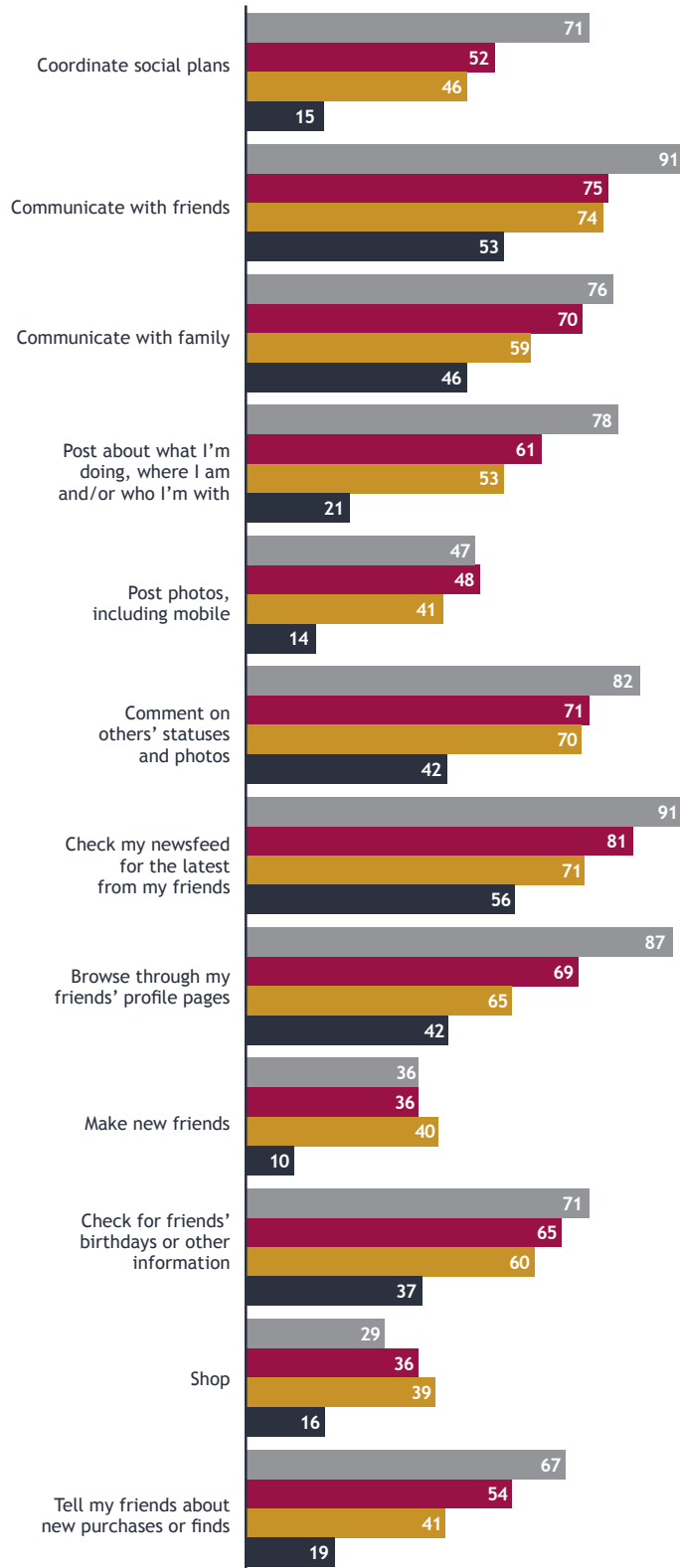
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1F:

Activities on Facebook (U.K.)

Percentage who do each of the following at least once a week on Facebook

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1G:

Attitudes toward social media (U.S.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)

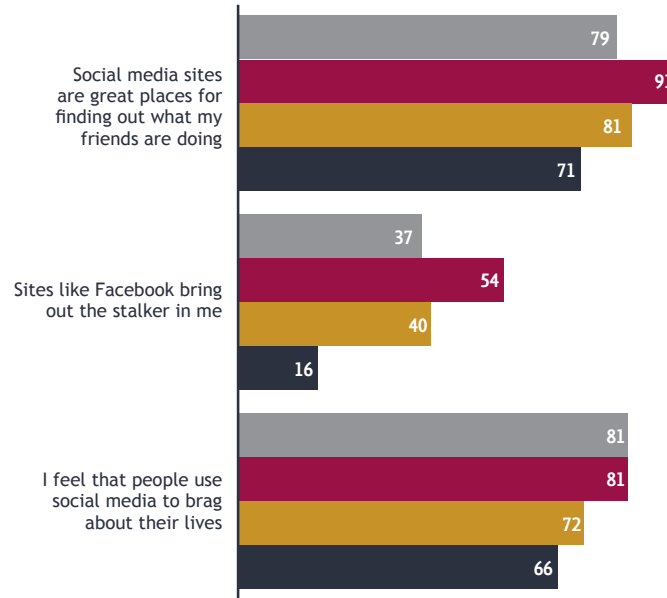
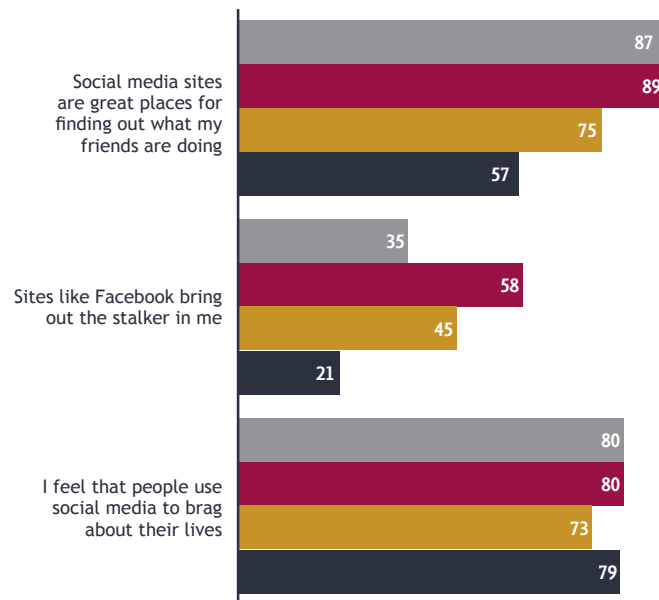


FIGURE 1H:

Attitudes toward social media (U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1I:

Social media and self-image (U.S.)

Percentage who agree with the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)

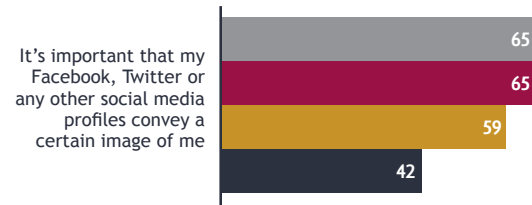


FIGURE 1J:

Social media and self-image (U.K.)

Percentage who agree with the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1K:

Being in the know (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)

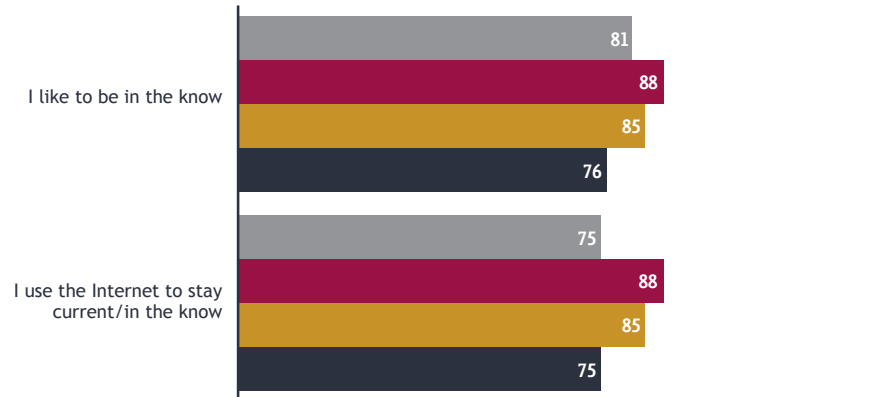


FIGURE 1L:

Being in the know (U.S.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)

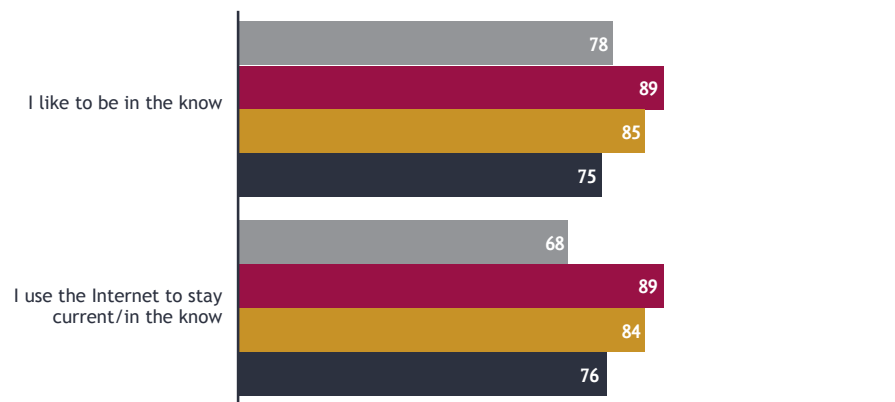
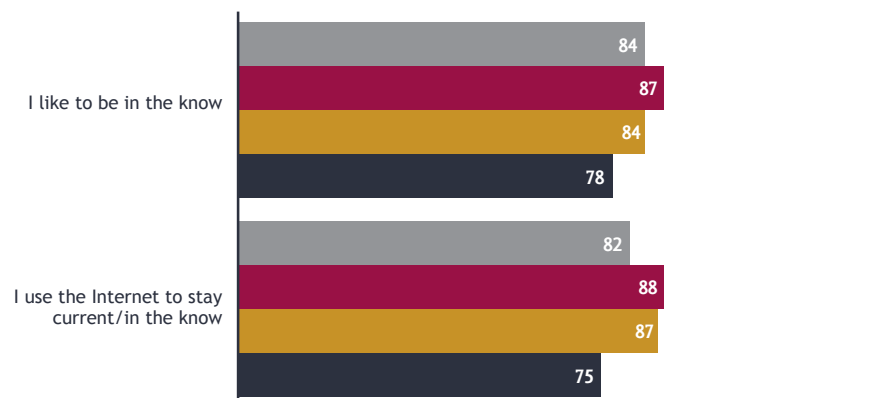


FIGURE 1M:

Being in the know (U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



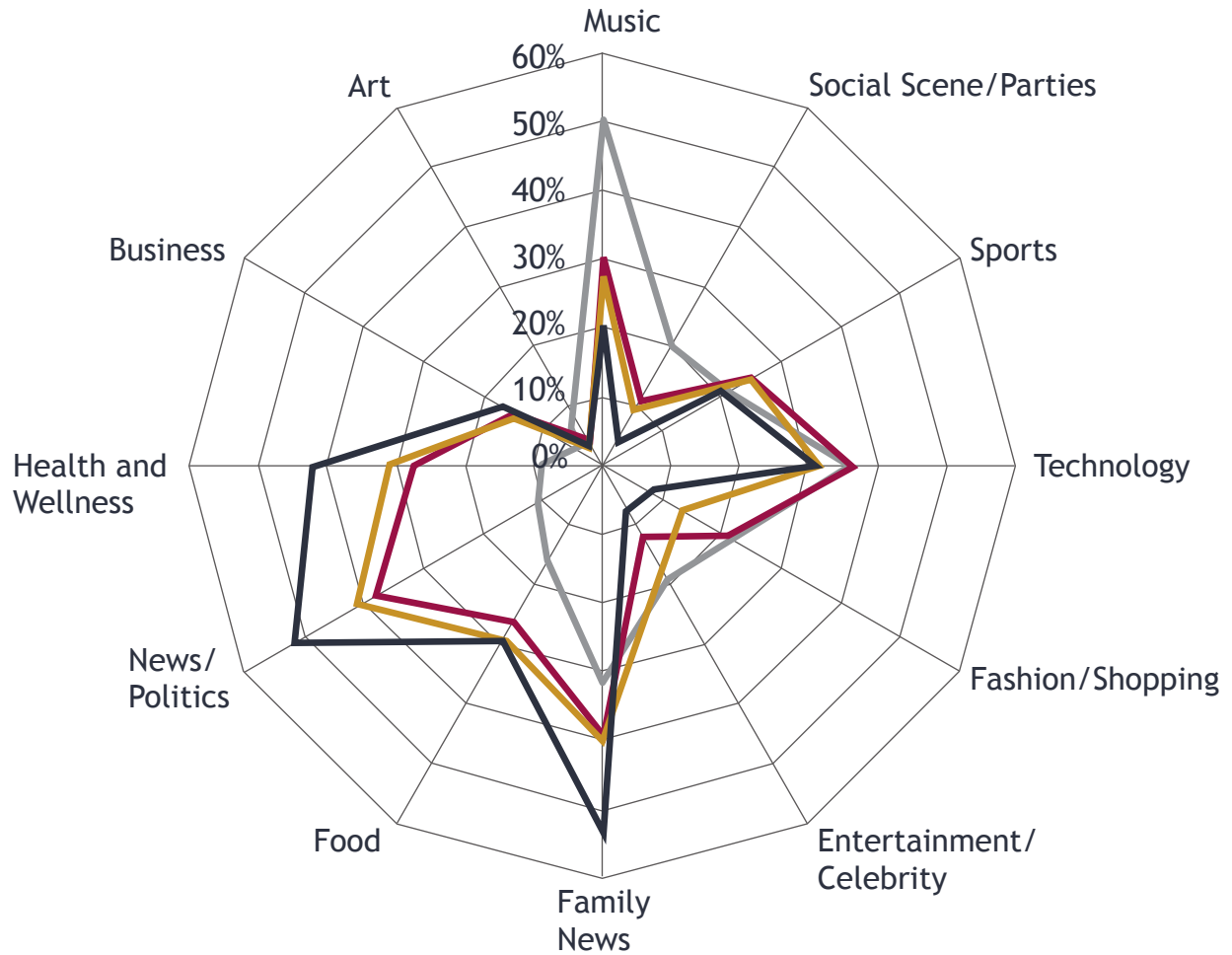
Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1N:

Top areas to be in the know (U.S. and U.K.)

■ Teen Millennials (13-17)
 ■ Adult Millennials (18-34)
 ■ Gen Xers (35-47)
 ■ Boomers (48-67)

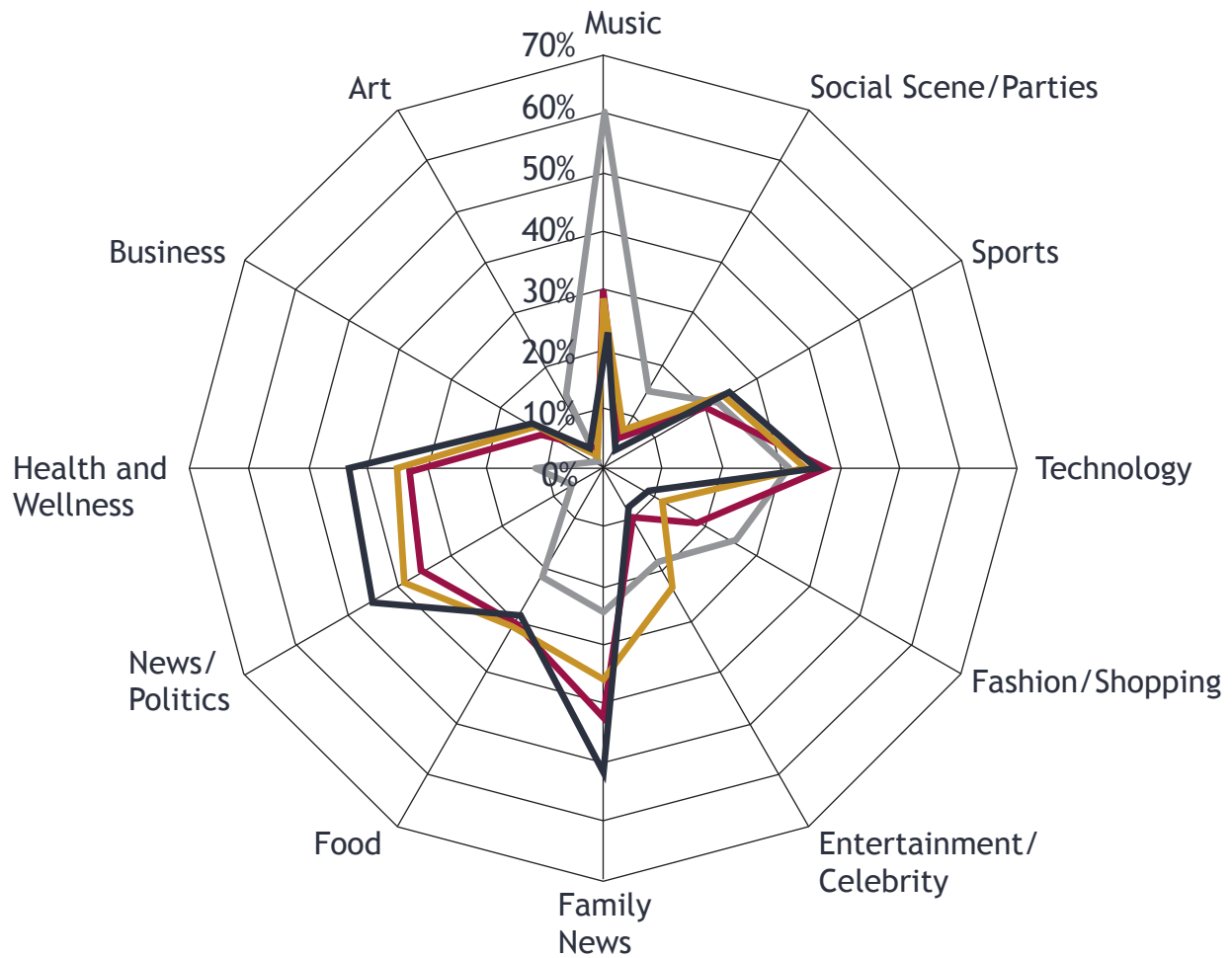


APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 10:

Top areas to be in the know (U.S.)

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



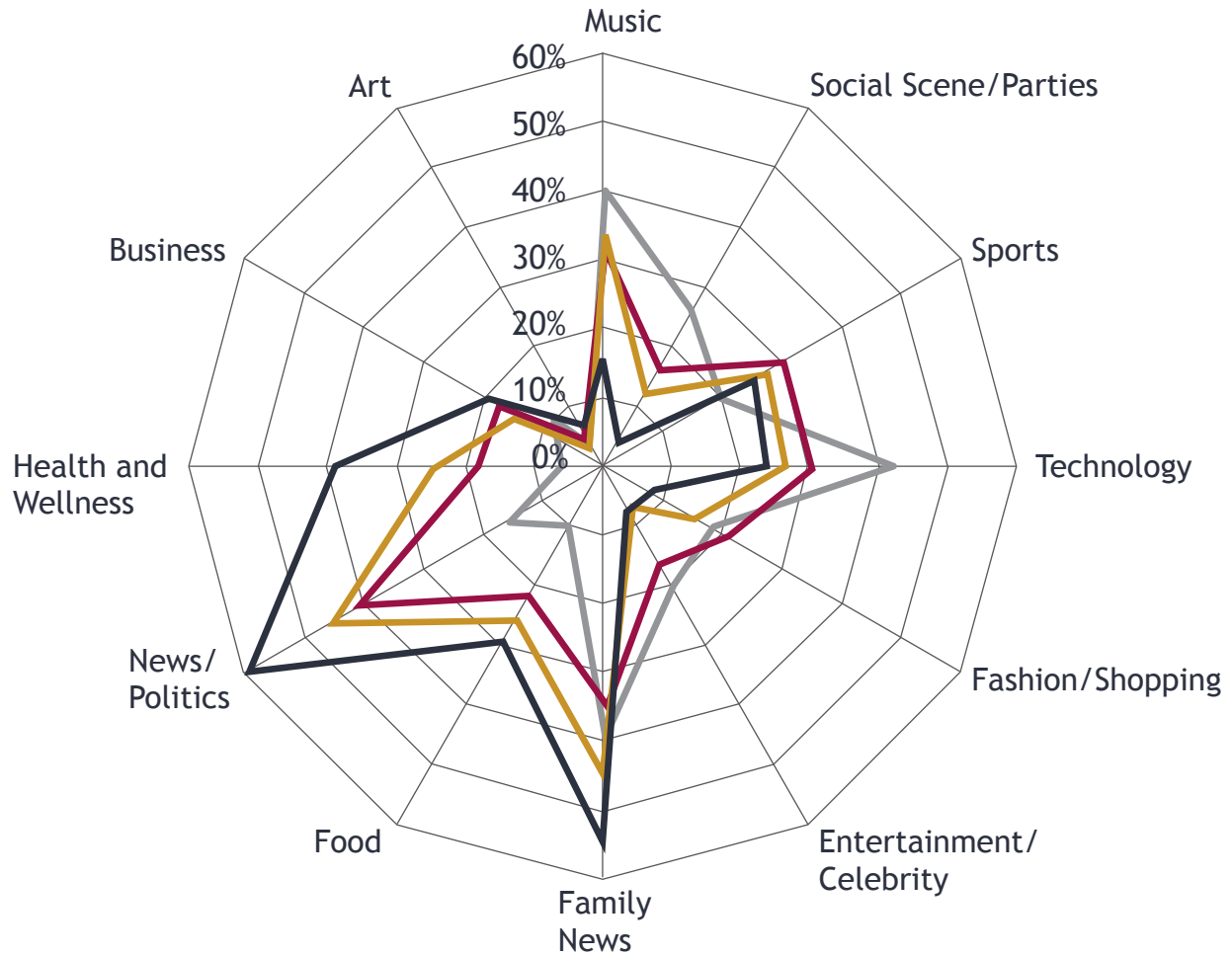
Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1P:

Top areas to be in the know (U.K.)

■ Teen Millennials (13-17)
 ■ Adult Millennials (18-34)
 ■ Gen Xers (35-47)
 ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

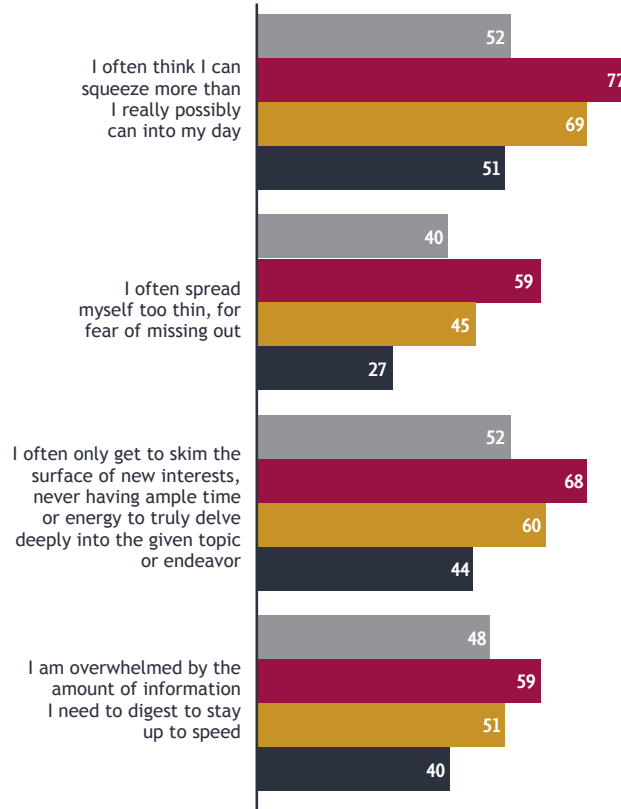
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1Q:

Life in overdrive (U.S.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

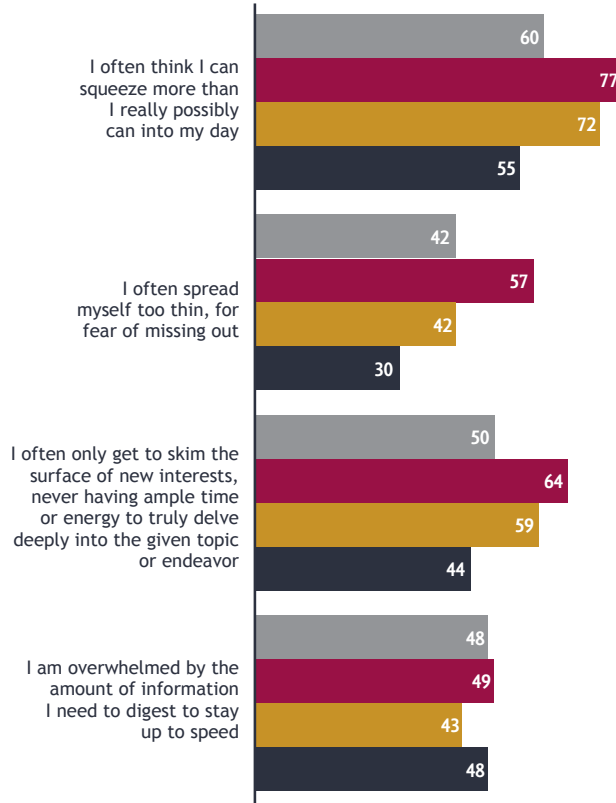
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 1R:

Life in overdrive (U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2C:

Relating to FOMO and experiencing it (U.S. and U.K.)

Percentage who can relate to FOMO and experience it

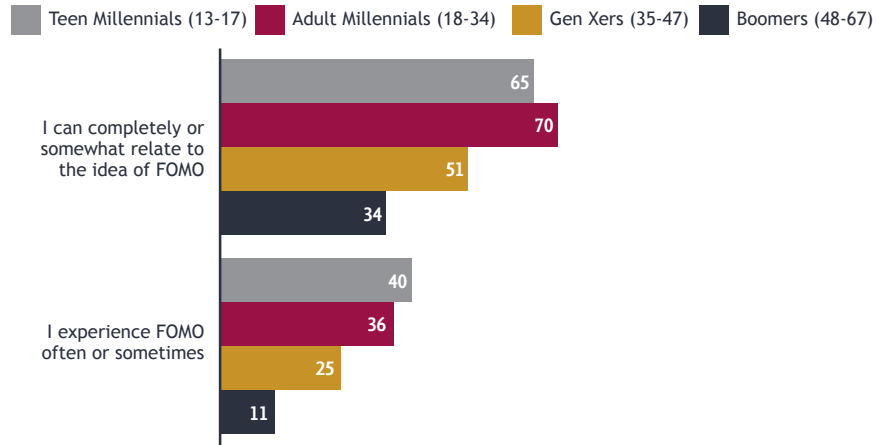


FIGURE 2D:

Relating to FOMO and experiencing it (U.S.)

Percentage who can relate to FOMO and experience it

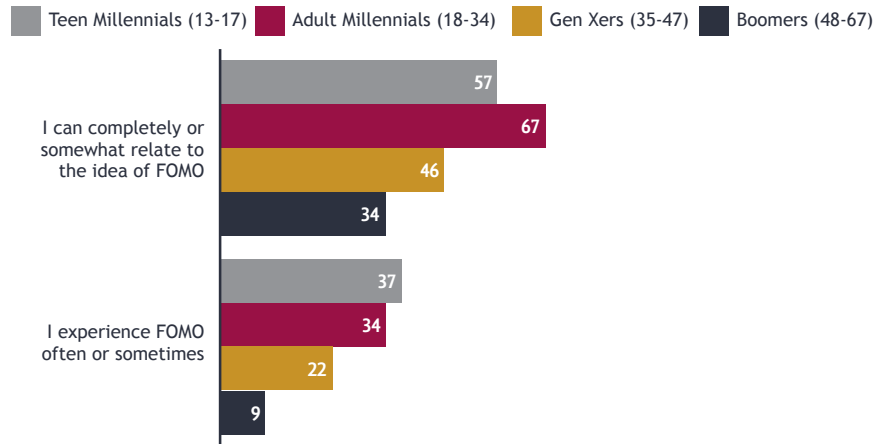
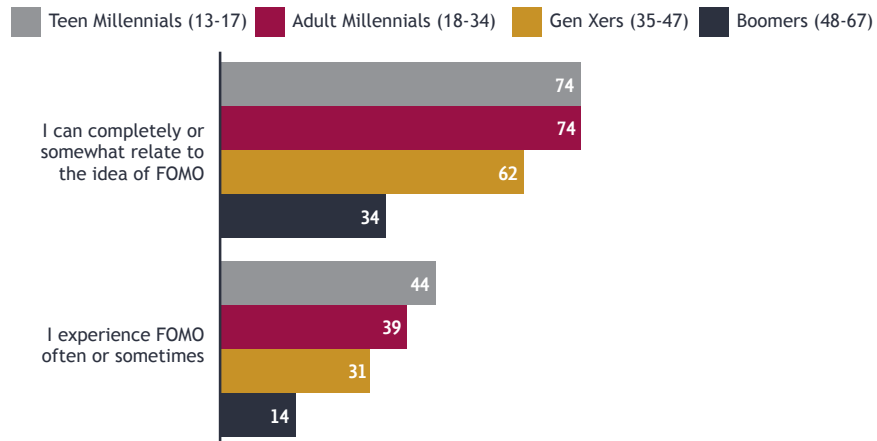


FIGURE 2E:

Relating to FOMO and experiencing it (U.K.)

Percentage who can relate to FOMO and experience it



Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2F:
FOMOfeed (U.S.)

Percentage who would feel very or somewhat left out on social media in the following situations

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)

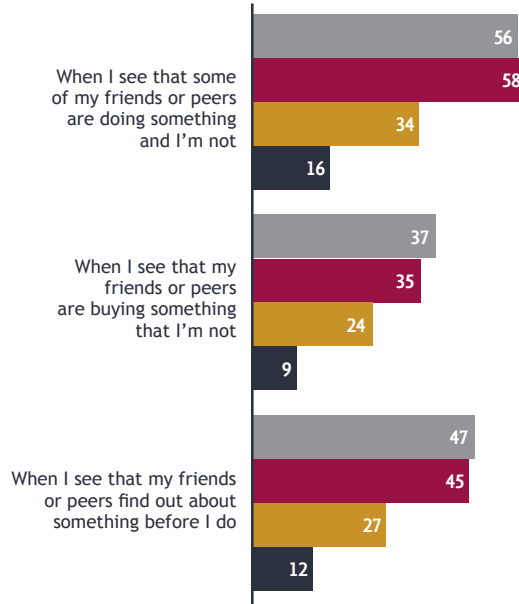
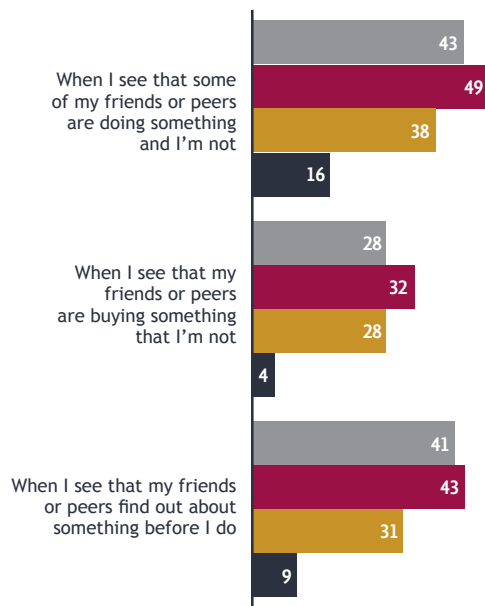


FIGURE 2G:
FOMOfeed (U.K.)

Percentage who would feel very or somewhat left out on social media in the following situations

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

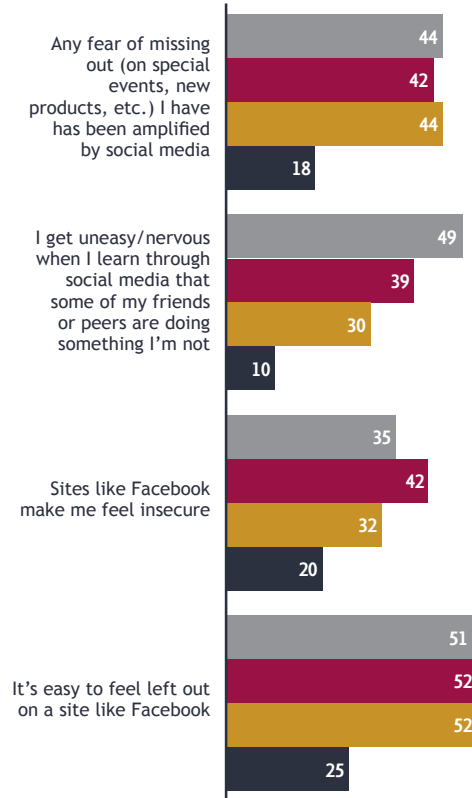
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2H:

Social media's effect on FOMO (U.S.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



Caution: Low base size for teens

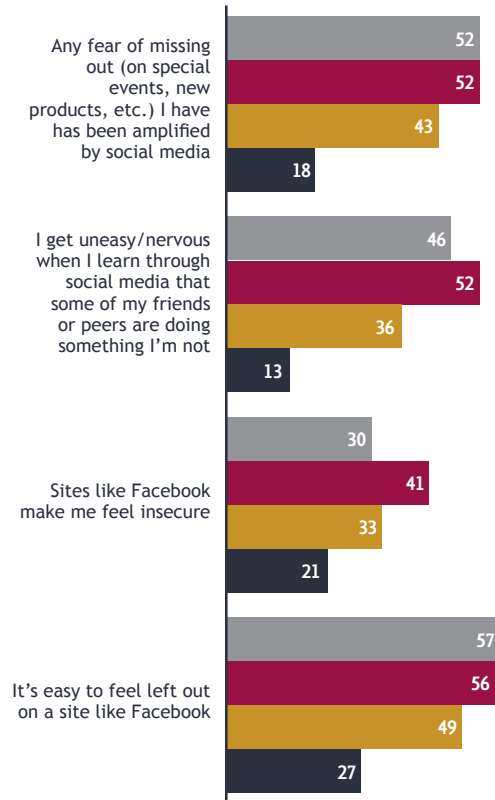
APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 21:

Social media's effect on FOMO (U.K.)

Percentage who agree with each of the following

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



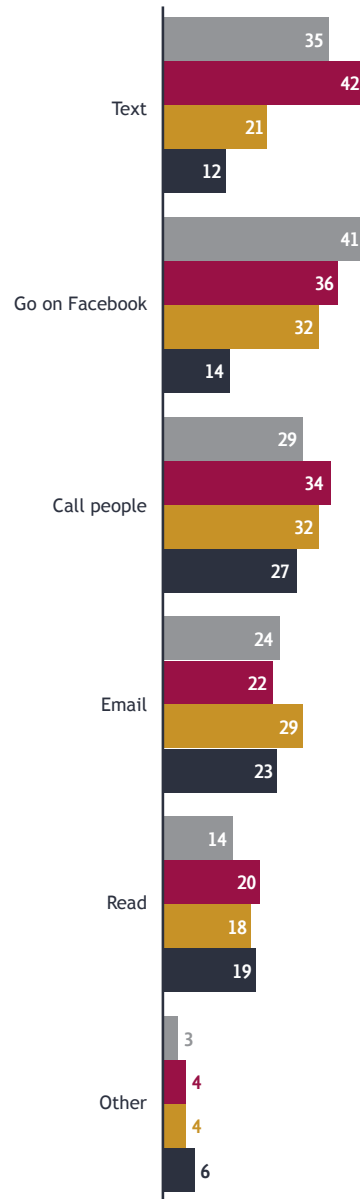
Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2J:

How people alleviate FOMO (U.S. and U.K.)

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)

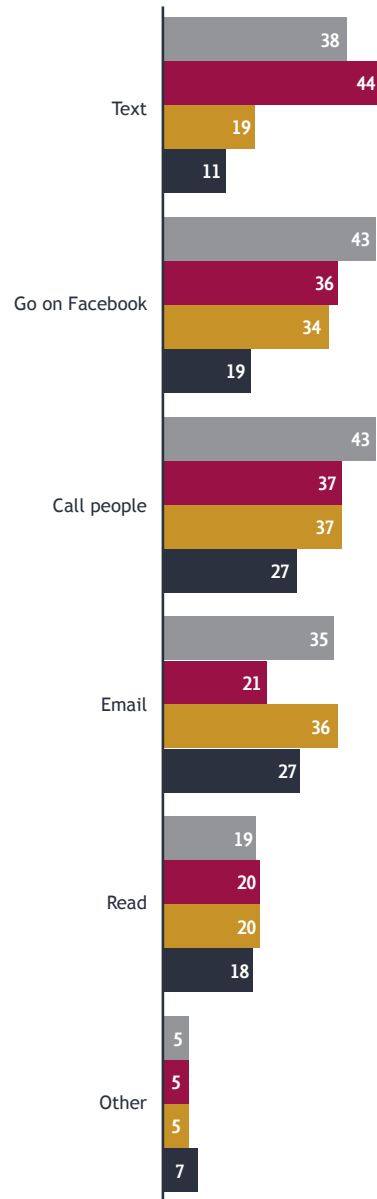


APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2K:

How people alleviate FOMO (U.S.)

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



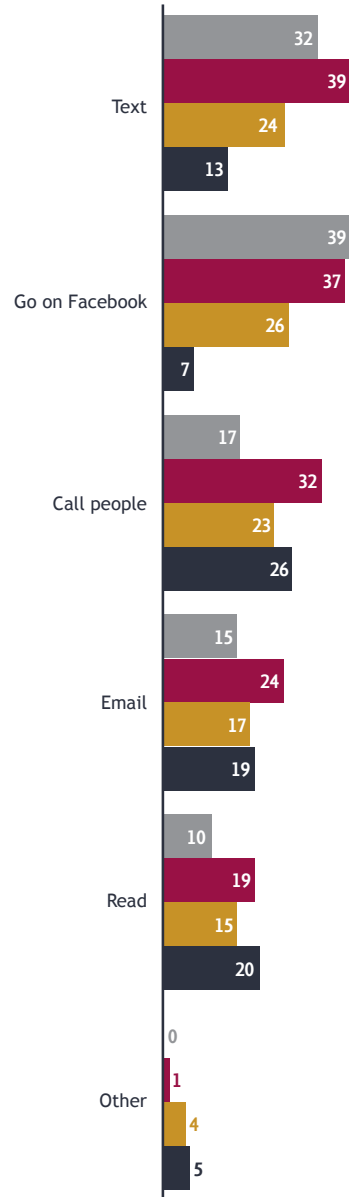
Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2L:

How people alleviate FOMO (U.K.)

■ Teen Millennials (13-17) ■ Adult Millennials (18-34) ■ Gen Xers (35-47) ■ Boomers (48-67)



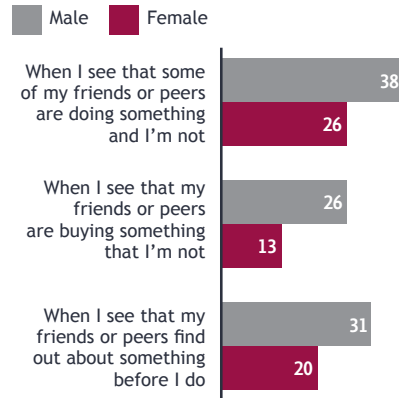
Caution: Low base size for teens

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL CHARTS (cont'd.)

FIGURE 2M:

FOMOfeed by gender (U.S.)

Percentage who would feel very or somewhat left out on social media in the following situations



THANK YOU

JWT: JWT is the world's best-known marketing communications brand. Headquartered in New York, JWT is a true global network with more than 200 offices in over 90 countries employing nearly 10,000 marketing professionals.

JWT consistently ranks among the top agency networks in the world and continues its dominant presence in the industry by staying on the leading edge—from producing the first-ever TV commercial in 1939 to developing award-winning branded content for brands such as Smirnoff, Macy's, Ford and HSBC.

JWT's pioneering spirit enables the agency to forge deep relationships with clients including Bayer, Bloomberg, Cadbury, Diageo, DTC, Ford, HSBC, Johnson & Johnson, Kellogg's, Kimberly-Clark, Kraft, Nestlé, Nokia, Rolex, Royal Caribbean, Schick, Shell, Unilever, Vodafone and many others. JWT's parent company is WPP (NASDAQ: WPPGY).

JWTIntelligence: JWTIntelligence is a center for provocative thinking that is a part of JWT. We make sense of the chaos in a world of hyper-abundant information and constant innovation—finding quality amid the quantity.

We focus on identifying changes in the global zeitgeist so as to convert shifts into compelling opportunities for brands. We have done this on behalf of multinational clients across several categories including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, food, and home and personal care.

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SONAR

Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO)

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