Teens Still Like Talking Face To Face, But Texting Catching Up

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Teens report spending 13.5% of their online time on their smartphone

Every generation of young people seems to be misunderstood by their elders, and todayâ€™s teens are no exception. While adults may accuse adolescents of preferring electronics to face-to-face contact, March data on teenage internet users in the US from Common Sense Media, a nonprofit that advocates for kids and families, shows that claim may be unfounded, or at least deserves qualification.

Nearly half of 13- to 17-year-old respondents said their favorite way to communicate with friends was in person. Texting was a close second, though, with one-third saying they preferred it.

Among those who liked texting better, 30% said it was the quickest way to communicate, 23% said it was easiest and 16% said it gave them more time to think about how to respond.

For those who preferred face-to-face communication, 38% indicated that it was more fun, while 29% said they could better understand what people mean in person.

Nevertheless, teens today are â€œdigital nativesâ€• in every sense, and even smartphones represent a significant online access point for these young internet users.

A May study of US teens by security firm McAfee, for example, showed that teen internet users reported spending 13.5% of their online time on their smartphone.

Whatâ€™s the takeaway for marketers trying to win a share of young internet usersâ€™ attention? March data from Ipsos OTX and Ipsos Global @dvisor suggests mobile ads are a good bet.

More than one-third (36%) of US internet users under 35 have read an ad on their mobile phone, according to the survey.

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