



## Social Media:

A Nationally Representative Multi-Mode Survey

2021 Results

### *Overview of Methodology*

Consumer Reports fielded this Social Media Survey to understand Americans' use of and attitudes toward social media, with a special focus on misinformation in social media; the ways people curate their social media experiences, such as by changing settings or deleting accounts; beauty filters; and purchases made on Instagram. These results are based on interviews conducted from August 19<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

The survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a nationally representative sample. Interviews were administered in English and Spanish, both online and by phone. In total, NORC collected 2,263 interviews. Of these, 144 had never had any social media accounts and were not asked any questions beyond the initial questions about which social media platforms, if any, they had ever used. Of the remaining 2,119 interviews, 1,985 were administered in English and 134 in Spanish; 2,010 were conducted by web and 109 were conducted by phone. Final data are weighted by age, gender, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, education, and Census Division to be proportionally representative of the US adult population who have ever had any social media accounts. The exception is the first question, about which social media accounts a person has ever had; this is weighted to be representative of the full US adult population.

The margin of error for results based on the social media users is +/-2.85 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins, and only those subgroups for which there are at least 100 unweighted cases are included.

## TOPLINE RESULTS

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The questions presented below were shown to respondents in this order unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, question verbiage, response answer choices, or direction of scales were randomized or rotated and those instances are noted below.

Prepared by CR Survey Research Department, October 2021

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## SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

SM1. [RANDOMIZE ITEMS, WITH "OTHER" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST. RESPONDENTS WERE PROMPTED ONCE IF THEY DID NOT ANSWER.]

Please indicate whether you have an account on any of the following social media platforms.	
	Total
	%
<b>Facebook</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	62
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	19
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	8
No, and I've never had one	11
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,254</b>
<b>Instagram</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	31
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	24
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	4
No, and I've never had one	41
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,245</b>
<b>Pinterest</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	15
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	31
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	6
No, and I've never had one	48
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,248</b>
<b>Twitter</b>	
	<b>Total</b>
Yes, and I use it regularly	14
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	23
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	11
No, and I've never had one	52
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,248</b>
<b>Snapchat</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	16
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	17
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	10
No, and I've never had one	57
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,245</b>

SM1. [CONTINUED.]

<b>Tumblr</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	2
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	6
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	7
No, and I've never had one	85
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,241</b>
<b>TikTok</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes, and I use it regularly	19
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	10
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	4
No, and I've never had one	67
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,245</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	50
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	20
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	2
No, and I've never had one	28
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,251</b>
<b>Reddit</b>	
Yes, and I use it regularly	10
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	12
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	2
No, and I've never had one	76
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,241</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes, and I use it regularly	4
Yes, but I rarely or never check it	1
No, I used to have an account, but I deleted it	0
No, and I've never had one	94
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,223</b>
<b>Percentage saying "Yes, and I use it regularly" for any platform, including "other"</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes, and I use it regularly	84
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	<b>2,263</b>
<b>Percentage NOT saying "No, and I've never had one" across ALL platforms, including "other"</b>	<b>Total</b>
Currently have or used to have any kind of social media account	94
No, and I've never had one (for ALL platforms)	6
<b>Base: All respondents</b>	

Note: The survey ended after this question for respondents who refused when prompted and those who responded "No, and I've never had one" to all, including "other." Net regularly and net ever responses are presented as a composite of responses to SM1.

## GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA QUESTIONS

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SM2.

Have you ever read news on social media that you initially believed to be true but later learned it was made up?	
	Total
	%
Yes	59
No	22
Unsure	19
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,110</b>

SM3.

How often, if ever, would you say you check a piece of news that you've read on social media to find out if it is true?	
	Total
	%
Always	25
Sometimes	49
Rarely	16
Never	7
I do not have any active social media accounts	3
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,103</b>

*By "check" we mean you look it up elsewhere, such as by Googling it or seeing if there's an article about it on a news site you trust.*

SM4. [RANDOMIZE ITEMS. "NATIONAL OR LOCAL TV NEWS" AND "CABLE NEWS CHANNELS" WERE KEPT TOGETHER IN EITHER ORDER WHEN RANDOMIZING. "OTHER" AND "I DO NOT FOLLOW THE NEWS" CAME LAST, IN THAT ORDER. "I DO NOT FOLLOW THE NEWS" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

Which, if any, of the following sources do you regularly use to get your news?

Select all that apply.

	Total
	%
National or local TV news networks, such as ABC or CBS	56
News websites, such as CNN.com, BuzzFeed, NPR.org, FoxNews.com, etc.	44
Cable news channels, such as MSNBC, CNN, and Fox News	43
Social media	38
News aggregators (e.g., Google news, Apple news, Feedly, etc.)	34
Radio news	32
Print newspaper or newsmagazine	25
Comedy or late night shows (e.g., Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel Live, The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, etc.)	13
Podcasts	12
Other	4
I do not follow the news	5
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,113</b>

SM5.

*Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have started fact-checking content and labeling content that is inaccurate in order to decrease the spread of misinformation and increase transparency. Sometimes, there is a link to factually correct information ("verified content") in addition to the label. On some sites, a notification also appears when people try to share the inaccurate content.*

Have you EVER seen content that has been labeled as inaccurate on a social media site or app?

	Total
	%
Yes	56
No	30
Unsure	14
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,110</b>

SM6. [SHOW IF SM5 = "YES." RANDOMIZE ITEMS, WITH "OTHER" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST. "I IGNORED THE POSTS" WAS KEPT WITH "I DECIDED TO VIEW THE CONTENT" IN EITHER ORDER WHEN RANDOMIZING, AND "I DECIDED NOT TO SHARE" WAS KEPT WITH "I DECIDED TO SHARE" WHEN RANDOMIZING IN EITHER ORDER.]

When you've come across content that has been labeled as inaccurate on a social media platform, which, if any, of the following have you done in response to seeing the label?

Select all that apply.

	Total
	%
I ignored the posts labeled as misinformation and moved on	47
I did additional research on my own	45
I decided <u>not</u> to share the content with others	31
I viewed the content	30
I followed the links to the verified content	21
I decided to <u>share</u> the content with others	5
Other	3
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever seen content labeled as inaccurate on a social media app or site</b>	<b>1,186</b>

SM7. [ORDER OF "TRUST" AND "DISTRUST" IN QUESTION STEM RANDOMLY ROTATED AND RESPONSE SCALE ROTATED TO MATCH, WITH "IT DEPENDS" RESPONSES ALWAYS SHOWN LAST. IF SM5 DOES NOT EQUAL "YES," QUESTION STEM READ "TO WHAT EXTEND DO YOU, OR WOULD YOU..." AS SHOWN; IF SM5 = "YES," QUESTION STEM ONLY READ "TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU..."]

To what extent do you, or would you, distrust or trust the labels that social media companies use to flag advertisements, posts, or articles as inaccurate?

	Total
	%
<b>Strongly trust:</b> if the social media company flags the content as inaccurate, I don't believe the content	7
<b>Somewhat trust:</b> if the social media company flags the content as inaccurate, I am less likely to believe the content	27
<b>Neither trust nor distrust:</b> if the social media company flags the content as inaccurate, it has no effect on whether or how much I trust the content	25
<b>Somewhat distrust:</b> if the social media company flags the content as inaccurate, I am more likely to believe the content	14
<b>Strongly distrust:</b> if the social media company flags the content as inaccurate, I believe the content	10
It depends on the platform	8
It depends on the topic	10
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,093</b>

SM8.

Do you think the government should have more oversight over social media?	
	Total
	%
Yes	35
No	65
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,084</b>

SM9. [RANDOMIZE ORDER OF STATEMENTS..]

Which of the following two statements would you say BEST describes your view about social media's impact on society?	
Would you say . . .	
	Total
	%
Social media fosters division in society by showing people only certain issue-oriented news items and advertising based on factors such as demographics and interests	60
Social media creates an environment that fosters free speech where people can hear and share perspectives on all sides of an issue	39
Don't know or no response*	1
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,112</b>

\*Note: This was not an explicit response option.

## CURATING SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCES

CURATE1.

Do you ever find yourself feeling jealous or bad about yourself after looking at someone else's social media posts?	
	Total
	%
Yes	26
No	74
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,106</b>

CURATE2. [RANDOMIZE ITEMS, KEEPING "MUTED," "BLOCKED," AND "UNFOLLOWED" TOGETHER IN ORDER. "OTHER" AND "I HAVE NOT ADJUSTED THE SETTINGS" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST IN THAT ORDER. "I HAVE NOT ADJUSTED THE SETTINGS" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

In which, if any, of the following ways have you adjusted the settings on a social media platform to limit certain kinds of content?

Select all that apply.

	Total
	%
Unfollowed someone	59
Blocked someone	55
Made it so I have to approve people before they can view my account	40
Blocked anonymous contacts	39
Turned off targeted ads	39
Muted someone	33
Adjusted what topics display in my feed	24
Turned off comments	15
Other	2
I have not adjusted the settings on any social media platforms to limit or filter content	16
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,112</b>

CURATE3.

Have you ever wanted to change your privacy settings on one or more social media platforms but didn't know how?

	Total
	%
Yes	37
No	63
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,101</b>



CURATE4. [SHOW IF ANY RESPONSE IN SM1 = "YES, BUT I RARELY OR NEVER CHECK IT" OR "NO, I USED TO HAVE AN ACCOUNT, BUT I DELETED IT." RANDOMIZE ITEMS. "OTHER" AND "NONE OF THESE" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST IN THAT ORDER. "NONE OF THESE" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

You said earlier that there is at least one social media platform on which you used to have an account but do not now, OR that you have an account but never use it.

Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you deactivated, deleted, or stopped using your account(s)?

Select all that apply.

	Total
	%
It was not interesting to you anymore	62
It was taking too much of your time	29
There was too much misinformation on it	17
Privacy concerns	17
You were offended by other people's posts	11
It was causing you anxiety	11
Your account was hacked or otherwise compromised	5
You were a victim of harassment	4
Other	6
None of these	10
<b>Base: Respondents who have at least one social media account that they rarely or never use and/or who have deleted at least one account</b>	<b>1,748</b>

CURATE5.

Have you ever considered deleting a social media account?

	Total
	%
Yes, and I did	37
Yes, but I decided to keep it	35
No	27
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,104</b>

CURATE7. [SHOW IF CURATE5 = "YES, BUT I DECIDED TO KEEP IT." RANDOMIZE ITEMS. "OTHER" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST.]

You mentioned that you considered deleting a social media account, but did not. Why did you keep the account(s)? Would you say . . .

Select *all that apply*.

	<b>Total</b>
	%
It's the easiest way to stay connected with people I don't live with	57
It just seemed easier to stop using it than to delete it altogether	38
I'm afraid I'd miss out on things if I stopped using it	23
It helps me to keep up with news	21
It's a habit I can't break	16
I'd never remember birthdays without it	15
I depend on it for organizing or participating in groups	15
I use it to promote my work	8
Other	6
<b>Base: Respondents who considered deleting a social media account, but decided to keep it</b>	<b>746</b>

## BEAUTY FILTERS

FILTER1.

Have you ever edited your appearance before posting a picture or video, such as by using an Instagram, Tiktok, or Snapchat beauty filter?

*This question is about filters and software designed to improve a person's appearance. Please do not include other kinds of filters, like, for example, the ones that give the subject dog ears or swap one person's face with someone else's.*

	<b>Total</b>
	%
Yes	21
No	68
I have not heard of these filters	11
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever had some kind of social media account</b>	<b>2,103</b>

FILTER2. [SHOW IF FILTER1 = "YES." ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]

*This question is about filters and software designed to improve a person's appearance. Please do not include other kinds of filters, like, for example, the ones that give the subject dog ears or swap one person's face with someone else's.*

About how often do you edit your appearance with a beauty filter when you post pictures or videos of yourself to social media?

	Total
	%
Never	9
Rarely	34
Sometimes	35
Often	13
Always or nearly always	9
<b>Base: Respondents who use beauty filters</b>	<b>416</b>

FILTER3. [SHOW IF FILTER1 = "YES" OR "NO." RANDOMIZE ORDER OF STATEMENTS.]

*This question is about filters and software designed to improve a person's appearance. Please do not include other kinds of filters, like, for example, the ones that give the subject dog ears or swap one person's face with someone else's.*

Which of these statements comes closest to your own opinion, even if neither is exactly right?

	Total
	%
Beauty filters and other image-retouching programs are troubling	59
Beauty filters and other image-retouching programs are harmless	39
Don't know or no response*	2
<b>Base: Respondents who have heard of beauty filters</b>	<b>1,890</b>

\*Note: This was not an explicit response option.

FILTER4. [SHOW IF EITHER STATEMENT SELECTED IN FILTER3. RESPONDENTS PROVIDED OPEN-ENDED TEXT TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION.]

Please tell us a little about why you chose that answer.

## SHOPPING ON INSTAGRAM

[THIS SECTION WAS SHOWN ONLY TO PEOPLE WHO HAD EVER USED INSTAGRAM—WHERE SM1\_B DID NOT EQUAL “NO, AND I’VE NEVER HAD ONE.” RESULTS ARE SHOWN BOTH OUT OF ALL RESPONDENTS WHO SAW THE SECTION AND THOSE WHO REGULARLY USE INSTAGRAM—WHERE SM1\_B = “YES, AND I USE IT REGULARLY.”]

IS1. [RANDOMIZE ITEMS.]

Have you ever seen any advertisements or product placement on Instagram?

*Instagram Shopping is a feature, accessible by tapping the icon that looks like a shopping bag, that shows only ads. These ads usually have a link to view a product on a website and to message the company or person who posted it. On the other hand, sponsored posts (also known as “influencer marketing”) are posts that show up in your feed to promote a brand or product. Ads appear as regular advertisements, as opposed to posts, in various sections of the app.*

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
<b>Through the Instagram Shopping feature</b>		
Yes	29	42
No	48	40
Unsure	23	18
<b>Base: As shown</b>	<b>1,286</b>	<b>685</b>
<b>Through an ad or sponsored post elsewhere on Instagram</b>		
Yes	47	66
No	35	24
Unsure	18	10
<b>Base: As shown</b>	<b>1,286</b>	<b>685</b>

IS3. [SHOW IF IS1 = "YES" FOR EITHER INSTAGRAM SHOPPING OR ELSEWHERE ON INSTAGRAM. RESPONSE OPTIONS SHOWN IN THE ORDER: "YES, THROUGH INSTAGRAM SHOPPING"; "YES, FROM ANOTHER SITE"; "NO". "NO" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

Have you ever purchased anything through Instagram or because of an ad or post you saw on Instagram?

Select *all* that apply.

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
Yes, from another site but <u>because of</u> an Instagram ad or post	28	30
Yes, <u>through</u> an Instagram post or the Shopping feature	23	29
No, I have not purchased anything I saw advertised on Instagram	55	50
<b>Base: Respondents who have seen ads on Instagram through Instagram Shopping and/or elsewhere</b>	651	475

IS4. [SHOW IF IS3 = "YES, THROUGH INSTAGRAM." ITEMS SHOWN IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER, WITH "OTHER" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST.]

What kind(s) of products have you purchased through Instagram?

Select *all* that apply.

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
Clothing (including shoes)	60	63
Cosmetics	33	33
Jewelry	22	24
Hair products	20	23
Electronics or electronic accessories	18	17
Health/fitness gear	15	16
Skin care products	15	15
Pet supplies	12	12
Home goods/decor	9	9
Art	9	7
Toys	7	5
Kitchen utensils	6	6
Purses/bags	5	3
Other, please specify	6	6
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever purchased anything <u>through</u> Instagram (IS3_1)</b>	157	133

IS5. [SHOW IF IS3 = "YES, THROUGH INSTAGRAM" OR "YES, FROM ANOTHER SITE BUT BECAUSE OF AN INSTAGRAM AD OR POST." "NO" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

You said earlier that you have purchased products through Instagram or because of advertisements or posts you saw on Instagram.

Have you EVER researched a product you saw in an ad or sponsored post on Instagram elsewhere (such as by Googling it, reading reviews, or going to another site) before buying it to make sure it was legitimate?

Select all that apply.

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
Yes, and I bought it elsewhere	72	73
Yes, and I came back and bought it through Instagram	30	30
No	9	10
<b>Base: Respondents who ever purchased anything through Instagram or because of an Instagram ad or post (IS3_1 or IS3_2)</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>250</b>

IS6. [SHOW IF IS3 = "YES, THROUGH INSTAGRAM." RANDOMIZE ITEMS, WITH "OTHER" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST.]

You said that you have purchased a product through Instagram. Which, if any, of the following are reasons you did?

Select all that apply.

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
I saw it and wanted it	64	64
It was convenient	45	43
The price was reasonable	45	44
I wanted to support the person or business that posted it	24	24
An influencer I trust promoted it	17	17
I can't find the product anywhere else	11	9
A person I know reposted the ad	4	4
Other	-	-
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever purchased anything <u>through</u> Instagram (IS3_1)</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>133</b>

Note: Dash (-) indicates no responses.

IS7. [SHOW IF IS3 = "YES, THROUGH INSTAGRAM."]

You said that you have purchased at least one product through Instagram. Have you ever experienced any problems with a product you purchased through Instagram?

*This can be a problem with the delivery or the product itself.*

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
Yes	32	29
No	68	71
<b>Base: Respondents who have ever purchased anything through Instagram (IS3_1)</b>	157	133

IS8. [SHOW IF IS7 = "YES." RANDOMIZE ITEMS. "OTHER" AND "NONE OF THE ABOVE" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST, IN THAT ORDER. "NONE OF THE ABOVE" WAS EXCLUSIVE.]

You said that you have had a problem with a product you purchased through Instagram. Which, if any, of the following have you experienced with your purchase(s)?

*Select all that apply.*

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
The product that arrived was lower quality than I was expecting	-	-
Product that arrived was different from what was advertised (different	-	-
Product never arrived	-	-
Product didn't work or broke shortly after I got it	-	-
Wrong quantity arrived	-	-
Product seemed unsafe	-	-
Other	-	-
None of the above	-	-
<b>Base: Respondents who had a problem with a product purchased through Instagram</b>		
<b>Sample size too small to report results</b>	57	45

Note: Too few people responded to present results. Dashes here indicate that, due to low overall sample size, data are not reported.

IS9. [SHOW IF SURVEY WAS TAKEN IN SPANISH AND IF IS1 = "YES" FOR EITHER INSTAGRAM SHOPPING OR ELSEWHERE ON INSTAGRAM. ROTATE "SPANISH" AND "ENGLISH" IN QUESTION STEM AND MATCH ORDER IN RESPONSE OPTIONS TO MATCH, WITH "NO" ALWAYS SHOWN LAST.]


When you see ads or sponsored posts on Instagram, does the language the ad is written in--that is, Spanish vs English--affect how likely you are to buy the product being advertised?

	Ever used Instagram	Regularly use Instagram
	%	%
Yes, more likely to buy products from an ad written in English	-	-
Yes, more likely to buy products from an ad written in Spanish	-	-
No	-	-
<b>Base: Spanish speakers who have seen ads on Instagram, either through the Shopping feature or elsewhere</b>		
<b>Sample size too small to report results</b>	79	61

Note: Too few people responded to present results. Dashes here indicate that, due to low overall sample size, data are not reported.

**CONTACT:**

Kristen Purcell  
 Chief Research Officer  
[Kristen.Purcell@consumer.org](mailto:Kristen.Purcell@consumer.org)

 @kristenpurcell