

BOOK REVIEW

Generation Z: Social Media, Technology, and New Generations

Atay, A., & Ashlock, M. Z. (2022). *Social Media, technology, and New Generations: Digital Millennial Generation and Generation Z*. Lexington Books. ISBN: 9781478550703

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Generation Z: *Social Media, Technology, and New Generations*, edited by Ahmet Atay and Mary Z. Ashlock, explores how millennials and Generation Z use social media. Atay and Ashlock discuss the generations' connection with social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest, Skype, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and X (formerly known as Twitter). The impact of digital technologies such as cell phones, computers, televisions, etc. and how it impacts their lives are also addressed.

The book takes the reader through the pros and cons of social media on relationships, attitudes, behaviors, mental health, self-esteem, and social standing. For instance, some pros are that social media is great for entrepreneurs and creatives. Cons of social media include mental health effects such as: being technology-obsessed, having a negative outlook on oneself, not being able to form healthy relationships and more.

Generation Z focuses on young people, but other generations mentioned include the Silent Generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Gen Xers (1965-1979), Generation Y or Millennials (1980-1999), Generation Z (2000-2021) and Generation Alpha (2022-).

Through multiple studies and the insights of other contributors, this book covers the entire landscape of social media and its influence on these generations.

Both editors remember a time before social media. “As an older member of Generation X...I was not born into the new media technologies...but I am deeply situated in the digital culture that surrounds us in many ways” (p. 29). They offer an in-depth look at an older generation’s outlook on this digital age. They offer a nuanced, intersectional perspective that makes this a book worth reading.

Atay and Ashlock encourage reader reflection on use of social media and technology. For instance, why use multiple social media platforms? How and why are people influenced by social media? Why are Generation Z and Millennials so concerned with their appearance, and why are younger generations obsessed with online attention? Concerns are that overuse of social media by young people may result in them becoming, “shallow [and] unable to form meaningful relationships” (p. 131).

Generation Z: Social Media, Technology, and New Generations highlights how much of an impact social media has on the younger generation. It not only affects their dating lives, but also their self-presentation, self-perception, social activism, work life, education and more. This influence is felt not only in the U.S. but other countries as well, such as Turkey and Nigeria: “...Nigeria in the present dispensation has become part of the global world where media, one could argue, has become an essential part of everyday life” (p. 151).

The book highlights how social media can provide positive outcomes for future generations in Nigeria. Through social media and technology, “The future generations are [going to progress] in terms of communication and getting information... [they must] harness the wealth of information...to achieve development which includes social, intellectual and political development” (p. 161).

The digital era is in full effect and will require increasingly skillful use of social media. This book is highly recommended for those interested in the connection between the digital world and the upcoming generations: scholars, educators, and parents. Its use in educational settings and at home could help create positive outcomes for the newer generations.