



**Reddit  
Flash Report:**

**Gen Z on Reddit**

*How Gen Z is channeling their urgency into action.*

## BACKGROUND

# A TRUNCATED CHILDHOOD

**TL;DR:** *Gen Z's childhood has understandably led to escapism in dark humor and alternate realities.*

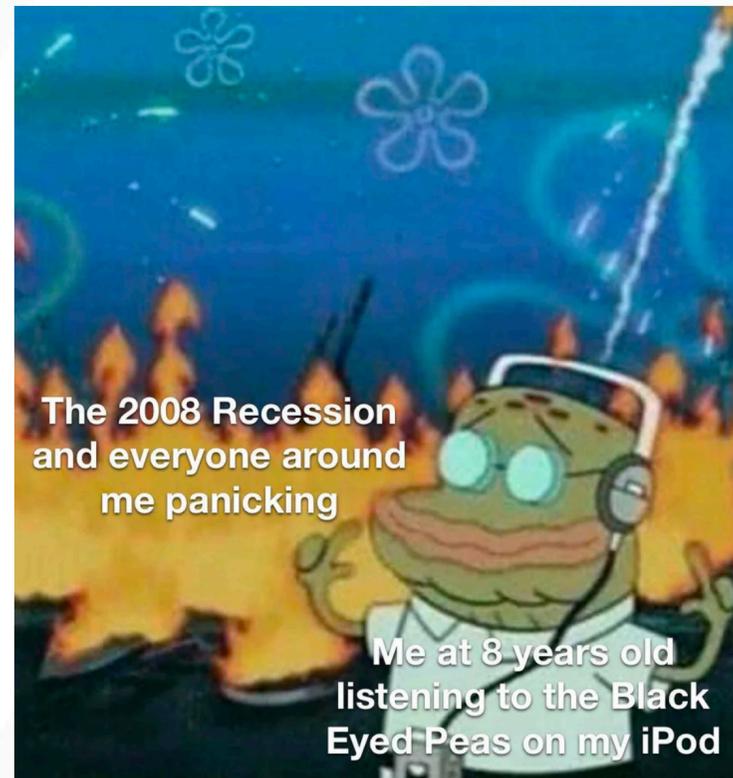
Decades-long wars. Global financial meltdowns. A once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. The opioid crisis. Gun violence. Climate catastrophes. Social unrest. Any one of these things are enough to cause childhood trauma. Gen Z's childhood has contained them all.

Is it any wonder they communicate in dank memes and dark humor?

As the first digitally native generation, there is no escape from the barrage of bad news. To cope, they have created a facade of absurdist, nonsensical memes. It's a communication style rooted in expecting the worst, even as they hope for the best.

**So do they embrace their “doomer zoomer” personas? Not necessarily...**

SOURCE:  
1. Comscore



# 3.6x

more likely to visit  
**TV Comedy Subreddits<sup>1</sup>**

# 3.3x

more likely to visit  
**Alcoholic Beverage Subreddits<sup>1</sup>**

# 2.6x

more likely to visit  
**Virtual Reality Subreddits<sup>1</sup>**



Created by the Reddit Partner Insights Team

## 5 KEY INTERESTS

# GEN Z URGENCY DRIVES ACTION

**TL;DR:** *The negativity of Gen Z speech is at odds with their actions and passions.*

Underneath Gen Z's frustration and anxiety is a desperation that's fueling a sense of urgency. They're anxious about a bleak future, but they're not accepting it—nor are they accepting the excuses and delays from older generations. They're taking action.

While you might expect Gen Z to be flooding meme subreddits, the reality is that they're spending far more time in *solution-oriented* subreddits. It's fun to vent from time to time, but the hard work of fixing this world is more important. Call it self-preservation or a lack of emotional maturity, but what they say is not matching what they are doing.

**Don't get distracted by the rhetoric. Gen Z is all-in on making change happen now.**

## URGENCY TO ACTION

01.

Environment

02.

Politics

03.

Self-Reliance

04.

Fluidity

05.

Practicality



## GEN Z'S GREATEST ISSUE

**TL;DR:** *Gen Z doesn't just talk about environmental change, they're flooding subreddits that enact change.*

For Gen Z, climate change and environmental concerns aren't an issue, they're a matter of life and death. And increasingly, they're holding corporations accountable for what's happening.

On Reddit, they're turning rhetoric into action. Whether it's sharing information on top polluters, organizing around key bills, or creating routines and hacks to limit their own impact, it's not about posturing, it's about *doing something*.

Communities share the burden of researching and advising on products, packaging and corporate giving. Win their approval, and the community will do the marketing for you.

**The key is to DO something; don't just talk about what you're planning.**

SOURCE:

1. GWI, USA Q4 2021. \*Gen Z= 16-24.

2. Reddit Internal Data

3. Quantcast, 2022. \*Gen Z= 18-24.

47%

of US Gen Z redditors are interested in environmental issues <sup>1</sup>

+223%

YoY growth of r/environment, <sup>2</sup>  
which over-indexes Gen Z <sup>3</sup>

#2

most upvoted Environment conversation in the last year <sup>2</sup>

r/environment

↑ 36k Upvotes

75% of people want single-use plastics banned, global survey finds



We need a survey to ask one question:

Do you want corporations and governments held accountable for their environmental impacts?

Because if that happened, the environment would be saved.

### BRAND ACTION

Action to reverse climate change isn't a "nice to have" for Gen Z, it's essential. The good news is that they will meet you halfway. They will change behavior if it makes a meaningful impact. Solicit their ideas and use them to amplify the message.



# HACKING THE GRIDLOCK

**TL;DR:** *Gen Z is leveraging the power of community to hack government gridlock and force positive change.*

You might think that the gridlock in Washington would foster a hopeless ambivalence in Gen Z. How could they possibly change things when compromise seems impossible? Perhaps it's best to control what you can control. After all, doesn't change start from within?

That's not what we're seeing with Gen Z. Changing your own behavior is the bare minimum. Unlike Millennials, Gen Z is willing to work within the system to make change happen. Or more accurately, to hack that system to make it work for them.

The beauty of being digitally native is that organizing and consolidating power comes naturally to them. If one person figures out a hack, it's instantly shared with the community, amplifying the impact.

**Gen Z want change that goes beyond themselves.**

SOURCE:  
1. GWI, USA Q4 2021. \*Gen Z= 16-24.  
2. Reddit Internal Data  
3. Quantcast, 2022. \*Gen Z= 18-24.

# 46%

of US Gen Z redditors are **worried about the US Government** <sup>1</sup>

# +41%

YoY growth of r/effectivealtruism, <sup>2</sup> which over-indexes Gen Z <sup>3</sup>

# #8

*most upvoted Politics conversation in the last year* <sup>2</sup>

r/effectivealtruism

↑ 162 Upvotes

## Counting down the days to ACE's new charity recommendations



Being vegan



Donating to effective animal charities

## BRAND ACTION

Gen Z are hacking politics as best they can, but they need allies. Take up causes they believe in and open up doors for them. You can't sit on the sidelines—even on issues that seem out of scope. They know the power you wield and reward you for doing so.



## SELF RELIANCE

# MADE BY ME, FOR ME

**TL;DR:** *Gen Z actually prefers to do it themselves, resulting in something more personal and ethical.*

The beauty of being a digital native is that every answer is at your fingertips. Have a question? Google it. Need a product recommendation? Ask Redditors. Product not what you want? No problem, just follow this video tutorial to hack it.

Combine this with the financial instability that so many Gen Z's have suffered through, and what arises is a culture of self reliance. Part curiosity, part independence, part not settling—it's a cultural shift towards finding pleasure in doing things themselves.

It also ties into the environmentalism of up-cycling. Why buy new when I can enhance what I already have?

**There's an opportunity to give Gen Z some agency in making things their own—especially if it means more personalization and less environmental waste.**

### SOURCE:

1. GWI, USA Q4 2021. \*Gen Z= 16-24.

2. Reddit Internal Data

3. Quantcast, 2022. \*Gen Z= 18-24.

# 65%

US Gen Z redditors believe learning new skills is important <sup>1</sup>

# +42%

YoY growth of r/howto, <sup>2</sup>  
which over-indexes Gen Z <sup>3</sup>

# #9

most upvoted DIY conversation in the last year <sup>2</sup>

r/howto

↑ 4.6k Upvotes

## How to fix your jeans



## BRAND ACTION

Gen Z want to be involved. They live that hack-life. So, give them the chance to participate. Encourage product adaptations or “off-menu” combinations. Give them the chance to finish the product at home—highlighting how that helps the environment.



## FLUIDITY

# FROM PANDERING TO PROTAGONIST

**TL;DR:** *Gen Z is fluid by nature and see labels as a stifling vestige of pandering to “diversity.”*

When “other-hood” is the norm, representation is insufficient. For Gen Z, having representative diversity is simply window dressing. It’s alternate perspectives that are intriguing, and fluidity of that representation that truly stands out.

In practice, that starts with not making assumptions or applying labels. It’s allowing straight, cis-males to ignore gender stereotypes without calling it out as special. It is normal for Gen Z identity to be fluid. They don’t feel the need to choose and don’t see any contradiction in changing.

The key is to avoid pandering and instead challenge your notion of a protagonist.

**It’s not about checking diversity boxes, it’s about shifting the gaze to represent their passions.**

### SOURCE:

1. GWI, USA Q4 2021. \*Gen Z= 16-24.
2. Reddit Internal Data
3. Quantcast, 2022. \*Gen Z= 18-24.

# 27%

of US Gen Z redditors  
Identify as LGBTQ+ <sup>1</sup>

# +73%

YoY growth of r/RedditLaqueristas, <sup>2</sup>  
which over-indexes Gen Z and 47% male. <sup>3</sup>

r/RedditLaqueristas

↑ 59 Upvotes

**Just painted my nails for the first time, as a cis man. Far from perfect, but I’m happy with how they came out!**



## BRAND ACTION

Gen Z can smell tokenism a mile away. Remember that diversity extends behind the camera. It’s the stories you tell in your ads as much as who’s in them. Focus your branding on shared interests and need states, not personas.



## PRACTICALITY

# EVERYDAY I'M HUSTLIN'

**TL;DR:** *Gen Z won't let their idealism get in the way of financial stability.*

Don't mistake Gen Z's passion for change as idealism. They deeply believe their values, but they're also practical. Compromise is sometimes necessary—especially when those values are at odds with their stability. Sure, they want to work for a company with incredible ethics, but they also have to eat.

The underlying theme is one of survival. It's hedging their bets, buying time, and waiting to seize the better opportunity. That's best expressed in their embrace of the gig economy and entrepreneurship. There is no time like the present to make some income.

Spurred on by their environmentalism, products have utility and value beyond how they are used. Everything can have a second life and be a revenue source.

**The hustle may be real, but so is rent.**

### SOURCE:

1. GWI, USA Q4 2021. \*Gen Z= 16-24.

2. Reddit Internal Data

3. Quantcast, 2022. \*Gen Z= 18-24.

# 75%

of US Gen Z redditors have  
**worked in the Gig Economy**<sup>1</sup>

# +22%

YoY growth of r/freelance,<sup>2</sup>  
which over-indexes Gen Z<sup>3</sup>

r/freelance

↑ 191 Upvotes

## Just made my first money freelancing!

If you were to tell me a year ago I'd be paid to code a year from then, I would have just laughed. Now I just got off my first work session with my employer and he logged the time! I can't wait to get more!

## BRAND ACTION

Gen Z is struggling to balance risk and reward with careers and higher education. Investments in eSports or the Metaverse could be more about reducing that risk for ambitious Gen Z's, allowing them some security while they reach for their dreams.



# Thanks!

Want to Learn More?

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I CAN  
ABOUT  
NATURE

I  
AM  
WHO  
I  
AM