



# THE POWER OF GEN C

## Connecting With Your Best Consumers

### THE **RUNDOWN**

Gen C are a powerful and global group of consumers that thrive on creation, curation, connection and community. When brands find the right way to engage them they can become the biggest spenders, the most vocal supporters and the most influential opinion formers. In short, they can become your best customers.



Ipsos MediaCT



thinkinsights  
Google

## Executive Summary

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Gen C are a powerful and global group of consumers who thrive on creation, curation, connection and community.

All around the world...

- They don't just passively consume – 90% create online content at least once a month.
  - They're passionate brand advocates – two thirds agree that “If there is a brand I love, I tend to tell everyone about it.”
  - They're active consumers – 56% have taken action after watching ads for a product or service on YouTube.
  - They're regular YouTube users – 76% of Gen C visit YouTube weekly, and 36% visit daily.
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Gen C are avid consumers, enthusiastic early adopters and passionate brand advocates, and when brands figure out the right way to engage them, they can become the biggest spenders, the most vocal supporters and the most influential opinion formers. In short, **they could become your best customers.**

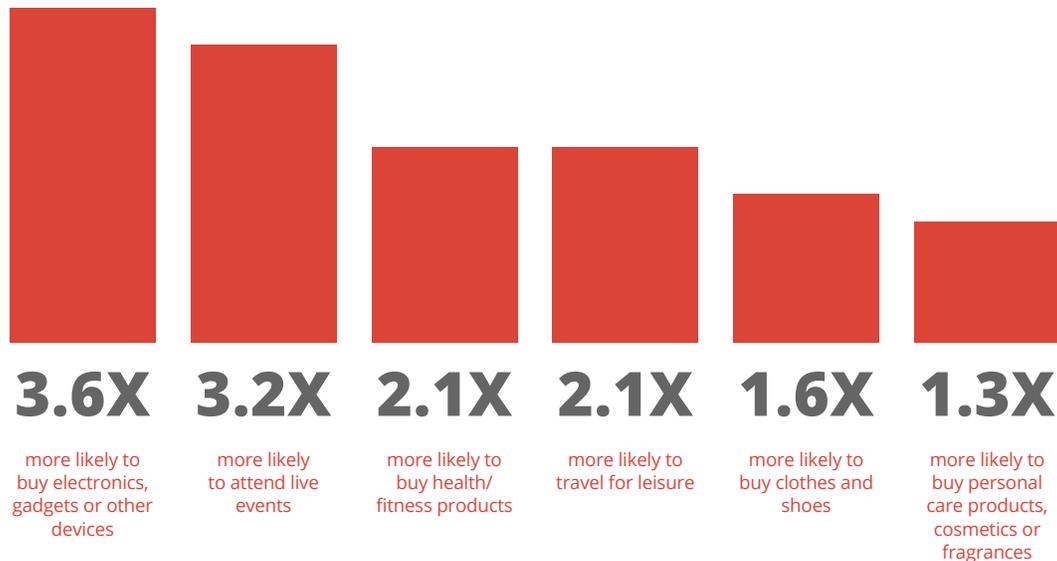
But before you can engage with Gen C, you must first fully understand them. Generation C, or Gen C, is a term coined by Nielsen and Booz Allen Consulting in 2010<sup>1</sup> to describe millennials. Now fast-forward to 2013 to when Gen C have broken out of their mold. They have become a true psychographic—not simply a demographic but a mindset that spans generations.

Globally, it's still true that most millennials are Gen C, but **across 30+ countries, on average, 39% (with a range of 20% to 50%) of Gen C are aged 35 or over.**

At Google, we find that Gen C comprised a large and engaged group on YouTube, so we're constantly motivated to understand them better. Most recently, we conducted a global study on Gen C with Ipsos MediaCT and TNS,<sup>2</sup> and for the first time we're now able to see the behaviors that make Gen C such a potent force. From electronics to travel, clothes

to cosmetics, live events to fitness, Gen C buy products and services with far greater regularity than do their non-Gen C counterparts; they're **up to 3.6 times more likely to purchase**. And two thirds of Gen C around the world say that **"If there is a brand I love, I tend to tell everyone about it."**

## GEN C ARE YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS



**Q:** And, how frequently, if ever, do you engage in each of the following activities? At least monthly

**BASE:** Gen C, non-Gen C

**SOURCE:** YouTube Audience Study. vs. non-Gen C where applicable. Top two box ratings where applicable

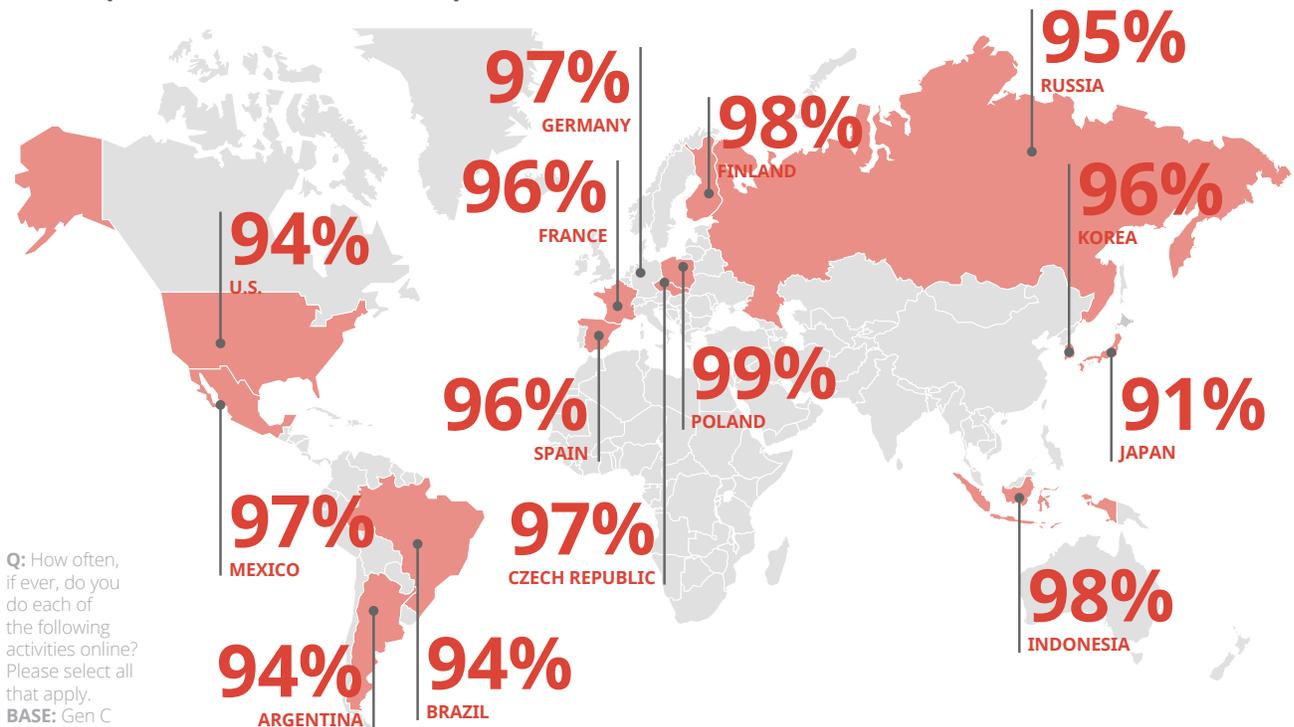
## The new consumer mindset: Empowered by technology, driven by community

Gen C care deeply about Creation, Curation, Connection and Community, and they see creation as a way of life; whether it's shooting videos, writing blog posts or posting reviews, almost everyone of them does it. **Nine in ten create online content at least once a month.**

*"Creation means to make something valuable and share it with others. We do this because it's empowering and necessary for our world."*

**Liz, USA**

## % CREATING CONTENT AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS)



But creation is just one means of expression for Gen C. They also add value and drive engagement in their communities by sharing links, building playlists and updating their status; **three quarters of Gen C curate online content at least once a week.**

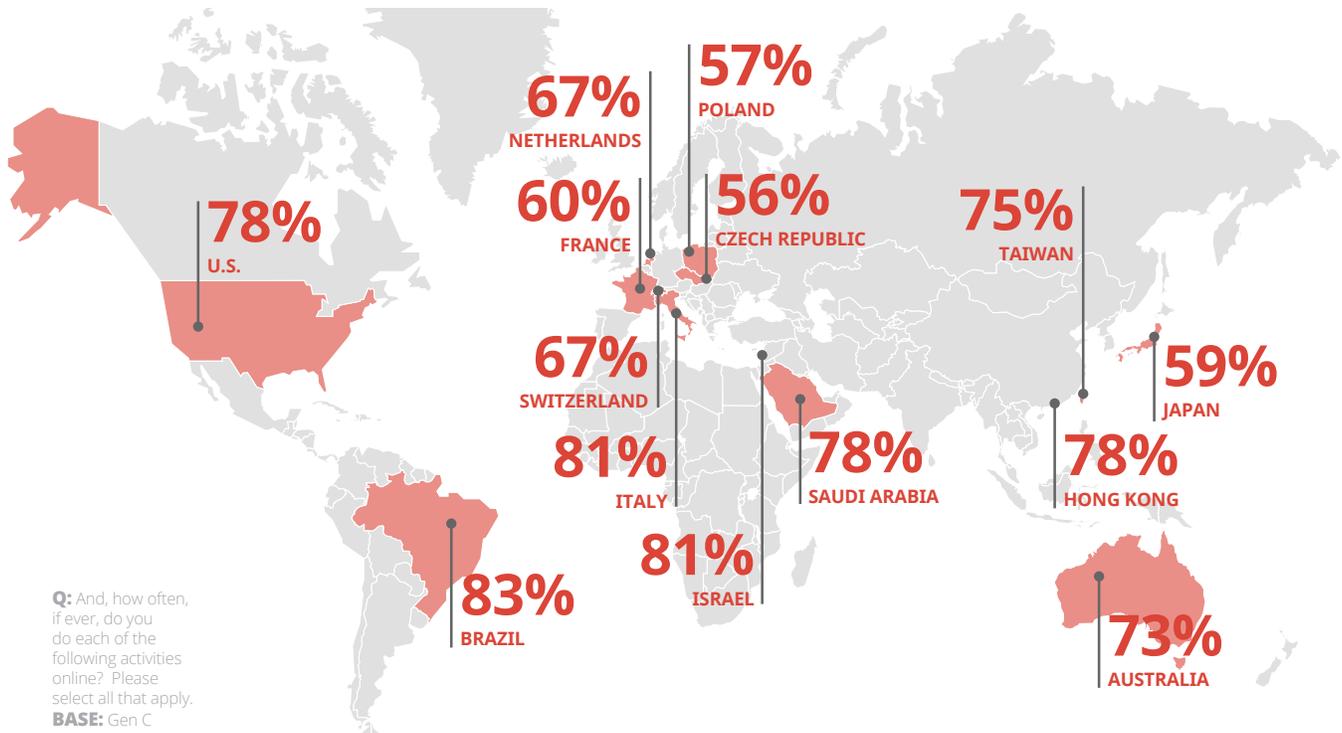
*"I post images, videos, comment on other people's posts, and share them when needed. It helps people bond with one another."*

**Felipe, Brazil**

*"We have access to so much more information and can get information much quicker through the internet. It has shaped the way [we] communicate, consume news, are entertained and taught."*

**Luke, UK**

## % CURATING CONTENT AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS)



Gen C live in the present tense, masterfully controlling media and technology to feed their hunger for information and to satisfy their need to feel connected no matter where they are. Part of that motivation comes from FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out, with social platforms helping them to keep their finger on the world's pulse. They also thrive on adding value to communities; **seven in ten curate or create to build community.**<sup>3</sup>

*"I create resources that teachers might utilize in their own classrooms. I post them on my blog... some little activity I created, somebody in Australia could be using. That's really empowering and really rejuvenates you and makes you want to create more."*

**Liz, USA**

## A new force in culture and commerce: Spending, sharing and influencing

For Gen C, the days of passive consumption are over, but as this section shows, brands are discovering how to form deeper connections with this engaged audience. Across the globe, Gen C are twice as likely to be early adopters, agreeing that “I am among the first of my friends and colleagues to try new products.” **Gen C are 1.8 times more likely to be influencers, agreeing that “people often come to me for advice before making a purchase.”**<sup>4</sup>

Technology has given Gen C control over every part of their lives, and nowhere is that seen more clearly than in the media they consume. They expect access to what they want, when they want it, and while they’re happy to welcome brands into their lives, the power must stay in their hands. They’re almost twice as likely to lean toward ads that give them a choice to skip; **Gen C are 1.6 times more likely to agree that “The only ads I like to watch are ads that I have a choice to skip.”**<sup>4</sup> This is seen most strongly in the US and Brazil, where Gen C are 2.4 times more likely to lean toward ads that give them a choice to skip.

*“Some of my favorite ads are ones that promote music (such as Avenged Sevenfold), the ‘Catch Jeremy’ ad, The Geico ad (Hump Day), and generally anything that makes me laugh. I like them because they start out with something that makes me think, ‘Hmm...this is interesting’, and then I normally end up in stitches by the end of them. They do change my feelings toward the brand / advertiser because if the commercial makes me feel good, then I start to think the product will do so as well. Sometimes I decide to keep watching the ad after the ‘skip’ option if the ad starts out with a ‘bang’, and makes me want to see the ending.”*

**Hailee, USA**

They control the ads they see, so brands wanting to engage with Gen C must do so in ways that bring real value. In 2013, for example, Pepsi MAX launched "Test Drive," a four-minute prank video in which a disguised Jeff Gordon takes an unsuspecting car salesman on the test drive of his life. It racked up nearly 40 million views online and took top spot on the March YouTube Ads Leaderboard,<sup>5</sup> trading on its humor and sense of surprise to give viewers something they'd want to share with others.

Actively choosing the ads they watch, Gen C are more than twice as likely to agree that "Advertising on YouTube helps me decide which products or brands to buy,"<sup>4</sup> and 1.8 times more likely to agree that "YouTube enables me to interact with my favorite brands."<sup>4</sup> They're also more likely to take action: **56% of Gen C around the world have taken action after watching ads for products or services on YouTube.**<sup>4</sup> In some countries, such as Brazil (89%), Turkey (80%), Saudi Arabia (79%) and Russia (76%), the vast majority of people take action as a result of seeing ads for products or services on YouTube.

## Engaging with Gen C: Analyzing media habits on YouTube and beyond

*"I think it is absolutely fascinating to look at the audience on YouTube. Unlike traditional media, they are defined psychographically . . . and that does give you a better opportunity for brand engagement. You can tap into a very passionate set of individuals who can be advocates for your brand and have networks that can extend well beyond YouTube."*

**Ann Green, Senior Partner, Millward Brown**

While they constantly multitask and consume media on all screens, Gen C spend a significant amount of time on YouTube: **worldwide, 76% of Gen C visit YouTube weekly, and 36% visit daily.** YouTube is one of their top destinations, with three quarters of Gen C across the globe agreeing that "YouTube is the first place I go to when looking for online videos."

*“YouTube is global. I don’t think there is any other site so supported by people all around the world . . . users can connect with other users from different parts of the world.”*

**Yui, Japan**

It’s also a platform made by fans, for fans. That resonates with Gen C because they care passionately about building community and making their voices heard, and on YouTube any content can reach anybody else, anywhere in the world. So whether they’re uploading their own content, sharing videos made by others or commenting on something they’ve just seen, they’re able to lean forward and add value rather than passively consume. As a result they’re spending more time online and less time with traditional broadcast media, changing the rules of engagement for brands seeking to reach them.

### **PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WATCHING LESS TV OR PAYING LESS ATTENTION TO TV BECAUSE OF YOUTUBE**



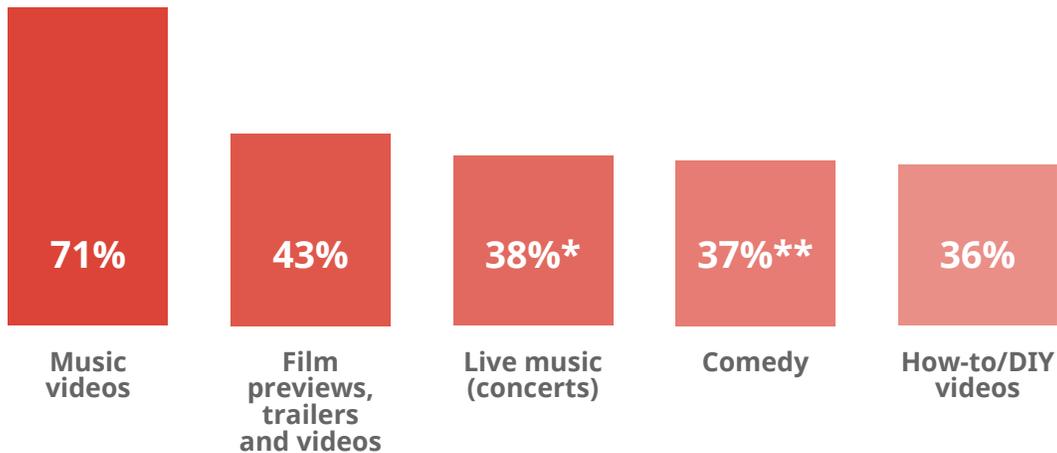
**Q:** Which of the following action(s), if any, have you taken because of YouTube? Please select all that apply.  
**BASE:** Gen C who have ever visited YouTube

Dove Real Beauty Sketches<sup>6</sup> harnessed these changing behaviors to become the most-watched ad of 2013, with 163 million views on YouTube. The three-minute YouTube film about how women view themselves ignited a global conversation about the definition of beauty, topped the Cannes YouTube Ads Leaderboard and won the Titanium Grand Prix at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, making it one of the most successful ads of the year and forming a meaningful connection with viewers all around the world.

Globally, 92% of Gen C say they visit YouTube for entertainment and relaxation,<sup>4</sup> making this type of content a lynchpin of YouTube usage. **Three in five of Gen C agree that “YouTube is one of my primary ways of discovering new music and movies,”<sup>4</sup>** and music videos is a top-five genre in all the global markets surveyed apart from one. Film previews, trailers and videos are popular too, a top-five genre in 27 of the 29 markets across Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America.

But Gen C also engage deeply with YouTube, using it to pursue a variety of passions, such as music and film, cooking and home improvement, with How-to/DIY featuring as a top genre in 23 of the 35 global markets, including the Asia-Pacific.

### TOP FIVE GENRES GLOBALLY



**Q:** Which of the following types of videos, if any, do you typically watch on YouTube? Please select all that apply.

**Q:** Which of the following other types of videos, if any, do you typically watch on YouTube? Please select all that apply.

**BASE:** Gen C who have ever visited YouTube

\*Across 29 markets

\*\*Across 31 markets

By engaging fans, not just viewers, brands can share their passions and become an active part of the communities they care about. Gen C use YouTube to create and curate millions of personal stories every day, and brands that work to do the same will be welcomed into the Gen C global community—**an enthusiastic audience of consumers and advocates.**

## The Bottom Line

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Gen C are a powerful new force in culture and commerce, and they spend a significant amount of time on YouTube. They're active consumers who make a difference with their passions in life, spending behaviors and influence on others, and they have the potential to become your best customers. In fact, there's a good chance that they are already your best customers.

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### SOURCES

- 1 "The Rise of Generation C: Implications for the world of 2020," Booz Allen and Co., 2010; and "Introducing Generation C: The Connected Collective Consumer," Nielsen, October 2010.
- 2 Google undertook several qualitative research initiatives, including findings based on diary, mobile and digital-based methods, as well as in-home ethnographies conducted in 2011 and 2013.
- 3 Global YouTube Audience Study conducted across 29 markets in North and South America, Europe, Middle East and Africa.
- 4 Global YouTube Audience Study conducted across 29 markets in North and South America, Europe, Middle East and Africa.
- 5 ["YouTube Ads Leaderboard March 2013." Google Think Insights. Google. March 2013.](#)
- 6 ["Real Beauty Shines Through: Dove Wins Titanium Grand Prix, 163 Million Views on YouTube." Google Think Insights. Google. June 2013.](#)

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Ipsos MediaCT, YouTube Audience Study, summer 2013. Conducted in 29 select markets in North America, Latin America, Europe and Africa, through a 20-minute online survey with general online population sample for ages 13 to 64.

TNS Australia Pty Ltd, YouTube Audience Study, Q4 2012 and first half 2013. Conducted in six APAC markets through a 25-minute online survey with general online population sample for ages 16 to 64.

Ipsos MediaCT, Generation C Study, first half 2013. Conducted in six countries (Brazil, India, Japan, Russia, U.S., U.K.) as a combination of mobile and digital qualitative exercises, quantitative surveys and in-home ethnographies (50+).

YouTube Project 40+ Study, Q4 2011. Conducted in five countries (France, Germany, Japan, U.S., U.K.) with 140 YouTube users as a diary study with in-home ethnographies.

YouTube Super Fan Study, November 2013. Conducted in the U.S. with super users of YouTube (a.k.a. SuperFans based on their social and YouTube activity) in the form of an in-depth email survey.