

WIRELESS REPORT 2021

**DITCH
THE LABEL**

Visit DitchtheLabel.org for the largest youth support hub in the world.

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WELCOME TO DITCH THE LABEL

LEADING THE WAY WHEN IT COMES TO UNDERSTANDING AND EMPOWERING YOUTH.

Ditch the Label is the older sibling to any young person struggling with issues from bullying, mental health, depression, online abuse and anxiety. It is estimated that every minute, at least one young person benefits from our help and support.

We don't sound like an adult and we don't judge; we're here to remove barriers in accessing support. That's why during 2019- 2020, over 5 million young people aged 12-25 trusted us to help them navigate the tough stuff.

We're the only youth charity that delivers support based on Big Data to those most in need through the platforms they're already using.

Our manifesto is simple, it consists of 3 core elements:

1. Understand the problem, by using research and big data and regularly listening to and learning from the lived experiences of young people.

2. To provide reactive support to those who need us, primarily through our online support community, website and in partnership with online games and social networks.

3. To affect culture and prevent issues such as bullying and poor mental health through our free educational resources available at DTLED.org and through our award-winning public awareness campaigns.

Our existence is threatened.

The pandemic has seriously affected our funding while demand upon our services has increased.

As an independent charity, we are entirely reliant upon donations to fund our life changing work and without funding, Ditch the Label, a charity that so many young people depend upon, will cease to exist.

It costs as little as £3 to provide direct support to 1 young person in need. Please text DITCH 3 to 70085 to donate, or visit www.DitchtheLabel.org/donate to find out how you can support us.

Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text DITCHNOINFO 3 to 70085.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

Welcome to the Wireless Report 2021. As part of our Annual Bullying Survey in 2020, we asked young people in the UK to tell us about their relationship with technology, social media and the issues that affect them the most.

As a result, detailed herein are the insights gathered from 13,387 respondents from across the country.

Part One of the report focuses on behaviours online such as time spent on platforms, selfies and drawing comparisons between oneself and other social media users. Part Two focuses on experiences online such as consent, difficult or unwanted attention and the need for moderation.

We continue to utilise this vital research in our own work; powering the development of innovative new support interventions, ultimately aiding our mission to empower young people and help them navigate the tough stuff.

In addition to The Wireless Report we also produce a range of other related reports, all of which are freely available at DitchtheLabel.org, including our Annual Bullying Survey which is the largest benchmark survey of bullying in the UK.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

We would like to thank everyone who has helped produce The Wireless Report 2021.

Professor Sheri Bauman
Ditch the Label research analyst and trustee

Dr. Liam Hackett
Founder and CEO of Ditch the Label

Georgie Bailey
Design and Illustrations

Bullet PR

Plus all of the schools, colleges and young people who participated

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a youth charity focused on helping young people navigate the issues that affect them the most, we find that mental wellbeing, bullying, online abuse and relationships are prominent areas of concern. Indeed, our research consistently finds that they are all connected.

The Annual Bullying Survey published its eighth edition in 2020 and is now firmly established as an invaluable benchmark of youth behaviours across the United Kingdom. This annual report makes essential reading as it uncovers the climate and culture surrounding bullying and online abuse whilst uncovering a wider range of challenges facing young people today.

As part of the Annual Bullying Survey in 2020, we asked young people to describe their experiences and behaviours online, with a particular focus on social media. We now publish those findings in this; The Wireless Report.

Against the backdrop of a global pandemic and the challenges posed, the connection that young people have with their social media platforms has never been stronger, with many using it to socialise and communicate on a seemingly ever-increasing basis. Many young people have been left feeling anxious and fearful for their futures and as such, it has never been more important to understand the issues affecting them on these platforms, identify ways to improve experiences and vitally, to protect young people from harm.

The Wireless Report highlights key behaviours on social media, including that 83% of young people use social media regularly throughout their day; every single day. Whilst this might not be surprising, it is a concern that 41% have stated they have had negative or hurtful comments posted about them on the social media they use so prolifically.

When asked about moderation on social media, only 15% felt that there was already enough moderation, indicating that a majority of young people feel that more can be done to protect them on social media platforms.

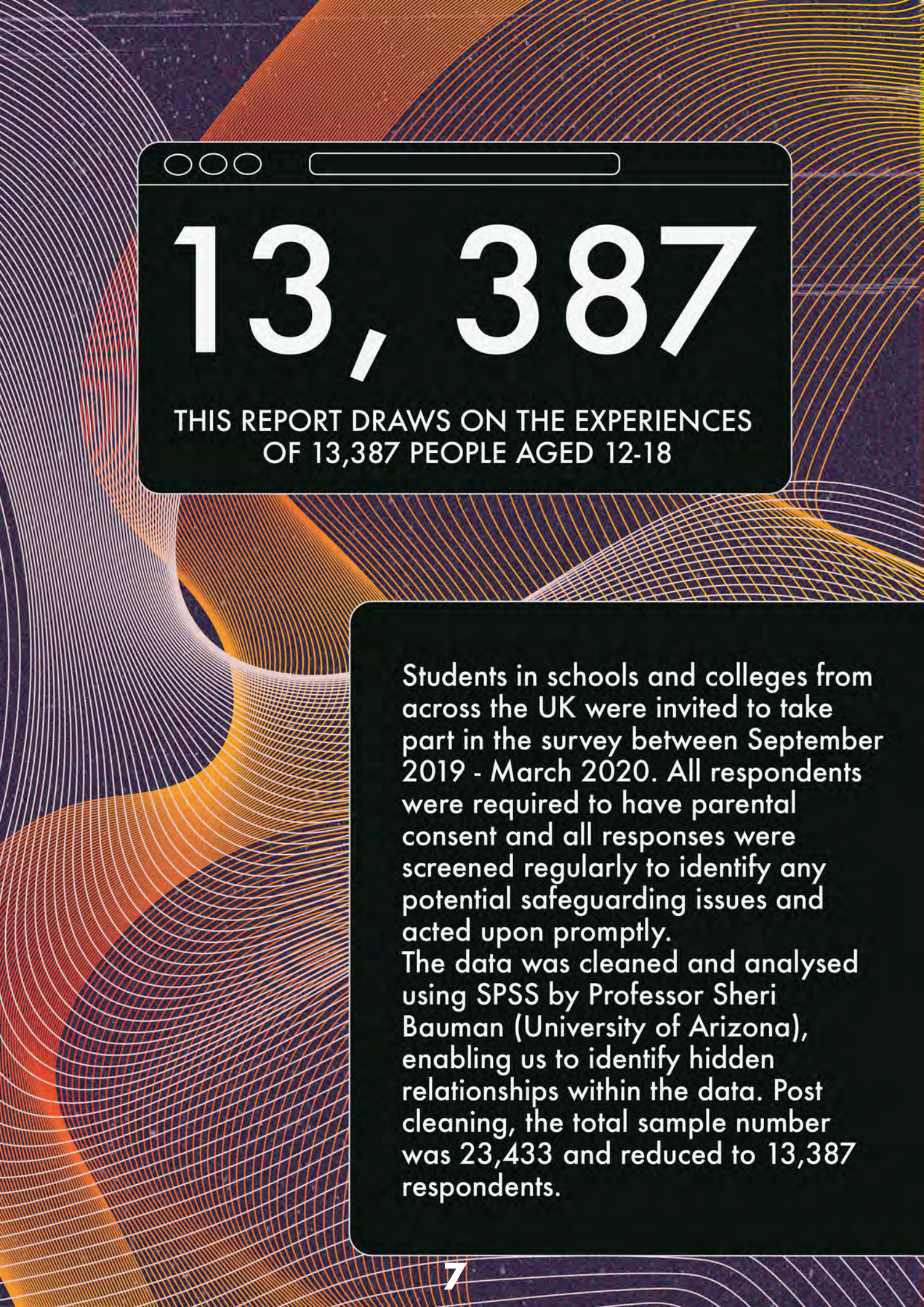


**Dr. Liam Hackett,
Chief Executive Officer**

In terms of other online behaviours, three quarters of young people have sent a naked selfie, whilst 1 in 4 have received an unsolicited naked selfie or unwanted sexual contact online. Of those that had received unwanted messages of a sexual nature, 14% suggested it was from someone several years older than themselves, thus highlighting further the pressing need for more robust moderation and protection measures within social media platforms and messaging services.

Each year, our research is used by policy makers, educators, industry, activists and stakeholders alike to gain a broader understanding of the issues young people face and to advocate for changes to make life better and safer for them. Once again, we welcome the wide sharing of this report across your networks.

At Ditch the Label, we remain driven to help as many young people as possible deal with the many challenges they face. Given the insights this report has produced, we would like to direct you to our comprehensive suite of resources for educators. Including modules in Bullying, Digital Literacy and Mental Health, we provide educators with the resources necessary to tackle some of these issues within a classroom setting. These modules can be downloaded for free at DTLED.org.



13,387

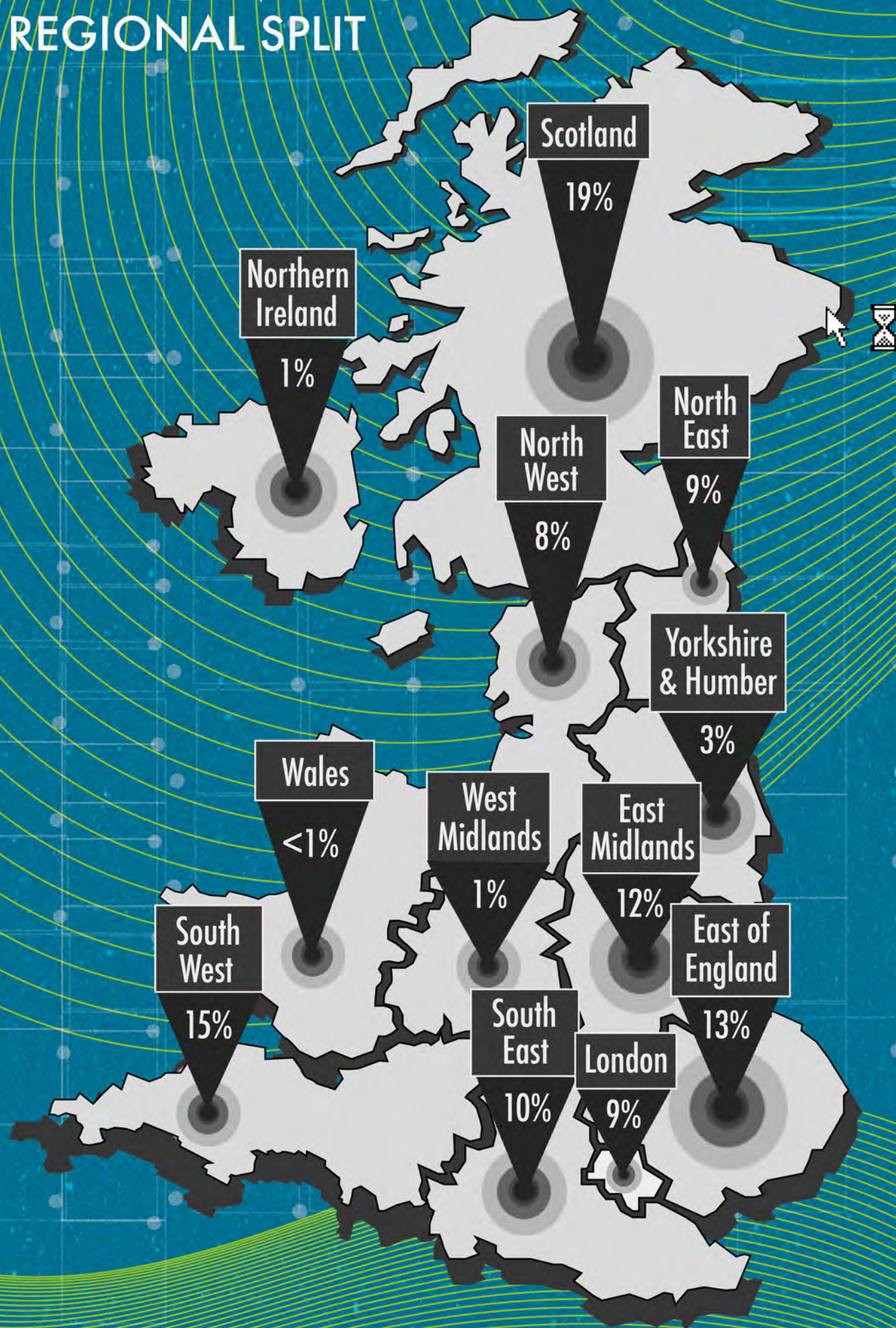
THIS REPORT DRAWS ON THE EXPERIENCES
OF 13,387 PEOPLE AGED 12-18

Students in schools and colleges from across the UK were invited to take part in the survey between September 2019 - March 2020. All respondents were required to have parental consent and all responses were screened regularly to identify any potential safeguarding issues and acted upon promptly.

The data was cleaned and analysed using SPSS by Professor Sheri Bauman (University of Arizona), enabling us to identify hidden relationships within the data. Post cleaning, the total sample number was 23,433 and reduced to 13,387 respondents.

REGIONAL SPLIT

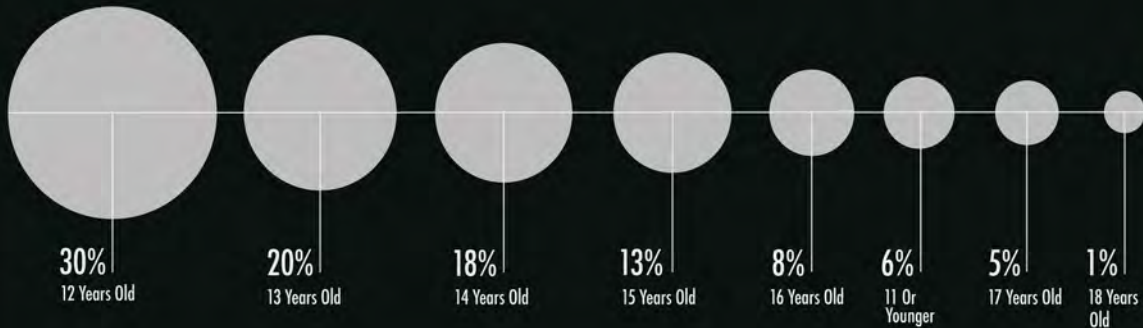
REGIONAL SPLIT



DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHICS

How old are you?



82%

Straight/Heterosexual

5%

Bisexual

5%

Prefer not to say

3%

Curious/unsure

2%

Other

1%

Asexual

1%

Lesbian

1%

Gay

Are you religious?

13% | Yes

19% | Haven't decided

59% | No

What is your sexuality?

74%

Of the respondents described themselves as Christian.

4%

Of the respondents described themselves as Other.

2%

Of the respondents described themselves as Sikh.

1%

Of the respondents described themselves as Jewish.

14%

Of the respondents described themselves as Muslim.

3%

Of the respondents described themselves as Hindu.

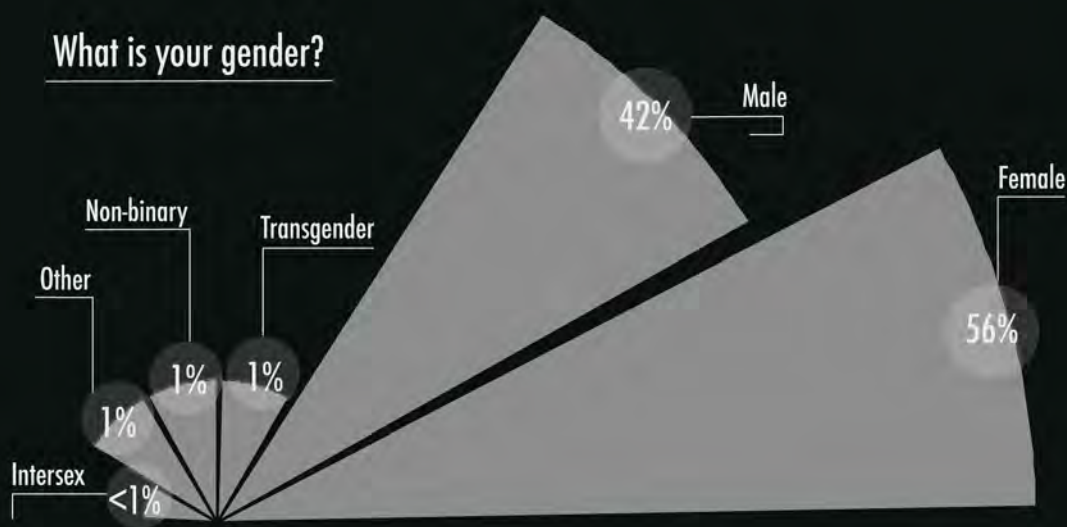
2%

Of the respondents described themselves as Buddhist.

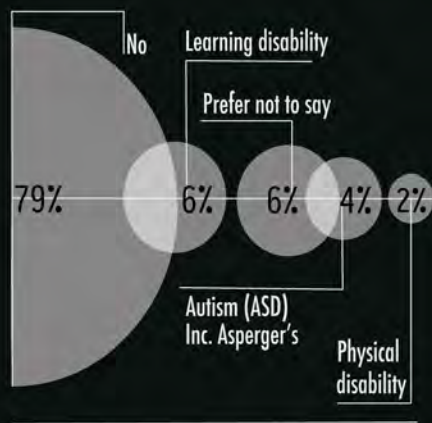
1%

Of the respondents described themselves as Pagan.

What is your gender?



Do you have any form of disability?



1 in 10
Receive free school meals
With 4% unsure & 1% prefer not to say

Are a Looked After Child (LAC)

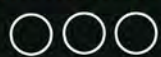
2 in 10

With 7% unsure & prefer not to say



What is your ethnicity?

79% White British	1% Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4% European	1% Any other white background
3% British Asian	<1% East Asian
2% Other	<1% Caribbean
1% Irish	<1% Hispanic or Latinx
1% African	<1% Mixed white & British Asian
1% Black British	<1% Mixed white & south Asian
1% Any other mixed/multiple ethnicity	<1% Mixed white & east Asian
1% South Asian	
1% Any other Asian background	
1% Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	
1% Arabic	
1% Mixed white and Caribbean	
1% Mixed white and African	



PART ONE

TIME SPENT ONLINE

FOLLOWERS

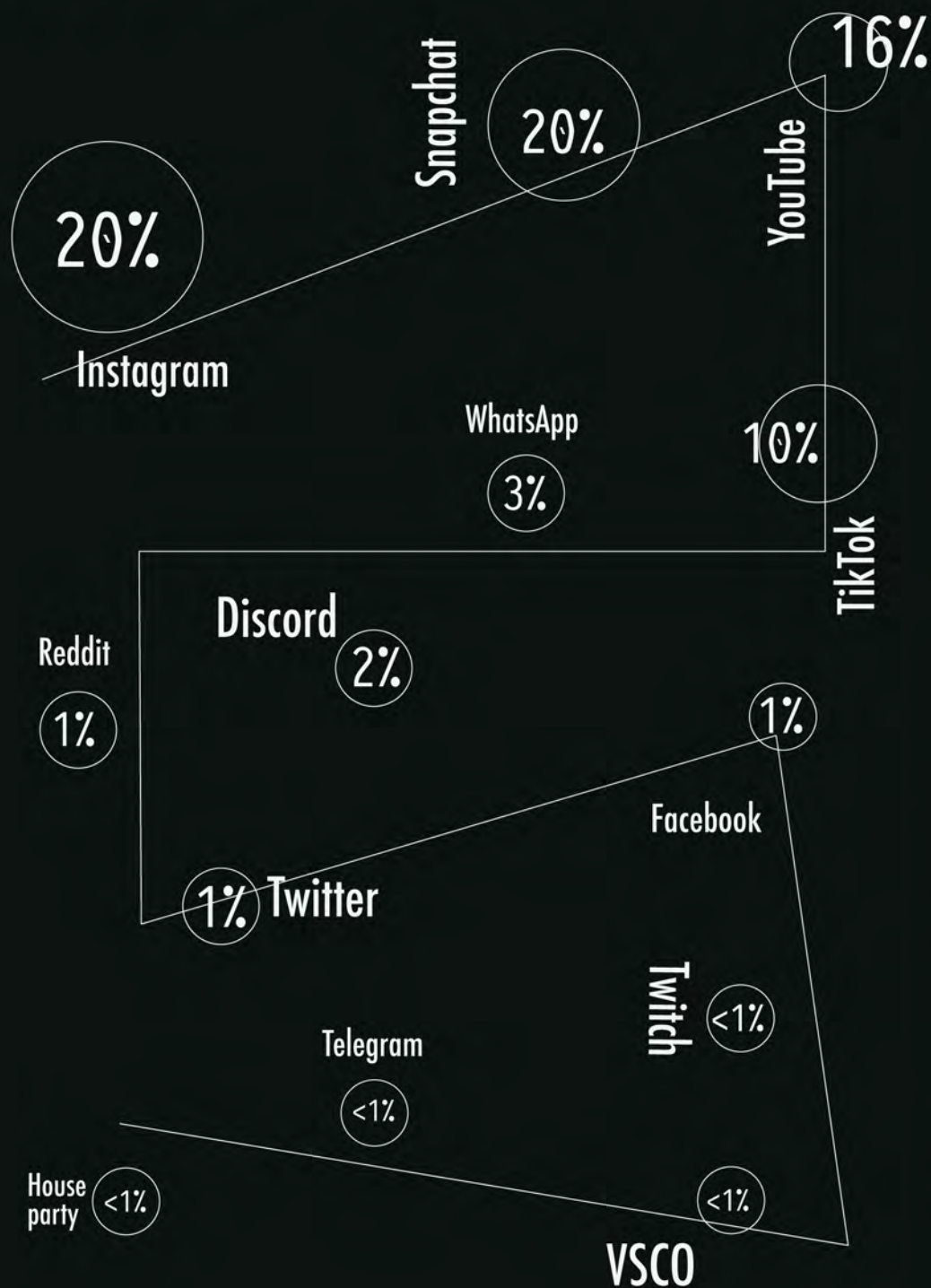
SELFIES

DRAWING COMPARISONS

FAVOURITE SOCIAL NETWORK

FAVOURITE SOCIAL NETWORK

What is your favourite social network app?



TIME SPENT ONLINE

TIME SPENT ONLINE

How often do you use social media?

42%
Constantly throughout my day

41%
A few times a day

6%
A few times a week

6%
Never

5%
Rarely

1%
Once a week

<1%
Once every 2 weeks

<1%
Once a month

Do you spend more time on social media than you would like to?

31%

Said yes

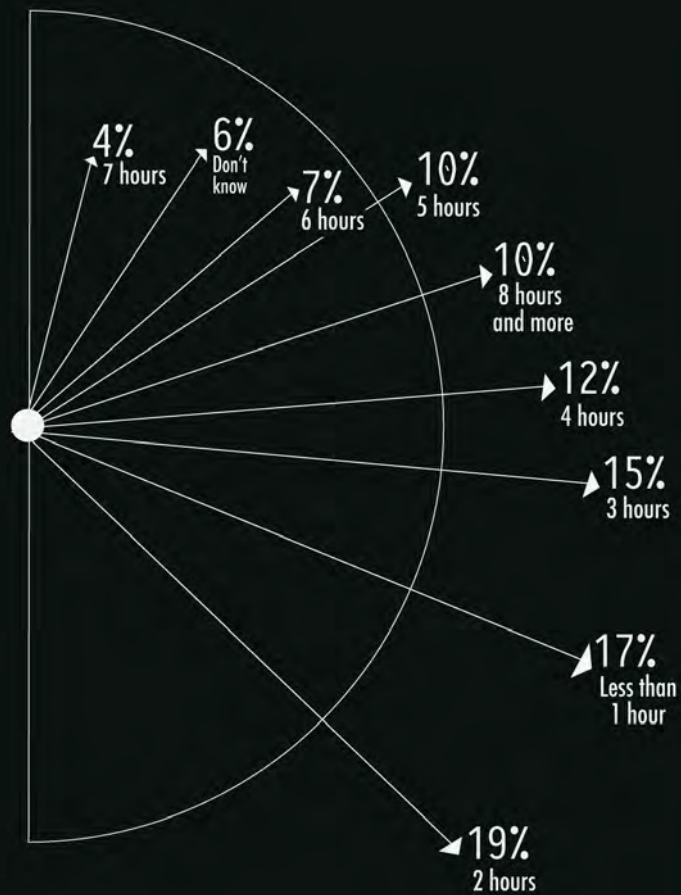
48%

Said no

21%

Said they don't know

How much time on average do you spend on social media?



FOLLOWERS

FOLLOWERS

Approximately how many followers do you have across all of your social media profiles?

How many followers would you like to have across all of your social media profiles?

16%

Less than
100

9%

17%

101-250

7%

20%

251-500

8%

18%

501-1k

10%

11%

1k-2.5k

8%

3%

2.5k-5k

4%

1%

5k-10k

3%

<1%

10k-25k

2%

<1%

25k-50k

1%

<1%

50k-100k

2%

2%

100k
or more

18%

11%

Don't know

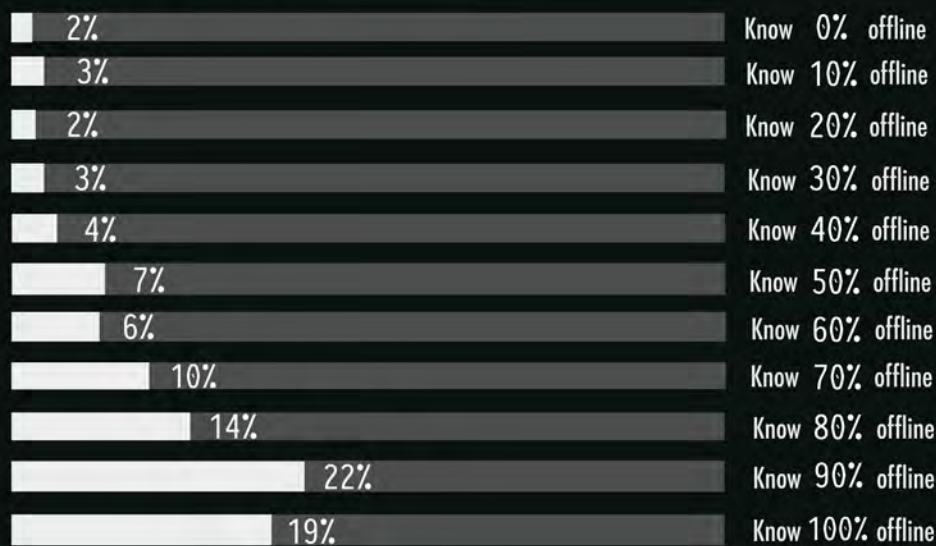
29%

Don't know

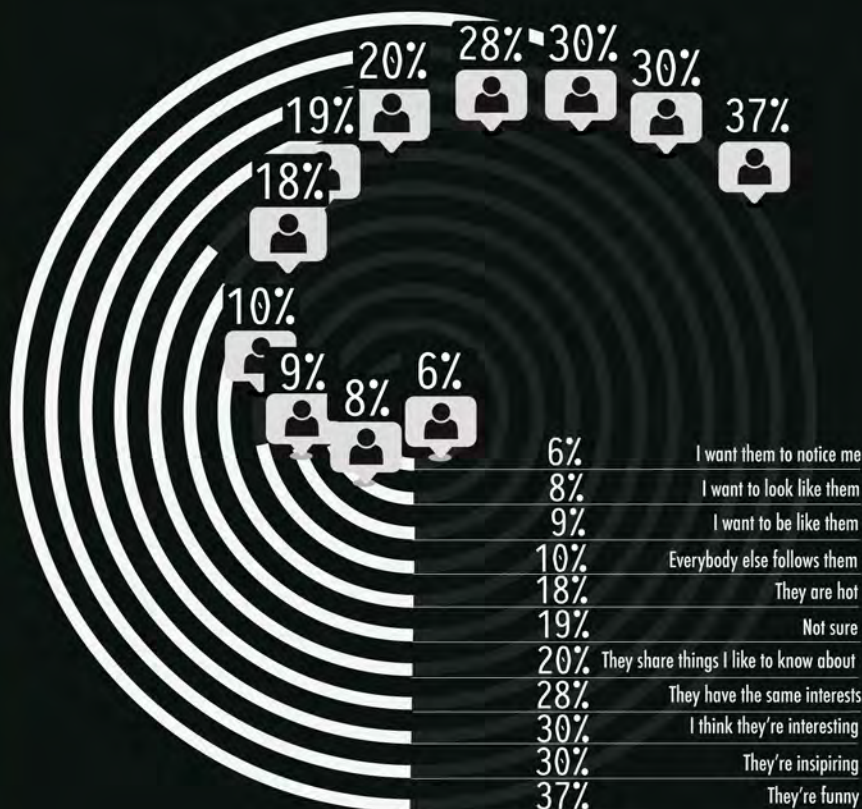
FOLLOWERS

FOLLOWERS

What percentage of the friends/followers that you have online do you know offline?



Why do you follow people you don't know on social media?



11%

Prefer to meet people online first

58%

Prefer to meet people offline first

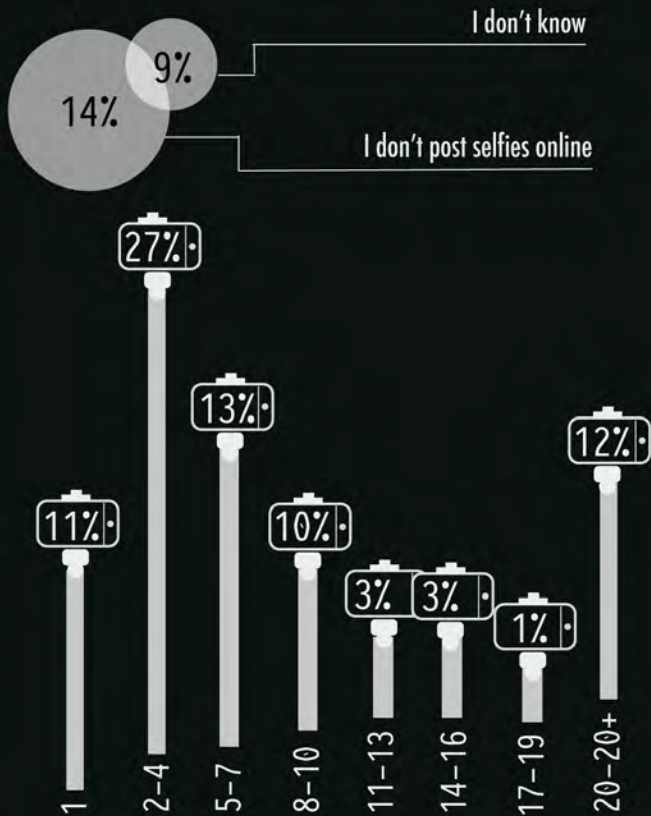
31%

Have no preference when meeting people

How often do you take selfies?



How many selfies do you have to take in order to find one of yourself that you like?



Roughly what percentage of the selfies that you post online do you edit first?

(This includes filters & apps like facetune and photoshop)



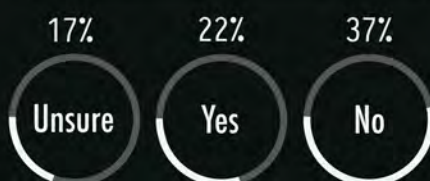
DRAWING COMPARISONS

DRAWING COMPARISONS

On a scale of 1-10, how much do you compare yourself with the people you follow online? (For example, your appearance, lifestyle, success, happiness)



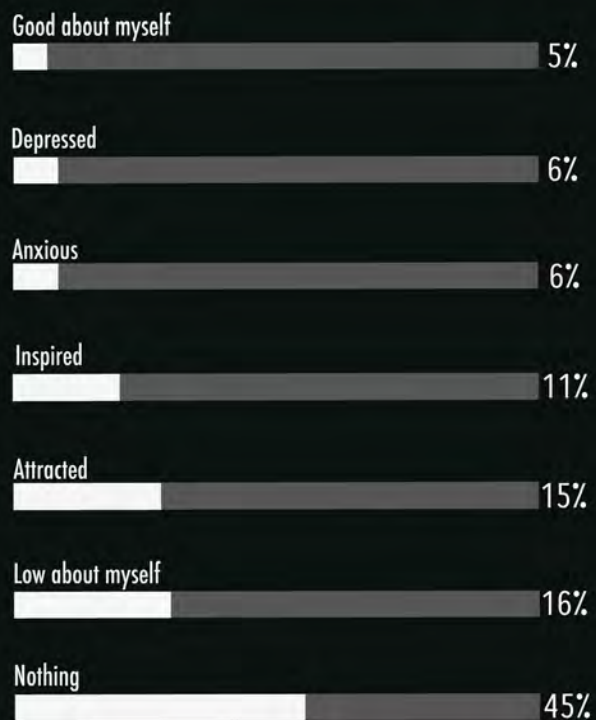
Do you think that social media puts you under pressure to look a certain way?

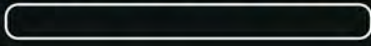


Do you think it's a good or a bad idea for social networks to hide the amount of likes you get on posts and how many followers you have?



When you see pictures of attractive people on social media, how does it make you feel?





PART TWO

TERMS & CONDITIONS
CONSENT
SKETCHY EXPERIENCES
MODERATION
PARENTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

TERMS & CONDITIONS

TERMS & CONDITIONS

How often do you read the terms and conditions when you sign up to a new app or social media network?

20%

Said sometimes

14%

Said they have once

36%

Said never

6%

Said always

For those that said they do not read the terms and conditions, why don't you?

"Published terms are rarely read and have become a 'click-through' exercise with many users failing to engage with them. Often they are hard to find and separated into multiple documents, immensely long, full of complicated legal language or act as a barrier to access. In many cases, if a user does not agree to all the terms or 'tick to agree', they are denied access. The majority of users simply tick and agree to terms that bind them to conditions they have not read. The routine acceptance of published terms has been given the unfortunate moniker of 'the biggest lie on the internet.'"

If a user cannot access a product or service without agreeing to published terms, consent is hijacked and cannot be considered meaningful. Forcing agreement in this way creates a power imbalance between companies and the users that engage with their products and services. When those users are children, and when those terms are unfair, the forced acceptance of terms is particularly problematic."

5Rights Foundation

Building the digital world that young people deserve.

Find out more at: www.5rightsfoundation.com



**5RIGHTS
FOUNDATION**

Do you think that companies may be spying on you through the technology you use?

16%

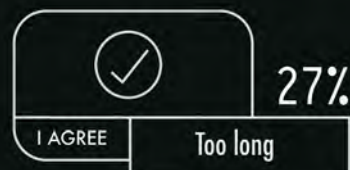
No

32%

Unsure

37%

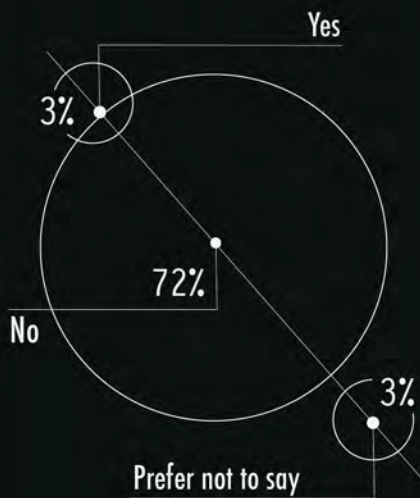
Yes



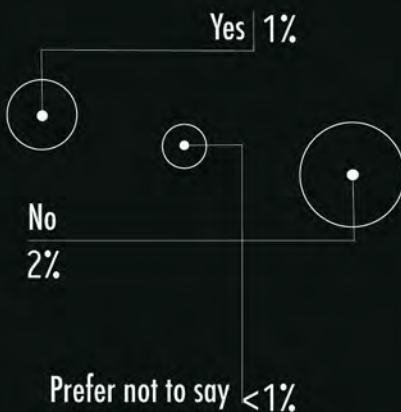
SOCIAL MEDIA & CONSENT

SOCIAL MEDIA & CONSENT

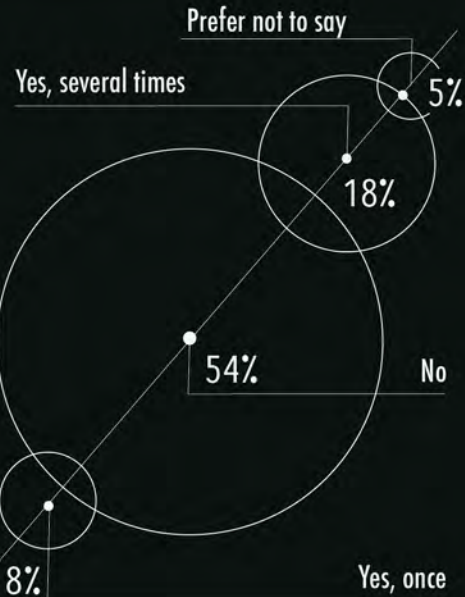
Have you ever sent someone a naked selfie?



Have you ever had a naked selfie shared without your permission?

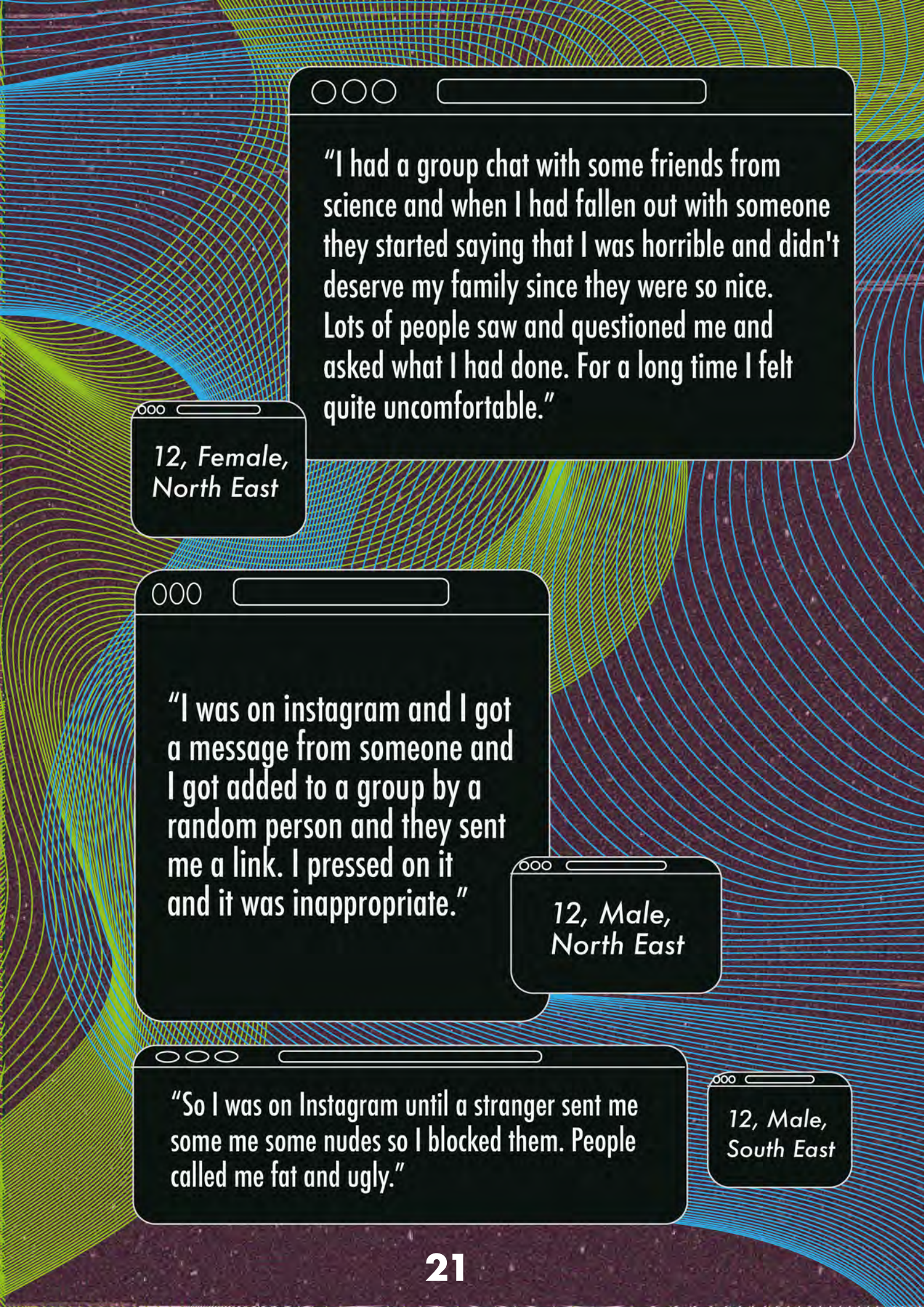


Have you ever recieved an unwanted sexual message or image from a stranger online?



Roughly how old were they?





“I had a group chat with some friends from science and when I had fallen out with someone they started saying that I was horrible and didn't deserve my family since they were so nice. Lots of people saw and questioned me and asked what I had done. For a long time I felt quite uncomfortable.”

12, Female,
North East

“I was on instagram and I got a message from someone and I got added to a group by a random person and they sent me a link. I pressed on it and it was inappropriate.”

12, Male,
North East

“So I was on Instagram until a stranger sent me some me some nudes so I blocked them. People called me fat and ugly.”

12, Male,
South East

“My friend posted a screenshot of an argument we'd had on Snapchat messenger on her Instagram feed where I'd been upset with her over something she'd said, in her description she made fun of that. She had covered my name on the screen shot, but the description made it clear who she was referring to.”

17, Female,
East Midlands

“When i was in year nine someone sent a photo of me (had pants on but I would still class as a nude) into a group chat with my older brother in and it caused everyone to fall out and fight.”

17, Female,
East Midlands

“There are loads of people on snapchat and instagram that ask for nudes and want me to meet them and send sexual pictures and ask me to give them money for sex and ask me to watch their webcams.”

13, Non-binary,
East of England

MODERATION

MODERATION

Have you ever had something mean posted about you online? If so, by who?



Do you agree or disagree that the internet should have more moderation?

Unsure

Agree

Disagree

15%

29%

41%

"Moderation covers a broad spectrum in online communities (aka social apps). From simple text filtering within communities of interest to full-fledged facial recognition and OCR (optical character recognition), there is a significant range of rules and guidelines that are specific to each community's unique needs. Just as the offline world requires government, the online world requires the same. Without some form of government or guidelines, mayhem can (and usually will) ensue. Hate speech, bullying, predatory behavior, vulgarity, illegal discussion - these are a few of the more obvious issues requiring regulation within our online communities. Aside from community owners wanting to ensure safety and a great experience for their members, most countries have government regulations requiring moderation online in order to protect community members of all ages, races, orientations, and interests. We celebrate those who manage online communities. They are the unseen heroes who keep our experiences positive and safe and allow us our freedom of expression without impinging on another's freedom."

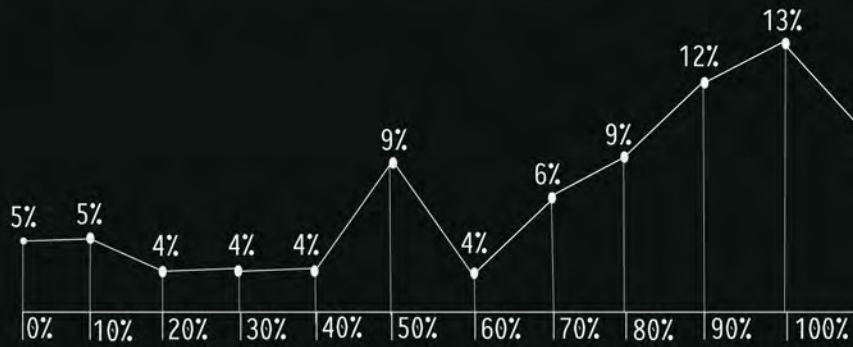
*Rebecca Newton, Head of Digital Safety and Community,
SuperAwesome of Epic Games and Ditch the Label Trustee.*



PARENTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

PARENTS & SOCIAL MEDIA

Roughly what percentage of the things you do online do you think your parents/guardians know about?



13%

Think their parents/guardians know 100% of what they do online.

9%

Don't know.

5%

Think their parents/guardians know 0% of what they do online.

000 0 00

Do you think it's embarrassing when your parents/guardians post pictures of you on social media?

11%

They don't

34%

Say they are not bothered either way

15%

No

24%

Yes

Do you agree or disagree that it would be nice if your parents/guardians spent less time online and more time with you?

33%

Agree

36%

Unsure

16%

Disagree



16%

No

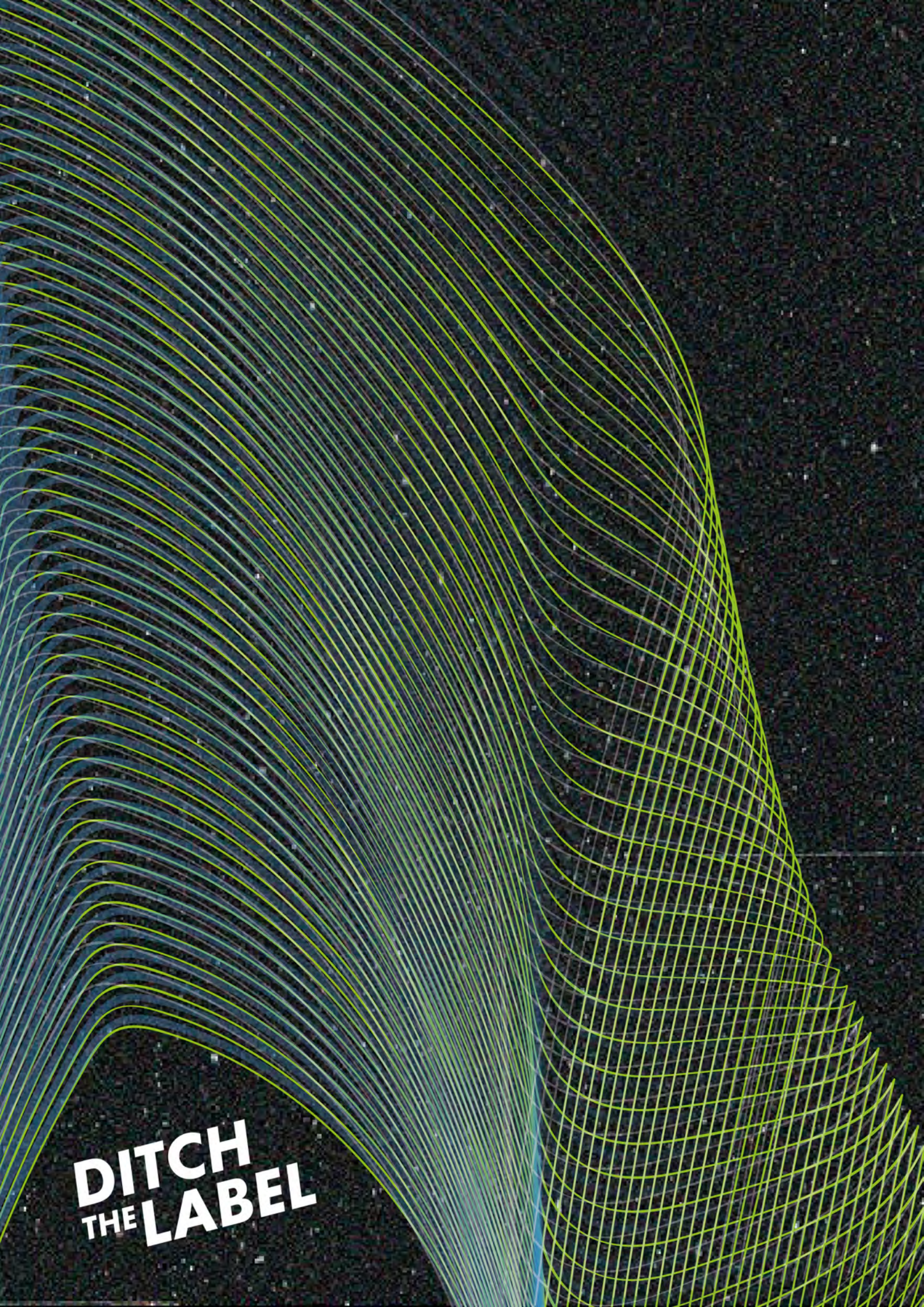
19%

Only on some profiles

40%

Yes

Are you comfortable with your parents/guardians following you on social media?

The background of the image is a dark, starry space. Overlaid on this are numerous thin, wavy green lines that curve and flow across the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth. These lines are more densely packed on the left side and become more sparse towards the right.

**DITCH
THE LABEL**