



Generation Z- Social Media as the Present & Future

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Where It All Began

Just when they thought it was another day of school, a place where they were supposed to be kept safe, students fought for survival as one of them had something else in mind. On February 14, students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida experienced a deadly school shooting by Nikolas Cruz, a fellow student. As students were sitting in class, there were shooting sounds outside their classroom, the last place that such sound should be heard in. Students immediately ran to hide under their desks as they reached for their phones to contact anyone who would respond to them. Students began to record messages to their parents and anyone who would watch and listen, mostly on Snapchat and texted their love ones, thinking it was the last time they would be able to see them. ([Andone](#))



On February 14, students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School experienced a deadly school shooting and 17 students and faculty members did not survive while other students walked out of the school completely changed.

The Shooting at Stoneman Douglas was the eighth mass school shooting of 2018. Tired of being victims and as survivors, students decided to come together with the help of the Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun control advocacy group, and create the March for Our Lives demonstration. The students who created the demonstration also organized a national walk out where students all over the world walked out of their classroom and school in support for the students who did not survive the shooting. Additionally, in creating the march students had three primary demands: pass a law to ban the assault weapons that are used in mass shootings, stops the sale of high capacity magazine that restrict the amount of ammunition and lastly, close the loopholes in America's background checks and implement laws that requires background checks on every gun purchase. (Andone)

Who is Generation Z?

Generation Z are people who were born from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, they are known to be the the most connected, educated and sophisticated generation. Additionally, Generation Z are also those who were born in an era of technological advances so they did not have to go through the early-phase of technology and the internet being a new thing to adapt to. Younger people are most often spoken down on, especially in this generation. Younger people are seen as inactive, always on their phones, on social media and doing nothing for themselves when in reality it is the complete opposite. Social media is the present and the future of the current generations and the future generations to come, so younger people are using the tools they have at their hands most importantly the digital media. Younger people are not able to vote or always participate in certain political events due to their age but what they are able to do is share, share their views, political information, and their experiences on social media to connect with others and amplify their own voice. Through technology—the internet and social media— Generation Z has developed into being very active about the ongoing issues that people face socially and politically.

Social media is often put in a bad light. Oftentimes, when people speak about it they usually say that people do not get off of it so they don't have a life, people have become so involved with social media that they do not communicate with those around them. However, social media has been a great tool for society especially political. Social media has offered a platform in which the most recent generation can become “actively involved in politics, albeit in ways different from previous generations...young people may share political information online or use social media to get others to join a protest--as during the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement and the Black Lives Matter movement.”([Luttig & Cohen](#))

Then & Now

Social media and the internet is something that allows one to connect with others, have a platform to speak up on anything one desire and to do anything one desire. Generation Z has used social media and the internet to its fullest advantage to engage and communicate with the world, whether it is to share moments or to speak up about an issue. Every generation has their own form of social media, something they used to capture and create memories and to communicate with others. Back then, quilt making was used to capture moments, to communicate with others not verbally but through images on the quilts, and to share information through generations. Digital media and social media are this generation's version of quilt making, as we are able to share our stories or experiences with others, we are able to connect with anyone in the world and anything that is shared in the digital media can stay there forever, as an archive for generations to look back at just like people used quilt making for. ([Jenkins](#))

March for Our Lives 2018: Media Coverage

March 24, 2018 the March for Our Lives occurred where millions participated.



Although many people before were speaking about and fighting for change regarding gun violence the mass participation increased after the Parkland shooting. The increased of attention for the March for Our Lives in such a short period of time demonstrates how invested Generation Z can be and their use of social media to their fullest extent. The March for Our lives posts reached 11.6 million post being shared. It all began with the National Walkout Day that occurred on March 14 where students left their classroom in support of those who lost their life. The National Walkout Day reached 1.3 million social posts the day of the event. (Deng) The event was also trending on Twitter the day that it occurred. Many different hashtags were created for the event including: #MarchForOurLives, #NeverAgain, #GunControlNow, EnoughisEnough and others.

The march also gained a lot of coverage on social media, it was top trending on Twitter, also gained many different hashtags which were

tweeted approximately 4 million times. Following the Parkland shooting students took leadership roles in fighting for policy change and emerged to be very influential on social media. Compared to celebrities and politicians who have spoken out about gun violence in previous years, students received more attention and coverage on social media. Social media played a significant role in the March for Our Life movement with all the coverage it received, where students were able to communicate with one another and support one another in something they were all experiencing.

Generation Z: Role in Social & Political Change

Generation Z are often looked down upon due to their constant use of social media and technology. However, they have used it to make significant changes in society, especially with the role they played in policy making in the aftermath of the Parkland shooting. With the success that students had with the March of Our Lives movement it demonstrates that students do get involved and care about ongoing social and political issues.

