



2020

A Decade in the Making

insights from
VICE media group

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In 2019, we launched **VICE Media Group**. We made one of the most watched documentaries on Netflix, took a bold stance on brand safety, developed an astrology app, brought VICE News home to VICE on TV, expanded our footprint in APAC, and added Refinery29 to the family. Through all of this, we learned a lot. A lot about us, about the world, and about young people.

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We're optimistic about the future, as we use these learnings to channel the energy of a young world. We're sharing them in the hopes that they'll help others better understand the world they operate in, and the young audiences shaping the next decade.

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INSIGHTS

to propel us forward

A NEW GENERATION COMING OF AGE

- 06 Fluidity is Not a Fad
- 08 A Call for Change
- 10 Creativity is Social Currency
- 12 Committed to Independence
- 14 Mindful About Wellness



A NEW ERA OF MEDIA EMERGING

- 16 Information is Entertainment
- 18 A New Definition of News
- 20 Truth is Discovered, Not Delivered
- 22 Finding the Unfamiliar in the Familiar
- 24 Technology is the Fifth Element

Fluidity Is Not a Fad

1 in 2

of Gen Z define their sexuality as something other than heterosexual

Source: VICE Voices, Identity & Privacy (US/UK)

6 in 10

of the VICE audience believe in fluidity and say we don't live in a binary world

Source: VICE Audience Poll, Relationships & Identity (Global)



“ALLOSEXUAL, DEMISEXUAL, BICURIOS — & OTHER SEXUALITIES YOU NEED TO KNOW”

Among the top performing R29 content

Source: R29 Google Analytics



Through our interactions with young people across the globe, we've seen dramatic shifts in how this generation defines themselves. Gen Z has rejected binary labels and refuse to be put in a box. Their identity is not based on demographics; gender, sexuality and ethnicity all exist on a spectrum, not as restrictive data points. It's their personalities, values and passions that define who they are.

Young people are fighting for a world where everyone can be the person they want to be. Equal rights is among the top issues young people care about; it's of utmost importance to them that everyone be included and accepted for their true self.

As part of this fight, VICE challenged ourselves and our brand partners to think more closely about programmatic keyword “blacklists” and their inherent bias. We whitelisted 25 terms that could describe one's identity and should not be deemed bad or offensive. For example, an article published a few months ago entitled “‘Limitless Africans’ Is a Stunning Snapshot of LGBTQ African Immigrant Lives” would have previously been blocked from brand advertising simply because it contained the term “LGBTQ.” With the new whitelisted terms in place, brands can now appear around content that showcases the art and creativity of a generation exploring their identity, a topic that matters greatly to our audience.

A Call for Change

Among the highest growth categories in readership: environmental coverage

Source: VICE Content Analytics

1 in 2

of the VICE audience would always choose a brand that supports a cause

Source: VICE Youth Census (Global)

3 in 4

of the R29 audience say they invest their time and money in practicing sustainability

Source: R29 Mad Chatter Sustainability Study (US)

If we've learned anything from the events of this past year – from the passionate response to Parkland to millions participating in Fridays for Future protests – Gen Z is not afraid to stand up for what they believe in. They're invested in the world we live in and the future of our society. They use those convictions to become agents of change, by being politically active, making charitable donations, fighting for human rights and trying to live sustainably. These beliefs not only dictate how they act, but how they spend their money. Doing good is now table stakes for brands, sitting next to price and quality in purchase criteria.



With a long life ahead of them, the health and safety of the planet Gen Z lives on is vital. We've conducted multiple surveys this year on the issues young people care about, and they've all come back with the environment topping the list. Even more telling is the surge in engagement with our environmental coverage. Stories about e-waste, plastics and the impacts of climate change are among our most read. These issues are so important to our audience that we featured the climate crisis movement's young leader, Greta Thunberg, on the cover of i-D – a coveted spot reserved for the most influential people shaping culture today.



Creativity is Social Currency

74%

**of Gen Z believe
creativity will be the
most important skill
in the workplace of
the future**

Source: VICE Voices, Future of Work (US/UK)

500k

**@viceasia TikTok
launch in Indonesia**

Source: TikTok Analytics

2.8B

**social impressions
around 29Rooms**

Source: Insights Rooms Social Analytics

The robots are coming. In fact, some could argue that they are already here. With so much being automated today, creative, nonlinear thinking is the way to get ahead and stand out from the crowd. It's also a way to balance out the intensity of all that advocacy for change. While young people believe creativity is going to become essential to succeed, they feel creative thinking is currently lacking from most academic curriculums.

This focus on creativity is redefining what work looks like. Many young people have developed their own wealth opportunities that don't rely on a regular 9 to 5 job. To attract those looking for a corporate career,

modern workplaces are rethinking their office spaces and policies to attract creative thinkers and foster creative thinking.

Gen Z is sharpening their creative skills from a young age. TikTok, the platform that launched the career of Lil Nas X, is a prime example. Focused on 15-second videos, this platform trades in creativity. It rewards the fun and weird, steering away from the cult of perfection often seen on other social platforms. Estimated to have been downloaded more than a billion times on app stores, TikTok has become the fastest growing social media app today. We experienced this momentum ourselves when VICE launched on TikTok in Indonesia to over half a million views.

Committed to Independence

“

My ideal relationship is more about bettering myself and less about dependency. At the end of the day, you have to rely on you.

”

FEMALE, AGE 25-34

Source: Love & Loyalty Focus Groups (US)

Young people live in a world of constant choice, with endless possibilities at their fingertips. As the sexual status quo has begun to break down, young people find themselves with more and more ways to express and explore intimate relationships. In this environment, it's not surprising that it's hard to commit.

This generation of youth is highly ambitious and fiercely independent. Gen Z told us the number one drawback of being committed is being too reliant on someone or something. Young people know if they want something done, they have to do it themselves. They are looking for someone passionate who can enhance their lives. There is no longer an expectation that one person will fulfill all one's needs, until death do you part.

Relationships are still highly valued and based on trust, honesty and dedication; they are just approached more practically. Gen Z doesn't have commitment issues, but rather a new definition of commitment.



ONLY
1 in 10 **are committed to being committed**

Source: VICE Voices, Love & Loyalty (US/UK)

Mindful About Wellness

This year, we saw horoscopes become some of our stickiest content, with readers coming back day after day to check out what the stars have in store for them. We followed the signs and launched our own astrology app, AstroGuide. But the data was pointing out more than a business opportunity.

Spirituality is clearly more alive than ever. Organized religion, however, is on the decline because young people don't see it as relevant to their lifestyle or values. They are turning elsewhere to nurture their minds and souls. They are creating art, listening to music, engaging in self-care... and checking their horoscopes.

With an increased focus on mindfulness, there has been a shift in how people view health and wellness, with mental health becoming its most impactful element. Our top performing health content is focused on mental health – primarily around how to manage it.

#1 Mental health has the biggest impact on health and wellness according to Gen Z

Source: VICE Voices, Wellness (US/UK)



HOROSCOPES

VICE digital content with most return visitors

Source: VICE Google Analytics



"I TRIED 20 TRENDY ANTI-ANXIETY PRODUCTS & THESE 8 ACTUALLY WORK"

Among the top performing R29 content

Source: R29 Google Analytics



"A NEW LAW WILL ALLOW STUDENTS TO TAKE MENTAL HEALTH DAYS"

Among the top performing i-D content

Source: VICE Google Analytics

Information is Entertainment

98%

of Gen Z say the education system has failed them in some way

Source: VICE Voices, Future Census (US/UK)

1 in 3

say higher education will have less importance in landing a job in 10 years

Source: VICE Voices, Education & Work (US/UK)



Throughout VICE's history, our mission has been to help our audience navigate the world. Now more than ever, we're seeing an appetite for topics and formats that educate. Some of our top performing content are how-tos and explainers around food, drugs, travel, health, sex and relationships.

anywhere they can to get educated on the hard and soft skills they need to succeed. Even though they want to be educated, it can't be all information all the time. The most engaging educational pieces are equal parts informative and entertaining.

This desire to learn is likely brought on by an education system young people feel has failed them. They are looking



FOOD HOW-TO VIDEOS

Among the top performing VICE YouTube content

Source: VICE YouTube Analytics



"WANT TO FOLD A FITTED SHEET? LET MARIE KONDO TEACH YOU HOW"

Among the top performing R29 content

Source: R29 Instagram Analytics

A New Definition of News

2019 was VICE's year for news. VICE News was nominated for a record-breaking 19 Emmys, and brought home six. In 2020, our award-winning news coverage will come home to VICE on TV. To inform our strategy for a new format and audience, we spent a lot of time researching and thinking about how news is defined and consumed today.

We learned that as long as it's current and informative, it's news. News is no longer limited to politics and current affairs. It can be about any topic – food, technology, culture, entertainment... the list goes on. News audiences today are also happy for their news to come from anywhere – local, national and international stories alike are welcome.



NEWS TODAY IS:

Current

information that is fresh and new

Comprehensive

inclusive of all markets (local, national and international)

Copious

covers topics from politics and social issues to culture and gaming

Source: VICE News Consumption Diary Study (US)

I define news as information about something new... a range of various topics, interests, people, industries, and pretty much anything you can think of.

”

MALE, 32

Source: News Consumption Diary Study (US)

Truth is Discovered, Not Delivered

In a time when “fake news” is part of our everyday lexicon and biased storytelling is the norm, young people are seeking the truth more than ever. We’ve learned that our audience looks to sources that inform them, but allow them to form their own opinion. Part of this discovery process is gathering information from various sides and sources.

We saw the desire to see the full picture through the success of One Star Reviews, a series that seeks to understand if the worst-rated places on Yelp are as bad as the internet says, or just misunderstood. The host, Taji, gets his teeth whitened, his nipple pierced, and even gets a stick-shift driving lesson from a less-than-stellar driver, all in the pursuit of truth. He approaches each experience with an open mind, takes it all in... and writes his own review.

It’s also important for young people to see and experience a thing for themselves to truly understand it. In one of our most viewed VICE News stories this year, “China’s Vanishing Muslims,” we took the audience with us as we reported from the Uighur homeland of China’s northwestern Xinjiang region. As journalists are not allowed to visit or speak with locals, we posed as tourists and wore hidden cameras, enabling us to uncover a side of the story never before seen, and giving the people experiencing this oppression the opportunity to tell their story.



ONE STAR REVIEWS

Among the top performing VICE YouTube content

Source: VICE YouTube Analytics



CHINA'S VANISHING MUSLIMS: UNDERCOVER IN THE MOST DYSTOPIAN PLACE IN THE WORLD

Among the top performing VICE News content

Source: VICE YouTube Analytics





Finding the Unfamiliar in the Familiar

83%

of the VICE audience is always searching for more in-depth information on topics they are interested in

Source: VICE Youth Census (Global)

Young people are hungry for information. They want background, context, characters, ideas, and most of all, they want to discover what others don't know yet.

Through this lens, approaching an ordinary topic in a different way can make it new and exciting again. Take pro wrestling for example. Peaking in popularity in the 90s, wrestling has remained a well-documented part of pop culture ever since. In 2019, VICE found a dynamic new way to talk about an old subject.

We approached the series *Dark Side of the Ring* with a unique perspective, uncovering deeper insights into the world of wrestling and taking some storytelling risks. It found mass appeal and attracted an audience that spanned demographics and regions.



DARK SIDE OF THE RING
Among the top performing VICE TV series

Source: Nielsen

Technology is the Fifth Element

ONLY **36%**

of Gen Z feel the need to take a break from technology

Source: VICE Youth Census (Global)

6 in 10

of Gen Z say digital technology allows them to do things they never imagined would be possible

Source: VICE Voices, Future Census (US/UK)



CARLINGS “adDRESS THE FUTURE”

Award-winning Virtue creative

31 awards including Cannes Grand Prix Lion and Eurobest Gold



Once simply a convenience, technology is now an integral part of young people's lives. It empowers creativity, entertains us, and connects us with diverse people and ideas from around the world. It can also be used as a tool to shape our identities, both on and offline. This year, Virtue's adDRESS THE FUTURE project for Carlings created the first digital fashion collection, providing users an opportunity to express themselves online while lessening their negative environmental impact offline.

Technology is so seamlessly integrated into young people's lives today that, unlike previous generations, they don't feel a strong need to take a break from it. In fact, Gen Z picks up the devices other generations put away during stressful periods. This generation turns to technology to get advice, connect with loved ones, get creative or escape to another world.

information desk

insights from
VICE media group

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