

# State of Human Attention 2026



This report by Jolt is based on aggregated insights from user interviews, surveys, onboarding data, anonymised usage, & independent research. It reflects trends from approximately **10K iPhone users** and is intended solely for informational and research purposes.

# Average screen time across the globe

Average daily screen time now exceeds **7 hours** in multiple countries. This level of usage spans both developed and emerging economies, pointing to a shared global pattern rather than a regional outlier.

Global average per day:

**5 hrs 37 mins**



N = 10K

# Apps people choose to block

Across most countries, the same social and video platforms dominate blocking behavior. While regional differences exist, such as WhatsApp replacing TikTok in India, the overall pattern remains consistent.

## Top 3 apps blocked globally:

- 1) Instagram
- 2) YouTube
- 3) TikTok



🏆 Most distracting app award goes to:



# When it comes to screen time, does size matter?

Larger phone screens are associated with higher daily screen time. Usage increases steadily with screen size, with the highest screen time observed on the largest displays.



As screens get bigger, sessions tend to last longer

# Smarter iphones, dumber outcomes

As phones became faster, brighter, and smoother, sessions quietly became longer.

## Better phone is worse for you

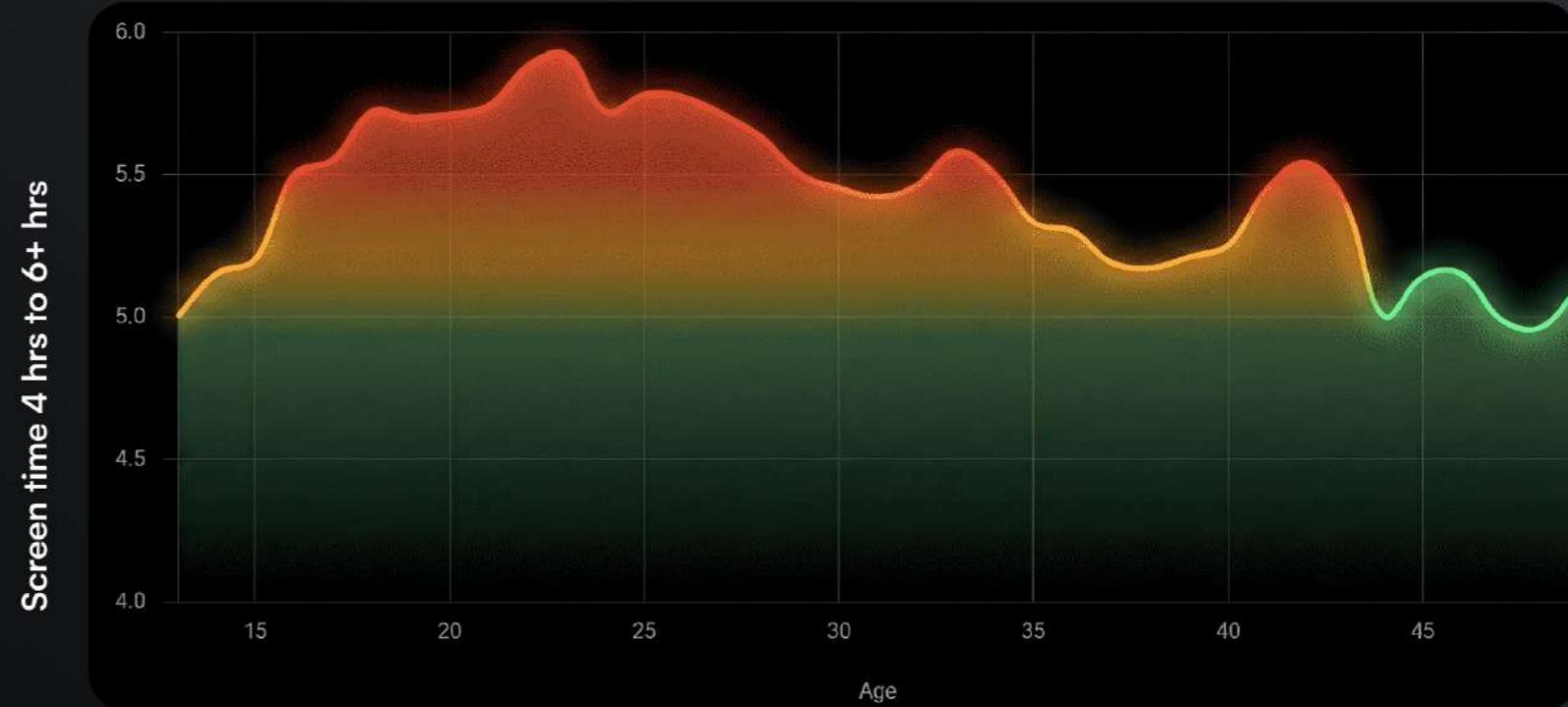
iPhone 13 series = 5.3 hrs/day  
iPhone 14 series = 5.6 hrs/day  
iPhone 15 series = 5.9 hrs/day  
iPhone 16 series = 6.4 hrs/day  
iPhone 17 series = 6.6 hrs/day



# The screen time life cycle

Rather than a single peak, screen time forms a long plateau across adulthood, suggesting sustained exposure, not a phase.

This isn't a teen problem. It's an adulthood baseline.



# It's not you. It's modern work

As work becomes more digital and communication-driven, extended screen time has become a shared feature across professions.

Extended screen exposure has become a proxy for productivity, not proof of it.

## Top 10 Professions Based on Their Screen Time



# Why do we keep reaching for our phones?

While the phone stays the same, the emotional and situational reasons for using it shift with age and responsibility.

Boredom starts it. Stress sustains it. Habit keeps it going



**Student/  
learning years**  
(13-22 yrs)

**3-4  
hours**

Boredom,  
Notifications &  
Social pressure



**Early  
employment**  
(23-32 yrs)

**4-5  
hours**

Stress/anxiety,  
Habit & work  
related



**Experienced  
professionals**  
(33-44 yrs)

**3-4  
hours**

Stress/anxiety,  
Work related &  
habit



**Experienced  
professionals**  
(45+ yrs)

**2-3  
hours**

Habit, Boredom  
& Notifications

# Everyone has a number. Apparently, It's almost the same

Across professions, most people aim for moderation rather than elimination, clustering around a 3-5 hours daily screen time goal.

People don't want to disconnect. They want control



Student/  
Unemployed

4-5  
hrs/day

Entertainment  
and social  
platforms



Working  
Professional/  
Freelancer

3-4  
hrs/day

Work tools and  
content  
platforms



Entrepreneur /  
Business owner

4-5  
hrs/day

Work,  
communication,  
and content



Teacher/  
Healthcare  
worker

3-4  
hrs/day

Communication  
and essential  
tools

# Screen time has a schedule

The time of day people use screens most changes across life stages.

Time of use shifts more than total use



**13-22 yrs**

After school/  
college

Before  
sleeping

Morning



**23-32 yrs**

Before  
sleeping

During breaks  
Morning



**33-44 yrs**

During breaks  
Morning

Before  
sleeping



**45+ yrs**

Morning

During breaks

Evening

# When screens start taking more than they give

The decision to reduce screen time is driven by its impact on everyday life rather than total hours alone, often felt through reduced focus, disrupted sleep, and scattered routines.

Calculated on the basis of declared screen time upon app onboarding | Source: Jolt App

## Top Goals Selected by Users

Relative distribution of user-selected goals



Percentages normalized across all selected goals | N = 10K

# We don't stop watching. We start choosing

From TikTok to YouTube to Netflix, content length increases as consumption becomes deliberate.

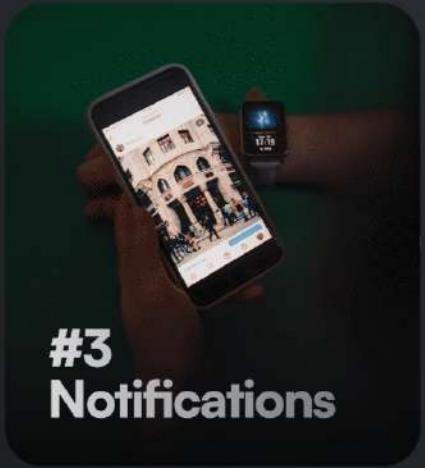
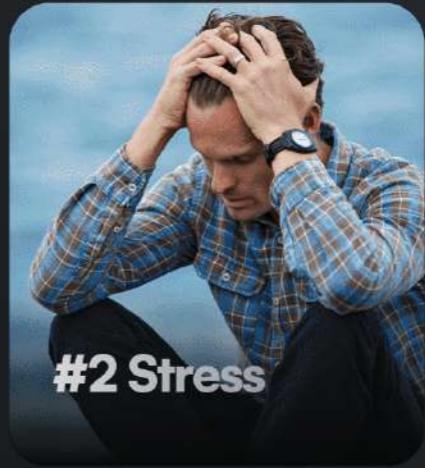
Maturity doesn't remove screens.  
It changes intent



# It's not about the apps

Across users globally, screen time is most often triggered by boredom, stress, and habit rather than work or task-driven use.

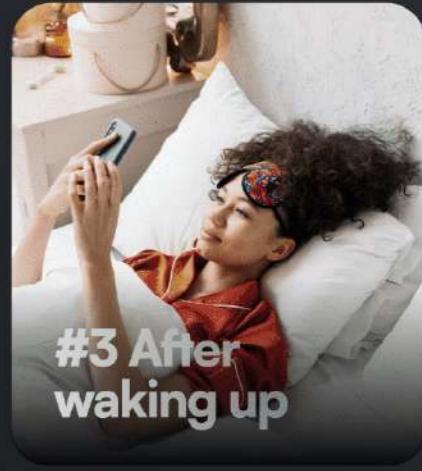
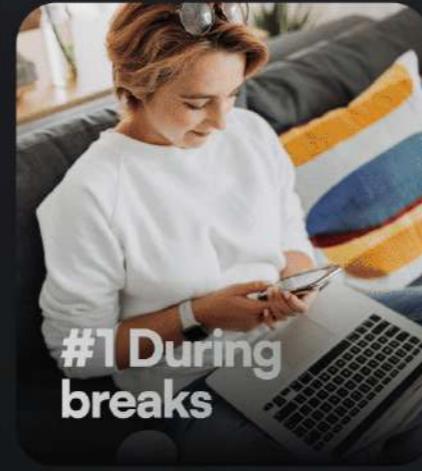
Most screen time isn't intentional. It's reactive



# Every pause has a phone

Phone use spikes during moments meant for rest or transition, such as breaks, mornings, nights, and commutes.

Idle time has become screen time. So when do you actually think?



# Where you live changes why you scroll

Geography influences phone use through culture, economics, and daily routine.

Usage patterns follow daily realities

**Asia****Americas +  
Oceania****Europe****Africa****South America**

Boredom  
Stress  
Notifications

Stress  
Habit  
Notifications

Habit  
Boredom  
Stress

Boredom  
Habit  
Relaxation

Boredom  
Relaxation  
Work/Education

# Growing scale of screen dependency

eyesafe

Published: 7, August 2025

## New Eyesafe Report Finds the Average Person Will Spend 21 Years of Their Life on Screens

An individual born in 2025 is projected to spend 21 years of their life—equivalent to over 181,000 hours—looking at a screen, according to a landmark new report from Eyesafe...

[Read more..](#)

StudyFinds

Published: 6, July 2023

## Screen zombies: Average person will spend 44 YEARS looking at digital devices —

NEW YORK — As millions of Americans sit in quarantine this year, many people probably feel their entire lives are spent staring at a computer screen. It turns out they may be right...

[Read more..](#)

# High screen time has long term neurological impact



HARVARD  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Published: 19, June 2019

## Screen Time and the Brain Digital devices can interfere with everything..

Whether we like it or not, digital devices are everywhere. Some of us can barely put them down, even when we're with cherished family and friends...

[Read more..](#)

**Dovepress**

Taylor & Francis Group

Published: 6, May 2024

## Night Screen Time is Associated with Cognitive Function in Healthy Young Adults:

Cognitive function plays a crucial role in an individual's overall development, encompassing fundamental brain processes including attention, memory, learning, language...

[Read more..](#)



Published: 7, March 2025

## Demystifying the New Dilemma of Brain Rot in the Digital Era:

The widespread phenomenon of "brain rot", named the Oxford Word of the Year 2024, refers to the cognitive decline and mental exhaustion experienced by individuals, particularly adolescents and young adults...

[Read more..](#)

**Translational  
Psychiatry**

Published: 31, October 2025

## Association of screen time with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms..

The association among screen time, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptom development, and brain structure, and the neural mechanisms underlying...

[Read more..](#)

# No age is safe from the screen trap

 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Published: 9, June 2025

## Screen time and emotional problems in kids: A vicious circle?

Washington — Spending too much time on screens may cause emotional and behavioral problems in children—and those problems can lead to even more screen use...

[Read more..](#) CDC

Published: 10, July 2025

## Associations Between Screen Time Use and Health Outcomes Among US Teenagers

The availability of smartphones among teenagers (hereinafter, teens) has increased significantly in the past decade, with nearly all teens having access to smartphones or other internet-connected devices...

[Read more..](#) Barna

Published: 10, Feb 2021

## Half of Gen Z Feel Bad About the Amount of Time Spent on Screens

Screens are everywhere. Whether at work, school or home, no generation is exempt from tech's influence in this digital age, especially as society moves further into a COVID-shaped reality that...

[Read more..](#) OXFORD ACADEMIC

Published: 31, December 2024

## SMARTPHONE OVERUSE AMONG OLDER ADULTS: A SCOPING REVIEW

The rapid advancement of technology and widespread adoption of smartphones have led to increased smartphone usage among older adults. While smartphones offer many benefits...

[Read more..](#)

# Global crackdown on youth screen time

## SCC TIMES

Published: 11, November 2025

### Social media off-limits for under-16s starting December 2025 as Australia sets Age..

In a move to safeguard children and reshape the regulatory landscape of digital access, Australia has enacted the...

[Read more..](#)

Published: 17, September 2025

### Brazil Passes Landmark Law to Protect Children Online

(São Paulo) — Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on September 17, 2025, signed the country's first law to protect children's rights online, Human Rights Watch said today...

[Read more..](#)

## Le Monde

Published: 29, June 2023

### France requires parental consent for under-15s on social media

In a new law aimed at combatting cyberbullying and reducing other harmful effects of social media on minors, social media platforms will be required to verify ages and obtain parental consent for minors under 15...

[Read more..](#)

European Parliament

Published: 26, November 2025

### Children should be at least 16 to access social media, say MEPs

MEPs are calling for ambitious EU action to protect minors online, including an EU-wide minimum age of 16 and bans on the most harmful addictive practices...

[Read more..](#)

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