

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



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

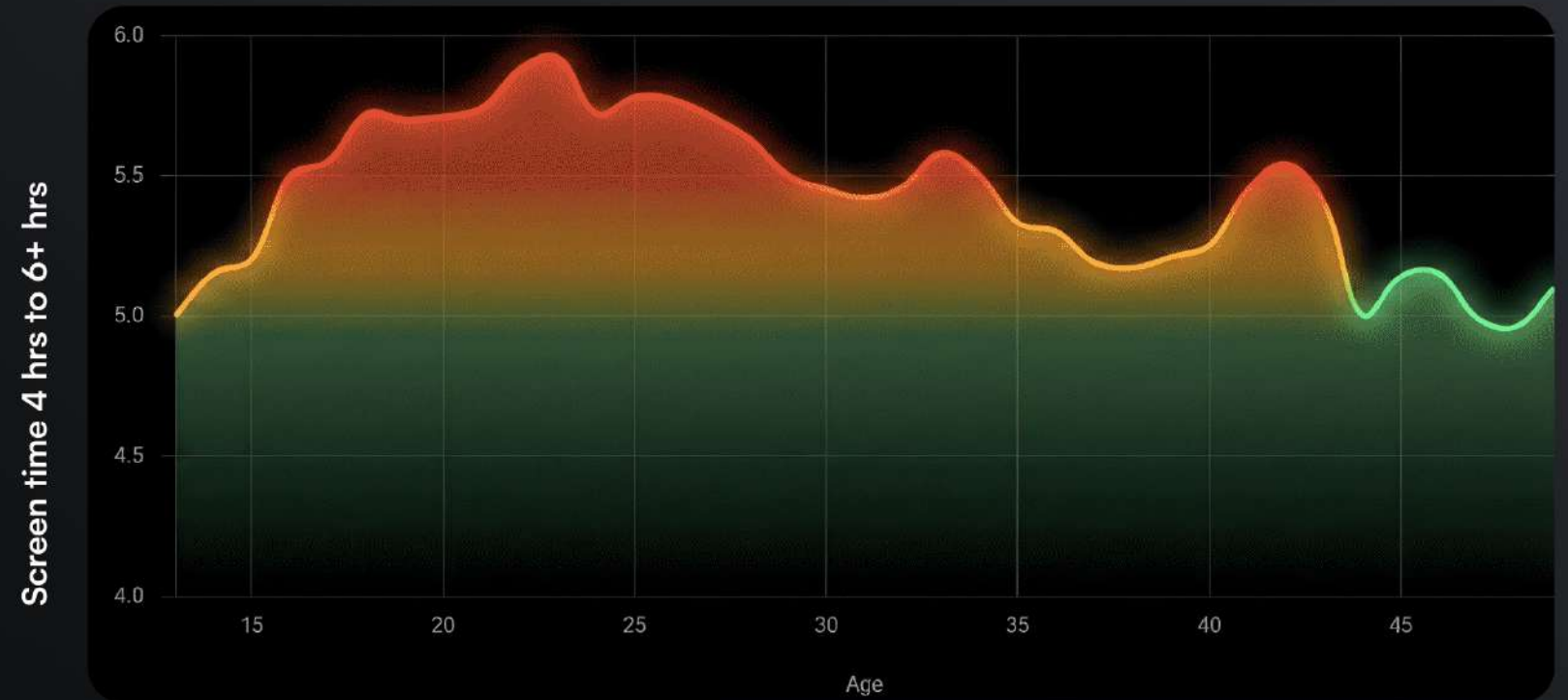
iPhone 13 series = 5.3 hrs/day
iPhone 14 series = 5.6 hrs/day
iPhone 15 series = 5.9 hrs/day
iPhone 16 series = 6.4hrs/day
iPhone 17 series = 6.6hrs/day



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.



Age 11-45+

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.

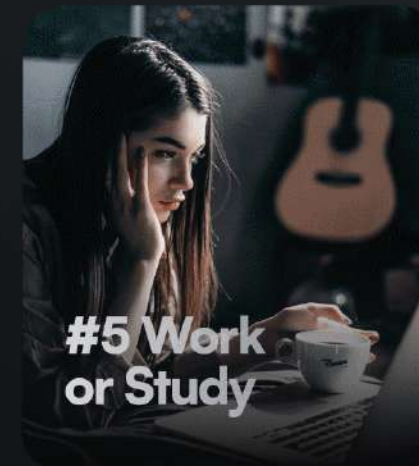
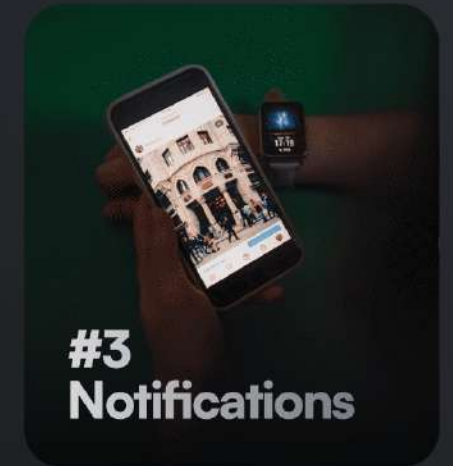
Maturity doesn't remove screens.
It changes intent



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.

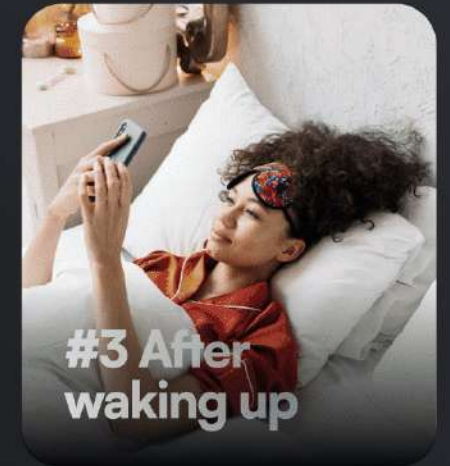
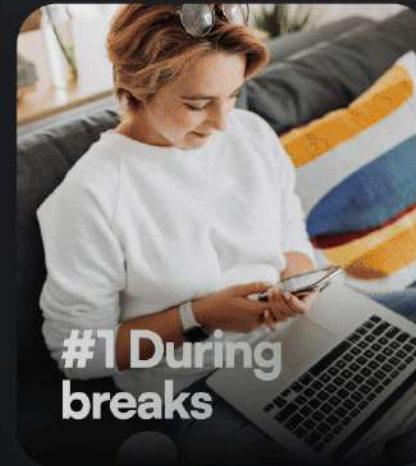
Most screen time isn't intentional. It's reactive



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

Boredom
Stress
Notifications



**Americas +
Oceania**

Stress
Habit
Notifications



Europe

Habit
Boredom
Stress



Africa

Boredom
Habit
Relaxation



South America

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



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..](#)

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..](#)

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..](#)



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..](#)



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



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..](#)

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..](#)

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..](#)

DISCLAIMER

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN PREPARED BY JOLT BASED ON A COMBINATION OF USER INTERVIEWS, SURVEYS, ONBOARDING DATA, ANONYMIZED USAGE INPUTS, AND INDEPENDENT SECONDARY RESEARCH CONDUCTED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND GLOBAL SCREEN-TIME BEHAVIORS AND DIGITAL USAGE PATTERNS. THE FINDINGS PRESENTED HEREIN ARE INTENDED SOLELY FOR INFORMATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND RESEARCH PURPOSES.

THE DATA AND INSIGHTS REFLECTED IN THIS REPORT REPRESENT AGGREGATED TRENDS AND SELF-REPORTED INPUTS AT THE TIME OF COLLECTION AND DO NOT CONSTITUTE MEDICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, LEGAL, OR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OF ANY KIND. INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS, USAGE PATTERNS, AND OUTCOMES MAY VARY SIGNIFICANTLY BASED ON PERSONAL, CULTURAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT CERTAIN DATA POINTS MAY BE DIRECTIONALLY SKEWED, AS THE PRIMARY DATASET ANALYZED FOR THIS REPORT IS DERIVED FROM IPHONE USERS AND DOES NOT INCLUDE ANDROID USER DATA. ADDITIONALLY, A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF RESPONDENTS CONSISTS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ALREADY ACTIVELY SEEKING TO REDUCE THEIR SCREEN TIME, WHICH MAY INFLUENCE BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS, MOTIVATIONS, AND REPORTED OUTCOMES.

WHILE JOLT HAS TAKEN REASONABLE MEASURES TO ENSURE ACCURACY AND METHODOLOGICAL INTEGRITY, NO REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IS MADE REGARDING THE COMPLETENESS, ACCURACY, OR FUTURE APPLICABILITY OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT. JOLT ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY OR LIABILITY FOR ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT USE, INTERPRETATION, OR RELIANCE PLACED ON THE FINDINGS BY THIRD PARTIES.

THIS REPORT DOES NOT ENDORSE, CRITICIZE, OR TARGET ANY SPECIFIC PLATFORM, APPLICATION, COMPANY, OR INDIVIDUAL. ANY REFERENCES TO APPS, DEVICES, COUNTRIES, PROFESSIONS, OR BEHAVIORS ARE PURELY DESCRIPTIVE AND ANALYTICAL IN NATURE, BASED ON AGGREGATED RESEARCH OBSERVATIONS.

BY ACCESSING OR USING THIS REPORT, READERS ACKNOWLEDGE AND AGREE THAT JOLT SHALL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY CLAIMS, LOSSES, OR DAMAGES ARISING FROM THE USE, MISUSE, OR INTERPRETATION OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED.



Check out
Jolt app and
cut your
Screen time
by 33% today

Get Jolt

