

TASMANIAN YOUTH FORUM TECHNOLOGY WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID



Tasmanian **youth** forum



youth network of Tasmania

About TYF

The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is Tasmania's peak youth consultative body. TYF is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the peak organisation for the broader youth sector in Tasmania. YNOT is funded by the Tasmanian Government to improve the Tasmanian community's response to youth issues.

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Introduction

This Report communicates the thoughts and ideas of young people aged 12 to 25 who participated in the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) consultation on technology. This included an online survey and activities at the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC). This consultation provided young people with the opportunity to share how they prefer to use technology, social media and access information, as well as their ideas about using technology in the future. Key findings in this Report have been developed from the combined consultation process.

Background to the Topic

Technology and social media are increasingly becoming a part of daily life. Research shows young people are using different types of technologies, particularly to access the internet (APS 2017). While, as a cohort, young people are comparatively digitally literate to older cohorts, there are many other factors that influence digital literacy including socio-economic status, employment status, level education and location (Thomas et. al. 2017).

Tasmania is the least digitally inclusive State or Territory in Australia and the north-west and north/north-east regions of the State are in the top five of the least digitally included regions (Thomas et. al. 2017). Digital inclusion covers aspects such as access to technology and the internet, affordability and ability to use digital technology. This means young people in Tasmania are likely to face additional barriers to digital inclusion than young people in other parts of Australia.

Research also shows social media use is common among young people and use of social media platforms increases as they move through adolescence, however, access, experience and use of these platforms varies greatly among young people (ACMA 2013).

Technology is also rapidly changing which is impacting upon education and employment prospects for young people (FYA 2017). Previous TYF consultations on topics such as education, employment and mental health has resulted in young people sharing both concerns and ideas about how technology may impact their future (TYF 2017). This demonstrates young people are concerned about technology but also want the opportunity to contribute ideas to this topic.

Consultation Process: Overview

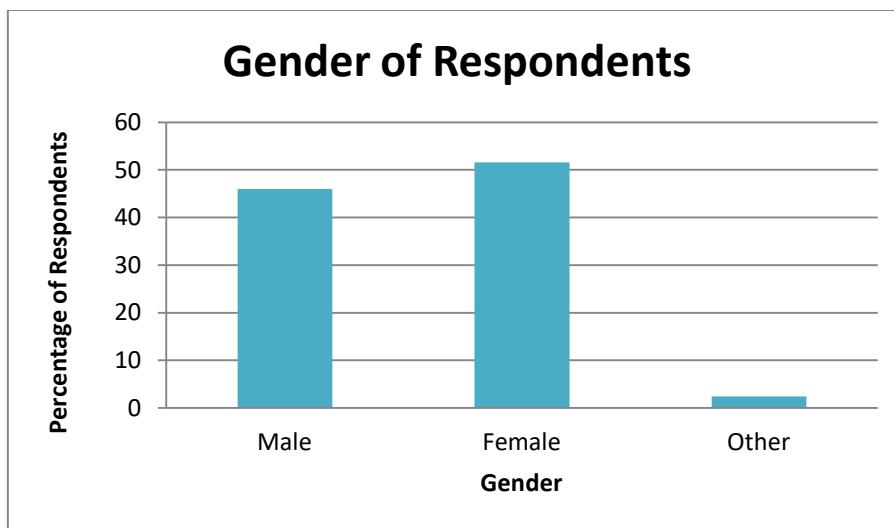
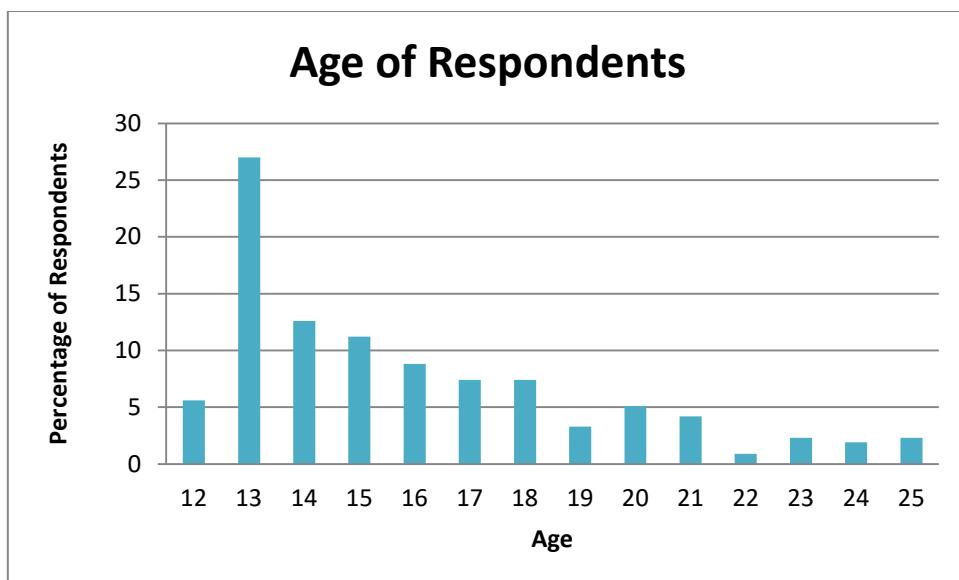
In June 2017, YNOT held the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC), which is a biennial event for young people aged 12 to 25 and those who work with young people or in youth affairs. TYF utilised the opportunity to consult with young people at the event as many had travelled from across Tasmania to attend and the topic of technology fit within the conference theme of innovation and looking towards the future. Several components of the conference provided the opportunity for young people to share their thoughts about technology. An online survey was also conducted after TYC to enable more young people with the opportunity to have their say on technology.

Limitations

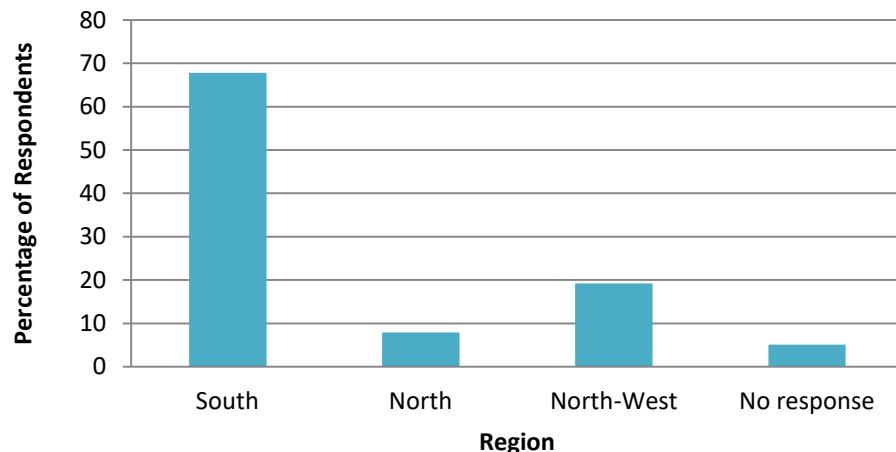
The structure of TYC is designed to enable young people to choose the workshops and activities they participate in, which meant there was no guarantee for how many young people would participate in the consultation activities at TYC. This reduced the number of young people engaging with the consultation activities at the event compared to previous consultations run in a traditional Statewide Forum structure (TYF 2017). It also meant it was not possible to gather demographic information for young people who specifically participated in these activities, however, this data was collected for all young people who were participants at TYC.

Consultation Process: Survey

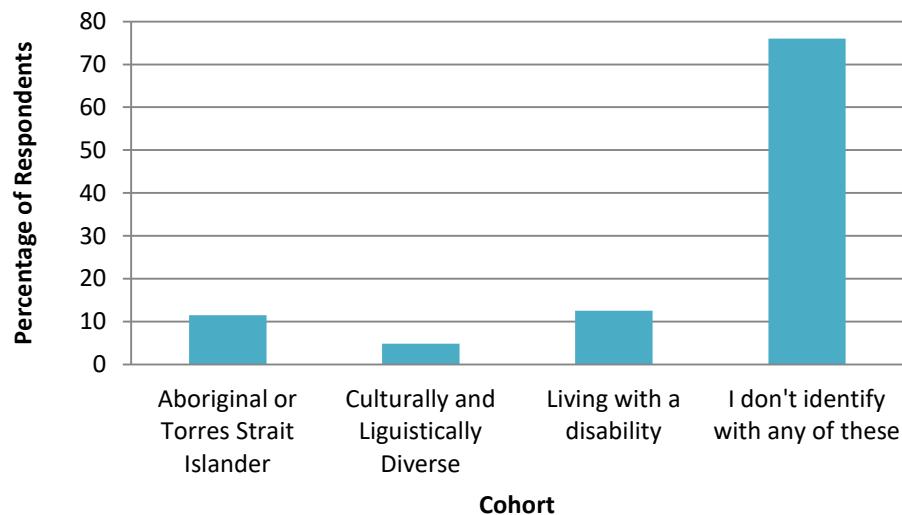
There were 219 people who responded to this survey. Of these, four respondents identified as being over the age of 25 and therefore these responses have been excluded from this Report, meaning 215 young people aged 12 to 25 responded. As shown in the graphs below, there was an unusually high proportion of respondents who said they were 13 or from the south of the State.



Region of Tasmania Respondents Live In

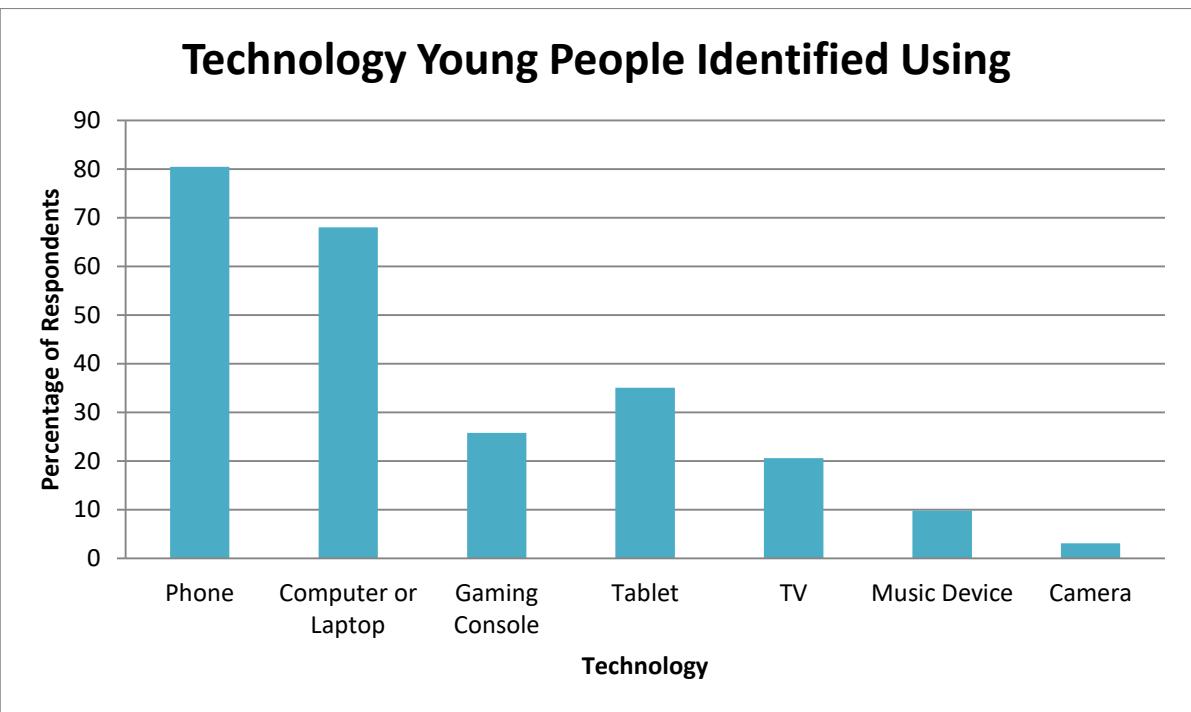


Cohorts Respondents Identify With



How young people say they are using technology

Young people shared the different types of technology they use and the graph below represents the most common answers provided by young people. Other devices mentioned included items such as house hold appliances and printers.



While young people are likely to be using many forms of technology in their life, most of them identified devices such as phones, computers and tablets as the technology they use. This indicates what many young people identify with these devices when they think about technology, despite this being a broad concept.

Finding 1: Young people identified phones, computers and laptops as the types of technology they were more likely to use.

Using Technology

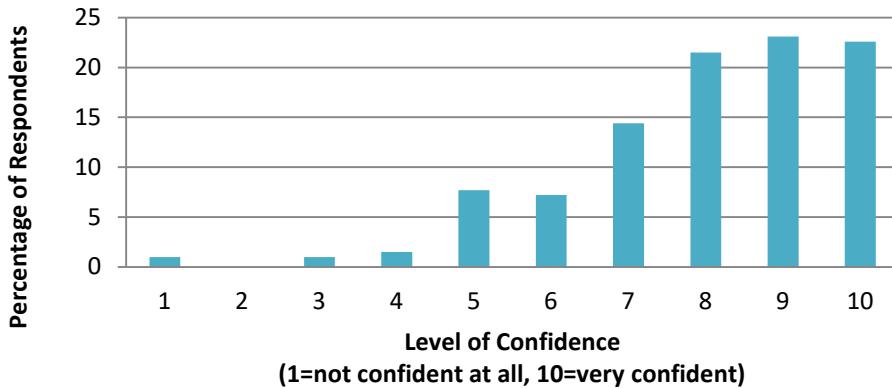
Young people were also asked to identify which piece of technology they found most useful to use. Over half of young people said they found phones the most useful and most said this is because they can communicate with others easily. Other reasons included; they find phones easy to use, phones can be taken anywhere and are easy to find information on the go.

Nearly a quarter of young people said a computer or laptop was the most useful piece of technology they use with many saying this because it is easier to look for information such as research for school work. Other reasons included computers or laptops can store documents well, they have a larger screen and are easier to type on than portable devices, and have lots of performance capabilities such as the ability to have more programs installed.

Other pieces of technology young people said they found useful included:

- Gaming consoles as they can provide entertainment
- Medical devices that help to improve their lives or the lives of others
- Internet
- Music devices

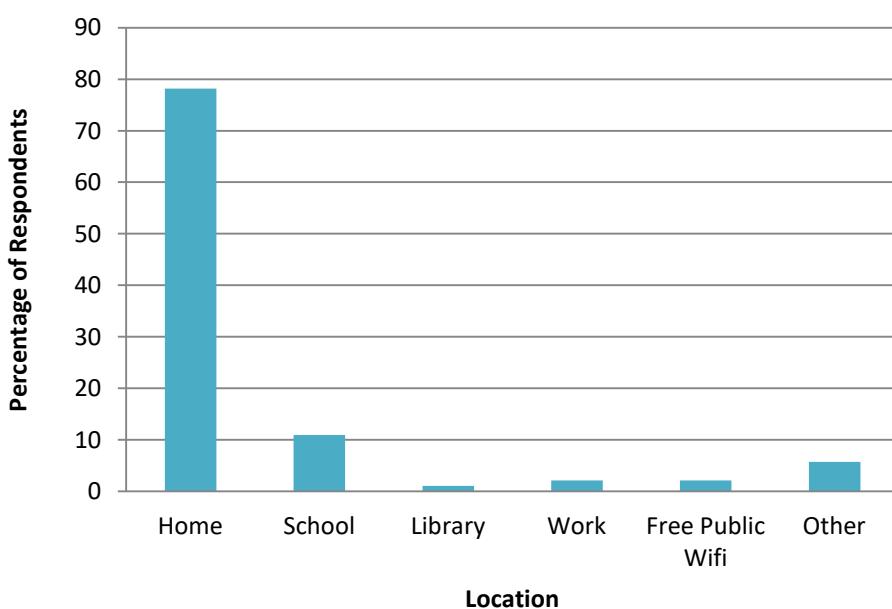
Young People's confidence in using technology



Young people are often perceived to be digitally literate. While young people rated their confidence in using technology fairly high, with over 65% rating their confidence in using technology an 8 or higher, there were also young people who were not as confident. This included some young people rating their confidence in using technology a 1-4 of out 10.

Finding 2: While young people generally have high levels of self confidence about using technology, there are young people who are not as confident in using technology.

Where young people access the internet the most



When it came to accessing the internet, the majority of young people (78%) said they access it most at home, followed by school (11%). Accessing the internet through mobile data was one of the options a young person who selected 'other' listed.

Finding 3: Young people are more likely to access the internet from home.

Concerns about technology

Young people were asked to identify what issues they were concerned about that related to technology. Issues about privacy and security concerned the highest proportion of young people; with around 25% sharing something they were concerned about related to this topic. This included getting viruses, being hacked or scammed, the security of their online accounts and people stealing their information.

Just under a quarter of responses were about concerns relating to technology design issues such as slow internet, not having reliable internet or devices breaking easily, including files being lost.

Cyberbullying was raised as an issue by around 1 in 8 young people. The majority of respondents did not give further reasons as to why this was an issue, although a few young people did say they were concerned about their personal safety online and there being too much 'hate' online.

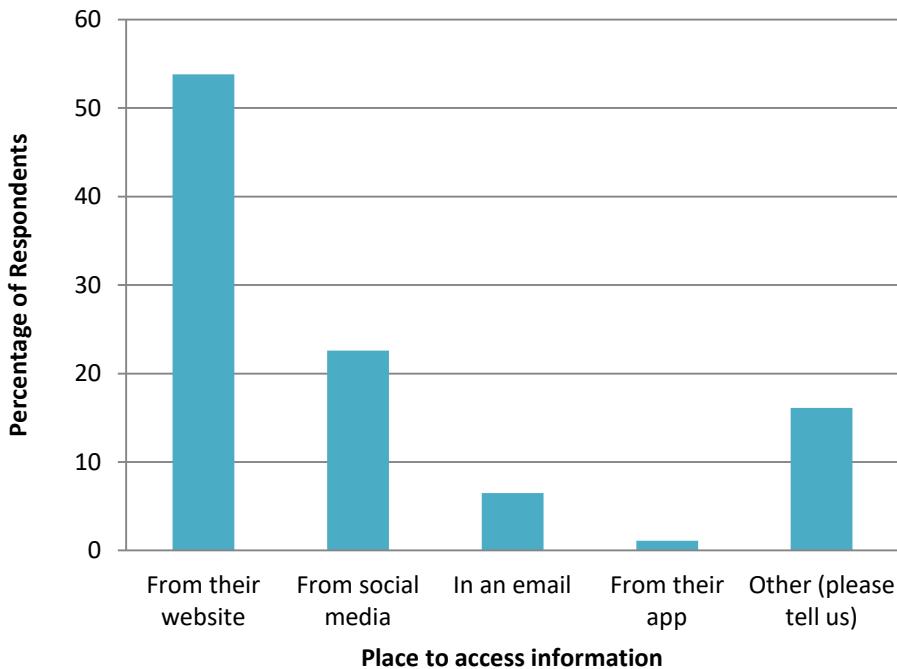
Finding 4: Young people are concerned about their privacy, safety and security online.

Finding Information Online

Young people were asked about what information they look for online. Approximately a quarter of young people said they look for information for their school work including research and information for assignments, and help with homework. Other common responses included:

- Accessing social media platforms, such as Youtube and Facebook
- Using the internet for entertainment by looking for games, funny videos and music
- Finding general facts and information to answer questions young people may have or a topic they are interested in
- Finding out how to do things by searching for tutorials or guides such as for cooking, art and do-it-yourself projects
- News and sports information
- Online shopping

Preferred way of accessing information from governments and organisations



When it came to accessing information from governments and organisations about their services, over half of young people said they want to access this information through a website. Social media had the second highest number of responses, however, this was still well behind accessing information from a website.

Of those young people who said 'other', around a third said they wanted to be able to visit the service and talk to someone face-to-face. Other young people wanted to have multiple ways to get the information including through a website, social media and email.

Young people also shared what they thought would make it easier for them to find information online. Just over a quarter of young people said they wanted the search engines they use to have better search capabilities to find information. This would include results listed with the most reliable sites first, more ways to refine searches to reduce the amount of results and ways to filter out irrelevant content.

Approximately 10% of young people said having more information available on websites and making them more accessible would help them to find information. This included websites having better layouts, headings that are easier to read, audio and video formats of text, and the use of simple language. Other ways young people said improvements could be made to help them access information included:

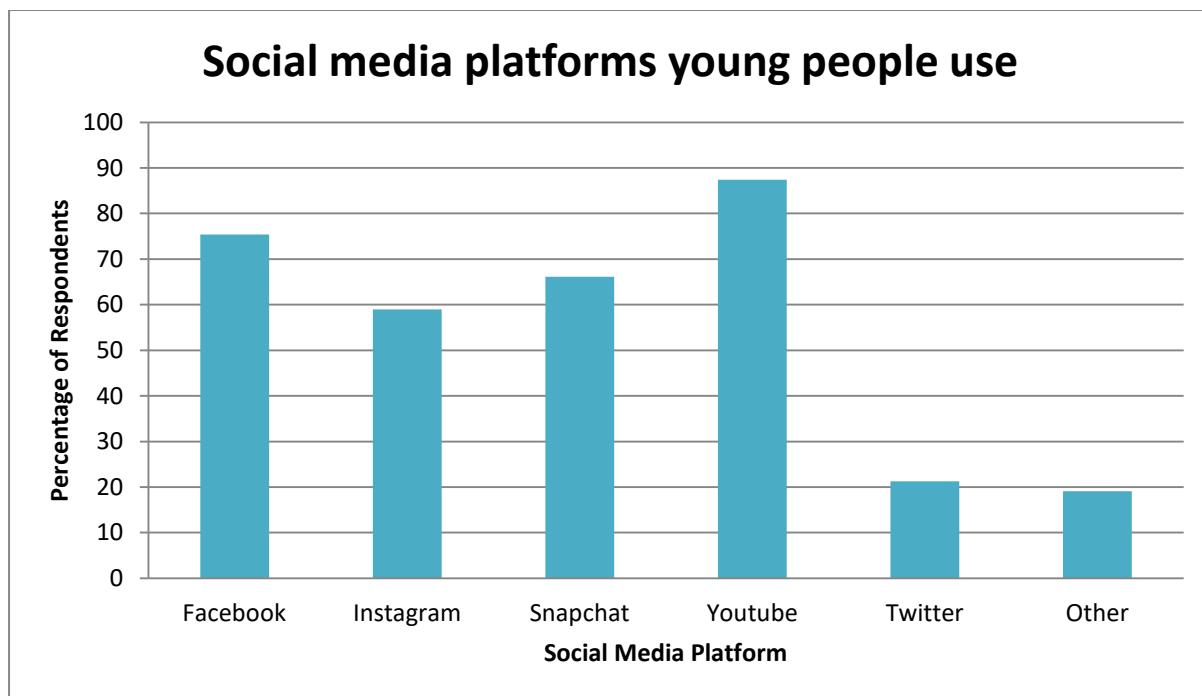
- Having a better computer or faster internet
- A tool that can check the accuracy of the information they have found
- Less scams and advertisements online
- Not having censorship and filtering

There were also a couple of young people who said they thought finding information was easy and didn't have any changes to make.

Finding 5: Over half of young people said they want to access information about services from websites.

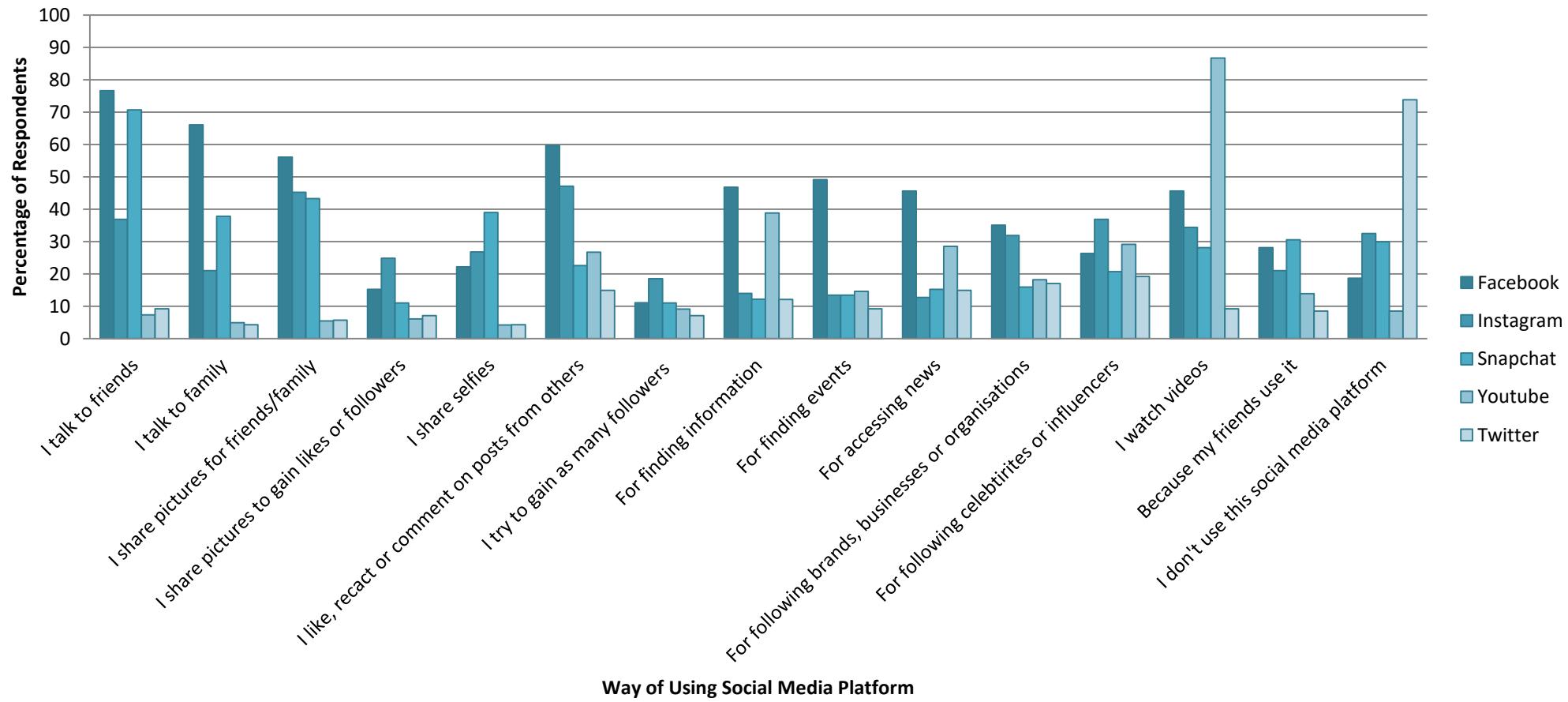
Using Social Media

Young people were asked to list the social media platforms they use. YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram were identified as the most popular social media platforms.



Other platforms young people mentioned they used included Reddit, LinkedIn, Tumblr and messaging apps like Skype and Kik.

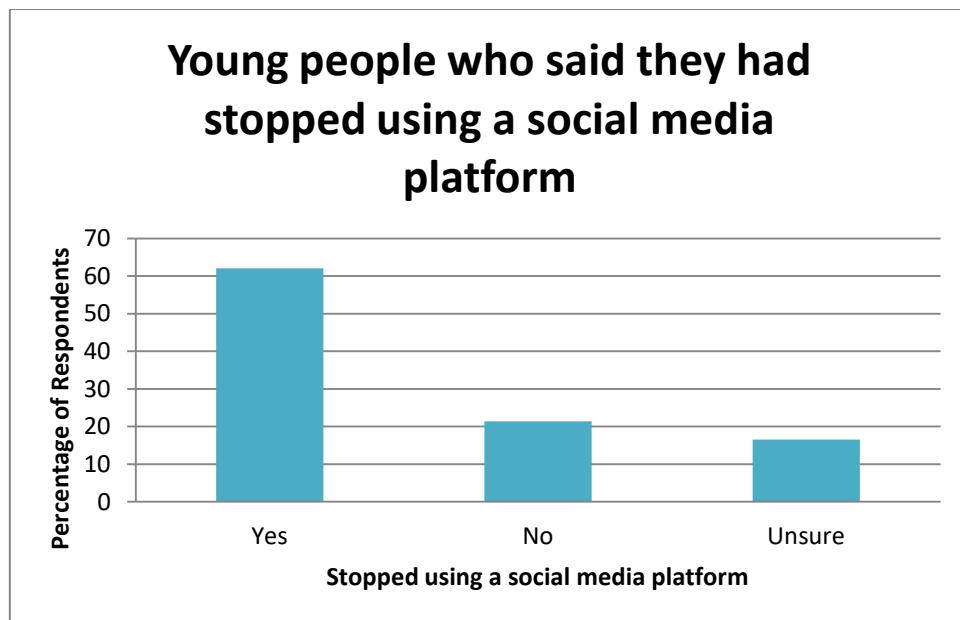
Young people's use of social media platforms



Young people were also asked to list why they use social media platforms. Some key points from the graph above include:

- Twitter had the highest proportion of young people who said they did not use the social media platform.
- Instagram was the social media platform where young people were most likely to say they try to get the most amount of likes and followers
- Facebook and Snapchat had a high proportion of young people who said they use these platforms to talk with friends
- Facebook had a high proportion of young people who said they use the platform to find events and news
- Young people were most likely to say they share selfies on Snapchat than other social media platforms

Other reasons young people said they used social media included; to plan events for their work or weekend, connect with people all over the world to make new friends, for fun, and to follow specific pages or causes online.



A high proportion of young people said they had stopped using a social media platform, from a short period of time to permanently. Young people were asked to list what platforms they had stopped using and why.

Finding 6: Over half of young people have stopped using a social media platform at some point.

Nearly a third of young people who said they had stopped using a social media platform said they had stopped using Facebook. Most of these young people said it was because they had lost interest in using the platform. Other reasons why they stopped using this platform included:

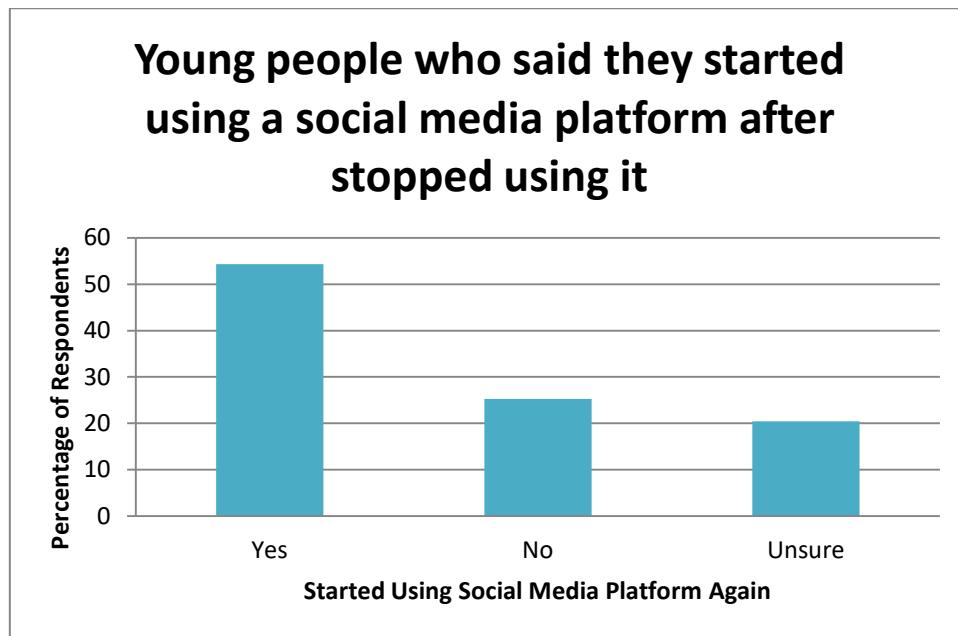
- Not liking the content on Facebook
- Their account had been hacked
- Lost their password or forgot they had an account
- Parents did not give them permission to be on it
- Other family members joined Facebook and they didn't want to be using the same social media platform
- Used it too much and needed to take a break
- Experienced bullying

Another third of young people said they had stopped using Snapchat. The reasons they gave for doing this included; they did not find the app interesting anymore, the app drained their phone battery quickly, they were concerned about the security of the app, couldn't keep up with 'streaks' (a way of measuring consistency sharing content with friends), friends were no longer on the platform, had been sent inappropriate pictures and were concerned about location tracking.

Approximately 10% of young people said they had stopped using Twitter and most of them said it was because they didn't find the platform interesting as it lacked good content, was boring and annoying. Another 10% said they had stopped using Instagram because they had been hacked, didn't like it anymore or weren't using it much anyway.

A further 10% said they had stopped using all their social media accounts and the most common reason was because they had been grounded. A few said they had been bullied online or had taken a break during exam time, which is why they stopped all social media use. Other platforms young people mentioned they stopped using included YouTube, Spotify, Twitch, Tinder, Tumblr, Bebo and Myspace.

There were also some young people who didn't specify a social media platform but said they had stopped because they put their phone down to spend time with friends, have to stop using social media of a night time or weren't interested in continuing using social media.



While many young people had stopped using a social media platform, around half of them said they had started using it again.

The Positive Aspects of Social Media

Young people were asked what they thought is good about using social media. Over 70% of young people gave answers that related to communication, such as social media helping them to stay connected with people, communicate with friends and family, and contact people when they can't see them face-to-face.

Around 15% of young people said they thought social media was good to share information and find out what people have been doing. They said it helps them know what is happening with their friends and family, promote issues and causes they care about, share photos, find out about activities and events, and share any information they are interested in.

A further 15% said they found social media useful for accessing news and information. Some young people commented on how they found it quicker to get information through social media than traditional media. News included what is happening in the world, emergencies and getting information about topics and events they are interested in. There were a couple of young people who said social media was more reliable to access information and would not give you viruses on your computer.

Other positive aspects of social media young people listed included organising events and accessing entertaining content for fun.

The Negative Aspects of Social Media

There was more diversity in the responses young people gave for what they thought was negative about social media, compared to what they thought was positive.

Just over a quarter of young people said they were concerned about bullying online. Many of these young people were concerned that it is easy for people to be mean to others online. Some young people were concerned they could experience bullying while others were concerned about the amount of bullying they had seen online.

Approximately 15% young people said they were worried about issues relating to content online. This included posts on social media lasting forever, communication with others online being misrepresented, pictures that set unrealistic expectations about how people should look and live, and people comparing themselves to what they see online, which can have an impact on their mental health.

Approximately 12% of young people said they were worried about their privacy including the lack of privacy online, having their personal details online, being monitored and stalking. A further 12% said they were concerned about people using social media too much. Concerns included people becoming addicted to using social media, not having time for anything else in their life, people becoming less connected, people losing social skills by not spending time with people face-to-face and being on devices for a long time without realising.

Young people were also concerned about the behaviours of others on social media and how this could impact them. Around 10% of young people listed each of these issues as a concern for them:

- Talking to strangers online and not knowing who is behind the profile. They were concerned about predators and scams from communicating to strangers.
- Social media profiles being hacked by other people who can steal their identity.
- People sharing content that they don't have permission to share or that isn't wanted, including sexting, inappropriate photos and screenshots of private messages.

Technology and the Future

Young people shared how they thought technology would influence the future. Just over a quarter of young people thought technology would have an impact on jobs available in the future. This included changing the way people work, such as the type of jobs available and more people working from home. Some young people said they thought jobs would be created because of technology, but there were slightly more who thought jobs would disappear because of changes due to technology.

Finding 7: Young people are concerned about the impact technology will have on their ability to get work.

Approximately 12% of young people thought there would be a negative impact in the future because of technology. This included people relying too much on technology, people becoming more lazy and robots taking over. Around 5% of young people thought there would be a positive impact on people's lifestyles because technology could help make everyday tasks easier. Other ways young people thought technology would impact the future included:

- Changing the way people learn with more online learning
- More information available so people can learn more
- Better performing phones and computers
- Creation of artificial intelligence resulting in hover cars and robots
- Faster communication
- Social life more online

There were also a few young people who said they did not think there would be much change due to technology in the future.

Goals for the Future

Young people were asked to share how they thought technology could help them to achieve their goals in the future. Just over a third of young people said they thought technology could help them by giving them access to information they need to know and helping them to learn new skills. This included finding information to help them do well at school and study courses online.

Just under a quarter of young people said they thought technology could help them get a job they wanted by using the internet to look for work, find opportunities to start a new business and network online. Some also thought technology would help create new jobs.

Other ways young people said they could use technology to help them achieve their goals included using technology to help them learn new skills so they can improve their abilities

and keeping in communication with friends and family in the future. There were also a few young people who were not sure how technology could help them or did not think it could.

Creating Technology

Young people also had the opportunity to share what new piece of technology they would like to see created in the future. Approximately 1 in 6 young people said they wanted improvements in existing technology. This included better internet browsers, better performing phones and computers, or the evolution of these devices, such as a newer type of phone. There were also young people who wanted new experiences to be offered to them through technology. This included virtual reality, teleportation, time travel, holograms and television that enables you to smell what is shown on the screen.

Health related technology was another group of ideas mentioned by young people that included having better technology to help people with disabilities and use technology to give people extra strength to do jobs such as trades or positions in the Army. Young people also wanted technology that could help people learn more information quickly, change genders, support people who are sick or elderly, and support emotional health.

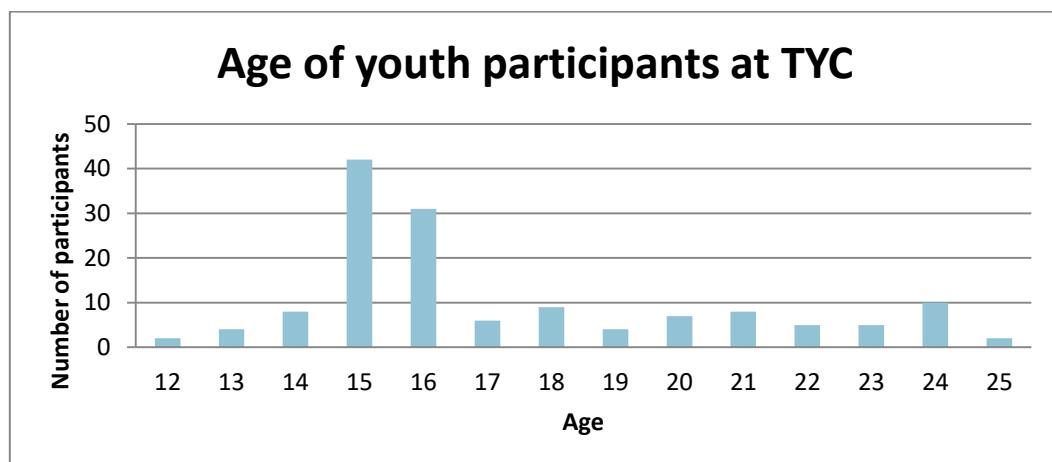
Other ideas for using technology included:

- Altering existing sports and games, such as electric skateboards
- Automation of tasks to help people get ready in the morning
- Making technology safer and secure
- Providing a way for people and animals to talk
- Reverse the effects of climate change
- New ways to develop energy or creating money

Finding 8: Young people are thinking creatively about how technology can help people in the future.

Consultation Process: Technology at TYC

TYF also developed ways for young people to have their say on technology at the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC). TYC is a two-day conference that young people and youth sector workers can attend to hear from keynote speakers, participate in workshops and activities, and network with others from across the State.



There were a high number of youth participants at TYC aged 15 to 16. Of all participants, 57% identified as female and 43% as male, however, ‘other’ was not an option in the online registration tool used to collect data. There were also 11% of participants who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

TYF provided opportunities throughout TYC for young people to have their say on technology. Below is a description of these activities and what young people shared in each of them.

Interactive Survey

TYF developed three short surveys young people could complete throughout TYC. A summary of the responses of each survey are below.

Survey 1 (44 responses)

- Nearly all young people said they used a phone, followed by about three-quarters who said they used a laptop and/or computer. Televisions and tablets were also mentioned by around a quarter of participants.
- The majority of young people said they accessed the internet at home, followed by school and then libraries.
- Over 50% of young people rated their confidence as a 9 or 10 out of 10 when using technology, with the rest of responses still high at between a rating of between 6 to 8.

Survey 2 (39 responses)

- A quarter of young people said they were most concerned about their privacy and security online. Another quarter said they were most concerned about technology taking over and spending too much time on it. A further quarter of responses related to young people’s concerns about bullying.
- Nearly two out of three young people said they thought technology would impact their future because of how it would change jobs. Some said this would be a benefit with more jobs and available in different industries, while others saw it as a negative as more jobs become automated.
- Approximately 75% of young people said they thought their phone was the most useful piece of technology for them. Some of the most common reasons why included that it is portable, can be accessed anywhere and can be used in multiple ways. This was followed by around a quarter of young people who said their laptop or computer was most useful and for most people this was because this technology is easy to use to get work and tasks done.

Survey 3 (46 responses)

- Just over half of young people said they look for information for school work online the most. This was followed by around a quarter of young people who said they look up general facts or information they want to access.
- There were around 65% of young people who said when it came to accessing information about services; they would prefer to get it from a website. This was followed by about 20% of young people saying they would like it from social media.
- The top three ways young people said could make it easier for them to find the information they need were more information that is easily accessible, better search results and websites that are easier to navigate.

Art-based Activity

Young people participated in an art-based activity that asked them about how technology would help them achieve their goals they had. Goals young people shared included:

- Jobs and industries they wanted to work in
- Wanting to have their own house, and family
- Topics and courses they wanted to study
- Travel around the world
- Learn new skills

Young people listed the following ways they thought technology could help them to do this:

- Assist with researching and planning
- Help with learning and studying courses online
- Use social media and the internet to help with promotion and advertising
- Connect to people all around the world
- Technology advancements in areas such as renewable energy to create more opportunities
- Help to find places to live
- Help to manage finances

Workshop by TYF

TYF developed a workshop on technology for young people at TYC, however, young people were able to choose on the day what workshop they wanted to attend for each session. Due to only a couple of young people choosing the technology workshop, this workshop was combined with a workshop on education and young people had the opportunity to focus discussions on technology at this. The original technology-based workshop format required more young people to run the planned activities.

Young people who chose to participate in discussions about technology wanted to have more technology incorporated into their learning at school. While they said there were good opportunities currently with laptops and tablet devices, having more virtual reality and new types of technology could help them have an immersive learning experience.

Workshop by Family Planning Tasmania

Family Planning Tasmania ran a workshop at TYC called *Sex Online*. This was a popular topic and gave the opportunity for young people to share their thoughts and opinions about respectful relationships, sexual risk taking and accessing sexual health information online.

Young people shared they learned about relationships and sexual health both online and through talking to people face-to-face. When young people asked about where they would go for help if they saw something online they were concerned about, a couple of participants said they would go to a helpline.

Key Findings

Finding 1: Young people identified phones, computers and laptops as the types of technology they were more likely to use.

Finding 2: While young people generally have high levels of self confidence about using technology, there are young people who are not as confident in using technology.

Finding 3: Young people are more likely to access the internet from home.

Finding 4: Young people are concerned about their privacy, safety and security online.

Finding 5: Over half of young people said they want to access information about services from websites.

Finding 6: Over half of young people have stopped using a social media platform at some point.

Finding 7: Young people are concerned about the impact technology will have on their ability to get work.

Finding 8: Young people are thinking creatively about how technology can help people in the future.

Conclusion

Young people have varied experiences using technology and are thinking quite broadly about the positives technology and social media can bring now and in the future. Phones, computers and laptops are the most common types of technology young people said they use, which aligns with the benefits many young people see technology having such as being able to communicate with others and finding information.

Young people are concerned about issues relating to technology such as the impact it will have on jobs, their privacy and safety online, and how it impacts their communication with others.

The report also shows there are young people who don't use some forms of technology, social media or who are not confident in their ability to. This is important to highlight as young people are often perceived to be digitally literate based on their age alone.

When it comes to social media, young people are using different platforms for different reasons. However, there are also many young people who said they have had a period of time off social media platforms, for various reasons.

This consultation shows young people are using and thinking about technology and social media in a broad way, although there are common themes about why they value technology including communication and accessing information.

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