

# Oh Snap! Social Media Use by Different Age Groups

## Desert Data Jam Report

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### **Background on the Science Topic:**

Although most social media platforms are less than 20 years old, social media has already become a multibillion-dollar industry used by hundreds of millions of people around the world. Social media platforms create communities for sharing information online. This year, users are spending an average of more than two hours per day on social media. These platforms are also used by businesses and political campaigns. It is important to study social media because it is an important part of life for so many people.

According to Google Search Trends, Snapchat is the most popular form of social media in New Mexico. Teenagers and young adults report that they use social media to connect with friends, share pictures, and find out what others are doing. Older social media users report that they use the platforms to network and participate in conversations with friends and family.

### **Information About the Dataset:**

The data were collected from January to April of 2018 by the Pew Research Center, an unbiased organization whose mission is to compile facts about current issues through polling and research. The Pew Research Center contacted people in the United States by phone, by mail, and in person. Survey respondents were offered \$5 for participating. In total, 3,803 people responded to the survey, and the data represented responses from people of different ages, genders, education levels, and ethnicities. Their responses were compiled into published research papers.

Pew Research Center researchers asked if survey respondents used the internet and if they owned a cell phone. They were also asked if they used any of the following social media sites online or on their phones: Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. The results were published in two papers.

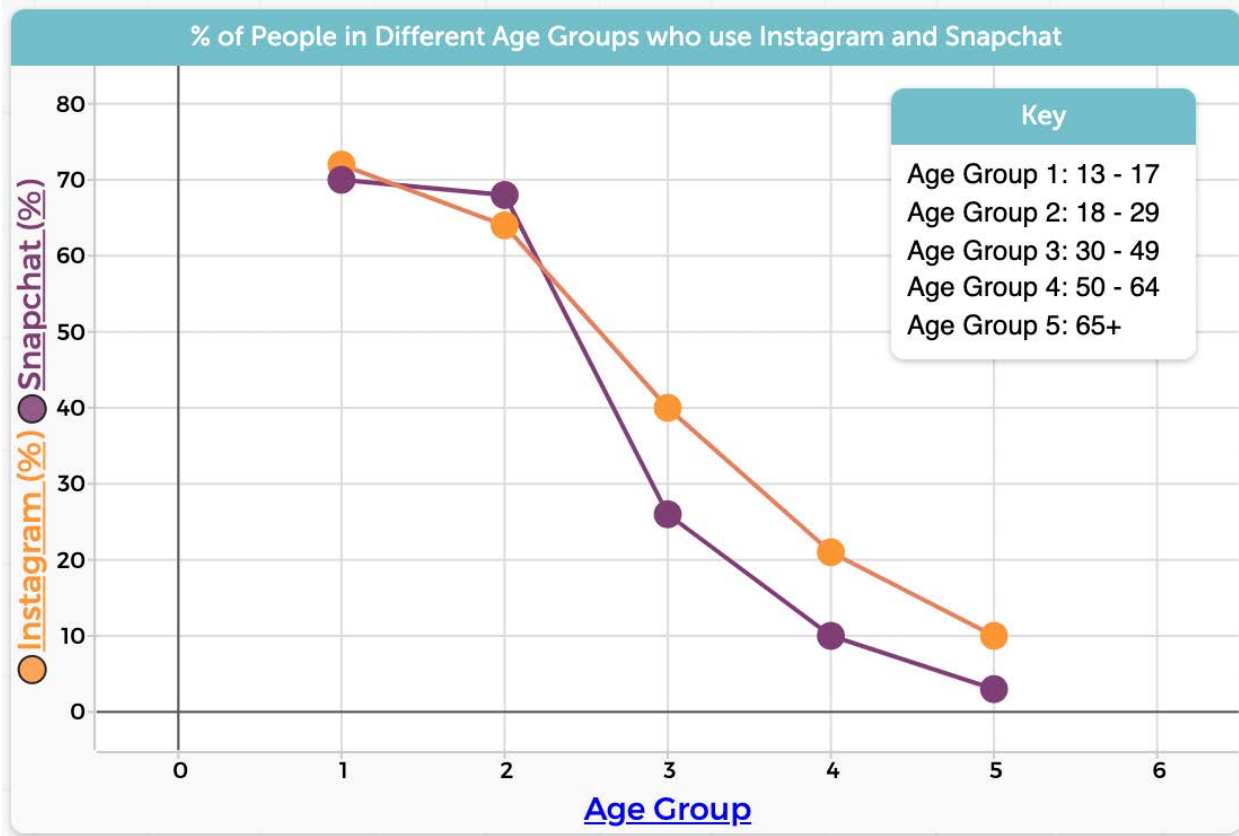
**Question:** Does the percentage of people who use Snapchat and Instagram depend on age?

### **Variables:**

Dependent: Percentage of people who use Snapchat and Instagram

Independent: Age group

Graph:



**Data Trend:** The percentage of people who use Snapchat and Instagram decreases with age.

**Possible Explanation:**

Snapchat and Instagram use is highest in teenagers (13–17-year-olds) and decreases with age. This may be because Snapchat is available only on smartphones, and the percentage of people who own smartphones decreases with age. Instagram and Snapchat are both apps designed to be used on smart phones rather than on computers. The percentage of people who own a smart phone also decreases with age, so it makes sense that these apps are more popular with groups that are more likely to have a smart phone.

**Brief Reflection:**

When I first heard about the Desert Data Jam project from Asombro Institute for Science Education staff members, I thought it sounded crazy. I have never done anything like this before. I collected my own data for a science fair project once, but I did not have to come up with a creative way to present that data.

Now that I have done a Desert Data Jam project, I realize how much fun it is. It was difficult to figure out what the data trend was. However, once we had that, we had fun figuring out a creative way to present the data. We also had to do a lot of work to figure out the scale for our

creative project. I learned how fun it is to think about new ways to present scientific data. One question I now have is what jobs are available that would allow me to use these skills.

Creative Project:

**How many people use Instagram and Snapchat?**

