

# Churn in India's internet economy

Instagram has new users from the older generation even as it retains young users, the latest round of the YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey shows



The data shows that older generations (pre-millennials) have started spending more time on social networking sites, whereas post-millennials continue to remain the major users of these platforms.

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Nikita Kwatra

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Across Indian cities, those with professional degrees are much more likely to rely on newspapers and news portals for news reports than on social media forwards. Men, more than women, use the internet for news. Women, more than men, use it for education-related content. Both men and women who are living away from their partners, or are single, tend to spend more time online.



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These are some of the key findings of the latest round of **YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey**, which surveyed nearly 10,000 respondents across 203 cities and towns of the country.

Roughly half of the respondents in the online survey conducted in the October-November 2020 period were millennials (24 to 39 years). The rest were post-millennials (18 to 23 years) and pre-millennials (above 39).

This is the fifth of a series of bi-annual online surveys aimed at examining the aspirations, anxieties, and attitudes of India's digital natives.

Over the past two years, the time spent by urban Indians online has gone up, particularly when it comes to watching videos. 51% said they regularly watch videos online for leisure, compared to 46% in 2018, when the first round of the survey was conducted. 41% respondents now spend more than six hours a week on video-streaming platforms, compared to 31% in 2018 (see chart 1).

While the average time on social media sites has remained largely unchanged, there has been a significant churn in the time spent by different generations of netizens across the country. The data shows that older generations (pre-millennials) have started spending more time on social networking sites even as millennials have cut back on

social media usage. Post-millennials continue to remain the major users of these platforms, with roughly half of them spending more than six hours a week on social media (see chart 2).

Among social media sites, Instagram saw the highest increase in active users. The share of those who visit the site

regularly rose by 10 percentage points over the past two years to 72%, driven largely by Instagram users from tier 3 cities and towns. The photo-sharing platform is gaining traction among older generations. 54% pre-millennials are now active on Instagram compared to 36% in 2018.

The proportion of active Instagram users among older millennials (31 to 39 years) also rose 9 percentage points to 68% over the same period. There was hardly any change in the proportion of active users among younger millennials and post-millennials, who remain the dominant users on the site.

Twitter has also seen a small rise in the share of active users, but this is restricted largely to tier 1 and tier 2 cities. Tier 1 cities are those with populations of above 5 million. Tier 2 cities and towns are those with populations of less than 1.5 million, as per the last census held in 2011. The ones in between tier 1 and tier 3 are classified as tier 2.

Facebook saw a decline in the share of active users across all city tiers. The decline over the past two years was sharpest among tier 3 respondents, data from the respective survey rounds show (see chart 3).

The YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey was conducted jointly by the Indian arm of global market research firm YouGov, Mint, and the Delhi-based think tank Centre for Policy Research (CPR).

The survey shows that the internet's draw is greatest for single and lonely individuals. 63% of singles spent more than

four hours a week on social media sites compared to 55% of those living with a spouse or partner. Those who are in a relationship, but living away from their partner, tend to spend even more time on social media sites than singles (see chart 4).

More of the married folks (67%) use the net for shopping compared to singles (56%). More singles (57%) use the net for education-related content compared to those who are married (51%).

More male respondents said they primarily use the internet for news and banking. More women said they used the net for entertainment and education-related content. An equal proportion of men and women (68%) use the net for social networking. However, they do not spend the same amount of time on social networking sites. 62% female respondents spend more than four hours a week on social media sites as compared to 56% male respondents who spend similar hours (see chart 5).

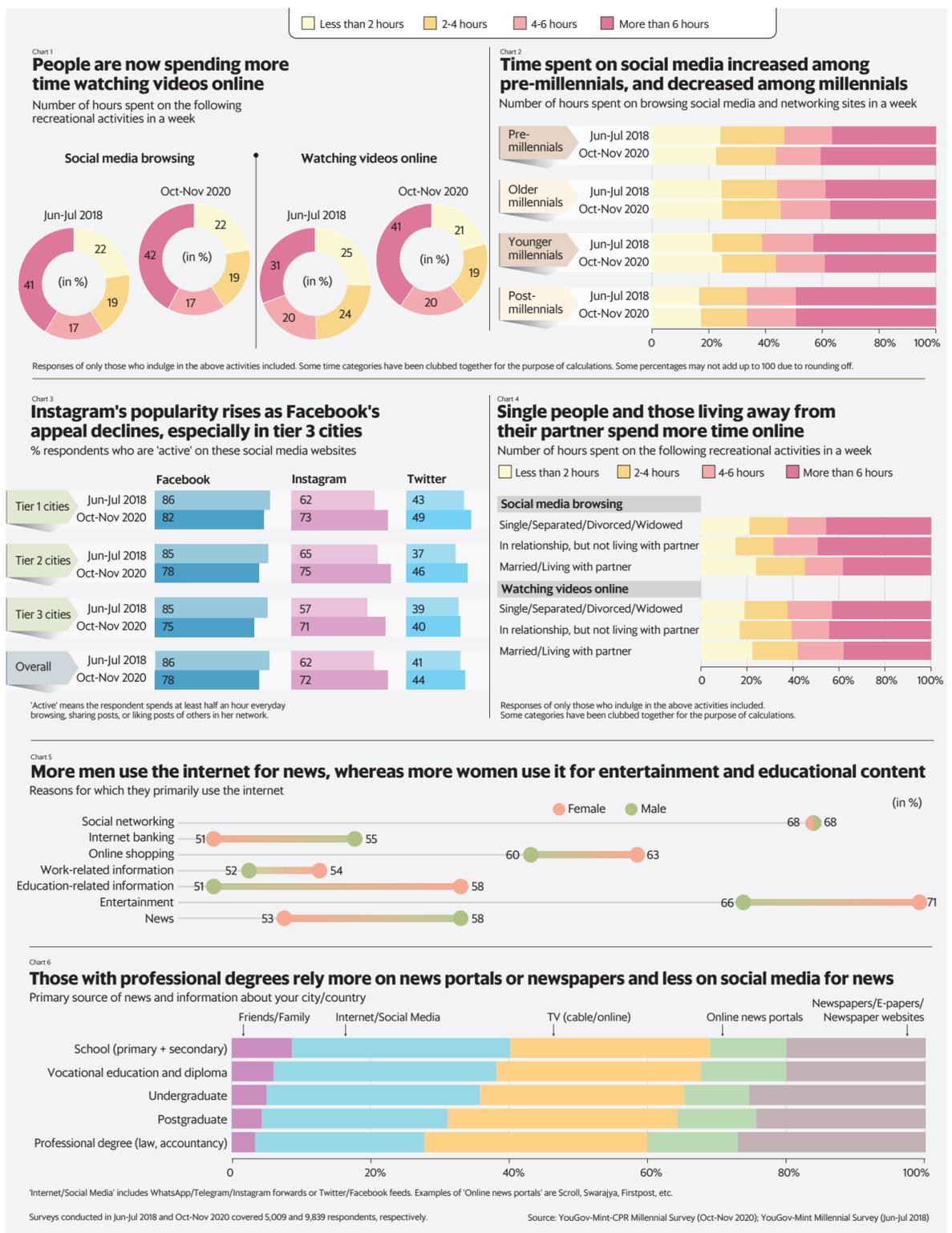
56% respondents said that they primarily use the internet for news. The online news sources are varied, from e-papers to news portals to social media feeds.

The professionally educated rely more on newspapers and their online versions for news and less on social media forwards (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.) and relatives compared to the less educated, the survey data shows (see chart 6).

The pandemic may have pushed more people towards the internet, but different cohorts and genders are using the internet quite differently. The YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey shows.

*This is the concluding part of a five-part data journalism series on how the covid-19 pandemic has impacted India's digital natives. The first part looked at the unequal impact of job and income losses in urban India, the second looked at how Indians are tackling financial insecurity, the third part explored personal and professional lifestyle changes during the pandemic, and the fourth looked at attitudes towards covid vaccination.*

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