



# Gen Z x **SELF EXPRESSION**

*From Avatars to Influencers – Marketing to the “It” Generation*

*July 2017*



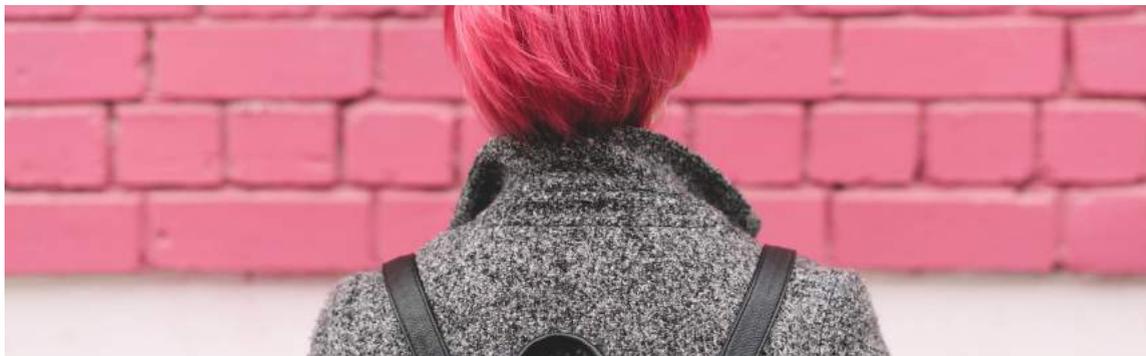
**Kelton**



# Thinking **FORWARD**

There's no question that Gen Z is today's "it" consumer. With an estimated \$44 billion in purchasing power and influence over another \$600 billion, they will dominate the marketplace for years to come. Gen Z's reliance on social media has already changed the advertising landscape and retail will never be the same.

Self-expression is a uniquely revealing form of communication for any generation – it taps into a powerful combination of attitudes and emotions. Digital media has propelled Gen Z self-expression into hyper drive, revealing not only who Gen Z is today, but who it wants to become tomorrow.



## **About Kelton**

*Kelton is a strategic consultancy that helps global businesses grow by turning insights into ideas that transform brands.*

Founded by journalists, Kelton is purpose-built for discovery. We ask questions, synthesize information, and put the pieces together to find the best way forward. Our diverse teams marry insight and imagination to help companies innovate, build brands, communicate and overcome strategic hurdles. We are proud to work with many of the world's most loved brands – from Fortune 500 companies to disruptive startups.

For more information, check us out at [\*\*KeltonGlobal.com\*\*](https://KeltonGlobal.com).





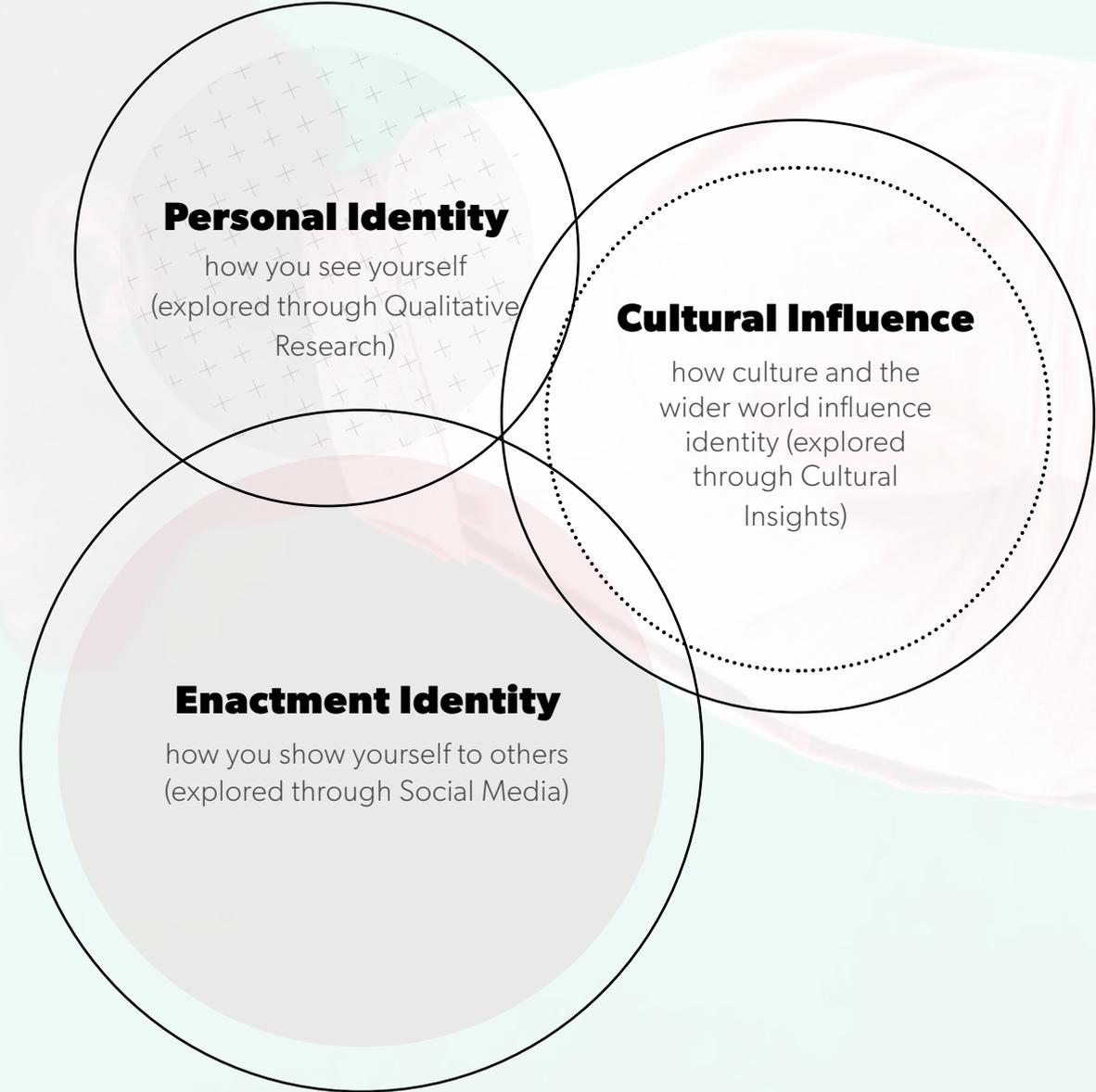
'They have high hopes for the brands they choose. From Nike to X-Box, they expect big things. As professionals, we should see this as our challenge—to live up to the standard Gen Z has set for us and to continue to inform, inspire, and create products and marketing that facilitate the world in which **THEY WANT TO LIVE.'**

- "It's Lit" Google Report, 2017

# 3 aspects of **SELF-EXPRESSION**

## **Understanding a Generation**

At Kelton, we approach any challenge from a range of perspectives. We mix methods to see what others miss: the pattern that reveals a sea-change or an insight that inspires the next big thing. In the case of Gen Z, we've layered traditional lenses with a magnifying glass on social media to focus on Enactment Identity.



# Values that **MATTER**

## So, what exactly makes Gen Z... Gen Z?

Differences in values and beliefs are often the biggest indicator of generational shifts. We've all heard many of the generalities about Gen Z: born to a digital world, practical yet optimistic, "colorblind." Each has a kernel of truth surrounded by a wide swath of generalization. As we look at Gen Z through the lenses of creativity and self-expression, three of these fundamental values come to the foreground.



Logan Paul - Help Me Help You ft. Why Don't We [Official Video]  
TheOfficialLoganPaul  
Subscribe 2.9M  
65,591,899 views  
1,398,457 likes 88,582 comments

## **NEW INFLUENCE(R)S**

Millennials believe anyone can be a star. But for Gen Z, everyone IS a star. Spheres of influence have shifted from mass market celebrities to grassroots influencers. Suddenly there are more people, options, looks, and attitudes to choose from. For every Kendall Jenner, there are dozens of YouTube stars with smaller, yet equally powerful, spheres of influence. These everyday influencers shape the ways Gen Z understands the world.

## **NEW NORMAL**

Demographic and social shifts have broadened Gen Z's definition of 'mainstream.' Gen Z is more accepting of looks, lifestyles and points of view that were once considered fringe. This generation not only grew up with America's first black president, but they've also seen gay marriage legalized and binge watched programming with transgender stars. For Gen Z, diversity is more than just a quota – it's a part of their lives.



So Lashy! BlastPRO Mascara by COVERGIRL | #LashEquality  
COVERGIRL  
Subscribe 332K  
7,040,801 views  
26,119 likes 12,451 comments

## **FLARE OVER FLAMBOYANCE**

Personal style is a cornerstone of self-expression. Despite a willingness to accept more diverse people into their world, Gen Z has thus far adopted a more reserved, traditional sense of style than Millennials. They lean toward a minimal aesthetic punctuated with small expressions of 'flare': pieces of personality peaking through in surprising ways and unique accents. Perhaps this aversion to fashion risk-taking comes from the the immediacy of feedback on social media, where confidence directly correlates to likes.





# Augmented Creativity

*With VR and AR, Gen Z creativity is poised to break through limitations of 2D and 3D*

New art forms are often influenced by emergent technologies, and Gen Z – born swiping, zooming and pinching – is already leading the charge into AR/VR creativity. With alternate, mixed, and virtual reality poised to disrupt the entertainment space, Gen Z is already using these new forms of self-expression to break past the constraints of 2 and 3D, creating immersive stories that bring their unique perspectives to life.



sketchar.tech We have tested SketchAR+Tango technology(Lenovo Phab 2 Pro) on a street. New video will be soon.  
sketchar.tech #sketchar #sketch #AR #augmentedreality #draw #drawing #sketching #dailysketch #dailydrawing #learntodraw #bestapp #virtualreality #VR #artist #bestartist #art #skills #growing #sketchdaily #mixedreality #ProjectTango #LenovoPhab2Pro #art\_gallery #bivart #worldofartists #artshelp #artist #illustragram #draw #drawing #illustration #topcreator #sketch\_daily  
diana\_simonova А можно на Samsung скачать это приложение?  
sepehr\_alipour why i cant install it on nexus 5x or nexus 5?  
sketchar.tech @sepehr\_alipour Now SketchAR is available only for Lenovo Phab  
711 views  
MAY 20

Launched in April 2017, **SketchAR** is an app that lets you draw in augmented reality – or what SketchAR calls mixed reality.

SO WHAT?

## Create Your Augmented Marketing Strategy Now

Gen Z is quickly acclimating to 4-D ‘future’ tech, and some brands are already tapping into the potential for brand building. Get ready: form your strategy to infuse AR into your marketing mix (via apps, games, product interactions, and other innovations).



**Jade Lo** is a 16 year old with a YouTube channel, a jewelry line, and 26K Instagram followers. Google tapped her creativity to demo Tilt Brush, a VR lightpainting app that lets users turn their artwork into animated GIFs.



**Splash’s** virtual reality app makes 360-degree videos as easy to make and post as Snapchat.



都對我未來的職業有著一定的期待



去旅行或者開車的途中，總能為你帶來新觀點



確保每個人都開心

'It Kid' **Kevin Poon** uses his fame to partner with corporate sponsors who support and underwrite their creativity.

## The 'It' Kid

*In the new world of social influence, Gen Z courts insta-fame profitable influence with fully-baked personal brands*

**Amandla Stenberg** is an actress / activist / musician / comic book writer / fashionista Gen Z icon.



Gen Z teen-trepreneurs are reaching unprecedented levels of fame and popularity, thanks to the reach of social media. While tapping teens for the next fresh face is nothing new, today's fresh faces come with an established brand and a built-in audience. Gen Z 'It Kids' are also uniquely multi-talented and multi-channel: their status comes from an ability to hopscotch genres, areas of expertise and creative self-expression. And no wonder – Gen Z places a premium on creativity as a way to get ahead in life. From political activism to singing, jewelry design or filmmaking, the better the personal highlight reel, the more Gen Z stands to gain.

### SO WHAT? Get Ahead of Influencers 2.0

Gen Z will continue to look to 'It' influencers as it matures as a cohort. Today's multi-modal fashion and lifestyle influencers should be woven into the mix in more ways than just marketing or new product launches: they can inform Innovation, consumer insights, and internal culture as much as they can promote your product.



**Gabsee** lets users create 3D avatars that can be placed in their videos.

**SO WHAT? What's Your Brand Avatar?**

If you're engaging in a conversation with your customer – and you should be – then take it to the next level. Your brand avatar – distilled, slightly more playful/interactive versions of our corporate selves – will bring the brand to life in consistent ways across channels.

**Avatar Play** *As visual iconography becomes a language unto itself, Gen Z plays dress up online*

More than any other generation, Gen Z knows that a picture is worth a thousand words. In fact, experts say that selfies are just another form of self-expression, and an incredibly important way for teens to negotiate identity. Selfies let teens control the way – or ways – they appear online. But Gen Z selfies aren't the same Photoshopped perfection their Millennial brothers and sisters post. With apps, masks and filters, Gen Z modifies its images in a way that is stylized but still authentic and real. Their digital avatars communicate more than looks – they communicate multidimensional aspects of identity: thoughts, feelings and a sense of play.



**Bitmoji** not only lets users create near perfect caricatures, it also lets them pick an outfit, a mood and some serious attitude.

**Baby Ariel** found insta-fame on Musical.ly. According to Ariel, “any Musical.ly is a good musical.ly as long as you’re being yourself.”



SO WHAT?  
**Join the Creative Community**

Gen Z has access to a lot of great resources, but nothing beats the exposure that a mainstream brand can bring. You can add a layer of legitimacy to these new communities in ways that range from advertising to product placement and sponsorship. Creative Communities will capture Gen Z’s attention for years to come. You can join in – or be left behind.

## CreativeCommunity

*Gen Z seeks the collaboration and feedback of digital communities for creativity and self-expression*

Self-expression differs from other creative pursuits in that it craves feedback. Gen Z expresses itself within digital communities, where feedback is plentiful, addictive, and sometimes damaging. Gen Z creative communities like Musical.ly are breeding grounds for new influencers. Others, like AwesomenessTV, provide a platform for Gen Z video distribution. Even Twitter has emerged as a creative community of sorts for Gen Z, with ‘dank memes’ operating as the social currency of self-expression. These Gen Z creative communities offer three critical elements: entertainment, interactivity and – increasingly – privacy controls.



**Dank Memes:** the most random, viral and creative form of self expression.

**Yeay** combines entrepreneurialism with creativity for a self-expression double whammy: it’s a global marketplace that lets designers sell products using video.

# Truth to Power

## Gen Z self-expression takes on the status quo

Gen Z is coming of age in an era of political division, renewed activism and social change. More engaged in political discourse than their Millennial counterparts, Gen Z teens are actively participating in public discourse through social media. They challenge institutions, push back on the status quo and call out injustice across both ends of the political spectrum. Self-expression for Gen Z is about more than communicating individual style and taste – it’s about raising their collective voice to address key issues.



This Forbes 30 under 30 recipient uses his YouTube stardom to speak out on LGBTQ rights, host podcasts, and speak at activism events around the country. With more than 11 million followers on Instagram and Twitter, Tyler Oakley serves as a voice for his politically active generation.

Image from Forbes



### SO WHAT?

#### Listen... and Act

Brands can learn a lot about Gen Z’s anxieties, passions and values by listening to their voices. And they can achieve a lot by reacting: with social impact strategies that add to Gen Z’s momentum and with innovations that address their concerns. The social and political leaders of tomorrow are sharing opinions now; brands that listen will thrive alongside Gen Z.



## Growth is about change - **FOR BRANDS + FOR PEOPLE**

The pace at which Gen Z changes is uniquely amplified by technology. Yet no matter how fast this generation moves, brands that stay ahead of generational change will gain competitive advantage. That's why we're here.

**We don't just gather data about Gen Z communication, we interpret it. We capture emerging shifts and transform those insights into ideas that build brands.**

Want to know more about how we can help? **Let's talk.**

+1.310.479.4040 | [contact@keltonglobal.com](mailto:contact@keltonglobal.com)

## Discover More

*You really thought we'd leave you hanging?  
Become an expert on Gen Z with even more resources:*



10 Trends: How to Communicate with the Digital Generation

**DOWNLOAD NOW**



10 Trends: Next Gen Fun

**DOWNLOAD NOW**