MTV Youth Sutra is an eye-poppingly revealing monthly exploration of what’s trending among youth, what they find on-fleek, and what they believe to be really woke. If you’d like to know more about Gen-Z, and solutions available to engage with Indian youth, tbqh, there isn’t a better option than writing into insights@mtvindia.com.
As a doomsroller in SocialMediaLand, you’ll find many attractions. Ride the rollercoaster of Covid panic, swim with angry snarks, watch a takedown, a cancellation, a sick burn! Get on the Merry-go-down and find a 100 reasons why your partner will leave you soon and a 1000 reasons why the planet is destined to collapse later this year. End your day by falling asleep and dreaming of your worst fears - No. 9 will shock you! Missed a ride? Don’t worry, tomorrow’s another Groundhog Day, so carpe doom.

Okay Google, what exactly is doomsrolling?

For anyone who’s still unclear, doomsrolling is letting your fingers run the treadmill of never-ending and dreadful social media news, but not being able to get off even after you feel exhausted, distressed and practically dead inside.

Sources consulted: MTV Youth Study ‘Mera Bharat Amazeballs’; Merriam-Webster Blog; The Print; Services for Healthy Use of Technology (SHUT) clinic at NIMHANS; BusinessInsider.in; Lady Shri Ram College and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) survey; Facebook IQ - Meet the Future: Gen Z's regeneration
Since March of this year, Google searches for the word ‘doomscrolling’ have increased 400%. It’s relatability and usage have become so high that it’s on Merriam-Webster Dictionary’s Words we are watching’ list - which, if you’re a word, means you’ve official made it and now get stopped for autographs. (Mr. Doom and Mrs. Scroll must be so proud.)

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The word’s rise in popularity is naturally indicative of a larger problem. For most Gen Z-ers, the average time spent on social media is almost as high as seven hours. This is the case even after 44% of them agree that social media usage aggravates their stress levels regarding all sorts of things, ranging from exams and placements to poor time management.

So why isn’t it as easy as clicking the log out button? Apparently, the more stressed Gen Z-ers feel, the more they visit social media, and the more they visit social media, the more stressed they feel. Besides, in the age of FOMO, when things are moving at the speed of several dooms-a-minute, social media really is the only way to stay on top of it all.

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According to Dr. Kanika Ahuja, a professor at Lady Shri Ram college, the current climate – with high social restrictions and low availability of face-to-face support – is making the situation even worse.

Dr. Manoj Sharma of NIMHANS has a similar story. Many of his patients who were doing significantly better due to reduced gadget time have now relapsed after entering the lockdown mode of tech usage.

Even outside of social media, the time Gen Z-ers spend watching OTT, playing games and surfing porn has increased 30%.

**Experts raise red flags**

**16-20 years**
The age group with largest number of patients being reated for online addiction - at Services for Healthy Use of Technology (SHUT) clinic at NIMHANS

Gen Zers are 1.4X more likely than average to keep watching more online videos, post pandemic

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Among sites seeing more traffic during the lockdown is VentAllOut.com, a social media platform that hopes to provide stress-relief by letting people vent their heart out anonymously and get paid for it in cashback. The platform also lets users seek advice from a dedicated panel of experts on issues of the day including mental health.

As to whether it’s helpful or not, the jury is still out.

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3 ways to Scroll Positive

If doomscrolling sounds frighteningly familiar to you, there is an exit.

1) Start by getting a better grip on your time with some digital wellbeing. Schedule every part of your day, including your social media usage, and holster your thumb as soon the buzzer rings no matter how many miles of scrolling you have left.

2) Secondly, make meditation a habit. It can not only help you sort out your priorities but also help you calm down and lower your general pace of life.

3) And no matter what’s happening, calling up a close friend or two and spending a few minutes talking to them might help you resist the urge to see what new disasters they have in SocialMediaLand.

Meanwhile, if you found this article while on you daily doomscroll session, take it as a sign to log out and catch your breath.

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