

Digital Well-Being Index

Year Two

At Snap, nothing is more important than the safety and well-being of our Snapchat community. We have in place, and consistently enforce, policies and rules that detail the type of content and behavior that are acceptable on Snapchat. We offer tools and resources to help Snapchatters stay safe, and we engage with others in industry and across the tech ecosystem to better protect teens and younger users in particular.

To offer insight into how teens and young adults are faring online, in 2022 – and again in 2023 – we conducted research into Generation Z’s digital well-being. The study, which draws upon more than four decades of subjective well-being research, was adapted for the online environment to produce a Digital Well-Being Index (DWBI), a measure of Gen Z’s online psychological well-being. We surveyed teens (aged 13-17), young adults (aged 18-24) and parents of teens, aged 13 to 19 in six countries: Australia, France, Germany, India, UK and the U.S. We asked respondents about their exposure to various online risks and, from those results and other attitudinal responses, devised a DWBI for each country and a combined reading across all six.

DWBI Readings for 2023

The Year Two Digital Well-Being Index for the six geographies again stands at 62, unchanged from 2022, and a somewhat average reading on a scale of 0 to 100 – neither particularly favorable, nor especially worrisome. By country, India again registered the highest DWBI reading at 67 (down one point from 68 in 2022), and France and Germany came in below the six-country average, at 59 and 60, respectively, compared to 60 in both geographies in 2022. Australia’s DWBI remains at 63; the UK again matched the six-country reading at 62, and the U.S. held steady at 64. The index leverages the PERNA model, a variation on an existing research vehicle, comprising 20 sentiment statements across five categories: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Negative Emotion and Achievement. Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with each of the 20 statements, taking into account all of their online experiences on any device over the preceding three months. An example statement in each of the five categories follows. For a full inventory of all 20 statements, see this [link](#).

Role of social media

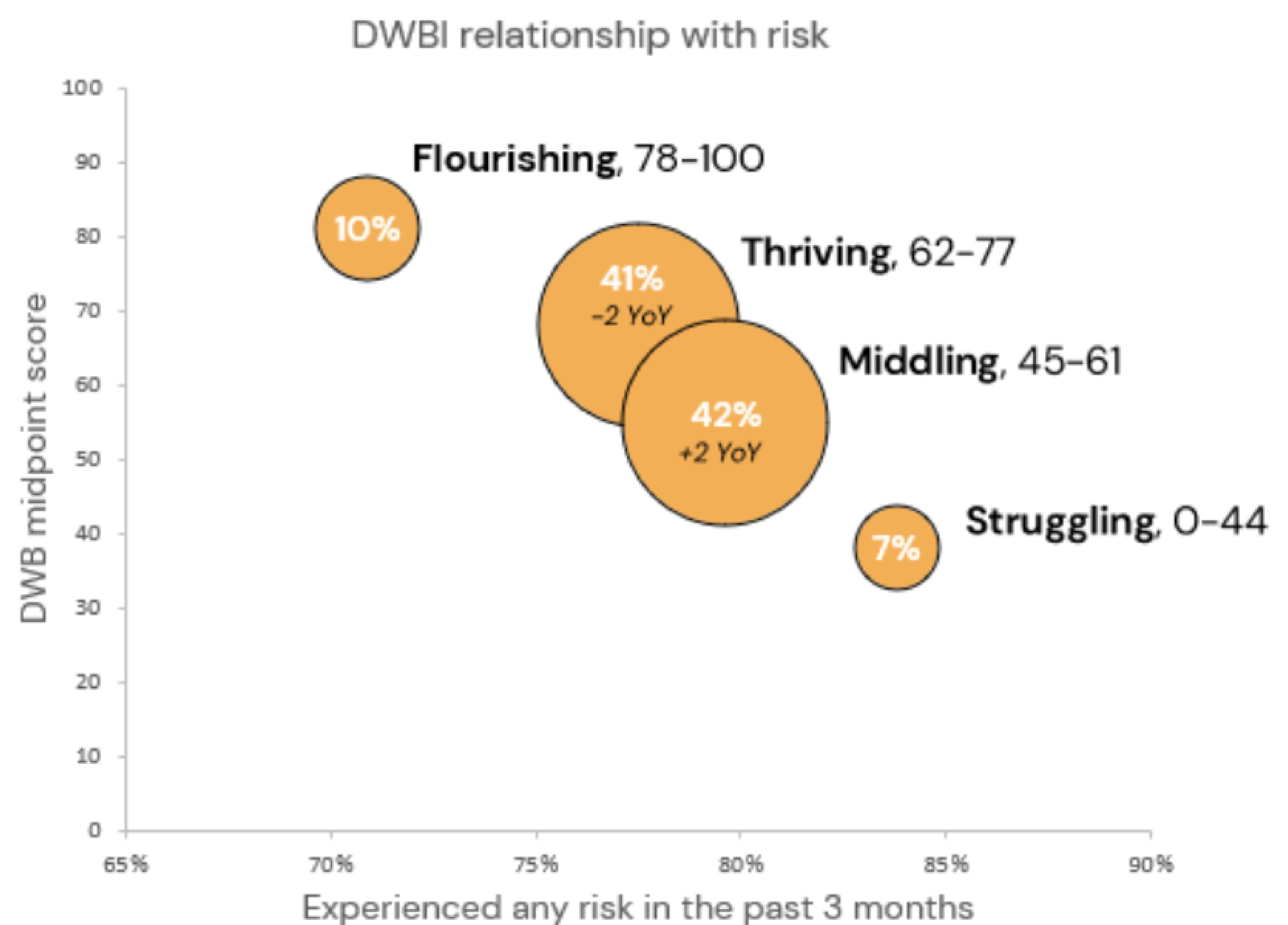
A DWBI score was calculated for each respondent based on the 20 sentiment statements. Their scores were aggregated into four DWBI groups: Flourishing (10%, unchanged from 2022); Thriving (41%, down 2% from 2022), Middling (42%, up 2% from 2022) and Struggling (7%, unchanged from 2022). (See, Below for details.)

Index Category	Sample Sentiment Statement
Positive Emotion	Often felt delighted
Engagement	Got completely absorbed in what I was doing online
Relationships	Have people in my life online who really care about me
Negative Emotion	Worried about what other people might be saying about me online
Achievement	Was able to grow in my skills and abilities

DWBI Group Sizes & Score Ranges

Slight shift of 2-pts. from Thriving to Middling since 2022

DWB group	Description
Flourishing (Very high)	Extremely positive – rate everything at the top end of the scale.
Thriving (High)	Average top two box across the dimensions– may not be top box on everything but experiences overall are very positive
Middling (Medium)	“Mid range” in their evaluations. Mix of good and bad ratings. Everything’s not rosy
Struggling (Low)	Rate all dimensions on the low end of the scale (1-3 range). Consistently encounter negative experiences and outcomes



Closer Look at “Sextortion”

In Year Two, we took a closer look at Generation Z’s exposure to online sextortion schemes, either via “catfishing” or “hacking.” Sixty-five percent of Gen Z teens and young adults, on all platforms and devices – not just Snapchat — said they or their friends were targeted in online catfishing scams, or were hacked by criminals who stole explicit personal imagery or other private information. In both scenarios, the resulting photos and videos were then used to threaten or blackmail the young people, with abusers demanding money, gift cards, more sexual imagery, or other personal information in supposed exchange for not releasing the material to the young person’s family and friends.

- Half (51%) of respondents said they or their friends were targeted for, or victims of, catfishing, and 47% of those cases targeted respondents directly over the prior three months.
- Meanwhile, 47% of respondents said they or their friends’ devices or social media accounts were hacked, with 39% of those instances happening to respondents in the last quarter.

Online “catfishing” occurs when criminals pretend to be someone they are not to lure a victim into sharing personal information or producing sexual imagery. “Hacking,” meanwhile, typically involves a criminal gaining unauthorized access to a victim’s electronic devices or social media accounts to steal intimate photos or other personal information. For the most part, in both schemes, the videos, photos, or other private information are then used to blackmail the victim into acceding to the perpetrator’s demands.

For more on the sextortion research results across the six countries, as well as what Snap is doing to protect our community against this online risk, see [this post](#).