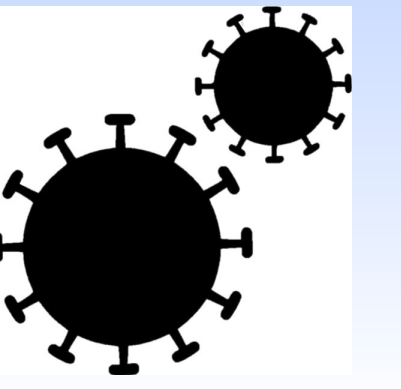


# How has secondary school student's screen time patterns changed during the Covid-19 pandemic and what effect does this have on them?



## Introduction

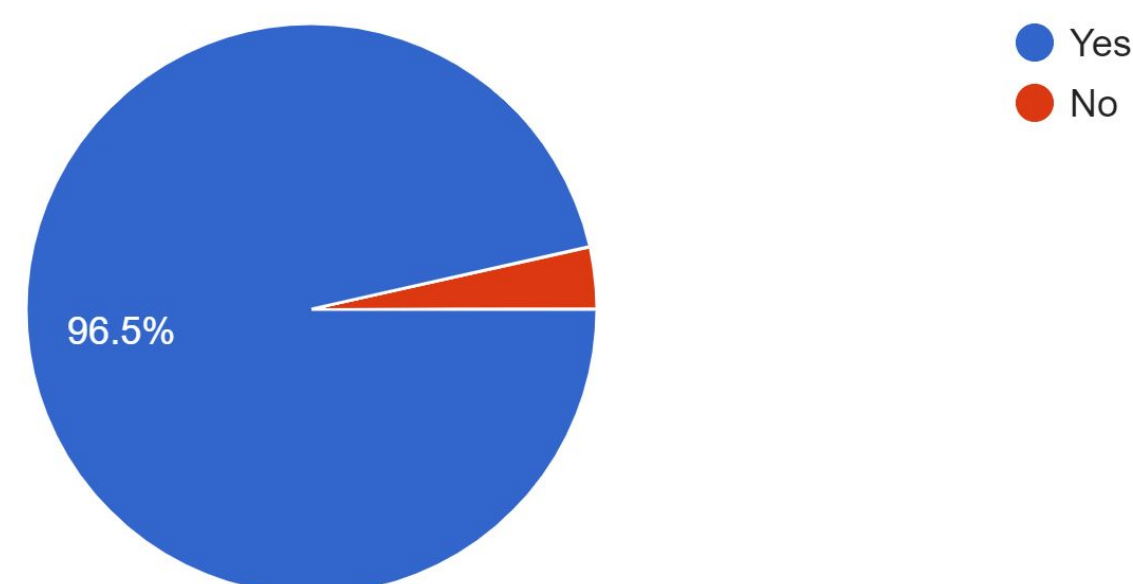
During this Covid-19 pandemic we have gotten used to many new things- social distancing from one another, wearing masks and frequent hand sanitising. One thing in particular that has changed for most of us is our increase in screen time. We have all had to get used to online school and navigating our way through learning remotely. Evidently, there has been a huge increase in screen time for most of us, as now socialising, learning and much more takes place online. The topic we chose for to do our project on is about the changing screen time patterns during the Covid-19 pandemic and what effect this has on secondary school students. Each group member noticed that their screen time patterns changed dramatically from pre-Covid-19 times to during the pandemic. We experienced both positive and negative effects to this change. This inspired us to wonder how screen time patterns have changed for secondary students and what effects does this have on them. Our aim of this project was to find that out.

## Methods

We decided that the best method to collect information for our project was to conduct a survey. We opted to send a survey out to online to every student in our school. We wrote seven questions relating to our topic. The questions we asked tried to pinpoint firstly the change in screen time patterns and secondly the effect of these changes. We received 142 results from students ranging from 1st year - 6th year. Our sample population is representative of all ages and genders of students in secondary school.

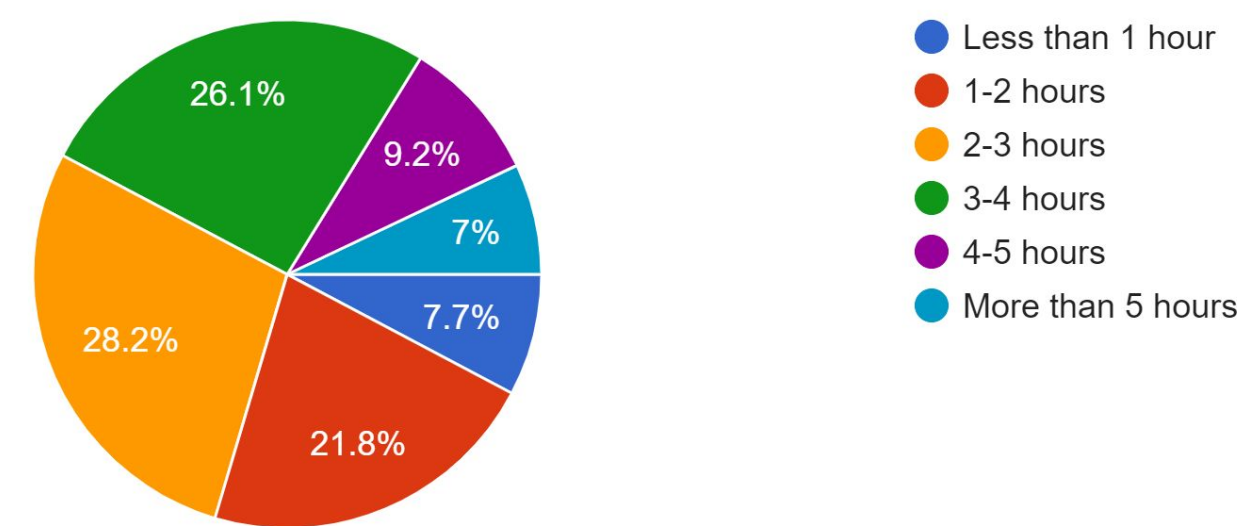
## Results

Has your screen time increased since the start of the pandemic?  
142 responses



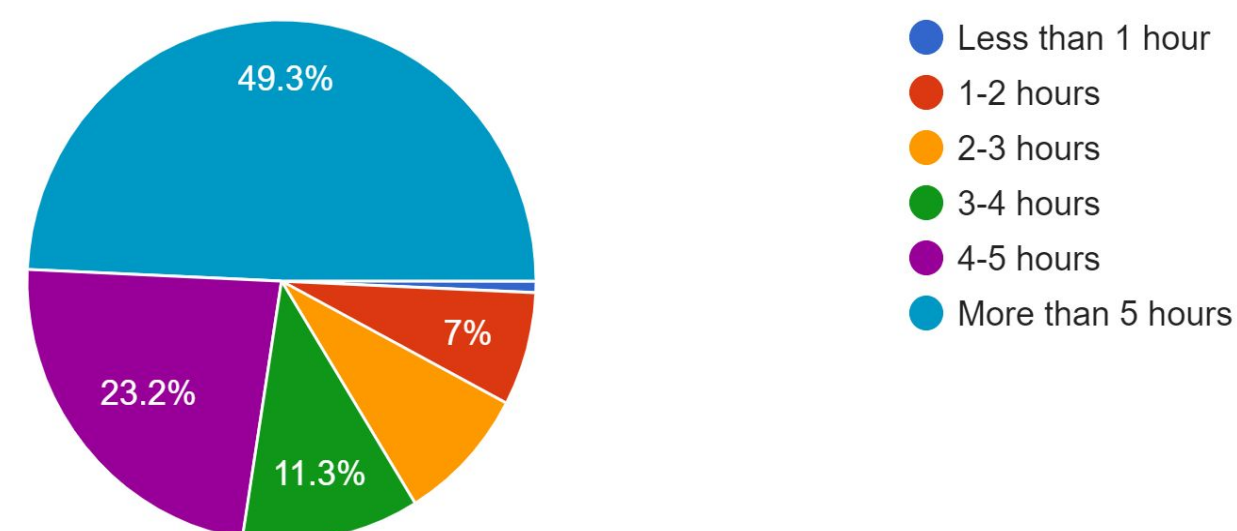
From this graph we can see for most students their screen time has increased since the start of the pandemic. Only 3.5% of student's screen time did not increase, while 96.5% of student's screen time has increased since the start of the pandemic.

What was your average screen time per day prior to the pandemic?  
142 responses



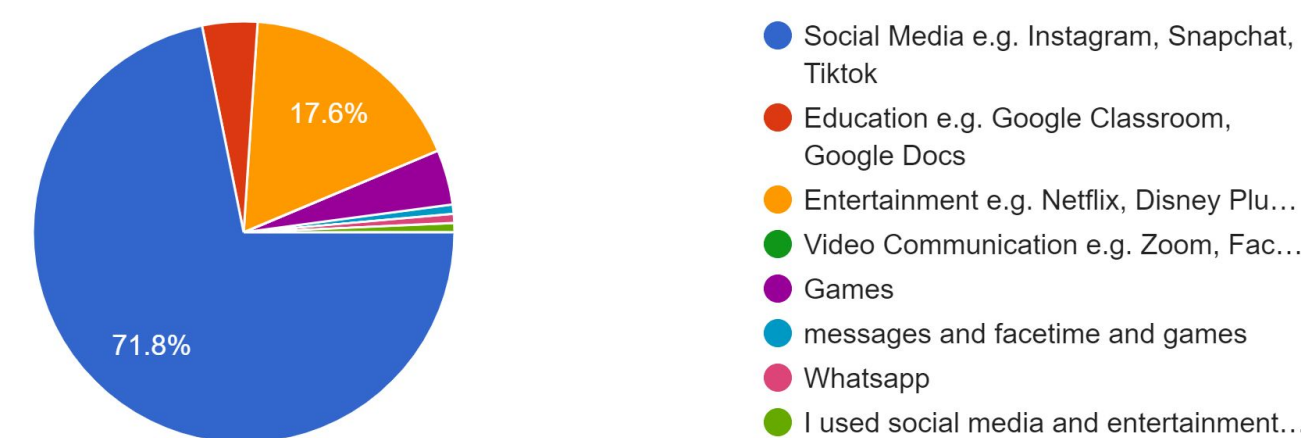
From this pie chart we can see that most students spent a daily average of between 1-4 hours on a device. This accounts for 76.1% of students. The most common daily average screen time was between 2-3 hours, which accounts for 28.2% of the population. Only 7% of students spent a daily average of more than 5 hours, which is the least common daily average screen time, closely followed by less than 1 hour which accounts for 7.7%.

What is your average screen time per day during the pandemic?  
142 responses



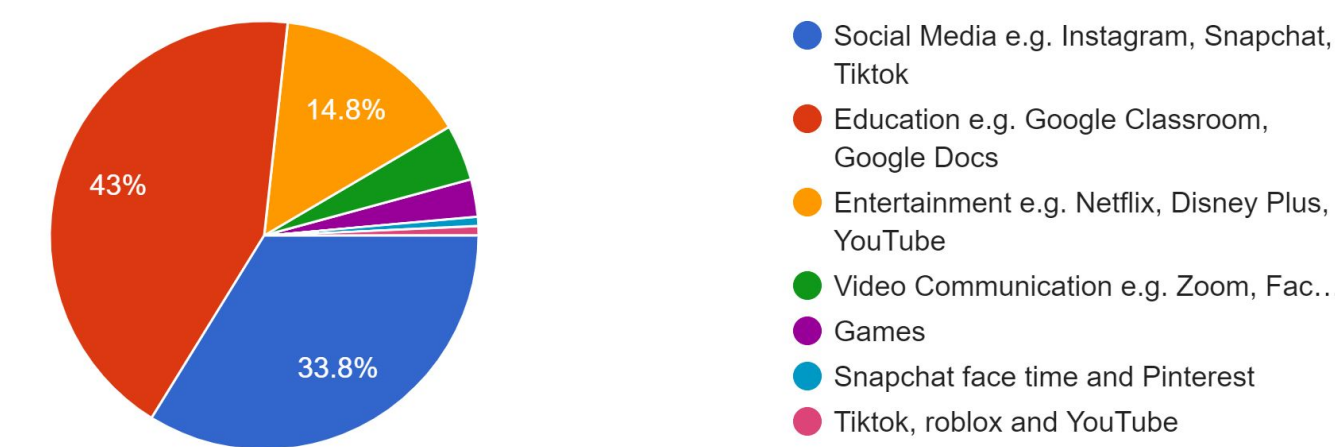
We can see that most students spent a daily average of more than 5 hours on a device. 49.3% of students fall into this category. The second highest average daily screen time during the pandemic was between 4-5 hours which accounts for 23.2% of the students. Only 0.7% of students spent less than 1 hour on a device, which is by far the least common daily average screen time.

What apps did you use the most prior to the pandemic?  
142 responses



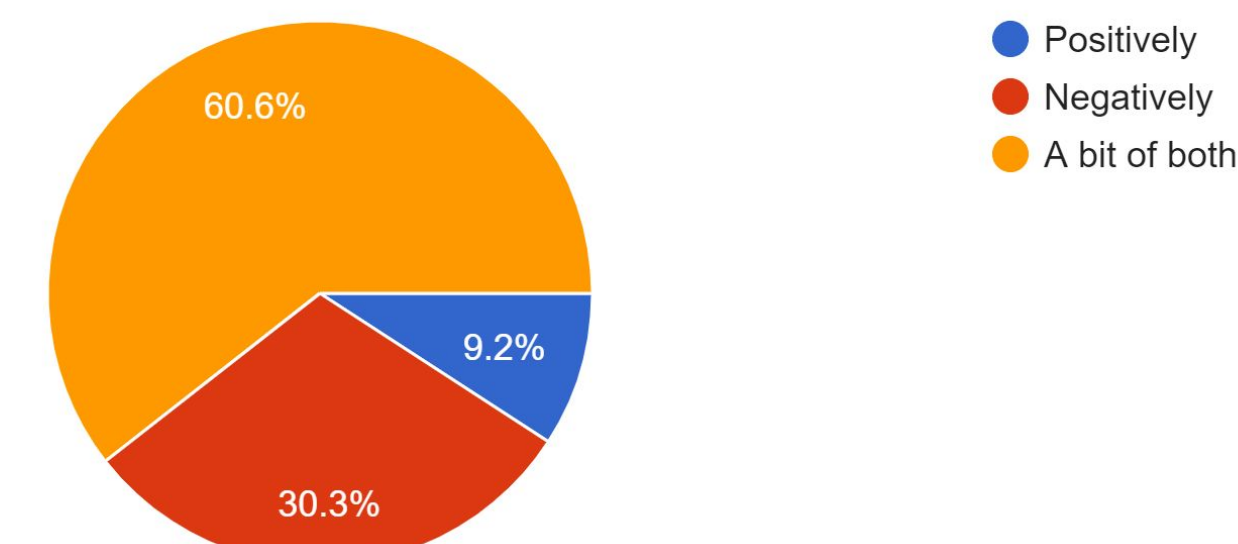
We can see that prior to this pandemic the majority of students used social media more than any other app. 71.8% of students used social media the most. The second highest was entertainment, which 17.6% of students used the most. We gave people an option to fill in an open-ended response to this question, which 2.1% of people did. 4.2% of students used educational apps, while the same amount of students used games. No student used video communications the most.

What apps do you use the most during the pandemic?  
142 responses



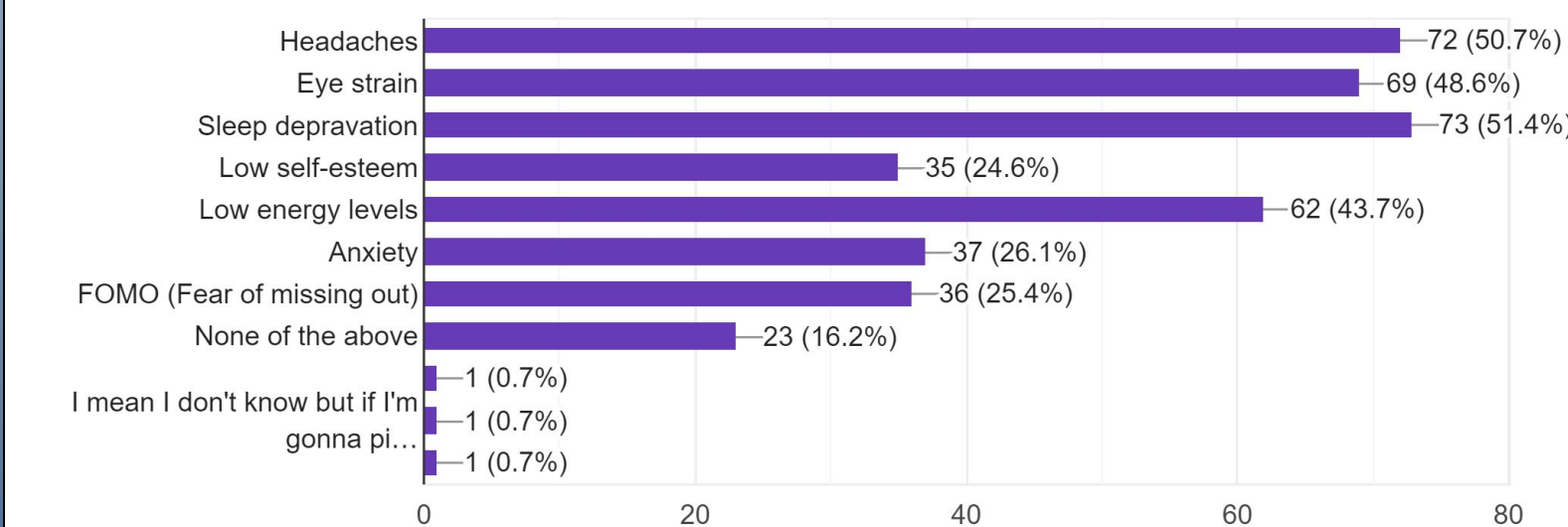
From this pie chart we can see that the most commonly used app during the pandemic was educational apps, which 43% of students used the most. This is then followed by social media at 33.8%. 14.8% of students used entertainment apps the most, while 4.2% of people used video communications. 2.8% of students used games the most during the pandemic. 1.4% of students filled out the open-ended response to this question.

Does an increase in screen time affect you positively or negatively?  
142 responses



We can see that most students, 60.6%, are affected both positively and negatively by an increase in screen time. 30.3% of students experience solely negative effects of increased screen time, while only 9.2% of students have positive effects of increased screen time.

Do you experience any of these as a result of increased screen time?  
142 responses



From this bar chart we can see some of the things students experience as a result of increased screen time. The most common were sleep deprivation (51.4%), headaches (50.7%), eye strain (48.6%) and low energy levels (43.7%). 26.1% of students experience anxiety, 25.4% experience fear of missing out and 24.6% experience low self-esteem as a result of increased screen time. Only 16.2% of students do not experience any of these. 2.1% of students filled out the open-ended response to this question.

## Conclusions

To conclude, we must answer the question we asked at the beginning 'How has secondary school student's screen time changed during the Covid-19 pandemic and what effect does this have on them?'

- To answer the first part of this question, student's screen time has increased since the start of pandemic for 96.5% of students. Before the pandemic most students spent between 1-4 hours on a device per day (76.1%) but during the pandemic most students spent 4+ hours daily on a device daily (72.5%). The apps students used prior to the pandemic changed since the start of this pandemic. For 71.8% of students, social media was the most used app prior to the start of the pandemic and 4.2% of students used educational apps the most. However during the pandemic the most used apps were educational ones (43%). Only 33.8% of students used social media apps the most during the pandemic. From this information we can confidently conclude that for the vast majority of students their screen time has increased since the start of the pandemic. We can also come to the conclusion that there has been a shift in which apps students use the most, from social media apps prior to the start of the pandemic to educational apps during the pandemic. There has also been an increase in video communication apps.
- Now, to answer the second part of this question 'What effect does this increase of screen time have on students?'. 60.6% of students are affected both positively and negatively by this increase in screen time. However nearly a third of students (30.3%) experience only negative effects of an increase in screen time. Less than ten per cent (9.2%) of students receive positive effects of increased screen time. We can now say that the majority of secondary school students experience a mixture of both positive and negative effects of increased screen time, however a large proportion experience only negative effects. The most common things students experience as a result of increased screen time were sleep deprivation (51.4%), headaches (50.7%), eye strain (48.6%) and low energy levels (43.7%). A considerable amount of students also experienced anxiety (26.1%), fear of missing out (25.4%) and low self-esteem (24.6%). Shockingly only 16.2% of students do not experience any of these. From this data we can conclude that there are many negative consequences of increased screen time that many students experience. Only a very small proportion of students do not experience any of these consequences.

