# Gen Z and Millennials Accept Online Creeping and Stalking as Part of Dating Culture

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*Alarmingly, more than one third  of younger generations say they don't care if a current or former romantic partner stalks them online, as long as it's not in person*

TEMPE, Ariz. & PRAGUE, Feb. 7, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- A new survey conducted online in the US by The Harris Poll on behalf of Norton, a consumer Cyber Safety brand of Gen™ (NASDAQ: GEN), reveals Gen Z (ages 18-25) and Millennials (ages 26-42) have concerningly relaxed attitudes about online stalking. Over one-third of Gen Z (34%) and Millennials (35%) say they don't care if they are being stalked online by a current/former partner, as long as they are not being stalked in-person. This is more than three times higher than what older adults (age 58+) (10%) reported.

"This research is a wakeup call. The fact that so many Gen Z and Millennials think online stalking is acceptable tells us that more needs to be done to educate younger generations about the dangers," said Kevin Roundy, Senior Technical Director of Norton Labs. "There is an important distinction between curiosity, such as searching someone up online to learn more about them, versus invading someone's privacy or stalking. These attitudes and behaviors are a slippery slope that could place people in real danger, whether the stalking is online or in-person. We highly encourage securing your devices and personal information to help protect your privacy, which can be critical not only for your Cyber Safety, but your physical and mental wellbeing as well."

The report also uncovered the most common tactics used for online creeping. Popular methods among those who have been in romantic relationships include checking a current or former significant other's phone to view texts, calls, direct messages, emails or photos (16%), reviewing device search history (12%), and tracking a current or former partner's location using a location sharing app (11%).

One possible explanation for relaxed attitudes about online creeping and stalking is a lack of understanding of how sinister it can become. While curious internet searches or scrolls through social media might be normal or harmless, on the other side of the spectrum are more serious online stalking behaviors, including the use of stalkerware and creepware apps used to covertly monitor someone's text messages, phone calls, direct messages, emails or photos. The majority of Americans (83%) are unfamiliar with them, indicating a need for more education and awareness.

Cyber stalking is a critical Cyber Safety issue, and Norton firmly stands against this abusive, invasive behavior. In addition to detecting stalkerware and creepware through Norton Mobile Security for Android, Norton is working to improve detection and mitigation of stalkerware, share best practices for ethical software development, and increase technical capacity of survivors and advocacy organizations as a founding member of the Coalition Against Stalkerware.

In addition to new discoveries about online creeping and stalking, the study revealed online dating scams

are impacting some Americans. One in four Americans (25%) have been the victim of an online dating or romance scam. Cybercriminals favor catfishing scams, which lure people into a relationship by means of a fictional online persona, with 10% of US adults saying they've fallen victim to that type of scam. More than half (53%) of Americans who are victims of online dating scams suffer financial losses, with victims losing $230 on average.

To view the study's full results and accompanying visual assets, please visit the 2023 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Special Release – Online Creeping press kit at: https://newsroom.gendigital.com/2023-Norton-Cyber-Safety-Insights-Report-Special-Release-Online-Creeping

**About the 2023 Norton Cyber Safety Insights Report: Special Release – Online Creeping**
The research was conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of Norton among 1,001 adults aged 18+, of which 95 are Gen Z (ages 18-25), 255 are Millennials (ages 26-42) and 415 are Older Adults (ages 58+). The survey was conducted November 29 – December 19, 2022. Data are weighted where necessary to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. Weighted variables included: age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income and propensity to be online.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 4.1 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

**About Norton**
Norton is a leading Cyber Safety brand of Gen™ (NASDAQ: GEN), a global company dedicated to powering Digital Freedom through its family of trusted consumer brands including Norton,
Avast, LifeLock, Avira, AVG, ReputationDefender and CCleaner. Gen empowers people to live their digital lives safely, privately, and confidently today and for generations to come. Gen brings award-winning products and services in cybersecurity, online privacy and identity protection to more than 500 million users in more than 150 countries. Learn more at Norton.com and GenDigital.com.

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