

Glowing up – How Gen Alpha is moving through adolescence

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THE MEDIA PRECINCT

RESOLVE

01

Born into a turbulent world

Generation Alpha have always had the world at their fingertips. Since 2010, the year the first-Generation Alpha child was born, we've witnessed major cultural, political and social shifts spurred on by the advent of the internet, enhanced communications and technological advancements that have moved faster than a lot of us could have ever predicted.

While older generations grew up cognisant of what the world was like before these advancements, for Generation Alpha, it's all they know. This has major implications on not only how they're growing into adolescence, but how, as marketers, we need to engage and connect with them.



02

Tech moulding young minds

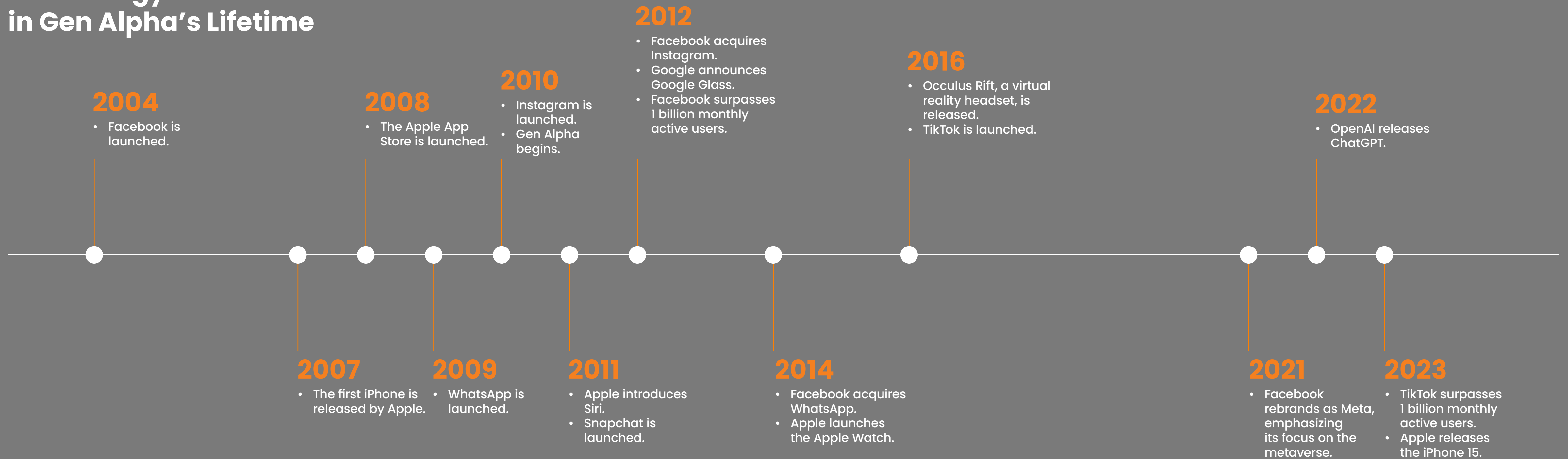
For Generation Alpha, growing up looks completely different to what it looked like 15 years ago. Where previous generations could switch off the TV to disconnect to a stream of news and content, Generation Alpha have had access to smartphones, tablets and the internet ever since they were born.

This unrestricted access to news and information, entertainment and connection has not only shaped how they interact with the world around them, but how they're developing and growing up into young adults.

Children are reaching biological, psychological, social and even commercial maturity much earlier than previous generations. Early exposure to advanced learning tools, wider perspectives and even topics like mental health are shaping how they move into adolescence, making them a much more sophisticated consumer with increased autonomy when compared to previous generations.

The rapid development of Gen Alpha kids has been largely shaped by major innovations across the tech industry. From the launch of Facebook in 2004 and the iPhone in 2007, how we connect and consume media has shaped the environment Generation Alpha grew up in, moulding their behaviours and habits as they grow into adolescence.

Technology Advancements in Gen Alpha's Lifetime



03

Changing spheres of influence

While children younger than 12 have typically looked to their parents or primary caregivers for guidance and support, children's spheres of influence are becoming larger, earlier. Where school friends and peers may have had a large impact in setting social expectations and cues early in life, exposure to content trends and influential online figures is permeating how children learn and understand social norms and expectations.

While a good majority of these influences are relatively harmless, increased time spent online increases potential exposure to dangerous rhetoric and ideas that can be incredibly harmful. Algorithms on platforms like TikTok and Meta have a tendency to prioritise negative or emotionally charged content over neutral or positive content, showing more potentially harmful content to users more often.





04

The dangers of negativity bias

Exposure to negative content can be incredibly dangerous for the psychological health and development of young children. Being exposed to an increased amount of negative or emotionally-charged content can take a huge emotional toll, [increasing risks of stress and anxiety](#) in minds that are not yet equipped to be able to discern between what's real or fake, good or bad.

05

Sephora kids

For young girls, early exposure to beauty and lifestyle content can take root as body dysmorphia and hyper-focus on their appearance. From pro-anorexia content through to [#GetReadyWithMe](#) videos that document morning beauty routines before going to school, young girls are being exposed to dangerous ideas that are shaping how they move into adolescence.

Dove, known for their pioneering approach to marketing to women, recently shone light on this in their [#TheFaceof10](#) campaign, bringing awareness to the impact of anti-ageing messaging on young girls. With frequent exposure to influencers and marketing messages on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, young girls are being exposed to ideas that they need to 'change' or 'improve' their body from an extremely young age. With millions of young girls going into [Sephora and Mecca](#) asking for anti-ageing products, having these messages streamed directly into their devices is proving to be dangerously effective.





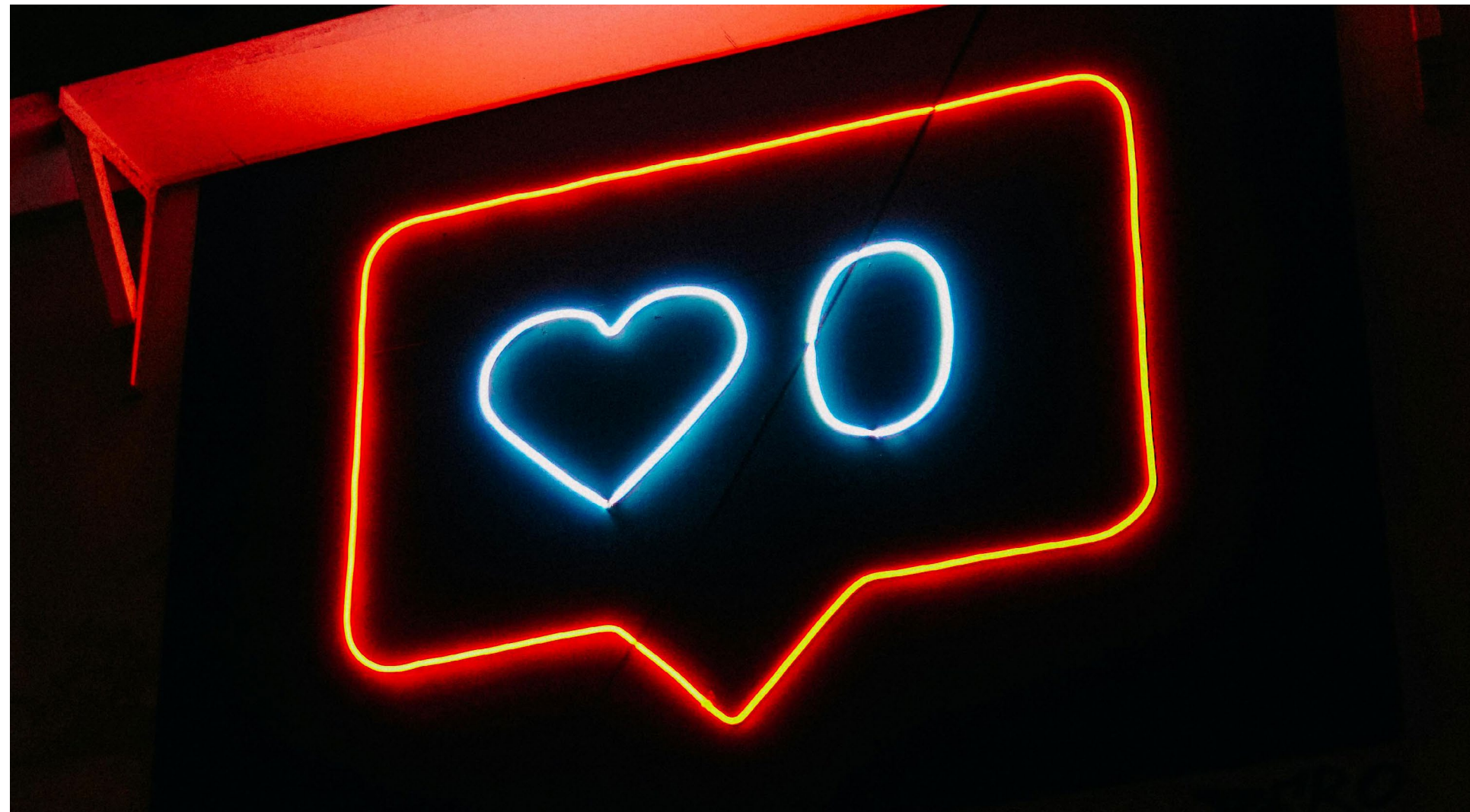
06

Young boys in crisis

Young boys are also being exposed to increasingly dangerous rhetoric and ideologies online, impacting and shaping not only how they see themselves, but how they come to understand family dynamics, romantic relationships, sexuality and gender.

Influential figure [Andrew Tate](#) has continuously made headlines for his misogynistic views and ill-informed advice on money and education (See [Hustler's University](#)). Despite being de-platformed, Australian research from [The Man Cave](#) has indicated that a huge 35% of young men believe that Andrew Tate is 'relatable',

and 25% of young men look up to Tate as a role model. With teacher's reporting [increases in sexual harassment](#) in schools, what may have once been brushed off as a 'fringe' view is now having a direct impact on both the development of young boys, and the safety of young girls. In a time of social media echo-chambers and a system that is yet to catch up, young boys are being stranded in a sea of dangerous ideas with only a small number of positive male role models in sight.



07

Community driving commerce

While the implications of influential content on Generation Alpha's values and views is yet to be fully realised, there are some key indicators that suggest that being exposed to so many messages so early is also having an impact on how they form their identity as young people and consumers.

The rise of the 'viral aesthetic' has defined much of how Generation Alpha shop, dictating what they should purchase, or more accurately, pester their parents to purchase for them. From the now-famous [Stanley Cup](#) to the resurgence of [Ugg Boots](#), viral products hit fever-pitch much quicker, and often with little input from the brands themselves.

Community and connection to celebrity is the number one driving force behind how quickly a product is 'picked up' into the cultural zeitgeist, and if the collective deem it as 'cool', you can be sure that dollars will follow.



08

The rise of the 'aesthetic'

For a generation that has spent most of their waking moments online, the idea of belonging to a subculture like a 'goth' or a 'hipster' to find meaning has all but disappeared. What was once a choice to form your identity around a 'scene' – typically aligned to music, film, sport or fashion – Generation Alpha are now choosing to be defined by an 'aesthetic', a fleeting colour palette, vibe or type of product that meaning can be drawn from. From ['mob wife'](#) to ['tomato girl'](#), Generation Alpha have

the ability to switch from whatever look, vibe or tribe they want to be a part of, allowing them to curate their personal brand on their own terms. Setting aside the environmental implications of increased fast fashion and cycling through micro-trends at the speed of light, kids are now focussed on curating their own personal brand to broadcast to the world.

09

It's all about me

Brands aren't setting the tone of what is and isn't desirable like they once did. Brands can no longer seek to have full control over the narrative of what is cool and what isn't, and the modern marketer needs to be aware of this changing dynamic between the consumer, culture and commerce.

The expectation for immediacy and personalisation has never been greater, and if your brand doesn't have what the Gen Alpha teen is seeking, they'll simply move on to a brand that does.

As we continue to see trends move at the speed of light, production timelines will need to shorten, and reliance on tech and AI will increase to keep up with this demanding consumer cohort. Their expectation that everything they've ever wanted is accessible to them in an instant will become one of the most important factors in determining how they spend their money.





RESOLVE

A checklist for marketers

With the first of Generation Alpha turning 18 in 2028, marketers need to consider how to effectively reach this generation as they grow into young adults.

- Align with their commercial aptitude.** Generation Alpha are arguably the most savvy consumers the world has ever seen, and it's imperative that your communications with them reflect this.
- Get involved in communities.** Find a community that 'gets' your brand and infiltrate it. Host events, look for partnerships and insert yourself into the conversation on social.
- Be cognisant of their challenges.** Generation Alpha are growing up in tumultuous times. Consider how your brand and approach to marketing is alleviating, or exacerbating, their experiences of growing up.
- It's about them, not you.** They want what they want, and if you can't give it to them, they'll find it elsewhere. Think about how you can align more closely with their expectations of immediacy and personalisation.
- Look to tech for help.** Generation Alpha has high expectations. Lean on AI and emergent tech to help get your job done faster, and reach this generation quicker.



To better connect with Gen Alpha, get in touch with our team of creative and media youth marketing experts today.

[Get in touch](#)

-  www.mediaprecinct.com.au
-  www.resolvecontent.com.au
-  +61 2 8081 2665
-  contact@mediaprecinct.com.au
-  Eora Country,
The Stonemason's Cottage,
46-48 Kensington Street,
Chippendale, NSW, 2008

