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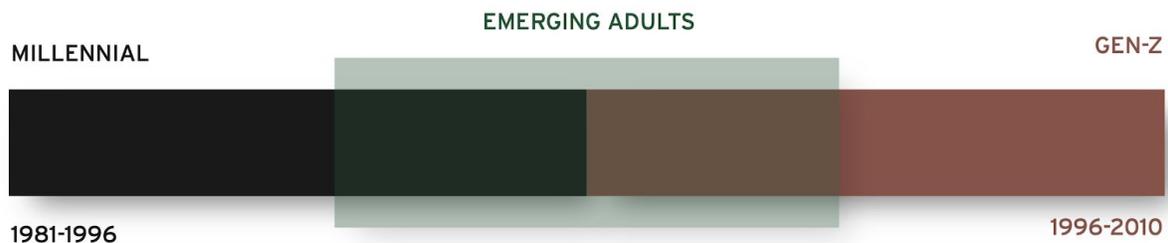
Thesis Paper

Emerge

April 23rd, 2020

Introduction

Generations have defined our culture and values as they have become more solidified over the years. I seek to explore the gap between two young generations, Millennials and Gen-Z, in order to understand the sources and consumption of information among this group and what is lacking in this area. I will then create a source that is reliable and curated to this generation gap, defined as “Emerging Adults”. I will create a print publication for Emerging Adults (ages 18-28), with content created by those who belong to this newly identified generation, addressing the challenges and inspirations within the topics of food, travel, politics, health, and storytelling. Below is a visual representation of the emerging adult generation, which is the target audience for this publication.



Generations are defined by associating a group of people born between certain years with traits and characteristics that align with their actions or values. They can shape our culture and create a sense of belonging to a certain group of people. The issue is

that those that fall within this generation gap are missing this sense of belonging. Many products and sources of information are designed and curated for defined generations, not the generation gap. This creates a lack of substantial and reliable information that is curated for the Emerging Adult Generation. In this paper, I will discuss the context behind the problem that led me to create a publication as the solution. I will detail the historical significance of my interests, research that I encountered and digested, as well as my own research that I have conducted. This project, the creation of a print publication for the Emerging Adult generation, provides reliable and relevant information to those seeking a trustworthy source curated to their specific wants and needs.

Contextual Discussion

The term “Emerging Adult” was first proposed in an article in the *American Psychologist* in 2000 written by Jeffrey Arnett. It is described as the “in-between” phase of one’s young adulthood. In order to understand what it is that Emerging Adults want to see in an informational publication, it is important to have a strong foundation of who they are and what they value. In the original work by Arnett, he mentions five key aspects of the Emerging Adult generation: age of identity exploration, age of instability, age of self-focus, age of feeling in-between, and age of possibilities. These are all stages of life that Emerging Adults are experiencing. Munsey states, “The phenomenon has only arisen in the past few decades in the United States in response to social and economic changes, and it urges continuing scholarship examining the nature of life and paths of development for emerging adults”.¹ At this point, those classified as Emerging Adults are

¹ Munsey, Christopher. “Emerging Adults: The in-between Age.”

constantly going through change. They are recently independent, having just started college or begun their life as an independent working and supporting themselves.

After gaining an understanding of who Emerging Adults are, I wanted to better understand what they want in order to create a publication specifically curated towards them. In a study by Perry L. Glanzer, 229 different Emerging Adults between the ages of 18 and 23, the younger half of the generation, were interviewed to understand their purpose and goals, and what they consider a good life. Glanzer states, “their future vision of the good life focused more on individualistic concerns such as happiness, material acquisitions, and personal experiences with family being the only communal interest”.² When it came to purpose, the study was about to place participants into 5 categories: The Directionless, The Achievers, The Relationalists, The Religious, and the Change the

World Transformers. Next, information was gathered regarding the future goals of Emerging Adults and how they related to their life’s purpose. Table 2 was taken from the study, detailing the numbers and responses from participants. Knowing common purposes or goals in the lives of emerging

Table 2. Coding Labels for Both Questions.

	Purpose	Future goals
Directionless	73	0
Plain Directionless	44	0
Professionally Directionless	5	0
Broadly Directionless for Peer Review	7	0
Go With the Flow Directionless	6	0
Metaphysically Directionless	11	0
Achievers	77	255
Happiness	25	80
Material	5	60
<i>New Experiences (e.g., travel/skydive)</i>		44
Professional	47	39
<i>Success Achievers</i>		19
<i>No Regrets</i>		13
Relationalists	59	145
Family Relationalists	31	107
Virtue Relationalists	28	27
<i>Friend Relationalists</i>		11
Religious	19	12
Change/Contribute to the World	5	21

Note: Italics indicates the category is new and emerged during the coding of future goals.

² Glanzer, Perry L., Jonathan P. Hill, and Jessica A. Robinson. “Emerging Adults’ Conceptions of Purpose and the Good Life: A Classification and Comparison.” *Youth & Society* 50, no. 6 (September 1, 2018): 715–33.

adults will help to understand what content they may want to see in a publication. This also provides a way to create an inclusive collection of content that may be relevant and interesting to those who resonate with different purposes or future goals and not only those who have these aspects of life in common.

The next aspect of Emerging Adults that I wish to understand in order to create a holistic publication is their day-to-day life. One thing that I have started to understand about emerging adults is that they have detached from what is considered a “traditional” lifestyle. Emerging adults have begun to do not what is expected of them, but what works for them. An article titled “OH, GROW UP: EMERGING ADULTS OR SPOILED BRATS?” elaborates on these transitions away from the expected. . “The traditional cycle seems to have gone off course, as young people remain untethered to romantic partners or to permanent homes, going back to school for lack of better options, traveling, avoiding commitments, competing ferociously for unpaid internships or temporary (and often grueling) Teach for America jobs, forestalling the beginning of adult life.”³ This work helped to further create profiles for Emerging Adults in order to understand exactly who they are and how they live.

Design Inspiration

Kinfolk is a print and digital publication that features content including home, work, style, and culture. The website states, “Kinfolk promotes quality of life and connects a global community of creative professionals from London to Tokyo.”⁴ The

³ “OH, GROW UP: EMERGING ADULTS OR SPOILED BRATS?” Accessed November 24, 2019.

⁴ John Burns. “About Kinfolk.” *Kinfolk* (blog). Accessed April 23, 2020.

simple, elegant, and modern style emphasizes the content and creates an aesthetic experience for the viewer.

Another aspect of the Kinfolk brand that impacted my work is the digital versions of the publications. Not only do they offer print subscriptions, but they offer digital purchases as well. Anything that you can get in a print version can also be downloaded as a digital copy as well. Although my research shows that most people would prefer to



Image from Kinfolk.com

read a print publication given the option, it is important to be realistic about the accessibility of a print publication. For those with busy and mobile lives, it may be more difficult to read a print publication. The digital version allows for the opportunity to not only make the publication more accessible, but to create an online platform and

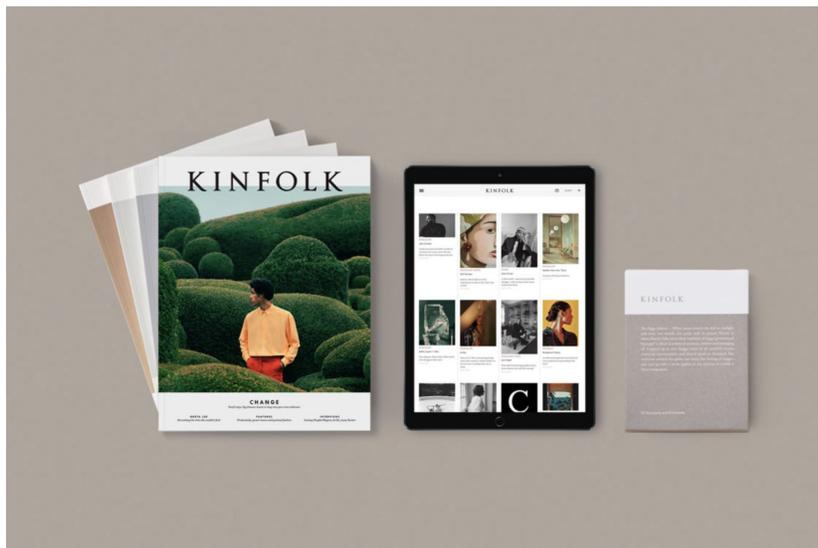


Image from Kinfolk.com

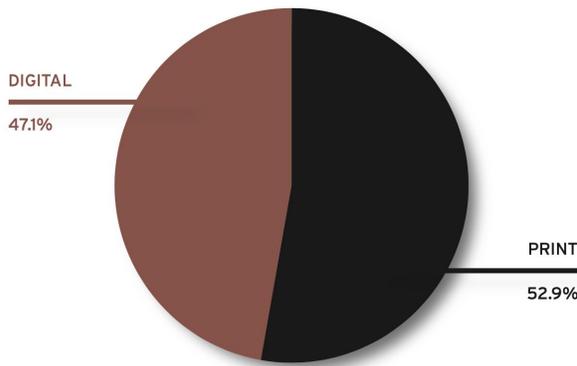
community for Emerge. With the work available to repost or tag on websites or social media platforms, there is an opportunity to promote the publication and the brand. Aesthetically speaking, Emerging Adults are drawn

to print publications and collectables, but in terms of practicality a digital version may be more realistic.

Methodology

Kinfolk provided a great foundation to do some research and investigating of my own as I began thinking about the physical manifestation of my research and the publication I am creating. I developed a survey that I sent out strictly to those who fall into the category of Emerging Adults.

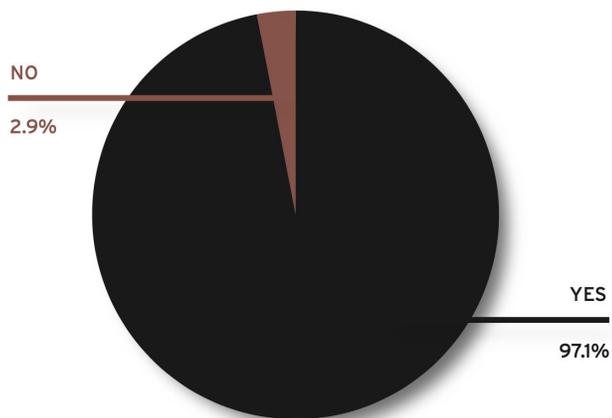
Would you rather read a print or a digital publication?



The first part of the survey inquired about whether readers would rather engage with a print or online publication. The charts to the left show the responses of 105 participants. From these responses, I was able to gather that Emerging

Adults would rather engage with a print publication. I also discovered that almost all participants, whether they prefer print or digital, would read a print publication. The second part of the survey regarded the content that would be featured. I wanted to include topics that the generation themselves chose,

Whether you chose print or digital, would you still read a print publication (ex. magazine, zine, book)?



not what I think they would want to see. The top five responses from the survey are the categories that will be featured in the publication. After receiving the results, the five sections of the publication will include politics, food, travel, health, and a section including storytelling and inspiration. After further thought throughout the design of the publication, I decided to make the different sections more flexible. I wanted room for those who submit work that does not necessarily fall within one of those categories. Rather than having a table of contents with labeled sections based on the topics, the publication will list the titles of the work without categorizing them.

This research allowed me the opportunity to reach out to those who were interested in submitting content with a more concrete definition of the project. I was able to give writers the categories that I want to feature in the publication while giving them enough freedom to create a piece that they are proud of. I reached out to peers who are part of the Emerging Adult generation through mediums that they often use, for example Instagram, emails, writing blogs (ex. Medium), and other platforms. Most writers who were interested in contributing to my publication responded with an idea and we worked together to develop a concept for their writing that would be exciting for them to write while staying consistent with the theme of the publication. After receiving the content from the writers, I used their words and stories to inspire the designs of the layout.

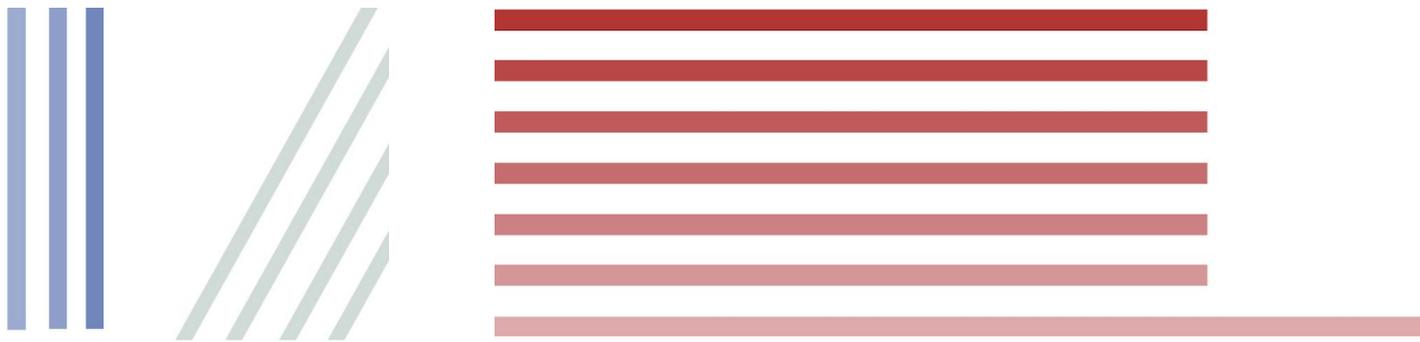
Another aspect of research that I utilized was interviewing Emerging Adults. It was important for me to understand what they wanted to see in the publication. I asked various questions and tried to maintain a casual and relaxed conversation in order to get reactions that I felt were real. After the interviews, I utilized what participants told me in

order to create a publication with content and design that Emerging Adults want to see. They desired a platform to share their writing and their work as well as to read other's work. In a sense, they were looking for a way to share their stories and hear others'. Throughout these conversations, I realized the importance of storytelling. It creates a community and provides a sense of relatability. Sharing stories can create inspiration, hope, encouragement, and excitement among those who share and listen, which is what I realized I had to do with Emerge.

Creative Work

Given the recent circumstances and the outbreak of the COVID '19 pandemic, the outcome of my creative work took a different path than I had expected. I received pieces from writers within the Emerging Adult generation and chose some of the strongest pieces to include in the publication. There are three shorter pieces and two longer ones. The shorter ones are meant to entertain and tell stories to complement the two longer pieces. The first longer piece is a three page spread written by Gabrijella Skoko and the second longer piece was written and photographed by myself. My original intention was to only include work created by others, but I felt as though I had a unique opportunity to share my experience and insights about being a college student during a global pandemic. As I learned to adjust and adapt with the changing world around me, I recognized that my publication seemed to take on the role of being a platform to share stories and create a sense of community. I realized the importance of storytelling, especially during this difficult time that we are all experiencing.

After receiving the content from the writers, I used their words to inspire designs for each spread. I wanted to create an overall consistency within the aesthetic choices of each piece but differentiate the designs depending on the messages of the work. Throughout the pieces, I included elements such as the use of the same few fonts, the overall style, and the horizontal and vertical lines featured in each piece. I chose not to



have a set color palette, but rather a neutral one with pops of color here and there depending on the piece I was working with. This allows for more variation within the publication between the different issues that may come out in the future. It also leaves room for further brand development as the publication grows.

Due to the cancelation of the final senior exhibition, I am no longer able to create the installation that was intended to accompany the publication in my studio space. This space was going to be a coffee shop setting or a space that one may typically read this publication. Featuring the publication in this type of space would have completed the experience and the brand of Emerge. Now, I want to take that same idea but create a virtual experience. In the future, I hope to continue working on the Emerge publication, brand, and overall experience. Below are the first two pages of the two larger pieces of writing in the publication.

American Brother

Writing by Gabriela Skoko

Sunday is my day for laundry. My self-care day. It sounds odd that throwing dryer sheets would be my healing space, but it is something I will always be able to do for and by myself. I find a certain peace in the lonesomeness. And a certain endless possibility within it. In this time, I can be whatever I want. This week, I chose to be a listener, and I sorted my clothes to Nikole Hannah-Jones' 1619 podcast.

In the first episode, she talks about her childhood home. Its ragged form, and its constant need for reparation. Each floorboard is cracked and door unhinged. Her father doesn't mind, but what he would never let fall into disrepair, was the American flag that flew outside. Jones couldn't make sense of her father's pride in something that only ever denied him.

My brother was stopped by a cop again. By that, I mean my brother was speeding in July when a Black cop pulled him over. The cop's violent screams piled spit on my brother's shoulder like some sort of souvenir. Souvenir, in its native space, means to remember. Remember. You're lucky I got to you first. It's the reason you are still alive.

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A homeless man outside the outside the Federal Reserve building in New York with the American flag in the background. Photo released by CNN (2019)

IN THE ABSENCE OF CLOSURE



Writing and Photography by Molly Bokor

Closure is a funny thing. In two weeks I was supposed to be graduating alongside my best friends, classmates, and peers, and now I am sitting at home submitting my final senior thesis virtually. I waited four years to have my own studio, create a project I am passionate about, and share it with those who have supported me throughout my college career, and now it is all gone.

I understand that I am in a very privileged position. I was able to go home, I am healthy, and I have a support system that allows me to live comfortably. That does not lessen my sadness or make my feelings invalid. Since the day classes were canceled with graduation soon to follow, I have been documenting my life in a series of photographs. I did not document this to share my privilege, but to capture the results of a global pandemic during a pivotal time in the life of a young adult – a graduating senior prepared to enter a world that is now completely shut down.

I am not just leaving college, but I am leaving my house that smells like laundry detergent when you walk in the side door, my professors who I have made real connections with over the past four years, Sargent Pepper's, the convenience store where we bought late night snacks and brownie mix, my senior studio that I spent hours decorating and showing off to my friends, and the hardest of all, my best friends in the world. We have parted ways sooner than expected.

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Conclusion

Emerge is intended to fill a generation gap that is lacking in cultural and informational sources for those between the ages of 18 and 28 who fall within the generation titled Emerging Adults. EmERGE will provide a source of information and entertainment to those within the Emerging Adult generation who desire something curated specifically for them. I hope to continue pursuing this field of research in order to discover more about how information is consumed by different generations. This will allow designers to create more targeted material that is more appropriate for the intended audience. We cannot assume that every generation digests information in the same ways. Generations grew up with different types of technology as they advanced throughout the years, and acknowledging the different desires of the various generations will allow for a more targeted publication. Future studies may include feedback regarding the first publication from Emerging Adults themselves in order to improve the following versions and future publication design. With that information, I will be able to continue creating issues of the EmERGE publication. With the development of the brand and publication, EmERGE has the potential to become a staple in the lives of Emerging Adults. In order to promote the publication and encourage others to view it, I will create a social media platform and marketing campaign using the EmERGE brand. Given the technological capabilities of the targeted generation, it is important to promote the publication on platforms that Emerging Adults regularly interact with. For example,

creating an Instagram profile and sharing marketing materials may help direct viewers to the publication.

Emerge is a publication curated and designed specifically for a generation gap between Millennials and Gen-Z called Emerging Adults. Generations have defined our culture and values as they have become more solidified over the years. EmERGE seeks to explore this generation gap through understanding the consumption of information among the Emerging Adult generation. Many products and sources of information are designed and curated for defined generations, not the generation gap. This creates a lack of substantial and reliable information that is curated for the Emerging Adult Generation. Through first hand research, EmERGE meets the entertainment and informational desires of this generation. This publication is filled with stories, experiences, and inspiration from those who belong to the Emerging Adult generation. Of course, anyone can view and enjoy this publication, but this gives an undefined generation the chance to read work that has been created for them based on their own requests.

Works Cited

1. Munsey, Christopher. "Emerging Adults: The in-between Age."
2. Glanzer, Perry L., Jonathan P. Hill, and Jessica A. Robinson. "Emerging Adults' Conceptions of Purpose and the Good Life: A Classification and Comparison." *Youth & Society* 50, no. 6 (September 1, 2018): 715–33.
3. "OH, GROW UP: EMERGING ADULTS OR SPOILED BRATS?" Accessed November 24, 2019.
4. John Burns. "About Kinfolk." *Kinfolk* (blog). Accessed April 23, 2020.