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Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material: Youth Attitudes and Experiences in 2021

Findings from 2021 quantitative research among 9-17-year-olds

Research conducted by Thorn in partnership with Benenson Strategy Group

THORN 

 Benenson
Strategy
Group

Acknowledgments

Understanding the complex intersection of technology and child sexual abuse empowers us to safeguard kids from the ever-evolving threats they face online. Without direct insights from kids who are encountering these issues every day, we risk falling behind in developing valuable resources for them to navigate the digital age safely.

THANK YOU

We are grateful to the kids who took time to participate in our survey. Without their gracious participation, we would not be able to share these key insights about self-generated child sexual abuse material.

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Introduction

SG-CSAM:

Explicit imagery of a child that appears to have been taken by the child in the image. This imagery can result from both consensual or coercive experiences. Kids often refer to consensual experiences as “sexting” or “sharing nudes.”

Self-generated child sexual abuse material (SG-CSAM) is a known challenge within the online child sexual exploitation landscape and an area with little available data. This report represents a continuation of Thorn’s ongoing research to illuminate that landscape and provide concrete data related to the size and scale of SG-CSAM experiences among kids and how SG-CSAM behaviors evolve over time.

Since 2019, Thorn has fielded an annual study of 1,000 minors that seeks to identify the rates at which young people are taking and sharing nude imagery of themselves. The study also examines the rates at which minors reshare the imagery of peers or are exposed to the nonconsensually reshared SG-CSAM of other kids. This report captures the third year of data collection related to that annual study and presents the results from 2021 alongside prior years. Over the 3 years of data collection, some concerns originally highlighted in 2019 have remained steadfast, while new areas of concern have emerged.

1 Since 2019, there has been a sustained increase in minors self-reporting that they have shared their own nudes. In 2021, as in 2020, approximately 1 in 6 minors reported sharing their own SG-CSAM. This includes 1 in 7 minors aged 9-12 and 1 in 5 minors aged 13-17.

2 While the percentage of minors who have reported seeing another child’s nonconsensually reshared nudes has remained relatively stable, **the perceived normalcy that their close friends nonconsensually**

reshare another child’s SG-CSAM has increased year over year. In 2021, 1 in 6 minors reported they believed their close friends at least sometimes nonconsensually reshare another child’s nudes.

3 Boys continue to demonstrate areas of increased risk. They have consistently reported a higher likelihood of resharing others’ content and of thinking that resharing is legal. Compared with 2019, the number of younger boys (aged 9-12) reporting they had shared their own nudes more than doubled, while reporting among older boys (aged 13-17) has nearly tripled.

4 Hispanic and Latino youth are demonstrating heightened risks related to SG-CSAM as compared with other groups.¹ In 2021, compared with their non-Hispanic and non-Latino counterparts, they were more likely to self-report they had shared their own nudes, believe that their close friends were also sharing SG-CSAM, and acknowledge that they had nonconsensually reshared someone else’s content.

This research will continue to be fielded and reported out annually. It remains our hope that this research can elevate the experiences of young people, support the heightened development of data-driven interventions, and ignite a more expansive body of research into this vital area of concern for those combatting online child sexual exploitation.

¹See Methodology & Research Design section for a more in-depth discussion about youth of color recruitment year over year.

Methodology & Research Design

Research on SG-CSAM continues to present unique challenges within an ever-changing digital environment. Survey authors have included here a brief discussion of some of these challenges and their corresponding mitigation strategies.

Challenges

CHALLENGE – The issues and risks associated with online SG-CSAM exist within a dynamic online environment: The technologies and platforms intersecting with this issue area are in constant flux, as are the habits of the kids who use them.

Action: This research relies on dynamic social research methodologies, which enable faster collection and analysis of data, to ensure it best reflects the current digital landscape. Because design limitations restrict the number of platforms shown to participants, this survey includes a diverse but nonexhaustive list of platforms, with top priority given to social platforms. The final list is informed by historical research, external reports, and expert consultation, and is reevaluated for the needs of each individual survey.

CHALLENGE – Attitudes towards sexuality vary widely across demographics.

Action: This is a universal issue, but the way it impacts kids differs across demographics. This research aims to identify trends among kids overall, as well as within

some significant subgroups – such as age and gender groups. A secondary objective was to get a broad understanding of how trends around this issue manifest differently across demographics. To this end, enhanced quotas were used in 2021 to ensure large-enough base sizes of 9-17-year-olds of color for analysis. Nevertheless, given sample size limitations, some of the data within subgroups are more appropriately viewed as starting points.

CHALLENGE – Entrenched stigma and sensitivity surrounding the topic may lead to an undercounting of scale and frequency.

Action: Asking individuals – especially kids – to open up about a subject as delicate and personal as sharing nude images of themselves likely activates self-report bias where participants lean into more socially desirable responses. It also requires the design of survey instruments that are safe and supportive. Sequence was important in our research instruments; sensitive questions were prefaced with a note acknowledging the difficulty of discussing the topic and reiterating the anonymity of the responses. Questions were also written in a manner that gave the space or permission for individuals to answer generally about “people they know” in lieu of exclusively asking respondents point-blank about their own online experiences. Resources for additional information and referrals for real-time support were highlighted in all survey instruments.

CHALLENGE – This study captured SG-CSAM attitudes and behaviors during 2021 – a year in which a worldwide pandemic (COVID-19) continued to influence kids, their online experiences, and social relationships.

Action: The researchers acknowledge that the continued and ever-changing pandemic inhibits our ability to distinguish the precise role COVID-19 has had on the ways kids explore and interact with their online worlds. As with the research conducted in 2020, the 2021 survey did include one question to record participants’ perceptions of the pandemic’s impact on the frequency of SG-CSAM experiences among their peers. A brief discussion of this data is included on page 29.

Research Design

This research represents a continuation of research originally performed in 2019² and monitored in 2020.³ Quantitative survey tools were used in 2019, 2020, and 2021 to collect self-reported data from minors aged 9-17.⁴

QUANTITATIVE ONLINE SURVEY

In 2021, the research was again designed to identify and monitor changes in minors’ behaviors and attitudes related to SG-CSAM as originally benchmarked by the quantitative research conducted in 2019 and first monitored in 2020. The 2021 survey repeated the majority of the questions originally fielded in 2019 and 2020 and added a small number

of questions designed to deepen our understanding of this issue. Throughout the report, figures presenting data collected from the new questions will be marked with: **NEW**

In total, 2,282 minors from across the United States participated in an 18-minute online survey from October 25 to November 28, 2021. Specifically, sample makeup included:

- n=659: 9-12-year-olds
- n=1,623: 13-17-year-olds

However, only the demographic questions and some of the broader questions, such as platform usage, were asked of the entire sample. For the majority of the survey, kids were split evenly and randomly into two groups and shown a set of questions based on the group to which they were assigned. One group was shown questions pertaining to Responding to Online Threats,⁵ the data of which will be reported on in a subsequent report.⁶ The current report will focus on the Experience Of and Attitudes About Sharing SG-CSAM questions, which were asked of 1,141 minors. Specifically, this group included:

- n=333: 9-12-year-olds
- n=808: 13-17-year-olds

To ensure a representative sample nationwide, data was weighted to age, gender, race, and geography, based on U.S. Census data. These weights were also held within each of the two groups to ensure they independently represented the nation’s demographics.

² Thorn. (2019). Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material: Attitudes and Experiences. Available at: <https://www.thorn.org/self-generated-child-sexual-abuse-material-attitudes-and-experiences/>

³ Thorn. (2021). Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material: Youth Attitudes and Experiences in 2020. Available at: https://info.thorn.org/hubfs/Research/SGCSAM_Attitudes&Experiences_YouthMonitoring_FullReport_2021.pdf

⁴ In the context of this report, and unless otherwise noted, the term “minors” is used to describe young people represented in the survey sample (9-17 year olds).

⁵ In prior reports this survey branch was referred to “Hurdles to Disclosure.”

⁶ Pending publication in 2023. Responding to Online Threats: Minors’ Perspectives on Disclosing, Reporting, and Blocking in 2021.

As mentioned, the 2021 research sought to ensure large-enough base sizes to analyze the data by specific racial and ethnic subgroups and as a result, incorporated an increased recruitment of minor participants who identified as persons of color within the 2021 cohort.⁷ The subsequent racial and ethnic breakdown was:

- n=453: White
- n=688: Persons of color (POC) (e.g. total respondents that identified as a racial or ethnic group other than “white”⁸)
 - n=313: African American/Black/Caribbean American
 - n=275: Hispanic or Latino
 - n=137 Other POC⁹
 - n=84: Asian or Pacific Islander
 - n=33: Native American or American Indian
 - n=5: Middle Eastern
 - n=21: Other

Throughout the report, data regarding racial and ethnic breakdowns from 2019 and 2020 is shown to provide context to the 2021 data. However, given comparatively smaller sample sizes for those groups in the 2019 and 2020 research, the prior years’ racial and ethnic subgroup data should be considered directional.

A Note on Results and Reporting

Due to rounding, many of the figures included in this report may have columns or rows that do not add up to exactly 100 percent. Some questions also featured multiselect response options, which have been noted.

A Note on Privacy and Safety

Ensuring the privacy and safety of those who chose to participate in this research was paramount. All participant responses were anonymized. Minor participants were recruited via both existing youth panels or directly through caregivers at the time of this survey. Caregiver consent was required for minor participation in youth panels, as well as for those minors recruited directly for the survey. In addition, help resources were provided to participants in the event they wanted to learn more about the topics discussed or needed professional support to talk about these issues.

⁷Base sizes for racial and ethnic subgroups will not add up to the total base size of n=1,141 because some participants identified as multiple racial or ethnic identities.

⁸Participants who identified as “white” and another race or ethnicity (n=85) were coded as the other race or ethnicity they selected. Among this subsample, 24 participants identified as white and another race or ethnicity which fell into the “Other POC” category.

⁹For the purpose of reporting racial and ethnic findings within this report, individual groups with a sample size greater than 100 are reported individually, while all groups with a sample size less than 100 were clustered together as “Other POC.”

SG-CSAM Metrics at a Glance

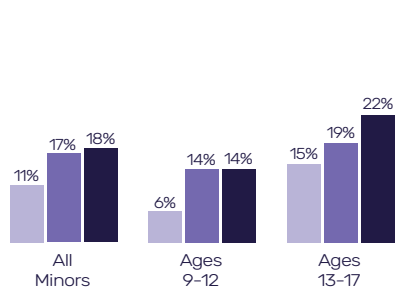
Given the ever-changing digital and social environments in which SG-CSAM occurs, it is essential to track the related attitudes and behaviors of youth over time to see how the landscape evolves. In particular, monitoring year-over-year changes related to how youth share, receive, and reshare SG-CSAM – and the perceptions they have of their peers doing the same – can expand the field’s understanding

of these important issues and where opportunities for intervention may exist. This section is intended to provide a high-level view of kids’ SG-CSAM attitudes and behaviors across a three-year period, from 2019–2021. In-depth demographic segmentation, including age, gender, sexual identity, and race/ethnicity, is featured in subsequent sections of this report.

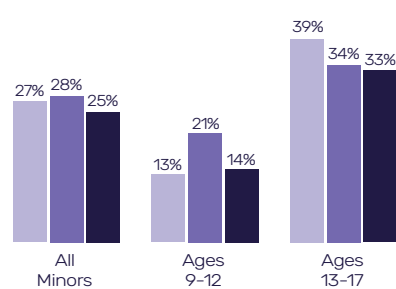
■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021

Fig 1 | Experiences with initial shares and perceptions of normalcy

% of all minors who have shared their own SG-CSAM



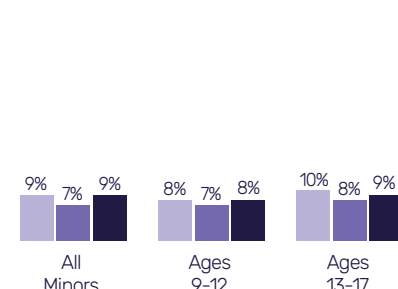
% of all minors who agreed it is normal for kids their age to share their own SG-CSAM



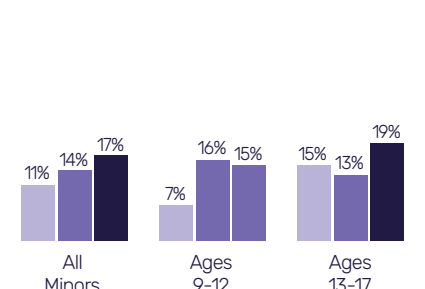
[Q40X] Have you ever sent or shared a nude photo or video of yourself either directly with someone else or with your social media followers? [Q40] How strongly do you agree with the following statement? “It’s normal for people my age to share nudes with each other.”

Fig 2 | Experiences with resharing SG-CSAM and perceptions of normalcy

% of all minors who have reshared someone else’s SG-CSAM

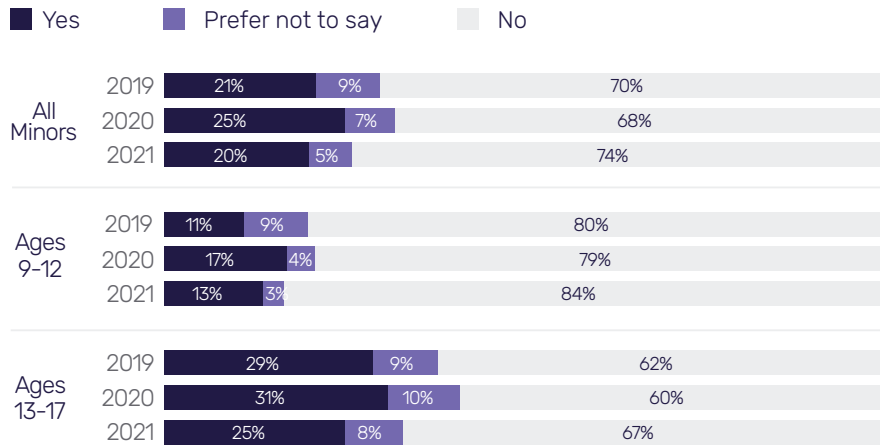


% of all minors who believe their close friends “often or sometimes” reshare another kid’s SG-CSAM



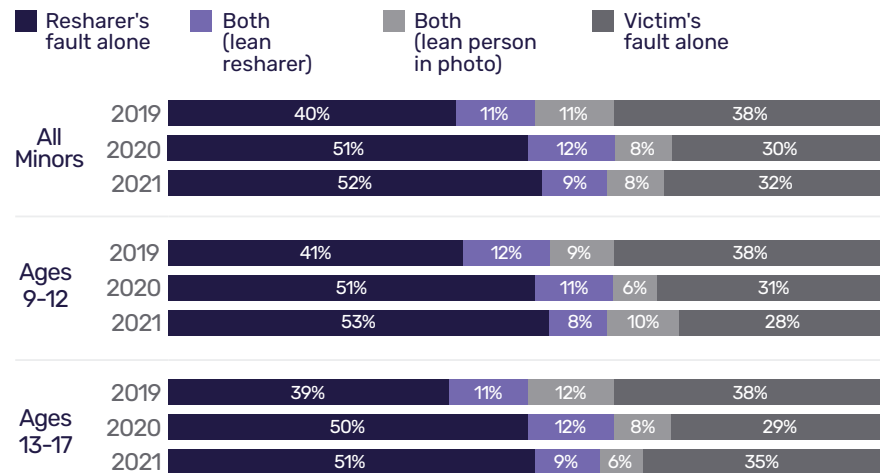
[Q50] Have you ever shared a nude photo or video of someone else without that person’s knowledge online? [Q35Br3] And how often do your close friends...send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others?

Fig 3 | Experiences with seeing nonconsensually reshared SG-CSAM



[Q49] Have you ever been shown or sent a nude photo or video of someone at your school or someone else your age in your community without that person's knowledge?

Fig 4 | Perceptions of blame

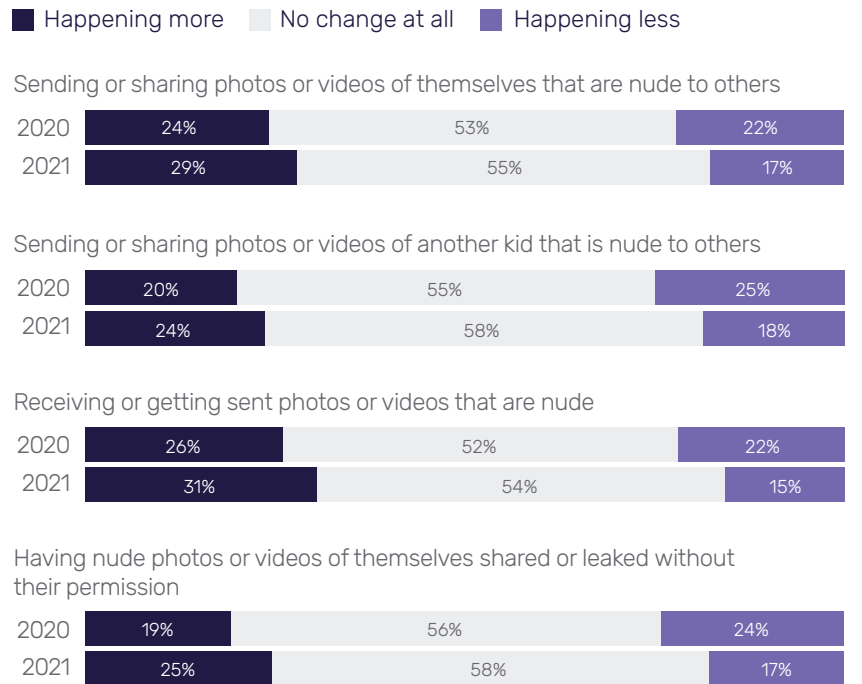


[Q51] In your opinion, if a nude photo or video of someone gets out, who is to blame?
 [Q52] And if a nude photo or video of someone gets out, who is most to blame?

COVID-19

The 2021 data was again collected during a time in which the COVID-19 pandemic continued to actively influence online behaviors. Like in 2020, the 2021 survey included one COVID-specific question to continue recording kids' opinions on the pandemic's impact. A more comprehensive discussion of this data is included on page 29.

Fig 5 | Perceptions of peer's SG-CSAM experiences since pandemic onset



[Q37] If you had to say, are kids at your school doing the following more or less since the start of the coronavirus pandemic (March 2020)?

Bars may not total 100 due to rounding.

The Digital Landscape

Minors spend their time in ever-changing online environments – and their engagement with different platforms remains in flux. As in 2020, many minors surveyed in 2021 reported increased usage on some platforms, while others dropped off.¹⁰ Gaming platforms such as Roblox (+12%), Fortnite (+10%), and Minecraft (+9%), showed the greatest increase in the number of minors who reported they have ever used them, driven primarily by younger users

(aged 9-12) (Fig 6). Roblox (+8%), TikTok (+8%), and Minecraft (+5%) showed the greatest increases in minors who reported daily use, where the increases in usage were more generally attributable to one age cohort (Fig 7). In 2021, the top five platforms used by minors at least once a day were YouTube (79%), TikTok (53%), Instagram (42%), Snapchat (42%), and Facebook (36%).

Fig 6 | General platform use among minors – Ever used

	2019			2020			2021				2019			2020			2021		
	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17		ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17
Amino	-	-	-	10%	8%	11%	6%	4%	7%	Roblox	-	-	-	47%	42%	50%	59%	66%	54%
Among Us	-	-	-	43%	23%	59%	43%	44%	42%	Signal	12%	12%	13%	2%	3%	2%	5%	6%	5%
Byte	-	-	-	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	Slack	12%	14%	11%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Call of Duty	-	-	-	48%	45%	51%	52%	48%	55%	Snapchat	68%	61%	74%	71%	67%	74%	68%	58%	77%
Chatroulette	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	5%	4%	Tagged	-	-	-	4%	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Discord	32%	23%	40%	34%	20%	45%	34%	24%	43%	Telegram	13%	13%	13%	11%	17%	7%	13%	13%	14%
Facebook	56%	51%	59%	62%	66%	60%	61%	52%	67%	TikTok	52%	55%	50%	69%	66%	71%	75%	69%	80%
Fortnite	52%	60%	46%	47%	47%	47%	57%	61%	54%	Triller	-	-	-	7%	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Google Hangouts/Meet	26%	21%	31%	64%	63%	65%	51%	47%	54%	Tumblr	25%	21%	28%	40%	45%	36%	34%	27%	39%
Grand Theft Auto	47%	45%	49%	39%	36%	42%	44%	40%	47%	Twitch	31%	28%	32%	36%	30%	41%	33%	25%	39%
Instagram	69%	56%	79%	76%	65%	85%	66%	49%	79%	Twitter	41%	28%	51%	59%	56%	62%	51%	39%	61%
Kik	18%	18%	18%	14%	11%	16%	13%	10%	15%	VSCO	18%	16%	20%	12%	8%	15%	8%	6%	10%
Live.me	-	-	-	-	-	-	7%	6%	7%	WhatsApp	27%	23%	31%	47%	55%	40%	44%	39%	47%
Marco Polo	18%	23%	14%	10%	12%	8%	10%	11%	9%	Whisper	-	-	-	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%
Messenger	53%	51%	54%	62%	69%	56%	64%	61%	66%	Wickr	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	4%	4%
Minecraft	-	-	-	62%	57%	65%	71%	72%	70%	Wink	-	-	-	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	4%
Monkey	17%	17%	17%	7%	7%	8%	6%	6%	6%	Wishbone	-	-	-	-	-	-	7%	5%	8%
Omegle	-	-	-	-	-	-	13%	9%	17%	YouNow	-	-	-	7%	10%	5%	6%	6%	5%
OnlyFans	-	-	-	6%	4%	8%	8%	7%	10%	YouTube	96%	95%	97%	97%	98%	97%	98%	97%	98%
Reddit	32%	24%	39%	32%	20%	41%	34%	26%	41%	Yubo	-	-	-	-	-	-	7%	5%	9%

[Q14B] How often do you use/check/play each of the following?

Percentages were derived from the full survey sample (n=2,282).

¹⁰ Platforms where 2019 and 2020 data is not available (Fig 6, Fig 7) are platforms added in subsequent surveys. For more detail on how platforms were selected for this survey, see the Methodology & Research Design section of this report.

Fig 7 | **General platform use among minors – At least once per day**

	2019			2020			2021				2019			2020			2021		
	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17		ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17
Amino	-	-	-	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	Roblox	-	-	-	17%	22%	13%	25%	35%	17%
Among Us	-	-	-	23%	13%	31%	10%	13%	7%	Signal	5%	3%	6%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Byte	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	Slack	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Call of Duty	-	-	-	18%	20%	16%	15%	14%	15%	Snapchat	49%	41%	55%	47%	40%	52%	42%	29%	52%
Chatroulette	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	Tagged	-	-	-	1%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%
Discord	15%	10%	18%	19%	12%	25%	17%	12%	20%	Telegram	4%	4%	5%	6%	10%	3%	6%	5%	7%
Facebook	29%	29%	29%	36%	45%	28%	36%	32%	39%	TikTok	30%	33%	28%	45%	41%	49%	53%	45%	59%
Fortnite	23%	31%	17%	17%	22%	13%	19%	23%	16%	Triller	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%
Google Hangouts/Meet	9%	8%	9%	33%	36%	30%	17%	16%	18%	Tumblr	8%	7%	8%	13%	18%	9%	11%	10%	12%
Grand Theft Auto	14%	15%	13%	12%	14%	11%	12%	11%	13%	Twitch	10%	12%	9%	14%	14%	14%	10%	7%	11%
Instagram	46%	34%	56%	50%	40%	59%	42%	26%	55%	Twitter	19%	14%	23%	28%	30%	27%	24%	19%	29%
Kik	5%	7%	3%	4%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	VSCO	6%	5%	6%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Live.me	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%	WhatsApp	12%	11%	14%	26%	39%	16%	20%	20%	20%
Marco Polo	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%	4%	3%	Whisper	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Messenger	27%	27%	27%	32%	38%	27%	34%	32%	36%	Wickr	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%	2%	1%
Minecraft	-	-	-	20%	23%	17%	25%	30%	21%	Wink	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Monkey	4%	6%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	Wishbone	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%
Omegle	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	4%	4%	YouNow	-	-	-	3%	5%	1%	2%	2%	1%
OnlyFans	-	-	-	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	YouTube	79%	80%	79%	80%	78%	81%	79%	78%	79%
Reddit	12%	12%	11%	10%	8%	12%	10%	9%	10%	Yubo	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%

[Q14B] How often do you use/check/play each of the following?

Percentages were derived from the full survey sample (n=2,282).

Platform Popularity Among Sharers & Resharers

Data collected in 2021 reinforced findings from past years, which found that young people who have shared, reshared, or been sent SG-CSAM use many of the same platforms as their peers who have not. In 2021, the top 10 most popular platforms, by daily usage rates, were consistent throughout the entire sample, with minor exceptions (e.g. Tumblr).

In 2021, the most popular platforms were similar to those identified in 2020. However, as seen previously, minors who

indicated they have shared, re-shared, or been sent SG-CSAM reported notably higher daily usage rates on some of these platforms than the broader sample (Fig 8).¹¹ Continued research is needed to identify the connection between rates of general platform usage and likelihood to have an SG-CSAM-related experience.

Fig 8 | Platform popularity among minors with SG-CSAM experiences – *At least once a day*

	AMONG MINORS WHO _____ SHARED OWN SG-CSAM		AMONG MINORS WHO _____ SEEN RESHARED SG-CSAM		AMONG MINORS WHO _____ RESHARED SG-CSAM			
	HAVE	HAVE NOT	HAVE	HAVE NOT	HAVE	HAVE NOT		
YouTube	75%	79%	YouTube	78%	78%	YouTube	72%	79%
TikTok	66%	50%	TikTok	72%	47%	TikTok	70%	51%
Instagram	65%	38%	Instagram	62%	36%	Messenger	69%	34%
Snapchat	62%	37%	Snapchat	61%	36%	Facebook	68%	35%
Facebook	62%	33%	Facebook	53%	34%	Snapchat	64%	40%
Messenger	61%	32%	Messenger	50%	34%	Instagram	64%	41%
Twitter	55%	18%	Twitter	45%	19%	Twitter	62%	21%
WhatsApp	45%	15%	WhatsApp	35%	17%	WhatsApp	53%	18%
Google Hangouts/Meet	40%	12%	Google Hangouts/Meet	29%	15%	Google Hangouts/Meet	53%	14%
Tumblr	36%	5%	Tumblr	24%	7%	Tumblr	51%	7%
			Discord	24%	14%			

[Q14B] How often do you use/check/play each of the following?

¹¹Prior reports have presented this data alongside comparative percentages for All Minors. In this report, the data is presented alongside comparative percentages between those who have experienced an SG-CSAM behavior and those who have not. The researchers believe this is a more effective comparison.

Online Behaviors

Following what appeared to be a decline in online supervision in 2020, data from 2021 suggests minors may be operating with levels of supervision more akin to 2019 rates (Fig 9). Minors overall, but particularly 9-12-year-olds, were more likely to follow established online safety rules in 2021 than

they were in 2020. Use of secondary accounts¹² (i.e. accounts designed to keep content private from some groups like caregivers or friends) revealed an average of around 1 in 4 (24%) minors across the 3 years of data (Fig 10).

Fig 9 | **Following online safety rules** – Among minors who say they have to follow each rule

		Check-ins			Blocked websites or apps			Limits on games			Social media monitoring			Permission to open a new social media account			Permission to download new apps			Common areas only			Limits on screen time		
		2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS	Always	45%	37%	44%	65%	52%	63%	43%	37%	43%	53%	47%	52%	61%	54%	68%	52%	50%	60%	45%	36%	37%	35%	30%	34%
	Most of the time	37%	35%	36%	25%	24%	25%	37%	34%	37%	29%	28%	33%	27%	26%	21%	36%	30%	27%	35%	36%	42%	42%	44%	44%
	Only sometimes	13%	22%	16%	4%	16%	7%	16%	23%	15%	13%	17%	11%	7%	11%	7%	8%	14%	9%	15%	20%	14%	17%	19%	16%
	Rarely or never	6%	5%	4%	6%	9%	5%	4%	6%	5%	6%	8%	4%	5%	8%	4%	4%	6%	3%	5%	7%	6%	6%	7%	5%
AGES 9-12	Always	52%	38%	47%	71%	49%	67%	47%	37%	46%	65%	49%	56%	70%	50%	75%	58%	48%	64%	50%	35%	33%	36%	28%	31%
	Most of the time	34%	38%	36%	24%	24%	22%	38%	35%	36%	27%	29%	27%	25%	32%	18%	36%	33%	27%	34%	40%	48%	48%	46%	48%
	Only sometimes	12%	19%	15%	2%	17%	6%	13%	24%	15%	7%	17%	14%	4%	9%	5%	4%	15%	7%	15%	19%	14%	14%	20%	15%
	Rarely or never	1%	5%	1%	3%	10%	4%	2%	5%	4%	2%	5%	3%	1%	8%	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%	6%	5%	2%	6%	5%
AGES 13-17	Always	33%	36%	41%	51%	56%	58%	34%	37%	40%	37%	43%	47%	47%	60%	61%	41%	53%	55%	36%	39%	43%	34%	34%	38%
	Most of the time	40%	31%	36%	27%	22%	28%	35%	33%	38%	31%	27%	38%	30%	16%	25%	35%	27%	28%	36%	29%	36%	31%	40%	40%
	Only sometimes	13%	28%	17%	11%	14%	8%	22%	22%	16%	21%	18%	9%	12%	15%	9%	14%	12%	13%	17%	22%	15%	23%	18%	18%
	Rarely or never	13%	6%	6%	12%	8%	6%	9%	8%	6%	11%	12%	5%	11%	9%	5%	9%	8%	5%	11%	10%	6%	12%	8%	4%
ALL GIRLS	Always	45%	40%	46%	66%	57%	62%	43%	45%	43%	49%	48%	48%	60%	55%	67%	58%	55%	61%	44%	36%	36%	35%	27%	33%
	Most of the time	38%	36%	36%	24%	22%	25%	38%	27%	35%	32%	30%	36%	26%	27%	23%	28%	28%	27%	34%	37%	39%	41%	48%	44%
	Only sometimes	13%	20%	14%	4%	15%	8%	14%	24%	18%	14%	13%	12%	9%	9%	5%	10%	11%	9%	17%	19%	17%	16%	17%	18%
	Rarely or never	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	8%	3%	5%	9%	4%	5%	6%	2%	5%	7%	9%	7%	7%	5%
ALL BOYS	Always	46%	35%	43%	64%	48%	64%	43%	32%	44%	57%	45%	56%	61%	53%	69%	47%	47%	59%	46%	37%	39%	36%	33%	35%
	Most of the time	36%	34%	36%	26%	24%	25%	38%	39%	38%	26%	27%	29%	28%	26%	19%	43%	31%	27%	35%	36%	45%	43%	40%	46%
	Only sometimes	12%	24%	18%	4%	16%	7%	16%	21%	13%	11%	20%	10%	6%	13%	8%	6%	16%	10%	14%	20%	12%	17%	21%	15%
	Rarely or never	6%	6%	3%	6%	12%	4%	4%	7%	5%	6%	8%	5%	5%	8%	3%	4%	5%	4%	5%	7%	3%	4%	6%	4%

[Q9] And would you say that you follow each of these rules...?

¹² Such as, but not limited to, “finstas” or “fake Instagrams.”

Fig 10 | Use of secondary accounts

			2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS		Yes	23%	27%	22%
		Prefer not to say	11%	7%	6%
		No	66%	66%	72%
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	Yes	14%	25%	16%
		Prefer not to say	11%	2%	3%
		No	75%	73%	81%
	GIRLS	Yes	15%	21%	16%
		Prefer not to say	10%	1%	4%
		No	75%	78%	80%
BOYS	Yes	13%	28%	16%	
	Prefer not to say	11%	4%	2%	
	No	77%	68%	82%	
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	Yes	29%	30%	27%
		Prefer not to say	11%	11%	8%
		No	60%	60%	65%
	GIRLS	Yes	38%	32%	25%
		Prefer not to say	10%	10%	9%
		No	52%	58%	67%
BOYS	Yes	21%	27%	28%	
	Prefer not to say	13%	10%	6%	
	No	67%	63%	65%	
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Yes	37%	36%	28%
		Prefer not to say	16%	9%	11%
		No	46%	55%	61%
	NON-LGBTQ+	Yes	19%	25%	20%
Prefer not to say		9%	5%	4%	
No		71%	69%	75%	
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Yes	22%	28%	24%
		Prefer not to say	10%	5%	2%
		No	67%	66%	74%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	Yes	23%	29%	29%
		Prefer not to say	15%	5%	7%
		No	62%	66%	65%
	OTHER POC	Yes	28%*	29%	22%
		Prefer not to say	12%*	11%	6%
		No	60%*	60%	72%
	WHITE	Yes	21%	26%	18%
		Prefer not to say	8%	7%	6%
		No	72%	66%	76%

[Q17] Some people have a “finsta”– or multiple accounts on one social network so that they can share some stuff more privately. Across the social media platforms or apps that you use, do you have a second private account that allows you to share content without certain people such as your parents, family, or people at school seeing it?

*Base size <100

SG-CSAM & Initial Shares

1 in 6

minors have shared their own SG-CSAM

SG-CSAM Production

Minors' self-reported data from 2021 revealed no substantial change in the rate of SG-CSAM (18%) production compared with 2020 (17%) and reflected a sustained increase from 2019 (+7%). Notably, there were some distinct changes within demographic subgroups, particularly among older boys (aged 13-17) (+8%), and minors of color, especially Hispanic and Latino youth (+11%). Both of these groups displayed pronounced increases in having shared SG-CSAM (Fig 11).

Importantly, based on the increased recruitment of minors of color in 2021, the data suggests Hispanic and Latino minors may be at heightened risk for sharing SG-CSAM (31%) when compared with their non-Hispanic and non-Latino peers. While a decrease (-6%) in their overall rate of sharing was identified, youth who identify as LGBTQ+ remained at heightened risk in 2021 compared with their non-LGBTQ+ peers (+10%).

Fig 11 | Experiences with sharing SG-CSAM – Ever

		2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS	ALL AGES	11%	17%	18%
	GIRLS	12%	14%	13%
	BOYS	9%	19%	22%
GROUPED AGES	9-10	3%	15%	13%
	11-12	7%	13%	14%
	13-14	6%	13%	20%
	15-17	19%	24%	24%
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	6%	14%	14%
	GIRLS	3%	11%	13%
	BOYS	7%	18%	15%
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	15%	19%	22%
	GIRLS	19%	17%	14%
	BOYS	11%	20%	28%
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	21%	32%	26%
	NON-LGBTQ+	8%	13%	16%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	11%	14%	19%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	11%	20%	31%
	OTHER POC	12%*	8%	8%
	WHITE	11%	19%	13%

[Q40X] Have you ever sent or shared a nude photo or video of yourself either directly with someone else or with your social media followers? Please remember that your answers are anonymous.

Numbers shown reflect the percentage of minors who reported they have shared their own nude imagery. *Base size <100

2 in 3

minors who have shared their own SG-CSAM have shared it within the past year

In 2021, a new question was added to the survey to further specify the recency of when, among those who had, minors had shared SG-CSAM of themselves (Fig 12). Among those who reported having shared their own SG-CSAM, two-thirds

(68%) indicated they had shared nude imagery of themselves within the past year, including 74% of 9-12-year-olds and 65% of 13-17-year-olds.

NEW

Fig 12 | **Experiences with sharing SG-CSAM, in the past year** – Among kids who have shared their own nudes

		AMONG ALL MINORS	AMONG THOSE THAT HAVE SHARED THEIR OWN NUDES
ALL MINORS	ALL AGES	12%	68%
	GIRLS	8%	58%*
	BOYS	17%	75%
AGES 9-12**	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	10%	74%**
	BOYS	12%	81%**
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	14%	65%
	GIRLS	7%	52%*
	BOYS	21%	72%
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	14%	53%*
	NON-LGBTQ+	12%	74%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	13%	66%*
	HISPANIC/LATINO	24%	76%*
	WHITE	9%	65%*

[Q40XT] And have you sent or shared a nude photo or video of yourself either directly with someone else or with your social media followers in the past year?

Numbers shown reflect the percentage of minors who reported they have shared their own nude imagery. Data for girls (aged 9-12) and other POC is not featured because all related data had a base size of <25. *Base size <100, **Base size <50.

2x

Older minors (aged 13-17) were 2x as likely to think sharing nudes with peers is normal compared with younger minors (aged 9-12)

Perceptions of Normalcy

Overall, in 2021, minors' perceptions that it is normal for people their age to share nudes with each other was generally consistent with past years, with approximately 1 in 4 agreeing that it was normal (Fig 13). Older boys (aged 13-17) (37%), Hispanic and Latino youth (37%), and LGBTQ+ youth (36%) were most likely to indicate they thought it was

normal, while 9-12-year-olds were the least likely (14%) to do so. In 2021, more minors reported they believed their close friends at least sometimes share SG-CSAM when compared with the 2 prior years. In particular, Hispanic and Latino youth (+15%) and older boys (+12%) displayed the greatest increases (Fig 14).

Fig 13 | Percentage of minors who agree sharing nudes with peers is normal

		2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS		27%	28%	25%
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	13%	21%	14%
	GIRLS	10%	16%	13%
	BOYS	16%	26%	15%
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	39%	34%	33%
	GIRLS	39%	37%	26%
	BOYS	38%	32%	37%
SEXUAL/ GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	39%	34%	36%
	NON-LGBTQ+	25%	27%	22%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	28%	28%	25%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	30%	31%	37%
	OTHER POC	21%*	23%	19%
	WHITE	27%	28%	20%

[Q40] How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "It's normal for people my age to share nudes with each other."

Numbers shown reflect the net percentage of minors who selected they "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree." *Base size <100

Fig 14 | Perceptions of close friends sharing SG-CSAM

		2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS		14%	15%	20%
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	10%	14%	14%
	GIRLS	10%	6%	9%
	BOYS	8%	22%	18%
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	17%	16%	24%
	GIRLS	19%	14%	19%
	BOYS	16%	18%	30%
SEXUAL/ GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	17%	22%	20%
	NON-LGBTQ+	12%	14%	20%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	14%	11%	21%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	12%	17%	32%
	OTHER POC	18%*	9%	12%
	WHITE	14%	17%	15%

[Q35BR2] And how often do your close friends...send or share photos or videos of themselves that are nude to others?

Numbers shown reflect the net percentage of minors who selected "often" or "sometimes." *Base size <100

SG-CSAM Recipients

In 2021, slightly less than half (43%) of minors who had shared their own SG-CSAM self-reported that they had shared it with someone they did not know offline, representing a seven point decrease from 2020 (Fig 15). Nevertheless, this still included 50% of 9–12-year-olds who had shared their own imagery. Additionally, 2 in 3 (66%)

minors who indicated they had shared a nude with someone they had never met offline also indicated the person they had shared their nude imagery with was someone who introduced themselves to the minor (in contrast to someone whom the minor had introduced themselves (Fig 16).

Fig 15 | **Sharing nudes with someone you know versus a stranger** – *Among minors who've shared nudes*

		2019	2020	2021			2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS	Had met the person(s) before	62%	50%	57%	LBGTQ+*	Had met the person(s) before	51%	59%	54%
	Had met some of the person(s) but not all	27%	36%	30%		Had met some of the person(s) but not all	42%	28%	21%
	Had not met the person(s) before	10%	15%	13%		Had not met the person(s) before	7%	13%	25%
AGES 9-12	Had met the person(s) before	70%**	42%*	50%**	NON-LBGTQ+	Had met the person(s) before	70%	45%	58%
	Had met some of the person(s) but not all	23%**	44%*	39%**		Had met some of the person(s) but not all	18%	41%	34%
	Had not met the person(s) before	7%**	14%*	11%**		Had not met the person(s) before	12%	13%	8%
AGES 13-17	Had met the person(s) before	60%*	54%	60%	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Had met the person(s) before	78%**	40%**	55%*
	Had met some of the person(s) but not all	28%*	31%	26%		Had met some of the person(s) but not all	11%**	33%**	25%*
	Had not met the person(s) before	11%*	15%	14%		Had not met the person(s) before	11%**	27%**	21%*
ALL GIRLS*	Had met the person(s) before	65%	50%	61%	HISPANIC/LATINO	Had met the person(s) before	71%**	34%**	59%*
	Had met some of the person(s) but not all	23%	45%	24%		Had met some of the person(s) but not all	15%**	49%**	34%*
	Had not met the person(s) before	12%	5%	15%		Had not met the person(s) before	14%**	17%**	7%*
ALL BOYS	Had met the person(s) before	59%**	47%	54%	WHITE	Had met the person(s) before	51%*	58%	58%*
	Had met some of the person(s) but not all	33%**	31%	35%		Had met some of the person(s) but not all	40%*	30%	27%*
	Had not met the person(s) before	8%**	22%	10%		Had not met the person(s) before	9%*	12%	15%*

[Q44] And had you met the person or people you shared this nude photo/video with in real life before you shared it?

Other POC data is not featured because all related data had a base size of <25. *Base size <100; **Base size <50

NEW

Fig 16 | **Nature of how minors came into contact with whom they've shared nudes online** – *Among minors who've shared their own nudes with someone they've never met in person*

		2021
ALL MINORS*	They introduced themselves to you	66%
	You introduced yourself to them	40%
	Other	5%

[Q44A] When you've shared a nude photo or video with someone you've never met in person, how did you meet this person online?

Columns will total more than 100 because question was multiple select. *Base size <100

Among kids who have shared nudes

42%

reported they had shared nude imagery with someone aged 18 or older

Consistent with 2020 numbers (41%), 42% of minors who have shared their SG-CSAM also reported sharing it with someone they believed to be aged 18 or older in 2021 (Fig 17). Notably, boys (+8%) exhibited an increase in sharing their SG-CSAM with someone they believed to be aged 18 or older. Likewise, while comparative sample sizes are small, African American youth (+15%), younger minors (aged 9-12) (+14%), and LGBTQ+ (+9%) youth also exhibited increases in sharing their SG-CSAM with someone they believed to be aged 18 or older.

Among minors who indicated they had shared their SG-CSAM with someone they know offline, a majority (54%) reported they would describe the person with whom they shared the imagery as a boyfriend/girlfriend while an even greater majority (63%) reported they would describe the person as a friend more generally (Fig 18).

Fig 17 | Those with whom minors share their SG-CSAM – Among minors who’ve shared nudes

	SOMEONE AGED 18 OR OLDER		SOMEONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18		SOMEONE WHOSE AGE YOU DID NOT KNOW		OTHER	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
ALL MINORS	41%	42%	57%	53%	30%	24%	4%	4%
AGES 9-12	36%*	50%**	45%*	43%**	37%*	24%**	1%*	5%**
AGES 13-17	43%	38%	63%	58%	25%	24%	6%	3%
ALL GIRLS*	41%	32%	68%	59%	26%	21%	1%	7%
ALL BOYS	40%	48%	47%	46%	34%	27%	6%	2%
LGBTQ+*	36%	45%	62%	61%	31%	24%	3%	8%
NON-LGBTQ+	45%	41%	52%	49%	30%	23%	5%	2%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	20%**	35%*	72%**	47%*	20%**	28%*	0%**	2%*
HISPANIC/LATINO	40%**	48%*	57%**	50%*	36%**	21%*	4%**	1%*
WHITE	41%	41%*	52%	59%*	25%	23%*	5%	7%*

[Q46] Have you ever sent or shared nude photo(s)/video(s) of yourself with any of the following...?

Question was multiple select. Answer choice “other” was included as an option for minors who might feel uncomfortable disclosing their perception of the age of the person(s) with whom they have shared SG-CSAM. Other POC data is not featured because all related data had a base size of <25. *Base size <100; **Base size <50

NEW

Fig 18 | Minors’ relationship type with those who they know in-person and with whom they have shared nudes – Among minors who shared their own nudes with someone they’ve met in person

	BOYFRIEND/ GIRLFRIEND	TOTAL FRIEND	Friend from school	Friend who lives in your area, but not your school	Friend of a friend	OTHER
ALL MINORS	54%	63%	33%	24%	24%	1%
AGES 9-12**	43%	78%	37%	33%	36%	0%
AGES 13-17	60%	56%	31%	19%	19%	1%
ALL GIRLS*	63%	53%	31%	20%	15%	0%
ALL BOYS	48%	69%	34%	27%	31%	1%
LGBTQ+**	87%	31%	21%	12%	3%	0%
NON-LGBTQ+	43%	75%	37%	28%	33%	0%
AFRICAN AMERICAN*	50%	57%	25%	20%	24%	2%
HISPANIC/LATINO*	44%	70%	36%	24%	26%	1%
WHITE*	70%	55%	35%	21%	20%	0%

[Q45] Thinking about the nude photo(s)/video(s) you have shared with someone you know in person, which of the following best describes your relationship with that person?

Question was multiple select. Other POC data is not featured because all related data had a base size of <25. *Base size <100; **Base size <50

Considerations for Sharing Personal SG-CSAM

In 2021, the percentage of minors who have not shared their own SG-CSAM but reported having considered sending it remained consistent with prior years at 1 in 10 (10%) (Fig 19).

Fig 19 | **Percentage of minors who considered sharing a nude, but chose not to**

	2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS	11%	12%	10%

[Q41] Even though you have never shared a nude photo, have you ever considered doing so?

Numbers shown reflect the percentage of minors who selected "yes."

"Once it's out there it's never coming back."

– Cis Female, 15, Hispanic/Latino, West

"Because I felt it wouldn't be right. I heard other kids in my school talking about it so I considered it, but knew it would be wrong so never followed through."

– Cis Male, 9, White, South

"I got targeted online when I was 8 years old and my mom flipped out and called the cops and they took my phone and never gave it back so [I] learned it was a bad thing to do."

– Nonbinary minor, 15, White, South

Nonconsensual Resharing & Intimate Image Leaks

1 in 5

minors reported they had seen nonconsensually reshared SG-CSAM

1 in 8

minors, aged 9-12, reported they had seen nonconsensually reshared SG-CSAM

Experiences with Reshared SG-CSAM

In 2021, 9% of minors admitted to resharing someone else’s SG-CSAM (Fig 21). This represents a generally stable overall rate compared with prior years. That said, a notable increase in resharing was identified among older boys (aged 13-17) (+5%) and among Hispanic and Latino youth (+10%). In fact, by comparison, the rate of resharing among older boys to older girls was nearly three times greater – while among Hispanic and Latino youth (18%) it was two times greater than the rate of African American youth and more than four times the rate of white youth. Consistent with past years, the rate of younger boys (aged 9-12) remained approximately two times greater than the comparative rate of girls.

For the second consecutive year, there was a notable decrease (-8%) among minors who reported that “nothing happened” as a result of their nonconsensual reshare (Fig 20). Since 2019, minors who had nonconsensually reshared someone else’s SG-CSAM increasingly identified that their friends thought it was funny (+22%), that the person in the imagery found out (+21%), that they got in trouble at school (+15), that they got in trouble with their parents (+15%), that they got in trouble with the police (+13%), and that their friends got mad at them (+13%).

The rate of minors who self-reported having seen nonconsensually reshared images of others remained somewhat consistent from 2019, with a fluctuation between 1 in 5 (20%) and 1 in 4 (25%) minors reporting they had (Fig 22). In 2021, 1 in 8 (13%) younger minors (aged 9-12) reported they had seen nonconsensually reshared imagery, while 1 in 4 (25%) older minors (aged 13-17) reported the same. That said, older girls (aged 13-17) were comparatively less likely in 2021 to indicate they had seen nonconsensually reshared images than in 2019 (-8%) or 2020 (-6%).

Fig 20 | **Consequences of re-sharing someone else’s nudes** – *Among minors who have nonconsensually reshared*

	2019*	2020*	2021
The person in the photo or video found out	13%	18%	34%
Your friends thought it was funny	12%	15%	34%
Your friends got mad at you	15%	19%	28%
You got in trouble at school	12%	20%	27%
You regretted sending it	20%	23%	26%
You got in trouble with your parents or caregivers	8%	29%	23%
You got in trouble with the police	8%	12%	21%
The person in the photo or video felt bad	15%	22%	20%
You felt bad for the person in the photo or video	19%	22%	20%
Nothing happened	32%	17%	9%

[Q50A] After you reshared a nude photo or video of someone else without that person’s knowledge online, which, if any, of the following happened?

Columns will total more than 100 because question was multiple select. *Base size <100

Fig 21 | Experiences with resharing SG-CSAM

		2019	2020	2021	
ALL MINORS	Yes	9%	7%	9%	
	Prefer not to say	7%	6%	2%	
	No	84%	86%	89%	
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	Yes	8%	7%	8%
		Prefer not to say	6%	5%	1%
		No	86%	88%	91%
	GIRLS	Yes	5%	5%	6%
		Prefer not to say	3%	8%	1%
		No	92%	87%	93%
	BOYS	Yes	12%	9%	10%
		Prefer not to say	7%	3%	0%
		No	81%	88%	89%
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	Yes	10%	8%	9%
		Prefer not to say	8%	7%	3%
		No	82%	85%	88%
	GIRLS	Yes	9%	7%	5%
		Prefer not to say	6%	7%	4%
		No	85%	85%	92%
	BOYS	Yes	10%	9%	14%
		Prefer not to say	10%	7%	3%
		No	80%	84%	83%
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Yes	12%	5%	8%
		Prefer not to say	9%	13%	4%
		No	79%	81%	87%
	NON-LGBTQ+	Yes	8%	8%	9%
		Prefer not to say	5%	3%	1%
		No	86%	88%	90%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Yes	10%	4%	9%
		Prefer not to say	7%	14%	2%
		No	82%	82%	89%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	Yes	8%	8%	18%
		Prefer not to say	10%	6%	1%
		No	82%	85%	81%
	OTHER POC	Yes	8%*	3%	8%
		Prefer not to say	11%*	6%	1%
		No	81%*	91%	91%
	WHITE	Yes	10%	9%	4%
		Prefer not to say	5%	5%	3%
		No	86%	87%	93%

[Q50] Have you ever shared a nude photo or video of someone else without that person's knowledge online?

*Base size <100

Fig 22 | Experiences having seen nonconsensually reshared SG-CSAM

		2019	2020	2021	
ALL MINORS	Yes	21%	25%	20%	
	Prefer not to say	9%	7%	5%	
	No	70%	68%	74%	
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	Yes	11%	17%	13%
		Prefer not to say	9%	4%	3%
		No	80%	79%	84%
	GIRLS	Yes	9%	17%	12%
		Prefer not to say	8%	4%	4%
		No	84%	79%	84%
BOYS	Yes	13%	18%	15%	
	Prefer not to say	9%	4%	1%	
	No	79%	79%	84%	
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	Yes	29%	31%	25%
		Prefer not to say	9%	10%	8%
		No	62%	60%	67%
	GIRLS	Yes	32%	30%	24%
		Prefer not to say	7%	11%	9%
		No	61%	59%	67%
BOYS	Yes	27%	31%	28%	
	Prefer not to say	12%	8%	6%	
	No	61%	61%	67%	
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Yes	29%	28%	25%
		Prefer not to say	12%	10%	11%
		No	59%	62%	64%
	NON-LGBTQ+	Yes	20%	24%	19%
		Prefer not to say	8%	5%	3%
		No	73%	71%	78%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Yes	29%	21%	24%
		Prefer not to say	7%	5%	3%
		No	64%	74%	73%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	Yes	21%	27%	28%
		Prefer not to say	12%	8%	6%
		No	67%	65%	66%
	OTHER POC	Yes	20%*	24%	15%
		Prefer not to say	12%*	11%	5%
		No	68%*	65%	79%
	WHITE	Yes	19%	24%	16%
		Prefer not to say	7%	7%	6%
		No	74%	69%	78%

[Q49] Have you ever been shown or sent a nude photo or video of someone at your school or someone else your age in your community without that person's knowledge?

*Base size <100

Perceptions of Legality

Since 2019, perceptions of legality surrounding reshared SG-CSAM have remained generally consistent: In 2021, 1 in 10 minors indicated they thought it was legal to reshare nudes of someone under age 18 if the person gave consent (Fig 23). When compared with data from 2020, decreases in this perception were identified among girls (-8%) and

African American youth (-9%). Minors who had shared their own SG-CSAM, reshared the SG-CSAM of others, or had seen the reshared imagery remained comparatively more likely to perceive the resharing of imagery as legal. This was particularly pronounced among minors who indicated they had reshared the SG-CSAM of others.

Fig 23 | Perceptions of reshared SG-CSAM legality

Illegal – it is illegal to reshare nude photos or videos of someone under age 18 no matter what

Legal – it is legal to reshare nude photos or videos of someone under age 18 if you have consent or permission

			2019	2020	2021				2019	2020	2021	
ALL MINORS			Illegal	88%	84%	88%	ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Illegal	84%	76%	88%
			Other	2%	3%	2%			Other	3%	4%	1%
			Legal	10%	13%	10%			Legal	13%	20%	11%
AGES 9-12	GIRLS	Illegal	95%	82%	90%	HISPANIC/LATINO		Illegal	87%	80%	85%	
		Other	3%	0%	1%			Other	1%	4%	0%	
		Legal	2%	18%	10%			Legal	12%	15%	15%	
	BOYS	Illegal	88%	86%	89%			OTHER POC	Illegal	85%*	83%	89%
		Other	5%	2%	0%				Other	3%*	8%	3%
		Legal	7%	12%	11%				Legal	12%*	9%	8%
AGES 13-17	GIRLS	Illegal	85%	88%	90%	WHITE			Illegal	90%	87%	91%
		Other	1%	3%	4%				Other	2%	1%	3%
		Legal	14%	10%	6%				Legal	8%	11%	7%
	BOYS	Illegal	85%	79%	83%		HAVE SHARED OWN SG-CSAM	Illegal	81%	72%	73%	
		Other	0%	6%	3%			Other	0%	2%	1%	
		Legal	15%	15%	14%			Legal	19%	27%	26%	
SEXUAL/ GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Illegal	86%	81%	85%	HAVE RESHARED SG-CSAM*	Illegal	84%	67%	60%		
		Other	2%	4%	3%		Other	0%	1%	1%		
		Legal	12%	16%	12%		Legal	16%	32%	38%		
	NON-LGBTQ+	Illegal	89%	85%	89%		HAVE SEEN RESHARED SG-CSAM	Illegal	83%	82%	80%	
		Other	2%	2%	2%			Other	1%	2%	1%	
		Legal	9%	13%	9%			Legal	16%	17%	18%	

[Q55] As far as you know, which of the following is most true?

*Base size <100

1 in 5

younger boys (aged 9-12) believe their friends at least sometimes share nudes of other kids

1 in 4

older boys (aged 13-17) believe their friends at least sometimes share nudes of other kids

60%

of kids exclusively or predominantly blame the resharer

Perceptions of Normalcy

In 2021, perceptions of normalcy around seeing or resharing nude photos or videos of others increased compared with prior years, particularly among older boys (aged 13-17), African American youth, and Hispanic and Latino youth (Fig

24). Younger boys (aged 9-12) remained nearly twice as likely to believe their friends at least sometimes share nudes of other kids compared with their female counterparts.

"If I were to ever have a photo of mine leaked I don't think it would be as concern[ing] as I'm a male but I believe if it were a friend of mine who was a female I would consider taking action as predatory behavior is prevalent towards females."

— Cis Male, 16, Asian, West

Perceptions of Blame

In 2021, minors remained less likely to blame the person in the photo (40%) and more likely to blame the resharer (60%) in instances involving nonconsensually reshared imagery, across most age, gender, sexuality, and ethnic demographics

(Fig 25). That said, the data for older girls (aged 13-17) who responded in 2021 was more similar to 2019 data, displaying a notable increase (+12%) in solely blaming the victim in cases of nonconsensual resharing.

"I think the sender does have to consider the risks however it's never their fault if their nudes are leaked. Revenge porn is a real and very serious problem and victims are often shamed for it. Whether they sent the nudes because they trusted someone, or were otherwise forced or coerced, nobody ever has the right to reshare nudes sent in private."

— Cis Female, 16, White, Midwest

"I had a video of me re-shared and I didn't like it, but I shouldn't have done it in the first place. I was made fun of for two school years. I learned my lesson and never shared a nude video again."

— Cis Male, 17, African American/Black/Caribbean American, Midwest

Fig 24 | Perceptions of close friends' SG-CSAM experiences

			2019	2020	2021
ALL MINORS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude		19%	22%	24%
	Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others		11%	14%	17%
	Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission		11%	13%	18%
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	13%	19%	15%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	7%	16%	15%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	8%	15%	14%
	GIRLS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	15%	16%	12%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	8%	10%	11%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	9%	10%	10%
BOYS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	10%	22%	18%	
	Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	6%	22%	19%	
	Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	7%	21%	19%	
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	25%	24%	32%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	15%	13%	19%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	13%	12%	21%
	GIRLS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	30%	24%	27%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	14%	11%	11%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	15%	10%	13%
BOYS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	20%	24%	34%	
	Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	15%	15%	27%	
	Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	12%	14%	29%	
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	26%	30%	34%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	12%	15%	13%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	14%	12%	16%
	NON-LGBTQ+	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	17%	20%	22%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	10%	14%	18%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	10%	14%	18%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	19%	24%	26%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	13%	9%	21%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	13%	7%	21%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	21%	22%	37%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	7%	14%	29%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	7%	11%	29%
	OTHER POC	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	33%*	17%	16%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	21%*	12%	9%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	15%*	12%	8%
	WHITE	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	16%	23%	19%
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	11%	17%	12%
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	12%	16%	14%

[Q35B] And how often do your close friends...?

Numbers shown reflect the net percentage of minors who selected "often" or "sometimes." *Base size <100

Fig 25 | Perceptions of blame when nudes are leaked

		2019	2020	2021	
ALL MINORS		Resharer's fault alone	40%	51%	52%
		Both (lean resharer)	11%	12%	9%
		Both (lean person in photo)	11%	8%	8%
		Victim's fault alone	38%	30%	32%
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12-YEAR-OLDS	Resharer's fault alone	41%	51%	53%
		Both (lean resharer)	12%	11%	8%
		Both (lean person in photo)	9%	6%	10%
		Victim's fault alone	38%	31%	28%
	GIRLS	Resharer's fault alone	38%	51%	52%
		Both (lean resharer)	11%	16%	10%
		Both (lean person in photo)	13%	5%	9%
		Victim's fault alone	38%	29%	29%
	BOYS	Resharer's fault alone	42%	50%	54%
		Both (lean resharer)	13%	8%	8%
		Both (lean person in photo)	6%	8%	11%
		Victim's fault alone	39%	34%	28%
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17-YEAR-OLDS	Resharer's fault alone	39%	50%	51%
		Both (lean resharer)	11%	12%	9%
		Both (lean person in photo)	12%	8%	6%
		Victim's fault alone	38%	29%	35%
	GIRLS	Resharer's fault alone	38%	57%	48%
		Both (lean resharer)	13%	12%	8%
		Both (lean person in photo)	14%	7%	7%
		Victim's fault alone	35%	24%	36%
	BOYS	Resharer's fault alone	39%	42%	51%
		Both (lean resharer)	10%	12%	7%
		Both (lean person in photo)	9%	10%	5%
		Victim's fault alone	42%	35%	37%
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Resharer's fault alone	49%	56%	57%
		Both (lean resharer)	12%	13%	11%
		Both (lean person in photo)	10%	4%	4%
		Victim's fault alone	29%	28%	27%
	NON-LGBTQ+	Resharer's fault alone	37%	48%	50%
		Victim's fault alone	41%	31%	33%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Resharer's fault alone	41%	46%	51%
		Both (lean resharer)	9%	12%	8%
		Both (lean person in photo)	11%	5%	8%
		Victim's fault alone	40%	37%	33%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	Resharer's fault alone	41%	50%	54%
		Both (lean resharer)	13%	15%	8%
		Both (lean person in photo)	6%	7%	7%
		Victim's fault alone	40%	27%	31%
	OTHER POC	Resharer's fault alone	41%*	55%	52%
		Both (lean resharer)	14%*	6%	9%
		Both (lean person in photo)	14%*	3%	7%
		Victim's fault alone	31%*	35%	33%
WHITE	Resharer's fault alone	39%	49%	52%	
	Both (lean resharer)	11%	12%	8%	
	Both (lean person in photo)	12%	10%	8%	
	Victim's fault alone	38%	30%	32%	

[Q51] In your opinion, if a nude photo or video of someone gets out, who is to blame? [Q52] And if a nude photo or video of someone gets out, who is most to blame?

*Base size <100

Perceptions of COVID Impact

Survey responses were collected from October 25 to November 28, 2021, during which COVID-19 remained a global pandemic. In a continued attempt to understand the potential impact the pandemic has had on minors' experiences with SG-CSAM, a COVID-specific question was

included in the 2020 and 2021 surveys. That question asked minors whether or not they perceived their peers were having SG-CSAM-related experiences more or less since the onset of COVID.

Fig 26 | Perceptions of peer's SG-CSAM experiences since pandemic onset

			Sending or sharing photos or videos of themselves that are nude to others		Sending or sharing photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others		Receiving or getting sent photos or videos that are nude		Having nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without permission	
			2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
ALL MINORS		No change	53%	55%	55%	58%	52%	54%	56%	58%
		Happening more	24%	29%	20%	24%	26%	31%	19%	25%
		Happening less	22%	17%	25%	18%	22%	15%	24%	17%
AGES 9-12	GIRLS	No change	54%	67%	64%	68%	56%	66%	63%	69%
		Happening more	21%	20%	12%	15%	19%	24%	10%	17%
		Happening less	25%	14%	24%	17%	25%	10%	27%	15%
	BOYS	No change	49%	65%	47%	65%	47%	66%	52%	69%
		Happening more	18%	21%	20%	23%	23%	21%	20%	22%
		Happening less	33%	14%	33%	12%	30%	13%	28%	10%
AGES 13-17	GIRLS	No change	51%	45%	53%	54%	51%	44%	53%	50%
		Happening more	31%	35%	24%	26%	31%	36%	23%	28%
		Happening less	18%	20%	23%	20%	18%	20%	24%	21%
	BOYS	No change	59%	46%	58%	49%	54%	45%	58%	47%
		Happening more	24%	34%	21%	31%	26%	38%	22%	33%
		Happening less	17%	19%	21%	20%	20%	17%	20%	20%
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	No change	44%	45%	47%	53%	43%	44%	50%	49%
		Happening more	30%	34%	23%	23%	30%	38%	19%	28%
		Happening less	26%	20%	30%	24%	27%	18%	31%	23%
	NON-LGBTQ+	No change	55%	57%	58%	60%	54%	56%	58%	60%
		Happening more	23%	27%	19%	24%	25%	29%	19%	25%
		Happening less	22%	16%	23%	16%	21%	14%	23%	15%
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	No change	45%	51%	57%	55%	44%	51%	50%	53%
		Happening more	30%	28%	15%	25%	26%	31%	13%	24%
		Happening less	25%	21%	27%	21%	30%	19%	37%	23%
	HISPANIC/LATINO	No change	48%	45%	48%	49%	46%	45%	51%	47%
		Happening more	27%	35%	26%	31%	29%	40%	23%	29%
		Happening less	25%	20%	26%	20%	25%	15%	26%	24%
	OTHER POC	No change	62%	64%	61%	64%	62%	59%	65%	65%
		Happening more	19%	23%	16%	19%	23%	28%	12%	22%
		Happening less	19%	13%	23%	17%	15%	13%	22%	13%
	WHITE	No change	56%	59%	57%	63%	55%	58%	59%	62%
		Happening more	23%	26%	19%	21%	25%	27%	20%	24%
		Happening less	21%	15%	24%	16%	20%	15%	21%	14%

[Q37] If you had to say, are kids at your school doing the following more or less since the start of the coronavirus pandemic (March 2020)?

Question text in the 2020 survey did not include reference to "(March 2020)."



While more than a majority of minors continued to indicate they did not perceive a change in the frequency of SG-CSAM behaviors since the pandemic began, in 2021 more minors were likely to indicate they believed SG-CSAM-related behaviors were happening more frequently (Fig 26). There was also a notable increase in teen boys' (aged 13-17) perceptions of the behaviors happening more frequently. Perceptions that such behaviors were occurring less frequently declined across nearly all age, gender, sexuality, and ethnic demographics.

Final Thoughts

Young people continue to engage with SG-CSAM both through exploratory and higher-risk, coercive pathways. The findings from our 2021 survey indicate the persistence of perceived normalcy surrounding the behavior and of demographic differences in kids' attitudes and behaviors related to SG-CSAM. The continuation of data collection and analysis related to this topic remains a vital need to deliver successful interventions that safeguard, support, and empower young people as they navigate their digital experiences.

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