



Craig Jaffe Research 360° Leadership in Research & Analytics

Craig Jaffe, Founder & Consultant
New York, New York | Mobile: 917-587-3649
Email: CraigJaffe@optonline.net | Website: www.CraigJaffeResearch.com
Social Media: www.linkedin.com/in/CraigJaffeResearch | www.twitter.com/CraigJaffeR360

WHY MILLENNIALS SHOULD NOT BE CALLED GENERATION Y

When Millennials were first dubbed by some as "Generation Y," it was out of ignorance.

Demographers do not name generations based on an alphabetical list of letters. For example, the Baby Boom Generation that preceded Generation X was not also known as Generation W.

Regarding why the letter X was used to represent a generation, explanations vary: the X is a kind of sign that can signify a break in population growth from the preceding Baby Boom Generation; it can be emblematic of antiestablishment proclivities; and some have suggested that X is a reference to the Roman numeral identifying the tenth generation since the United States declared its independence. In many cases, the X is symbolic and is not meant to represent a letter of the alphabet. Therefore, there is no reasonable explanation for referring to Millennials as Generation Y.

Since birth is a foremost attribute used to define cohorts in the social sciences, it is no wonder that generational terms often make reference to it. The Baby Boom Generation is named for the spike in birth rates. Generation X is sometimes referred to as "Baby Busters" given the decline in birth rates after the Baby Boom Generation. Millennials are sometimes referred to as "Echo Boomers" given they are often identified as offspring of the Baby Boom Generation.

REGARDLESS OF WHICH GENERATION IS BEING EVALUATED FOR MARKETING PURPOSES HOWEVER, THESE TERMS ARE OFTEN INEFFECTIVE AT PROPERLY DEFINING DEMOGRAPHIC OR BEHAVIORAL TARGETS. IF YOU ARE AN ADVERTISER, PLEASE TAKE NOTE.

Currently in 2015, the youngest Millennial is 11 years old and the oldest Millennial is 33 years old. One would be hard pressed to point to similarities between these two age groups.

In fact, those categorized as Millennials can be vastly different from each other in terms of media usage and purchase behavior.

Among the differences, advertisers may want to consider the varying degree of connection with digital media. The younger segment contains the truer digital natives who have a greater propensity to spend time on digital (i.e. apps, etc). The older segment has a greater propensity to make purchases using digital.

A chief problem many TV networks, web publishers, data companies, and marketers make is they continue to combine these two disparate segments and think of them as one group. Doing so ultimately waters down additional insights that can be otherwise gleaned and sold against this valuable target market.

For example, since the younger segment has less disposable income, combining this group with the older segment will yield a diluted perspective of purchase power.

Furthermore, since the younger segment typically spends a greater percentage of its media time using digital, combining this group with the older segment will yield a diluted perspective of time spent.

Going forward, it is recommended that advertisers take a markedly different approach and consider thinking of Millennials as something other than just one distinct group. If we segment Millennials into its respective parts, we can have the best of both worlds. Findings will emphasize all of the realized strengths of the target.

Don't get me started on Generation Z.

[For more information, please click here.](#)

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About Craig Jaffe Research 360°:

Craig Jaffe Research 360° is a research and analytics consultancy that advises how consumer trends, behavioral shifts and attitudinal dynamics can be leveraged and monetized. The consultancy is hired to perform Analytics, Ad Sales Research, Program Research, and Consumer Insights. It utilizes a variety of resources -- such as Nielsen, Google, MRI, comScore, Rentrak, and others -- and employs data science, research, and analytic techniques while working with media and marketing companies operating in the television, digital, and mobile marketplaces. Craig Jaffe Research 360° helps television networks and websites increase ad sales and audiences, and helps advertising and media agencies activate consumer purchase behavior.