

Where are my millennials at?

By [Livia Brown](#), issued by [Dentsu](#)

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*An in-depth look at millennials in Johannesburg. An analysis of their social media behaviour to understand what they are talking about and more importantly **where** these conversations are taking place.*

The media landscape is ever-changing and now more so than ever we are having to stretch out-of-home (OOH) campaign budgets further and ensure that we are getting the best use from the spend. This means we need to be smarter about how we plan OOH and make use of data to inform our strategies and ensure a deeper level of relevance with consumers. It's vital that we ensure we are communicating to the right audiences and in the right places. This means that the "Where" of consumers is becoming more and more important.



Posterscope South Africa has access to various location data tools, one of which is our social listening tool. Through this tool we can track conversations with specific hashtags or a category of hashtags from public accounts that are geo-tagged, on both Instagram and Twitter social platforms. The data from public, geo-tagged accounts represents about 5% of the total audience on Instagram and Twitter for our market.

Using our social listening tool to get a better understanding of millennial consumer behaviour in specific relation to their behaviour on Instagram, I wanted to get an understanding of what they are talking about and **where** these conversations are happening.

Urban Dictionary, which is often used to understand the millennial segment, defines a millennial as someone born between 1981–2001. Being a millennial myself, I must say that I feel like I am a part of a unique group, with our own language, patterns of behaviours and more importantly it seems that everyone is intrigued by us.

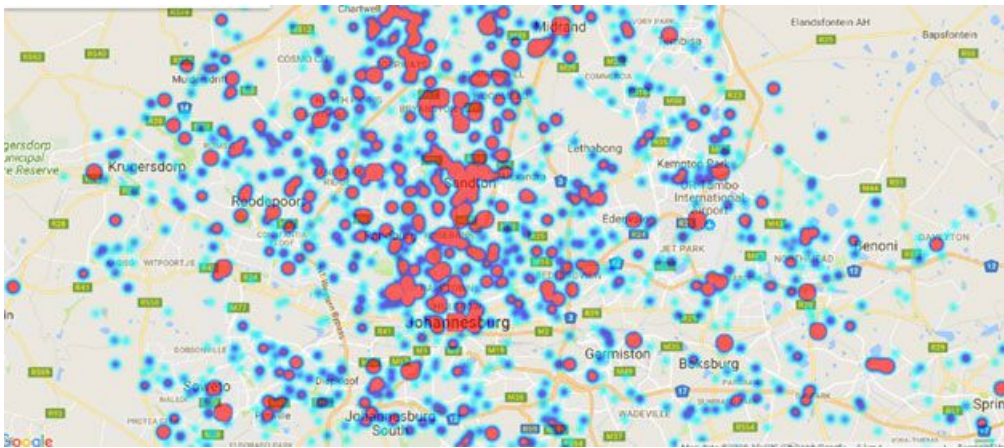
Urban Dictionary calls out the difference between Gen Y (people born between 1981-1991) and Gen Z (born between 1991-2001) quite clearly: "Both Generation Y and Generation Z can be called 'Millennials', with the primary difference between the two being technology. Generation Y grew up on personal computers, cell phones, and video game systems, while Generation Z has grown up on tablets, smartphones, and apps."

"Nearly four in 10 millennials (39%) say they interact more with their smartphones than they do with their significant others, parents, friends, children or co-workers," according to a survey done by Bank of America in 2016, article by Catey Hill, Market Watch.

Results from a study in May 2017 showed that 66% of the users on Instagram in South Africa are between the ages of 18–34 years old, according to an article on NapoleonCat.com.

Using Posterscope's social listening data tools, I was able to identify key hotspot areas for millennials, based on specific keywords. Some of the keywords included in this search were: On Fleek, Lit, Turn Up, Sorry Not Sorry, Said No One Ever, Netflix and Chill and Bae to name a few. There were over 41,000 posts during a six-month period that contained these keywords.

The below map shows where these conversations were taking place.



When the location of the posts was investigated it was interesting to see the following “millennial hotspot area” immerge; herewith a list of the top 15 locations within Gauteng:

Top 15 "Millennial Hotspot" Locations	
Location Name	Number of Posts at this Location
Johannesburg, South Africa	5447
Pretoria, South Africa	4003
Centurion, Gauteng	912
Midrand, Gauteng	811
O.R. Tambo International Airport	735
Bryanston, Gauteng	621
Soweto, Gauteng	571
Randburg, Gauteng, South Africa	554
The Maboneng Precinct	396
Roodepoort, Gauteng	326
Mall of Africa	296
Morningside, Gauteng, South Africa	282
Benoni, Gauteng, South Africa	269
Melrose Arch	258
Sandton City Shopping Centre	249

Other locations that were noteworthy were: Zoo Lake, Monte Casino, Sun City, Hartbeespoort, Eastgate Mall, University of Johannesburg, Menlyn Park Shopping Centre, WITS University, The Johannesburg Zoo, Gold Reef City, Walter Sisulu National Botanical Gardens and Pretoria National Botanical Gardens.

Here is a list of the keywords that were included in the data for the heatmap above:

Keyword	Number of Times Keywords were Posted
bae	3718
lit	1950
slay	1137
onfleek	1037
turnup	263
adulthood	228
sorrynotsorry	204
ratchet	85
thestruggleisreal	59
salty	50
byefelicia	41
netflixandchill	20
swerve	20
goalsAF	8
breaktheinternet	4
humblebrag	4
icanteven	4
clapback	3
saidnooneever	2
picsoritdidnthappen	1

From the conversations on Instagram there are a few clear trends that emerged for millennials.

They are a fun-loving group who don't take themselves too seriously and are full of banter. The use of references like #thestruggleisreal, #ratchet, #byefelicia and #adulthood shows their playfulness at how they approach daily challenges in a fun, light-hearted way.

Almost all conversations were around friends and socialising, even #Netflixandchill has more reference to doing this with friends than doing this alone. Using #sorrynotsorry seems to allow a fair amount of honesty and openness to express themselves freely without judgement, but to still call out bad behaviour of others. #onfleek is used predominantly by women and is used frequently in reference to women empowerment and self-love, I was also surprised to find that the majority of the posts with #onfleek, were in reference to eyebrows! And lastly, they are a lovable bunch, the most popular hashtag was #bae and in almost all of these posts #love is referenced alongside #bae. Millennials are connected and reactive to their surroundings and are authentic about who they are and how they express themselves.

With a better understanding of how millennials behave on Instagram we can use this data and insights to better inform our OOH strategies in a meaningful way. Focus areas and hotspots become clearer through understanding behavioural patterns and asking ourselves "Where" can we target this segment most effectively. Location data, through social listening, helps to create a roadmap for relevant and efficient OOH targeting and this is not the future of OOH, but is happening #now and the question is, are brands geared up to keep up with these changes? We certainly are.

References:

1. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/millennials-engage-with-their-smartphones-more-than-they-do-actual-humans-2016-06-21>
2. <https://napoleoncat.com/blog/en/instagram-users-in-south-africa/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Livia Brown is the Cape Town office manager for Posterscope South Africa and has been with the company since 2013. She manages the Cape Town office from an operations, team and client perspective, with a strong focus on driving the location data agenda across the business and solidifying their position as location experts.

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