Building a Better Social Media Future: The GenZ Co-Design Initiative

A Project of the Sustainable Media Center
251 Park Avenue South, NY, NY, 10010
Phone: (917) 924-2744
Info@sustainablemedia.center
www.sustainablemedia.center

Executive Summary

Vision

We envision a new, sustainable social media landscape that fundamentally shifts power to young people over the content they create, consume, and share. Our mission is to achieve this through three key innovations:

1. Intergenerational Co-Design: By bringing together GenZ innovators with experienced technology leaders, we will create solutions that combine youth insights with proven development expertise.
2. Alternative Business Models: Moving beyond the attention-based advertising model that prioritizes engagement over wellbeing, we will develop and test new revenue approaches that align platform success with user wellbeing.
3. Youth Agency: Rather than treating young users as products to be monetized, we will build platforms where they are true stakeholders - empowered to shape their digital environment and control their data.

Funding Plan

- Phase 1 (Year 1): $5,000,000 - Research and Team Building
- Phase 2 (Year 2): $15,000,000 - Developer Outreach and Proposal Review
- Phase 3 (Year 3): $15,000,000 - MVP Funding and Co-Design Development

Problem Statement

In the USA alone, roughly 90% of teens (13-17) and young adults (18-27)—62 million people—use social media. They spend an extensive amount of time on platforms that are ultimately doing them harm. 41% of teens with the highest social media use rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor.

Society has been waiting for leading tech companies to take action. But consistently they show us they value profit over protection.

Youth demand change, but they are often met with indifference and inaction. They are excluded from problem solving and talked at by existing solutions resulting in a lack of agency to create a new future. The adults in the room are yet to take bold swings to bring promises of allyship and collective effort to life.

Social media platforms have become vectors for various forms of harm affecting young users, including but not limited to: body image issues, loneliness, FOMO (fear of missing out), addictive behaviors, cyberbullying, and exposure to hate speech including antisemitism, racism, and other forms of bigotry. Recent data shows that 41% of teens report negative impacts on their self-image, 38% feel overwhelmed by social pressures, and over 30% report exposure to various forms of hate speech and discriminatory content.

The Context

Social media as we know it is not going away. Nor should it. It is as much a formative tool for good as it is for bad in the global society. Youth report that it

can be a positive experience, and they value the community and creativity social media can foster. But, they are also up against forces that, at best, are not designed with them in mind and, more often than not, are toxic—purpose-built to stoke anxiety and amplify offense. There should be better options that bolster their resilience and help them thrive.

It is a multifaceted challenge that requires a multifaceted solution. The 2023 Surgeon General Warning, digital literacy, youth mental health initiatives, and federal legislation are all making strides forward to create a better future. We see an opportunity to add another facet to the effort—the guidance and collaboration of GenZ.

Evidence

Since 2010, there has been a progressive decline in youth mental health, coinciding with the widespread availability of 24/7 internet and social media access via smartphones. Extensive research has documented these impacts:

- Among teens with high use of social media, 41% rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor, 10% expressed suicidal intent or self-harm in the past 12 months, and 17% expressed poor body image.
- 2022 Pew Research findings found that 38% of teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel overwhelmed.
- Six-in-ten teens say they think they have little (40%) or no control (20%) over the personal information that social media companies collect about them.
- A 2021 Wall Street Journal investigation created dozens of accounts registered as 13 year olds on TikTok. Algorithms funneled tens of thousands of weight loss videos to these accounts within weeks of joining the platform.

- Across the six major social media platforms, annual advertising revenue from children in the U.S. ages 0–12 years is over $2 billion USD and from all youth ages 0–17 years is nearly $11 billion.
- 2021 Common Sense Media survey (surveyed 1,306 people ages 8 to 18) found that 38% of tweens (8-12) were using social media.

Current Gaps

Currently, youth co-design efforts are fledgling and intergenerational co-design is even more rare. Though GenZ were some of the initial influencers of Snapchat's disappearing messages and TikTok's interactive platform, few social media platforms are purpose-built for youth, by youth.

Target Population

The initiative will initially focus on GenZ (12-27) in the USA. As of 2023, there were 69.31 million GenZ in the USA—20.69% of the population. Roughly 90% use social media—62.37 million people in the USA alone.

Over time, as we build experience with positive outcomes, we envision expanding our work to Gen Alpha (0-12) and sharing data and learnings with a broader, global audience to be used, customized, and modeled in various regions.

The reality of this work is there will be a ripple effect. Parents, mentors, teachers, communities—any entity that interfaces with youth stands to benefit from the process and solutions.

Goals and Objectives

Main Goals

Through co-design, we aim to identify alternative business models and numerous potential apps, platforms, models, protocols, and tools. Then we will develop, test, and scale potential solutions with guidance from GenZ throughout the process.

Primary Objectives

- Source 150 high-potential proposals for new social media apps, frameworks, business models, and protocols by January 1st, 2026
- Facilitate a thorough vetting process in which our GenZ advisors review, provide feedback, and potentially leverage limited user testing to identify interactive improvements.
- Fund up to 25 MVPs, working with GenZ to innovate, test, and iterate new ideas in a co-design framework
- .Frame public benefit corporation rules of incorporation that all funded projects must adhere to. Include equity participation for early-stage partners and mentors.
- Before formal user testing, establish a baseline for user mental health, well-being, and social media habits, followed by AI-driven chatbot check-ins to track and improve safety and wellness.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Stronger collective knowledge and understanding as updates and project results are shared with stakeholders (funders, parents, thought leaders, youth, etc.)
- New definitions of community, including trusted (known) members, unknown but purpose-based, community with collective behavioral norms, age-based communities with age verification, etc.

- An honest understanding of what GenZ gains, likes, enjoys, and needs from social media today
- A first-person explanation of what they find unpleasant, uncomfortable, dangerous, and hurtful to them and their friends within the current and emerging social media platforms and frameworks and the impact this has on their mental health
- Clarity around how they define privacy and how it fits into their life; how they prefer to control their data; and the dividing line between being the customer and the product of the platforms they use
- Insight into how their identity (or identities) change depending on if they're on public or private platforms and their perceptions of truth and trust
- Insight into what they would build/create for themselves and their friends if they could
- A deep understanding of their feelings about AI, how interacting with non-human actors feels to them, and what rules they would like to see around AI and disclosure

Project Description

Project Activities

1. Co-Design: GenZ provides initial guidance through co-design research
2. Innovation Call: An invitation to submit solution ideas via an online portal, emphasizing new forms of engagement, business models, and solutions that embrace free speech and provide safe environments. We anticipate interest from developers, university teams, high school collectives, etc.
3. GenZ Feedback: A large group of GenZ members will participate in the product innovation and feedback loop. They will review and rank proposals. They will be compensated weekly.
4. Intergenerational Partnerships: Projects chosen by co-creation team members will have access to community members, mentors, and SMC advisors to advance, explore, test, and build in a series of fast-moving development sprints.
5. Development & MVP: Teams will receive resources and funding to develop their MVP, incorporating continuous GenZ feedback and co-design principles.
6. Hybrid Program Format: The Lab will be virtual, with a limited number of in-person gatherings to facilitate design thinking collaboration, relationship building, and nuanced human feedback.

Methodology

Co-design, or co-creation, is a creative collaboration between designers, users, and stakeholders to develop solutions that truly meet the users' needs. Originating from participatory design practices in Scandinavia during the 1970s, co-design is a design practice in which community members are treated as equal collaborators in the design process.

What sets co-design apart? It's the practice of engaging those who will be affected by a solution as equal partners in the creation process. This approach ensures that the outcomes are not only innovative but also practical and responsive to real-world needs.

Key Elements of Co-design:
User Involvement: Directly involves those who will use the solution, leveraging their insights as the foundation of the design process

Feedback Integration: Design decisions are postponed until user feedback has been collected and analyzed, ensuring the solution is developed with user needs in mind

Iterative Process: Co-design is cyclical, allowing for continuous refinement even after a solution is launched, based on ongoing user feedback

Implementing Co-design:
Defining Objectives and Stakeholders: We begin by clarifying what we aim to achieve and who should be involved. Identifying the right mix of participants is key

Choose the Right Platform: An online collaboration platform can facilitate the sharing of ideas and feedback. Such platforms, like Agorize, support idea submission, discussion, and refinement

Foster Participation: Creating a welcoming environment where contributions are valued is crucial. Inform participants about the goals and encourage active involvement

Analyze and Act on Feedback: Finally, we explore the feedback to identify actionable insights and share them with MVP developers. All stakeholders are

updated on how their input is making a difference—an essential component of engagement and continued participation.

Innovation and Uniqueness

Our work is based on five foundational principles:

- Youth Empowerment: Projects must empower young people to control the media they consume, create, and share.

- Data Ownership & Control: Solutions must ensure young people have ownership and control over their data and online presence.

- Diversity & Inclusion: As part of our PSP's, platforms will promote ethical media practices, including the emergence of AI that can reduce the amplification of hate speech, purposeful misinformation, and conflict.

- Ethical Media Practices: Our platforms must prioritize diverse voices and perspectives in media content to combat harmful content while promoting positive user wellbeing and fostering meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.

- Impact Measurement: To ensure PSP compliance, platforms will continuously assess the impact of projects on the GenZ community and adjust based on feedback.

Implementation Plan

Project Phases, Timeline, and Milestones

2024: Planning and funding

The planning phase will focus on building a strong foundation for the initiative. A multidisciplinary core team, including project managers, research specialists, and engagement coordinators, will be hired to lead efforts and ensure seamless execution. Partnerships will be established with universities, research institutions, and youth-focused organizations to leverage expertise and expand outreach. Collaborative needs research will be conducted with these partners to identify specific challenges and opportunities related to GenZ's media interactions, ensuring the initiative aligns with participant and stakeholder priorities. This research will inform the scope of qualitative and quantitative studies, which will focus on understanding GenZ media usage, concerns, and aspirations. Clear objectives, timelines, and processes will be finalized for the 2025 co-design labs, along with criteria for MVP pitch evaluations and mechanisms to support funded projects.

2025: Co-Design Process for Sustainable Media Initiative

The foundation of our co-design efforts is built around 300+ GenZ research focus group pods, which will play a pivotal role in reviewing all 150 pitches for Minimum Viable Product (MVP) funding. Working alongside our mentor community, these pods will ensure that ideas are evaluated through a collaborative, intergenerational lens, combining the innovation of GenZ participants with the experience and guidance of seasoned mentors.

Q1 2025: Establish Research Protocols and Recruitment

Define research protocols ensuring inclusivity, rigor, and ethical standards. Recruitment will target a representative sample of GenZ participants, focusing on diversity in geography, demographics, and experiences. Outreach efforts will extend to universities, high school technology programs, school tech and media educators, university innovation programs, and prominent national youth tech organizations. These include programs like FIRST (robotics and STEM competitions for K-12), CyberPatriot (cybersecurity education and competitions), the National Youth Science Camp (NYSCamp) (a residential STEAM program), and the National Youth Leadership Forum - Explore STEM (immersive STEM experiences). Additional outreach will engage organizations such as NPower (free IT training), Globaloria (game design and coding), The Tech Challenge (a design competition), Girls Who Code (addressing the gender gap in tech), Code.org (free coding resources), and Youth Tech Inc. (tech camps focused on animation, robotics, and game design).

Q2-Q3 2025: Preliminary Virtual Co-Design Labs and First-Round Reviews

Conduct a series of preliminary virtual co-design labs, where participants will provide light feedback on early ideas and pitches. These sessions will serve as a quick review of the first-round pitches, enabling rapid iteration and refinement before formal evaluations. The deeper co-design process will follow after selecting funded projects, ensuring that the most promising ideas receive dedicated attention and robust development support. This phased approach allows for efficient initial feedback while reserving intensive co-creation for selected initiatives.

Q4 2025: Synthesis of Findings and Deeper Co-Design Planning

Analyze and compile insights from the preliminary co-design labs and pitch reviews into actionable recommendations for selected projects. Begin planning

deeper co-design engagements with funded projects to ensure their success. Findings from the preliminary phase will also be shared through a comprehensive report, public webinars, and targeted presentations to key stakeholders, ensuring transparency and broad dissemination.

2026: Public Solicitation & Review / Funding

MVP development, including public presentations of work (tentatively: May 15, June 15, July 15, September 15, October 15; 3-5 MVPs available for public input and interaction)

MVP investment

Iterate and de-risk Venture Investments in new platforms and business models with the aim of funding 5 startups within PBC Impact Structure.

2027: Monitoring and Evaluation

Regularly monitor teams, models, and results, including daily active users, organic growth, partnership advancement, and successes in creating sustainable social media solutions.

Personnel and Roles

Partnerships and Collaboration

JUV Consulting

Founded in 2016 by GenZ entrepreneurs Ziad Ahmed and Shaina Zafar, JUV Consulting is a purpose-driven agency focused on amplifying the voices of Generation Z through research, strategy, and creative initiatives. JUV specializes in conducting in-depth research to uncover the unique priorities, behaviors, and values of GenZ, enabling organizations to better understand and engage with this generation. In early 2024, United Talent Agency (UTA) acquired JUV Consulting and integrated it into their Next Gen practice, expanding its focus on youth-driven research, insights, and innovation. The Next Gen initiative supports programs like ZCON, a collaborative platform highlighting GenZ perspectives and fostering solutions for generational challenges.

YPulse

Established in 2004, YPulse is a New York City-based market research firm specializing in insights on Millennials and Generation Z. The company offers syndicated research products through premium subscription plans, providing clients with content, statistics, and marketing research to engage young consumers effectively. YPulse employs a range of research methodologies, including quantitative, qualitative, and ethnographic techniques, enabling clients to accurately identify target markets and develop strategies for brand growth and promotion.

Discuss.io

Discuss.io is a leading market research platform that specializes in qualitative research solutions, enabling brands and agencies to gain in-depth consumer

insights through live video conversations. The platform offers a suite of tools designed to streamline the research process, including features for preparing, conducting, and analyzing qualitative studies. With capabilities such as live research sessions, auto-moderated research, and previously recorded research analysis, Discuss.io facilitates global consumer engagement and supports agile product development. Additionally, the platform incorporates generative AI to enhance the analysis of qualitative data, providing users with actionable insights to inform strategic business decisions.

Potential Co-design Platforms

Designpickle, Bubble.io, others, or custom-developed co-design protocol and platform.

Impact and Outcomes

Expected Impact

Short-term gains: scale market-ready solutions purpose-built by GenZ for GenZ
Long-term gains: an alternative experience for the leaders of tomorrow that generates greater empathy and tenacity in them, paving the way for a future where hate for profit, misinformation, and other drivers of the current digital realm are reduced or eliminated

Quantitative and Qualitative Outcomes

- Improved agency in youth participants (pre/post-test)
- Tangible learnings in intergenerational participants (pre/post test)
- 3-5 solutions scaled to market by 2027
- Potential adoption of positive feature sets by mass social media platforms
- Include decentralized protocols in some or all of going-forward tests

Specific Platform Health Outcomes:

- Reduced exposure to harmful content across all categories including hate, anti-semitism, misinformation, body dysmorphia, eating disorders.
- Improved user mental health and wellbeing metrics
- More effective systems for fostering positive engagement
- Stronger community-building features
- Enhanced tools for promoting healthy online behaviors
- Better support systems for users experiencing various challenges

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Methods

Continued youth feedback will provide qualitative evaluation throughout the project. Quantitative data will be collected through various metrics.

New Experiences Growth / Reach Metrics

Once launched, we will measure against Impact and Market metrics.

- Market Metrics: Time on Site/App (TOS), Monthly Active Users (MAU), Session Length, Social sharing
- Impact Metrics (Benchmarks and Improvements): Mental health issues, Cyberbullying, Sleep disruption, Body image issues, FOMO (fear of missing out), Addiction, Attention span reduction, Privacy concerns, Exposure to inappropriate content, Pressure to conform

Alternative Revenue Growth

We'll explore and test new models that are alternatives to advertising sales, assessing against smaller audiences, focused expectations, and GenZ health and wellness outcomes.

Examples: digital goods sales, brand influencer partnerships, user-content creation, subscription, discounts for active content participants and engaged users.

Exact performance metrics and data analysis protocols are in development with our research partners, including process considerations that support continuous improvement.

Platform Health Metrics:

- Reduction in reported instances of harmful content (including hate speech, antisemitism, and discriminatory content)
- User wellbeing indicators (body image, anxiety levels, feelings of connection)
- Effectiveness of positive engagement features
- Impact of mental health support tools
- Quality of social connections formed
- Success of addiction prevention measures

Organizational Capacity

Mission and History

The Sustainable Media Center exists to act as a catalyst to facilitate change to build a sustainable social media future.

The Sustainable Media Center was created in 2022 to transform how social media platforms impact young users' mental health and wellbeing. The organization uniquely bridges the gap between youth and industry by uniting tech investors, media executives, and GenZ activists in a 180+ member board structure. Operating as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Center implements a three-pronged strategy: mobilizing youth innovators alongside industry veterans, testing new platform structures that prioritize wellbeing, and scaling successful innovations to reshape industry standards. Their mission emerged from growing concerns about social media's negative effects, with data showing 76% of teens use social media daily despite its links to anxiety, depression, and addiction. Through partnerships with youth-led advocacy groups and platform decision-makers, the Center aims to revolutionize how social media companies engage with young

users, transforming these platforms from sources of harm into forces for connection and creativity.

Accomplishments

Since its creation in 2022, the Sustainable Media Center has organized a diverse program of events bringing together industry leaders, academics, and youth activists to address social media's impact on young people. The organization launched with expert discussions on social media addiction with Princeton neuroscientist Uri Hasson and hosted strategic conversations about media transformation throughout late 2022. In 2023, SMC expanded its reach with major events at SXSW in Austin, featuring discussions on hate amplification and the future of media. They facilitated important dialogues with key figures, including Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen, investor Roger McNamee, and teen activists. Notable events addressed artificial intelligence's impact on truth, platform incentives with Esther Dyson, and GenZ perspectives on media. By October 2023, SMC was leading discussions on strategic change in social media's relationship with teens, demonstrating their evolution from a conversation starter to an action-oriented organization.

Team

The Actv8.Media team will be made up of existing subject matter experts and soon-to-be-hired core staff.

Subject Matter Experts

Emma Lembke

- Digital rights advocate from Birmingham, Alabama
- Co-founder of Design It For Us
- Led successful campaign for California Age Appropriate Design Code
- First youth testifier before Congress on technology regulation
- Featured in The New York Times, 60 Minutes, and NPR

- Studies political science at Washington University in St. Louis
- Focus on protecting future generations' digital wellbeing

Zamaan Qureshi

- Co-Chair of Design It For Us
- Leading youth voice in social media reform
- Federal and state policy influence
- First young person to successfully FOIA and sue SEC
- Extensive media coverage in Washington Post and TIME

Rochelle Grayson

- 30 years experience in digital strategy
- Founder of Mosaic and co-founder of ArtSites
- Named among Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women
- Focus on empowering underrepresented entrepreneurs
- Trilingual Afro-Latin leader

Jaclyn Corin

- Co-founded March For Our Lives
- Rhodes Scholar at Oxford
- Extensive experience in youth movement building
- Named to TIME's 100 Most Influential People
- Deep understanding of youth trauma and digital advocacy

Yair Landau

- Founder of Mass Animation, pioneering user-driven co-design studio
- Key architect at Sony Pictures Entertainment
- Led Academy Award wins for "The Chubb Chubbs!" and "Spider-Man 2"
- Built Sony Pictures Animation
- Expanded Imageworks globally
- Created first crowdsourced animated film on Facebook engaging 50,000+ creators
- Current focus on digital storytelling through venture investments

Vaishnavi V

- Head of Vyanams Strategies (VYS)
- Former Head of Youth Policy at Meta
- Led Twitter's APAC safety initiatives
- Shaped Google's child safety policies
- Berkeley graduate and former Disney Imagineer
- Active contributor to Integrity Institute and Institute for Security & Technology
- Global leader in youth online safety

Steven Rosenbaum

- Pioneering media entrepreneur
- Emmy Award-winning producer
- Created MTV Unfiltered's youth-driven storytelling
- Developed Magnify.net's innovative video platform
- Founder of the Sustainable Media Center
- Leads intergenerational alliance of 180+ leaders
- Champion of authentic content creation

Kanika Mehra

- NextGen Advisor at the Sustainable Media Center
- Segment researcher for The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- Extensive experience across NBC flagship programs
- Background in fact-checking and research
- Managed social content reaching 70 million users
- Expertise in political discourse and generational perspectives
- Strong focus on media transformation

David Simas

- Managing Director at Emerson Collective
- Former CEO and President of Obama Foundation
- Served as Assistant to the President
- Director of Political Strategy and Outreach in Obama Administration
- Led research for 2012 presidential reelection campaign
- Boston College Law graduate
- Expert in strategic research and public sentiment

Detailed Budget

Category	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total ($)	
Core Team	**$1,530,000**	**$3,362,000**	**$4,355,000**	**$9,247,000**	
- Executive Director	$250,000	$300,000	$325,000	$875,000	
- Program Director	$190,000	$182,000	$200,000	$572,000	
- Operations Manager	$150,000	$150,000	$150,000	$450,000	
- Product Manager	$160,000	$160,000	$160,000	$480,000	
- Software Engineers 2, 5, 8	$400,000	$1,000,000	$1,600,000	$3,000,000	
- Designers	$50,000	$380,000	$500,000	$930,000	
- Community Managers 2, 5, 8)	$150,000	$375,000	$600,000	$1,125,000	
- Data Scientists	$0	$260,000	$390,000	$650,000	
- CMO	$180,000	$180,000	$180,000	$540,000	
MVP's	$0	$375,000	$250,000	$625,000	
Overhead	**$3,560,000**	**$1,795,000**	**$560,000**	**$5,915,000**	
- Rent/Facilities	$75,000	$150,000	$200,000	$425,000	
- IT/Equipment	$75,000	$100,000	$100,000	$275,000	
- HR/Finance	$100,000	$1,500,000	$200,000	$1,800,000	
- Insurance	$35,000	$45,000	$60,000	$140,000	
GenZ Advisor Network	$500,000	$1,500,000	$1,875,000	$3,875,000	
GenZ Co-Design Coaches	$350,000	$400,000	$407,500	$1,157,500	
Platform Development	$500,000	$250,000	$250,000	$1,000,000	
Technical Development	$50,000	$150,000	$200,000	$400,000	
Marketing & Branding	$600,000	$1,150,000	$1,650,000	$3,400,000	
Evaluation & Research	$150,000	$300,000	$350,000	$800,000	
Travel	$200,000	$490,000	$630,000	$1,320,000	
Facilities & Space	$75,000	$150,000	$200,000	$425,000	
Legal & Compliance	$200,000	$300,000	$400,000	$900,000	
Program Operations	$150,000	$400,000	$550,000	$1,100,000	
Contingency	$500,000	$900,000	$1,200,000	$2,600,000	
Vendors:	**$240,000**	**$350,000**	**$415,000**	**$1,005,000**	
- PR Team	$50,000	$100,000	$150,000	$300,000	
- Recruiting	$40,000	$40,000	$40,000	$120,000	
- QA	$0	$50,000	$60,000	$110,000	

- Fundraising	$125,000	$125,000	$125,000	$375,000	
- Social Media Partner	$25,000	$35,000	$40,000	$100,000	
Phase Totals	**$5,330,000**	**$11,497,000**	**$13,042,500**	**$28,324,000**	

Core Staff Target Roles

Executive Director

- Champions the strategic vision while fostering key partnerships across industry and community stakeholders
- Directs high-level platform development decisions and ensures resources align with organizational goals
- Qualifications: 10+ years of leadership experience in tech or digital platforms, proven track record of scaling organizations, advanced degree in Business, Technology, or related field

Managing Director

- Orchestrates daily operations and team dynamics to maintain smooth workflow between departments
- Acts as the central coordinator for resource management and project execution timelines
- Qualifications: 7+ years project management experience, PMP certification preferred, demonstrated success in agile environments, strong financial acumen

Industry / Mentor Director

- Cultivates and maintains relationships with industry partners while coordinating mentor engagement across development projects.

- Creates structured mentorship programs and ensures valuable knowledge transfer
- Qualifications: 8+ years of industry experience, established network of tech professionals, experience in educational program development, strong background in professional development

GenZ Community Council Leader

- Serves as the bridge between young developers and platform direction, ensuring relevant engagement and innovation.
- Drives youth-centered initiatives and maintains strong community connections.
- Qualifications: 3-5 years community management experience, under 30 years old, proven track record in youth engagement/social media, background in digital marketing or community building.

Co-Design Platform Leader

- Guides the technical evolution of the collaborative development environment while maintaining system integrity.
- Enables seamless integration of new features and tools across the platform
- Qualifications: 5+ years of technical product management, strong coding background, experience with collaborative development tools, degree in Computer Science or related field.

MVP Submission and Teams Manager

- Oversees the evaluation process for new products while coordinating team dynamics and project progress.
- Ensures quality control and provides strategic guidance for development teams.

- Qualifications: 5+ years product development experience, strong technical background, experience with agile methodologies, proven track record in team leadership.

Sustainability Plan

Funding Strategy

Phase Two funding will commence once Phase One is well under way and we can make a targeted ask to Venture Capital funders. We have had initial discussions with key venture capital partners to gauge interest and identify key assessment requirements. Venture capital funding needs will be assessed as MVPs go to market and new learnings emerge. We anticipate success will generate increased interest from new parties, opening novel funding streams.

Partnerships and Community Involvement

Our core partnerships with JUV and other research collaborators are well established and will be deepened through this work. We anticipate ongoing support from these partners. We also plan to leverage key relationships to generate increased engagement over time with influencers, celebrities, and subject matter experts.

Long-term Plan

Success looks like an impact that extends far beyond the next few years. In addition to market-ready MVPs that re-invent social media for young people, we anticipate the MVPs will generate new ideas that continue to build a new future. In addition, we anticipate this novel co-design approach will yield insights about the methodology that clarify its relevance to other areas.

Appendices

Subject Matter Expert Full Bios

Subject Matter Expert Bios

Jaclyn Corin is a graduate of both Harvard and Oxford where she studied as a Rhodes Scholar, co-founded March For Our Lives following the 2018 Parkland shooting, helping build one of the largest youth-led movements in recent history. Named to TIME's 100 Most Influential People, she now serves on the Sustainable Media Center's executive board, bringing her deep understanding of youth trauma and digital advocacy to transform social media. Her research on social movements and digital media, combined with her experience advising major tech platforms on youth safety, drives her mission to create genuinely safe and constructive online spaces for young people. She is dedicated to transforming social media into a genuinely safe and constructive space for youth engagement and connection.

Zamaan Qureshi has established himself as a leading youth voice in social media reform through his multifaceted advocacy work. A recent American University graduate in international studies and political science, he has influenced policy at both federal and state levels, testifying in Vermont and Illinois legislatures and participating in White House events on mental health access and AI policy. His impact extends to major media platforms, with profiles in the Washington Post and contributions to TIME Magazine advocating for Congressional reforms. Notably, Qureshi made history as the first young person to successfully FOIA and sue the SEC, demonstrating his commitment to holding social media platforms accountable through legal channels.

A co-design expert and digital strategist, **Rochelle Grayson** brings 30 years of experience to empowering underrepresented entrepreneurs. As founder of Mosaic and co-founder of ArtSites, this trilingual Afro-Latin leader focuses on providing marginalized and BIPOC women with tech-enabled business resources. Named among Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women and Vancouver's Top 10 Women in Technology, Grayson combines her roles at UBC and Langara with her entrepreneurial background to bridge digital innovation and social impact.

As both a large media leader and startup media founder, **Yair Landau** created Mass Animation as a user-driven co-design studio revolutionizing collaborative film production. His creative leadership as a key architect at Sony Pictures Entertainment led to Academy Award wins for "The Chubb Chubbs!" and "Spider-Man 2," while building Sony Pictures Animation and expanding Imageworks' global reach. Through

Mass Animation, he produced "Live Music," the first crowdsourced animated film made on Facebook engaging 50,000+ creators across 17 countries. Today, he focuses on evolving digital storytelling through venture investments in companies like AwesomenessTV and mentoring the next generation of creators.

A global leader in youth online safety, **Vaishnavi V** heads Vyanams Strategies (VYS), partnering with organizations to design child-protective digital products. As Meta's Head of Youth Policy, she oversaw age-appropriate experiences across platforms including Instagram and WhatsApp. Previously, she led Twitter's APAC safety initiatives and shaped Google's child safety policies. The Berkeley graduate and former Disney Imagineer now contributes to the Integrity Institute and Institute for Security & Technology, leveraging her expertise in digital safety and youth wellbeing.

Steven Rosenbaum, a pioneering media entrepreneur and Emmy Award-winning producer, has dedicated his career to amplifying youth voices and building ethical digital communities. From creating MTV Unfiltered's youth-driven storytelling to developing Magnify.net's innovative video platform, he has consistently championed authentic content creation. Now, as founder of the Sustainable Media Center, he leads an intergenerational alliance of 180+ leaders, including 25 GenZ board members, focusing on empowering young people to shape their digital future.

Kanika Mehra brings extensive media experience from both legacy and digital platforms. Currently NextGen Advisor at the Sustainable Media Center and segment researcher for The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, she has worked across NBC's flagship programs including Meet the Press and The Rachel Maddow Show. Her journalism career spans fact-checking, research, and social media management at institutions including Reuters Institute, Bipartisan Policy Center, and the Wilson Center. At MSNBC/NBC News, she managed social content reaching 70 million users while contributing to election coverage and breaking news. Her work explores the intersection of media transformation, political discourse, and generational perspectives.

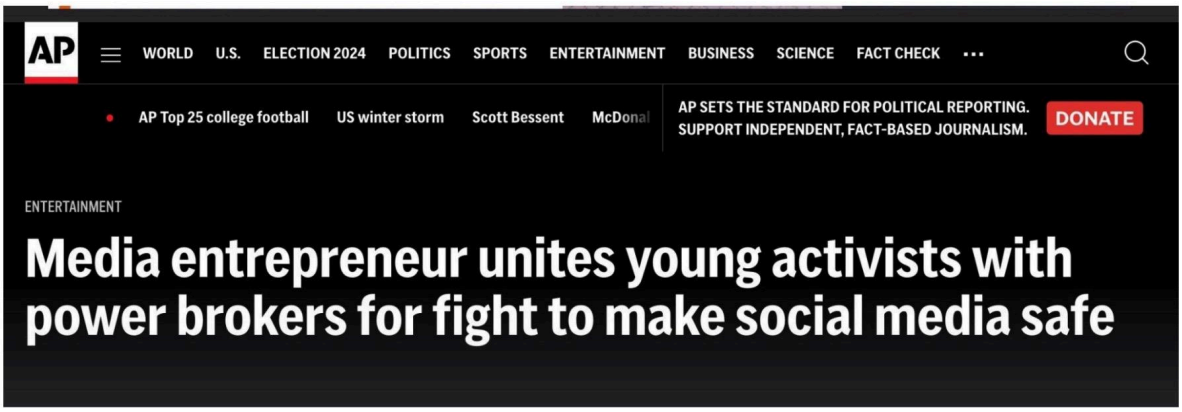
Emma Lembke, a digital rights advocate from Birmingham, Alabama, has emerged as a leading youth voice in tech policy reform. Her most significant impact came through co-founding Design It For Us, a youth-led coalition that successfully championed the California Age Appropriate Design Code - the century's most important tech accountability legislation. As one of the first young people to testify before Congress on technology regulation, she brings both personal experience and research-driven insights to national conversations about social media's impact on youth. Her advocacy work, featured in The New York Times, 60 Minutes, and NPR, focuses on mobilizing young activists to protect future generations' digital wellbeing through policy reform. She

studies political science at Washington University in St. Louis while leading initiatives to ensure online platforms are designed with youth safety in mind.

David Simas, a lifelong listener and strategic researcher, currently serves as Managing Director at Emerson Collective after seven years leading the Obama Foundation as CEO and President. His expertise in opinion research shaped the Obama administration, where he served as Assistant to the President and Director of Political Strategy and Outreach after leading research for the 2012 reelection campaign. A Boston College Law graduate, Simas brings his dedication to understanding public sentiment to advance social impact initiatives.

Press Coverage

- Associated Press coverage [Reference to attached PDF]
- Major media mentions
- Industry Recognition



BY DAVID BAUDER
Updated 10:41 AM EST, October 5, 2023

Share

NEW YORK (AP) — A media entrepreneur is trying to connect young people disturbed by the impact of social media on mental health with older power players to fight for change in how tech companies do business.

The newly-formed Sustainable Media Center is intent on stopping companies from using algorithms to push damaging information to vulnerable youths, dark things like suicide methods. Venture capitalist and trustee Bradley Tusk has seen

Link to open article: Associated Press.pdf

Annual Review
2024 Year in Review [Reference to attached PDF]
Key milestones and achievements
Growth metrics and impact measurements
Partnership developments

Click to view document:
NEW 202024 2024 Year in review UPDATE.pdf

Supporting Research

Comprehensive Research Bibliography

Academic Research & Clinical Studies

1. Twenge, J. M., et al. (2020). "Increases in Depression, Self‐Harm, and Suicide Among U.S. Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Technology Use: Possible Mechanisms." Psychiatric Research and Clinical Practice. https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.prcp.2019001
2. Twenge, J. M., et al. (2017). "Age, Period, and Cohort Trends in Mood Disorder Indicators and Suicide-Related Outcomes in a Nationally Representative Dataset, 2005–2017." Journal of Abnormal Psychology. https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/abn-abn0000410.pdf
3. Jiang, J., et al. (2021). "A Framework of Severity for Harmful Content Online." Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction. https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3479512
4. Brunskill, D. (2022). "Social media and mental health in adolescence." The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352464222002449
5. Beyens, I., Pouwels, J. L., et al. (2020). "The effect of social media on well-being differs from adolescent to adolescent." Scientific Reports. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-67727-7
6. Odgers, C. L., & Jensen, M. R. (2020). "Annual Research Review: Adolescent mental health in the digital age: facts, fears, and future directions." Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jcpp.13190

Policy Research & Legal Framework

7. Whiting, Z. (2023). "Social Media is a Harmful Product: Texas Should Prohibit Companies from Granting Access to Minors." Texas Public Policy Foundation. https://www.texaspolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-01-RR-BTT-SocialMediaMinors-ZachWhiting.pdf
8. Gibson, T.R., et al. (2023). "Algorithms, Addiction, and Adolescent Mental Health: An Interdisciplinary Study to Inform State-level Policy Action." American Journal of Law and Medicine. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-journal-of-law-and-medicine/article/algorithms-addiction-and-adolescent-mental-health-an-interdisciplinary-study-to-inform-statelevel-policy-action-to-protect-youth-from-the-dangers-of-social-media/EC9754B533553BDD56827CD9E34DFC25
9. California Age-Appropriate Design Code Act. (2022). https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB2273
10. 5Rights Foundation. (2023). "Risky-By-Design." https://www.riskyby.design/risky-by-design

Research Organizations & Industry Reports

11. Pew Research Center. (2022). "Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022." https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/08/10/teens-social-media-and-technology-2022/
12. Pew Research Center. (2023). "Teens, Technology, and Mental Health." https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2023/12/05/teens-technology-and-mental-health/
13. Common Sense Media. (2021). "The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens."

https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/the-common-sense-census-media-use-by-tweens-and-teens-2021

14. Center for Countering Digital Hate. (2023). "The Youth Health Harms Report." https://counterhate.com/research/the-youth-health-harms-report/
15. Deloitte. (2023). "Digital Media Trends Survey, 17th Edition." https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/technology/digital-media-trends-consumption-habits-survey.html

Government & International Organizations

16. U.S. Surgeon General. (2023). "Social Media and Youth Mental Health." https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/youth-mental-health-social-media/index.html
17. World Health Organization. (2023). "Guidelines on Mental Health and Social Media." https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073104

Investigative Journalism

18. Wall Street Journal. (2021). "Facebook Knows Instagram Is Toxic for Teen Girls, Company Documents Show." https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-knows-instagram-is-toxic-for-teen-girls-company-documents-show-11631620739
19. Scheff, S. (2017). "The harm of social media." USA Today Magazine. https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&issn=&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA523776154