

**Your name and affiliation/description**

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**Your suggested headline (if any)**

iGen: is it science or is it advertisement?

**Publication title (including subtitle, if any)**

iGen: Why Today's Super Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood (and What That Means for the Rest of Us)

**Publication author(s)/editor(s) (first names and surnames)**

Jean Twenge

**Publisher name**

Simon and Schuster

**Year of publication and edition number (if any)**

2017

**Review**

There are science books written to promote science and there are science books written to promote the author. 'iGen' is clearly the latter.

In her recent book, Jean Twenge neglects the opportunity to promote a balanced discourse about technology, and focusses instead on promoting herself. Only three pages in, Twenge already discusses why 'iGen' – her name for the post-millennial 'Generation Z' – is superior to all other naming suggestions. She addresses her daughters in the acknowledgements: "If I name your generation, will you listen to me when I ask you to comb your hair?". The book seems like an attempt to cement her terminology in science and her influence in the media. Given that the author spends 313 pages describing the descent of the recent generation into narcissistic tech addicts, this is quite ironic.

The book boasts an impressively long subtitle and graphs on almost every other page, however, this cannot shroud its lack of substance. The narrative revolves around Twenge's analyses of four large-scale datasets. Her analysis, however, mainly involves graphing trends on varying x-axes and examining how these lines change over time. Not delving into the data, the author scratches the surface of each variable, describing how its visual trends fit her overarching hypotheses. These hypotheses include that current teens are less happy due to smartphones and that they are growing up slower than previous generations. While studies are periodically mentioned, the reader never gains a deeper understanding of each effect and is quickly moved on to the next variable. This creates a disjointed and difficult reading experience. Combining superficial science and self-interest, 'iGen' sometimes reads more like an advertisement than a science book.

Conflict of Interest: Amy Orben identifies as an 'iGen' and has openly criticised Jean Twenge's recent book, having debated with her on a BBC World Service Newshour Extra in September.

**Word count**

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