

THE YOUTH RESPONSE: CANCEL CULTURE

We carried out a deep dive into 16-24 year olds thoughts on cancel culture to explore where they stand on the hotly contested matter

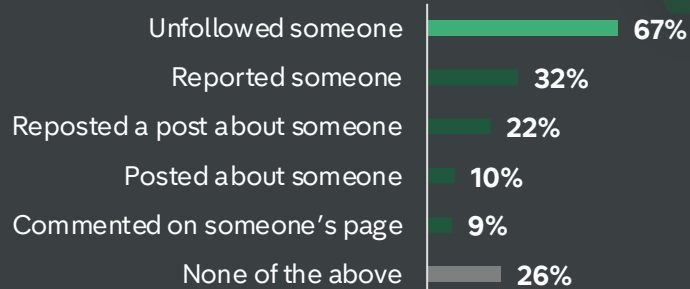
4YOUTH UNDERSTAND CANCEL CULTURE AS A FORM OF **ONLINE OSTRACISM** WITH MANY CHOOSING TO TAKE SOME FORM OF ACTION

For 4Youth, cancel culture exists to place online social pressure on those who have acted out of line according to the majority. It can take the form of losing brand partnerships or having platforms stripped away from influencers, celebrities or artists.



Twitter represents the biggest hotspot for cancel culture with **89%** having seen it there.

Prevalence of 4Youth engagement with cancel culture online



CANCEL CULTURE APPLIES A '**ONE SIZE FITS ALL**' APPROACH TO HOLDING PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE, IGNORING THE **COMPLEXITIES OF SITUATIONS**



IN THEORY...

4Youth believe the **sentiment behind cancel culture is pure**; on a societal level, it condemns actions that trouble the majority whilst showcasing what is right from wrong for often young and influential audiences.

When weighing up what's important, **61% value cancel culture's protection against hate speech** over the fact it discourages free speech, viewing it as a necessary evil that must pertain to online behaviour.



IN PRACTICE...

42% of 4Youth think it is ultimately damaging; this is because...

CONSEQUENCES MISALIGN:

The consequences often unfairly misalign with the severity of one's actions, causing harm to the person's mental health and reputation.

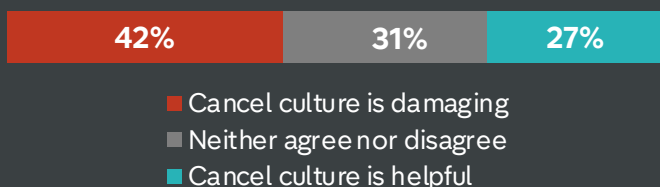
IT LACKS NUANCE:

There is a lack of appreciation for the nuances of real-life situations where there are more factors at play than 'good vs bad'.

IT LEADS TO SELF-CENSORING:

It produces a fear of expression, teaches intolerance and discourages productive discussion within a democratic society, making people strive to meet stringent societal expectations.

4Youth's Perceptions of Cancel Culture



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A MORAL QUESTION: SEPARATING THE ART FROM THE ARTIST

While 4Youth want to hold people accountable by shunning their work, often when it is art they once loved, this is **easier said than done...**

47%

Admit that their relationship to the work is **inevitably impacted** to some degree, even if they do not want it to be by the actions of the creator; **28%** feel neutral about it

Guilt often overrides their emotional attachment to the work making it **hard for them to feel the same** as they once did

HOWEVER, WHEN 4YOUTH'S BOND TO THE WORK RUNS DEEP, THEY ARE ABLE TO UNTANGLE THE ART FROM THE ARTIST AND BELIEVE THAT CONSUMPTION CAN REMAIN MORAL

42%

Feel you can still **morally consume an artist's work** even if they have done wrong; **34%** remain neutral on the matter

68%

Admit that even 'bad people' can create important works of art; **27%** feel neutral and only **5%** disagree

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*I feel it's hard to fully engage with an artist if you know they've done contemptible things...But I also **can't stop myself** enjoying certain work*
– Male 19

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*I have found it easier to distance myself from art from problematic artists that I **wasn't too bothered about in the first place***
– Female, 21

GOING FORWARD, CANCEL CULTURE REQUIRES MORE EMPATHY TO APPRECIATE THE NUANCE OF LIFE AND TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO CHANGE

4Youth suggest looking at issues which arise on a case by case basis and desire a more **humanistic approach** to tackling those who have done wrong by encouraging greater empathy and reason through the following practices...



Increasing empathy

4Youth want online spaces to become more open, fostering understanding of the fact people *can and do* make mistakes



Open education

It is important that those who are 'cancelled' are given the space to be educated and grow as people through productive discussion



Legal improvements

Improvements to the legal system would enable 4Youth to trust in the system more, so the burden doesn't fall on society to deal out justice themselves



Practical solutions

16-24 year olds suggest certain practical solutions for enforcing accountability including time bans on platforms or fines

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*We should educate them and try and **understand where they are coming from**. It's important to let them **learn and understand** why they are being cancelled.*
– Female, 21