

# Mindful Scroller

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Mindful Scroller is a social media plugin designed to motivate users to move away from bottomless scrolling on apps like Instagram and TikTok. Instead of blocking social media apps outright, Mindful Scroller takes a gentler approach. While periodic reminders of how many reels users have scrolled past keep them accountable, Mindful scroller encourages users to make real world connections and invest in new hobbies. Taking advantage of the algorithm designed to keep you scrolling, the plugin recommends activities users are likely to enjoy based on their feed. It can give local park recommendations, recipe ideas, and many other alternative decompression activities to keep users out of that bottomless scrolling pit. Mindful Scroller is the one-stop plugin designed to help anyone who struggles with doomscrolling on a daily basis, from young teens to adults. Mindful Scroller achieves this by giving users an introduction to the plugin through a free 7 day trial, no credit card required, followed by an affordable one-time purchase.

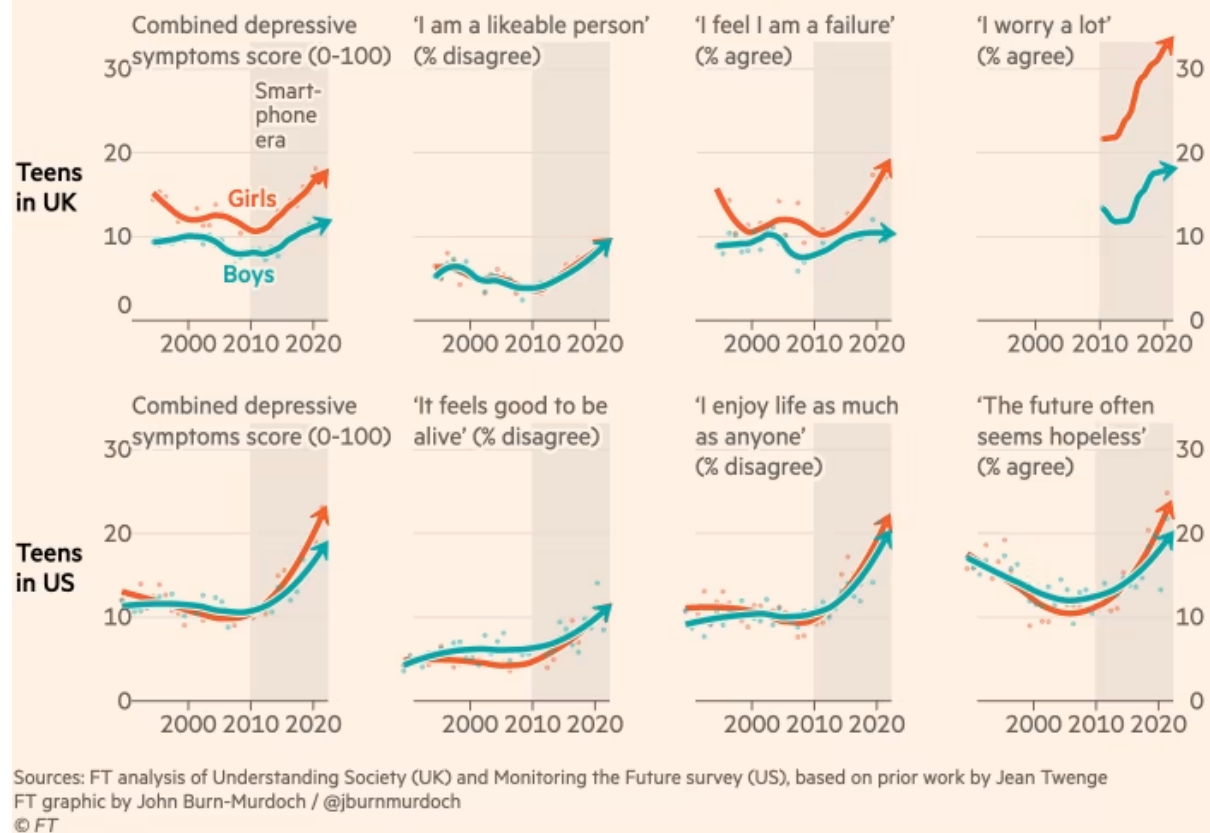
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## Why do Teens Scroll?

Why do teens use social media and Instagram reels? Social media is often used by teens as a way to alleviate stress and anxiety: “empirical work suggests that turning to social media represents a common [emotional regulation] strategy for adolescents... In some cases, the [emotional regulation] goal is to down-regulate negative emotions, such as when adolescents use social media to alleviate unpleasant feelings” (Davis). In the US, one in ten people is addicted to social media, and a survey of eighteen to twenty-two-year-olds concluded that forty percent were addicted (Boland). Oftentimes, this leads to the inverse effect of increased stress due to decreased productivity. Many apps and plugins address this issue, including: Flipd,

AppBlock, Moment App, Your Hour, Hold, Siempo, Freedom, Antisocial App, Focus, Cold Turkey, and SelfControl (Boland). On Flipd's website, they state that their app increases productivity by limiting distractions and celebrating progress: "Flipd users have achieved over 1.5 billion minutes of productivity" (Flipd). In a space where most apps address this issue by limiting or disabling access to social media, Mindful Scroller seeks to reduce usage by integrating alternative activities into the scrolling experience.

## Depression, anxiety and other mental health problems are soaring among teenagers in the UK and US, especially among girls



(Chart of Mental Health Issues Related to Social Media Usage)



(Predicted Success of Product)

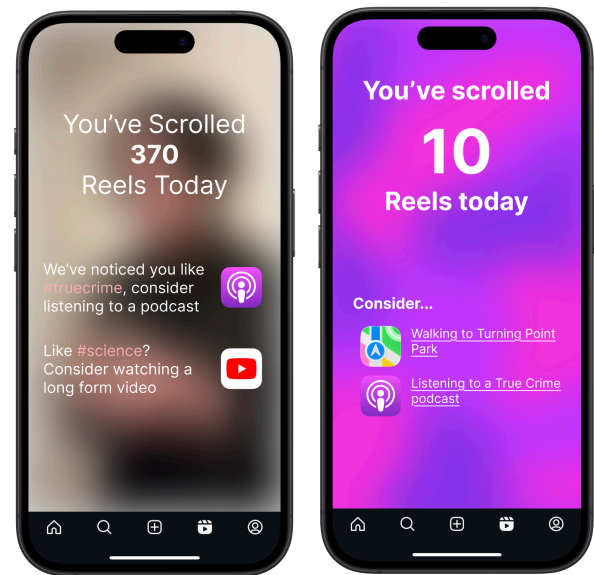
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## Features and Functionality

Mindful Scroller uniquely addresses the “mindless scrolling” or “doom scrolling” problem by periodically reminding the user with statistics of how long they have been scrolling, and suggesting alternative activities based on the user's feed. The further the user scrolls, the longer the delay is before the user is allowed to scroll past a reminder. As opposed to similar apps, Mindful Scroller is an Instagram/TikTok plugin that injects reminders directly into the user's

feed. Along with curated, low-friction calls to action, this allows for a natural transition from mindless scrolling to a more productive activity.

Mindful Scroller uses the tags that come up on your feed to suggest relevant and compelling activities. In this example, Mindful Scroller has detected that the user often watches Instagram reels containing the tag #truecrime, so the app suggests listening to a true crime podcast instead.



Here is a video example of the app's functionality: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/r9-3pU4FDjU>

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## Anticipating Challenges and Counterarguments

The idea of hijacking someone's stress relief tool is bound to face some resistance. Many rely on reels as a way to escape from their everyday lives and sink hours into mindless scrolling. "Why would I install this? I know my scrolling is bad, but I accept that." To these people, my counterargument would be that installing the plugin doesn't mean you CAN'T watch reels; it just means you're encouraged to do things in real life every once in a while and reminded to keep track of time while scrolling. Another common challenge for productivity apps is that users will eventually become fed up with the app and simply uninstall it. For this reason, Mindful Scroller doesn't fully block reels; it just offers non-judgmental reminders. They could also say, "This feels rejective, like you're telling me how I should relax." But again, Mindful Scroller doesn't prevent scrolling; it just offers alternatives to it. Another argument I would expect to hear is that,

“The app taking your data to make suggestions on what to do could be predatory.” To that, I say the app uses local device storage and end-to-end encryption, which means the data never leaves your phone and is inaccessible to anything besides the plugin. A further argument that could be proposed is “There are already apps that do this, like Cold Turkey or SelfControl.” The counterargument to this is that our app is special in that it suggests real world activities for the user to do based on the algorithm, meaning the ideas it creates will be more interesting than just any old AI could come up with.

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## Conclusion and Recommendations

The main issue Mindful Scroller is meant to address is the excessive consumption of short-form content, or doomscrolling. Mindful Scroller achieves this by letting users know how long they’ve been scrolling for to increase accountability, while different local events and hobbies that fit the users' interests are replaced. The target audience for this product is stressed young adults and teens who are stuck in a paralyzing loop of doomscrolling. The plugin offers a healthier way for users to wind down in their free time, which leads to increased productivity and a better mood. To better support young adults and students, we wish to continue the development of the plugin with your support.

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## Appendix

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