

The Rise and Fall of Memes in the US

Nguyen Thanh Tung, 2025

1. Introduction

By reading the title, you must be confused and wondering why this analysis exists. To answer this question, a simple phrase can be used, it is a “use of freewill”. I want to see the relevance of each meme or “brain rot”, how it surfaced, how quickly the internet moves on from it, and what kind of impact, if any, it leaves on our minds. This analysis is completely for fun, so if you find it enjoyable or somewhat useful, then I have done what I set out to do.

2. Data Description

The data was collected from 2022 up to June 2025 within the United States using Google Trends, which allows users to track how popular specific keywords or topics are over time. For this project, a selection of popular memes was chosen, including:

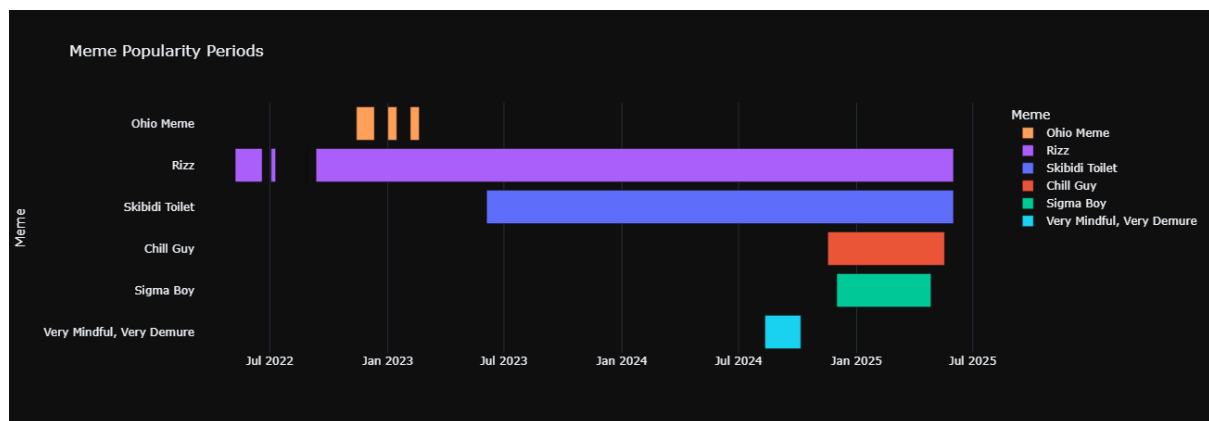
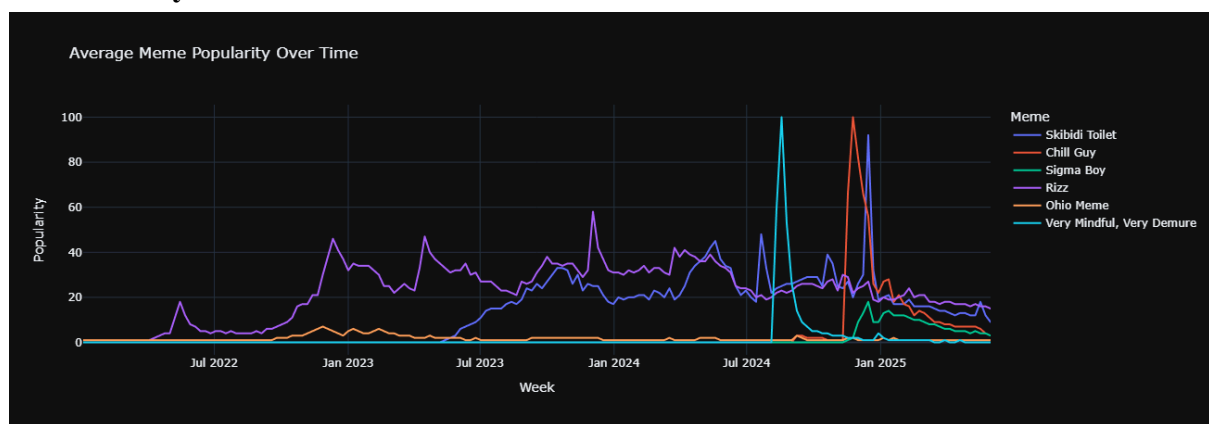
- **Skibidi Toilet**, a viral YouTube series by **DaFuq!?Boom!**, starting in **February 2023**, featuring bizarre animated battles between **toilets with human heads** (Skibidi Toilets) and **camera-headed people** (CameraHeads). Set to remixes of "Give It To Me" and "Dom Dom Yes Yes," the surreal series gained massive popularity, inspiring memes, fan art, and spin offs across platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter.
- **Rizz**, a slang term, essentially short for "charisma," that describes a person's ability to charm or attract others, particularly in a romantic or sexual way
- **Ohio Memes**, used as a term of insult or to describe something that is considered weird, cringe, or low-quality.
- **Very Mindful, Very Demure**, a phrase said by TikToker Joolie Lebron, who first used the phrase in a satirical video about workplace beauty etiquette that recommended being “demure and modest and respectful at the workplace.” From then the internet quickly used it as a sarcastic or humorous way to describe things that were the opposite like loud outfits, chaotic behavior, or absurd situations, turning it into a meme.
- **Chill Guy**, a meme based on a drawing of a dog-headed man in casual clothes, originally posted by X (Twitter) user **@PhillipBankss** in late 2023 with the caption: *“My new character. His whole deal is he’s a chill guy that lowkey doesn’t give a f*ck.”* The character went viral in **2024**, especially on **TikTok**, where people used him in memes and fancam edits to humorously portray laid-back or tension-defusing behavior. The meme evolved with sounds like Brian Griffin’s voice and later inspired spin-offs like **"Just a Chill Girl"** and a **Chill Guy meme coin**.
- **Sigma Boy**, a viral term and song referencing a specific type of young man. It's used in internet culture to describe a successful, self-sufficient, and independent individual who doesn't conform to traditional societal expectations. The song "Sigma Boy,"

released by Russian singers Betsy and Maria Yankovskaya, became a viral sensation on platforms like TikTok and Spotify.

The definitions of these memes may vary depending on who you ask, but for this project, they are based on my personal experience with them and information from knowyourmeme.com, a website dedicated to documenting and explaining memes.

The data is presented in a table and records the average weekly search interest for each meme with the total observations of 179. Most values are integers, except for some entries marked as '<1', which indicate that the average number of searches was less than one. For the sake of easier quantification and analysis, these '<1' values were converted to 0. Overall the data is clean and hardly needs any manipulation.

3. Analysis

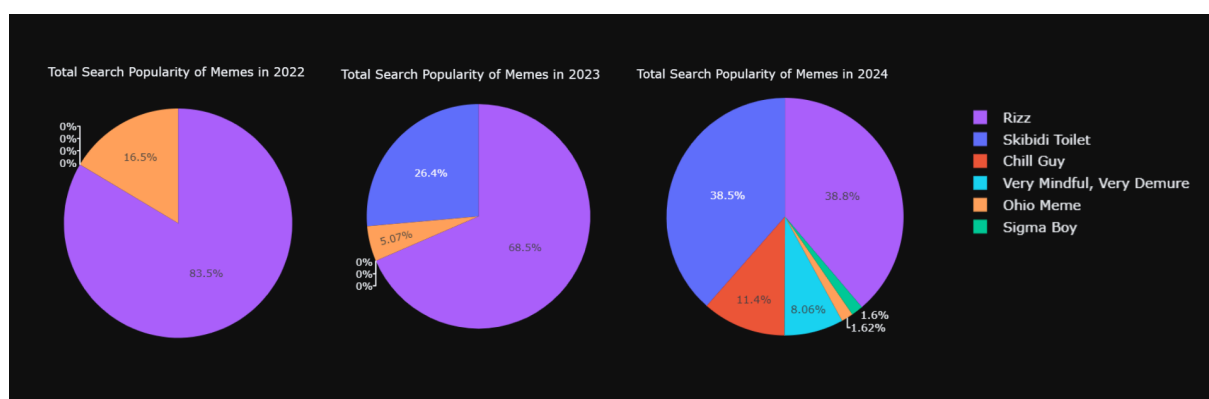


Quickly looking at line chart, some memes have existed for a very long period while some only peaked for a short time. The longest-existing meme is clearly Rizz, even though trending first in early 2022, it has experienced some ups and downs but is still well known. The reason for this could be that out of most memes, it is very easy to understand, flexible and funny to situations, and can have many prefixes like W rizz (Win or Amazing rizz), L rizz (Loss or lack of rizz), or unspoken rizz (silent charisma)... which completely fit with the short-style form of videos on popular medias like TikTok, Instagram Reels,...

Another viral and long lasting meme is Skibidi Toilet. Although it appeared much later than Rizz, Skibidi Toilet immediately clicked with young audiences raised along strong media advancement like Gen Z and Gen Alpha because of its nonsensical, hyper-visual, musically hypnotic, and endlessly remixable music. There is a large sudden spike on December 15th, 2024, that is when the episode “Revelation” released, having major lore advancement, causing a huge boom among fans. Details of the episode’s contents will not be revealed, however, if you are interested you can access [here](#) to check the series.

Two other memes that appeared and disappeared very quickly from the face of the internet is Very Mindful, Very Demure and Chill Guy. First for Very Mindful, Very Demure, the phrase is very flexible, it can be used in every possible scenario like eating a burrito bowl "demurely" or reading a book with exaggerated poise, further propelling the trend. However, as the trend became ubiquitous, its original satirical edge was diluted. The influx of branded content and widespread mimicry led to a sense of overexposure, causing audiences to lose interest. Then came the successor, the Chill Guy. The guy resonates with many audiences as a way to express the stress of daily life, turning it into something funny to be shared among people. The meme's popularity led to its adoption by major brands like Adidas and Uber Eats in their marketing campaigns . Additionally, it inspired the creation of the cryptocurrency **\$CHILLGUY**. However, the commercialization prompted Banks to copyright the artwork and issue takedown notices for unauthorized uses, leading to controversies and a decline in the meme's popularity.

Lastly, Ohio memes and Sigma Boy went viral for their absurd and ironic humor, but they didn't last as long or spread as widely as other memes because they were repetitive, lacked depth or narrative, and got quickly overshadowed by more dynamic trends like Skibidi Toilet or Very Demure, Very Mindful.



This is the total search popularity of memes in each year, from 2022 to 2024. The year 2025 was excluded, as it's only June, and there isn't enough data yet to provide meaningful insights for the full year.

From the pie charts, it is clear that Rizz has had the longest-lasting impact on media popularity over the years. In 2022, it dominated total meme search interest, and although its share declined over time, it still maintained a leading position in 2023 and remained nearly

tied with Skibidi Toilet in 2024. This consistent visibility across three years suggests that *Rizz* has had a sustained cultural presence compared to other memes, which either emerged later or peaked briefly.

Another insight from the pie chart is the clear decline in the Ohio Meme. With the appearance of other memes, Ohio Meme's share dropped significantly—from 16.5% in 2022 to just 5.07% in 2023, and further down to 1.6% in 2024. This sharp decrease suggests that Ohio Meme lost relevance quickly as newer and more engaging memes captured audience attention. Its early prominence may have been due to novelty, but it struggled to maintain cultural traction in the face of rising trends like Skibidi Toilet, Chill Guy, and Very Mindful, Very Demure.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, memes are not just internet jokes, they are powerful tools for connection, expression, and communication. They often reflect cultural values, social dynamics, and shared emotions. As shown in the charts, the lasting impact of memes like *Rizz* demonstrates how important relatability, flexibility, and emotional depth are in keeping a meme relevant. On the other hand, the rapid decline of the Ohio Meme shows that without meaningful resonance or adaptability, even popular memes can quickly fade. Besides that, external factors such as trends, media exposure, or commercial use can also influence a meme's rise or fall. Ultimately, memes play a significant role in shaping how people interact and engage in the digital world.