



The New Era of Self Expression: Over half of Gen Z admit social media is the only place they can truly be themselves with alter egos and secret profiles on the rise

- New research from Adobe reveals that for half of Gen Z, social media is the only place they feel they can be themselves with more than half (55%) adopting a 'secret' alter ego
- Fear of judgement, lack of confidence and pressure from society were cited as the determining factors in why Gen-Z struggle to be themselves
- Adobe has released a free collection of new digital tools inspired by the icon of self-expression, David Bowie, to mark 50 years since his most iconic creation and alter-ego, Ziggy Stardust, available now on Creative Cloud

LONDON, UK – 16 June 2022 New research from Adobe has revealed half of Gen Zs admit social media is the only place they can truly be themselves, with over half (55%) admitting they use a 'secret' alter ego so nobody knows the real them.

As many as 58% find having an online presence makes them feel more comfortable in their own skin, while 34% think this is made easier when taking on a persona or alter ego. Lack of confidence (55%) and pressure from society (34%) are among the top reasons why young people struggle with being themselves as 42% live in fear of judgement from others.

The study of 18-25-year-olds found more than a fifth generally don't like to expose their true personality, with a third being more self-expressive 'online' as opposed to 'offline'. And although 40% think being comfortable in your own skin is something that comes with age, more than a fifth reckon they won't show their true colours until they reach their 40s.

A further 59% reckon they'll one day look back on their younger selves and wish they had been more comfortable with who they were.

For half of Gen Z surveyed, icons such as David Bowie, Harry Styles and Zendaya have inspired them when it comes to self-expression to look at what's important to them, with 45% saying these icons have encouraged them to be more creative.

Adobe is paying tribute to David Bowie by launching a brand new range of Bowie-inspired digital tools across Adobe Creative Cloud. The tools, created in partnership with Bowie 75, mark both Bowie's 75th birthday and the 50th anniversary of one of his most beloved alter egos – Ziggy Stardust. Known for dramatic musical transformations, Bowie was considered the original 'chameleon' of pop, thanks to his ever-changing appearance and sound.

The 'Adobe x Bowie' collaboration is a chance for all to step into the birthplace of Bowie's iconic alter ego by opening up his 'dressing room' to the world and inviting people to create their own personas.



The new tools released by Adobe in partnership with Bowie 75 have been inspired by his colourful and vibrant personas. They include a range of make-up brushes named after some of his biggest hits, such as 'Ashes', 'Changes', 'Major Tom' and 'Queen Bish'.

Simon Morris, VP of Marketing, EMEA and APAC at Adobe said: "For the next generation, creativity is rooted in one's authentic self; it's about ongoing self-discovery and also, about having fun."

"In a world that's increasingly polarised, we are in a new era of self-expression; that can be daunting to exhibit in real life, so trendsetters like David Bowie are paramount to inspire and encourage. His vision was limitless. Our new digital tools aim to capture this spirit and lift the limits of creativity – embracing anybody with a story to tell and empowering them to create incredible personas, just like he did."

The launch of the partnership – 'Adobe x Bowie' – is the latest in an ongoing initiative by Adobe to bring back to life historic tools from artists that have changed the world and place them in the hands of modern creators. This was first launched in 2017 with the digital recreation of Edward Munch's paintbrushes, continued in 2018 with the Lost Alphabets of Bauhaus Dessau, and was last seen in 2020, with the release of a vast array of brushes inspired by the legendary 1980s New York artist, Keith Haring.

Adobe's research also found 55% of 18-25-year-olds try and use social media to make their life seem more exciting than it really is. Instagram, Facebook and TikTok are the top social platforms young people use to be self-expressive. Much like Bowie himself, music (30%) and fashion (27%) were voted the best ways for Gen Z to truly express who they are.

An encouraging 7 in 10 believe society is on the right path to breaking down all barriers to become more self-expressive and authentic in the future.

The digital tools are widely available now – and fans are encouraged to try out the Bowie range, create their own personas [here](#), and share their designs via #AdobexBowie.

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For more information visit: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/lead/creativecloud/bowie75.html>

Notes to editors

- Images can be downloaded [here](#)
- The Adobe x Bowie digital tools include over 150 graphics, colour swatches, vectors, patterns and stickers, created by Tina Touli, Kae Neskovic, Tabea Mahern and Thomas Hedger. They can be used across Creative Cloud apps, including Photoshop, Photoshop for iPad, Illustrator, Illustrator for iPad, Fresco, Adobe Express and Substance family. In addition, 18 digital brushes created by Kyle T. Webster can be used in Photoshop, Photoshop for iPad and Fresco. They are available [here](#).

About Adobe

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About Bowie 75

Bowie 75 is a celebration of the 75th anniversary year of David Bowie, who redefined musical genres and the potential of live performance for generations of music lovers. Creating and discarding a variety of personae and restlessly challenging musical boundaries, Bowie released timeless albums including *The Man Who Sold The World*, *Space Oddity*, *Hunky Dory*, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust...*, *Aladdin Sane*, *Diamond Dogs*, *Young Americans*, *Station to Station*, *Low*, "Heroes," *Lodger*, *Scary Monsters, Let's Dance*, *Heathen*, *The Next Day* and many more. ★ (pronounced "Blackstar"), Bowie's 28th and final studio album, was released on his 69th birthday—January 8, 2016—and charted at #1 in more than 20 countries (including his first #1 in the U.S.), later winning five Grammy Awards. David Bowie died on January 10, 2016, two days after



the release of ★. His body of work, his influence on the worlds of music, art, fashion, film, theater and beyond, and his legacy of fearless innovation and endless reinvention will live on forever.

For further information, go to Bowie75.com

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