

Sceptical Scrollers

10 per cent of the country

A digitally-native group who have lost faith in institutions, do not pay attention to mainstream politicians and seek alternative sources of truth for themselves.



"Post-Covid I am much more critical about what I read - now I want to do my own research because I don't trust the government or doctors on everything"

Talia, Leeds

"Most of the things I would read on is online and I think Twitter or X is perfect for it because when you go to the comment section you get a different perspective from everybody and I think you tend to find people who have better answers and more truth"

James, Glasgow

"I used to vote, but I just don't have any faith in any parties at this point"
Carolyn, Glasgow

Key words

Online, disengaged, disillusioned, open-minded, non-ideological, untrusting, curious.

What they worry about

The gap between rich and poor, the job market, corruption of politicians, bias in the media, crime, mental health.

Where you might find them

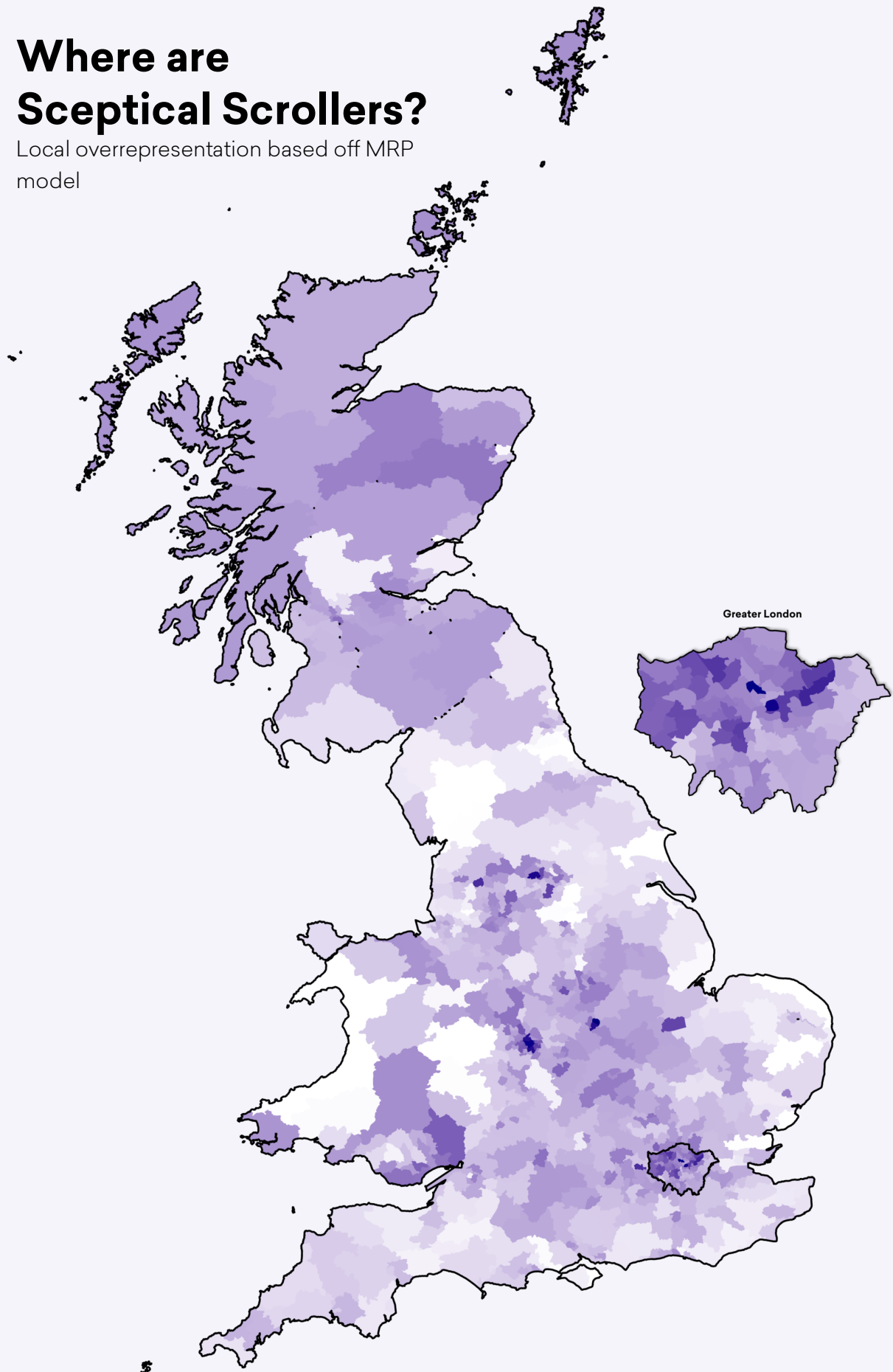
On Discord, Snapchat, TikTok and Reddit; living at home with their parents or in rented accommodation; working multiple jobs; in urban city centres; in constituencies such as Birmingham Perry Barr, Glasgow South, Luton North, Swindon North.

How they get their news

While many do not actively seek out political news, it often comes to them - either while browsing social media or referenced as part of discussion shows they might watch on YouTube for entertainment. They are much less likely to trust information from large media institutions, and more likely to believe information they see from social media users posting directly.

Where are Sceptical Scrollers?

Local overrepresentation based off MRP
model



Source: More in Common, June 2025

No event in the 21st century has shaped perceptions of the role of government and the power of the state than the Covid pandemic and the measures put in place to tackle it. The Sceptical Scrollers are a group for whom the pandemic has played a formative role in their outlook, relationship with politics and trust. This segment's sense that politicians, poorly qualified to handle a global crisis, were making it up as they went along has a profound effect on their world view. They also appear to be influenced by social media algorithms that elevate fringe ideas and negative content.

Sceptical Scrollers feel alienated from many of the political institutions that have traditionally formed the bedrock of British democracy. They take little at face value, even from sources of expertise, are sceptical of political edicts and have turned to alternative information sources.

So an example of that is maybe certain things that they would suggest are really good for you in terms of diet, for example, I think are very outdated and actually there's a lot more information out there from other sources. So that then makes me question a little bit about how much to follow some of the other advice that comes out and the whole medical model of things. So the medical model or the social model of things. So you don't necessarily need to fix things with say drugs or science.

Caroline, Sceptical Scroller, Glasgow

Pandemic scandals, from Party-Gate and other breaches of lockdown rules, or question marks over procurement procedures, have furthered this group's already deep disillusionment with politics and the integrity of politicians. Sceptical Scrollers think that Britain today is broken, but they do not trust anyone to fix it.

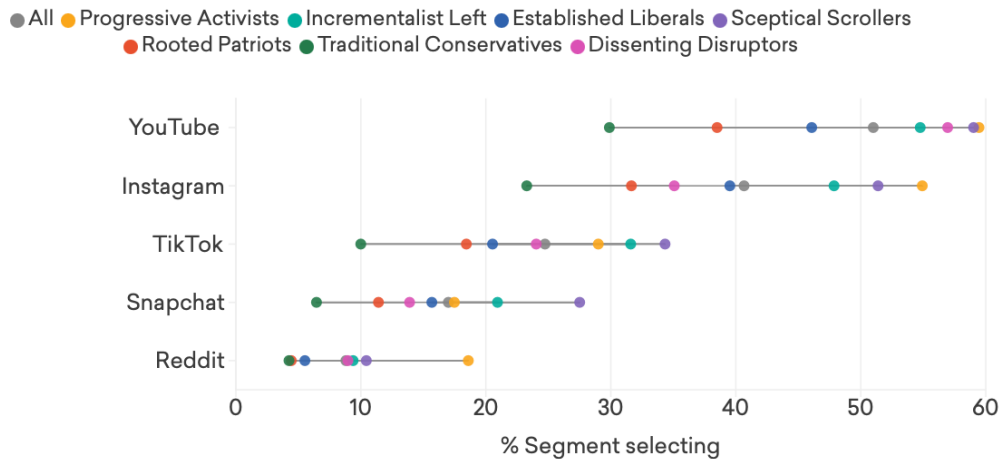
I think since Covid and the way that the contracts and the procurement was all blatantly, blatantly just the lads helping the other lads from the public school - and it doesn't feel like that was just a Conservative thing.

Claire, Sceptical Scroller, Manchester

Sceptical Scrollers are younger than any of the other segments and therefore digitally native. They spend a lot of their time on social media, and are more likely to use Snapchat and TikTok than any of the other segments. This segment is also more likely to play video games than any of the other six.

Figure 69 | Social media use by segment

Which of the following social media platforms, if any, do you use most days?



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Every night I struggle with doom scrolling and listening to podcasts, YouTube videos, everything, just because it's procrastination and I know that it is. But ironically, I spend time looking at ways to improve my life and self-care and just positive things, but take no action. So I'm watching everyone else do well and take action and I'm spending so much time watching it and taking no action on my own life. So come away feeling even worse about my own situation.

Vicky, Sceptical Scroller, Glasgow

This group is one of the most ethnically diverse, with 22 per cent identifying as non-white. This segment has the highest proportion of Asian Britons of all seven (16 per cent), as well as the highest proportion of Sikhs and second highest number of Hindus.

Sceptical Scrollers' lack of trust spans from politicians to mainstream media and many would sooner trust independent sources over established outlets. As they spend so much of their time online, they find themselves more trusting of individuals rather than institutions as sources of impartial information. Sceptical Scrollers also see information as more authentic when it is raw, unedited, when it appears from an individual on their social media feed rather than a news outlet such as the BBC.

Lacking trust in mainstream institutions, many Sceptical Scrollers have taken the job of editorialising the truth into their own hands. In focus groups, it is common to hear Sceptical Scrollers talk about 'doing my own research' or 'finding my own truth', rendering Sceptical Scrollers both very aware of a range of global issues, but also occasionally misinformed. Most of this segment now say it is probable that the Covid pandemic was exaggerated to

control people. Two in five believe it is probable that the moon landings were staged. Other segments might describe Sceptical Scrollers as open to conspiratorial thinking.

Most of the things I would just read on is online and I think Twitter or X is perfect for it because when you go to the comment section you get a different perspective from everybody and I think you tend to find people who have better answers and more truth and the comments and you can find independent reporters come in with their resource and it helps kind of back what they're saying and challenges what the mainstream media is saying and it kind of opens your mind so you're not getting, again, false media.

James, Sceptical Scroller, Glasgow

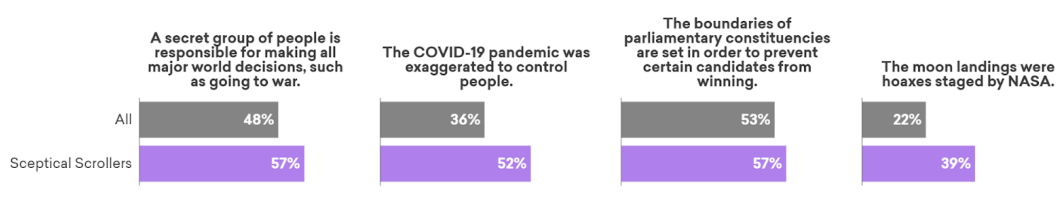
I think it goes back years and years. I think the main issue that not just our country's got, is that it's people are greedy and the rich want to be richer. And the ease now with social media and the media to make the little man hate the little man rather than the bigger picture is far too easy now and it's looking pretty bleak.

Rose, Sceptical Scroller, Sheffield

Figure 70 | Sceptical Scrollers' beliefs in conspiracy theories

Do you think the following is true or false?

Showing % who said true

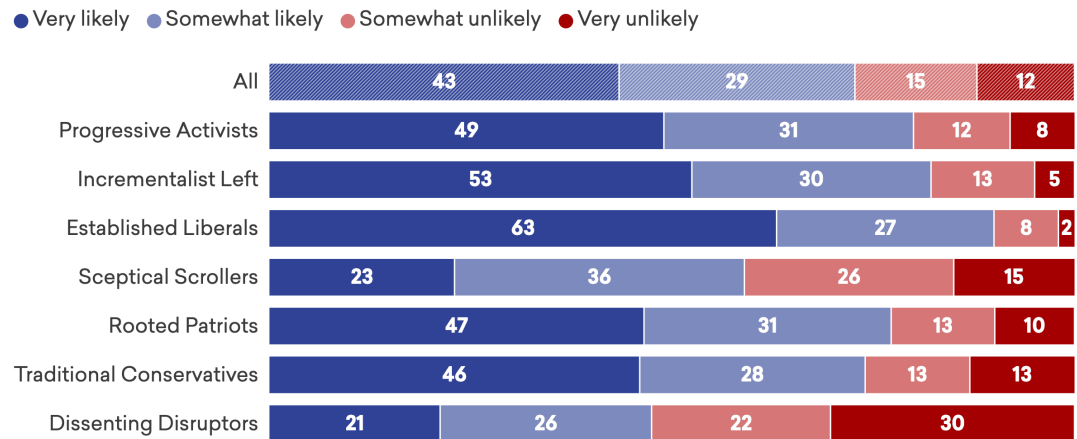


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These beliefs and lack of trust have real-world consequences for how Sceptical Scrollers treat government instructions. For example, alongside Dissenting Disruptors they are the group most likely to say, at least in this moment, they would not follow government advice to isolate if there were another pandemic on the same scale as Covid.

Figure 71 | Likelihood to isolate in case of another major pandemic by segment

If there was another pandemic on the same scale as the Covid-19 pandemic, how likely would you be to follow government instructions to isolate?



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Sceptical Scrollers' distrust extends to lack of faith in other institutions such as the judicial system and faith leaders. Forty five per cent of this segment go so far as to say they do not trust their neighbours.

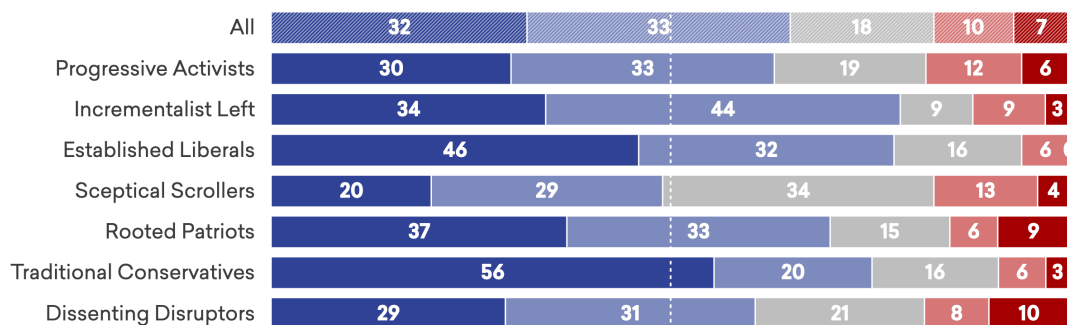
Sceptical Scrollers' living conditions do not give them much faith in the status quo. This is the most urban segment and many of them live in rented accommodation with flatmates, or at home with their parents. Many in this segment feel that they were promised that hard work would lead to homeownership, and instead they must live in shared flats well into their twenties and thirties which feels like a betrayal of the social contract. Sceptical Scrollers are generally dissatisfied with their housing situation but are financially struggling and find it difficult to find anything better. For some Sceptical Scrollers, financial struggles run even deeper - they are the group most likely to have used a food bank in the last year.

Figure 72 | Satisfaction with housing by segment

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your life?

Housing

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



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The economic hardship or difficulties that many Sceptical Scrollers experience fuels their perception that conventional politics has failed them. They also do not expect that future economic growth will improve their lives either. This contributes to a belief that only dramatic systemic change and a rethinking of the fundamentals will improve their prospects, but they are doubtful about what that might look like and not optimistic that it is likely to happen.

I don't think necessarily that it's going to be better. I mean the cost of living has gone up ... I think there's a lot of hardships coming that way. So, I don't know. I don't know. If I'm honest, I don't think it is better or good, I don't think it's heading in a good direction at the moment.

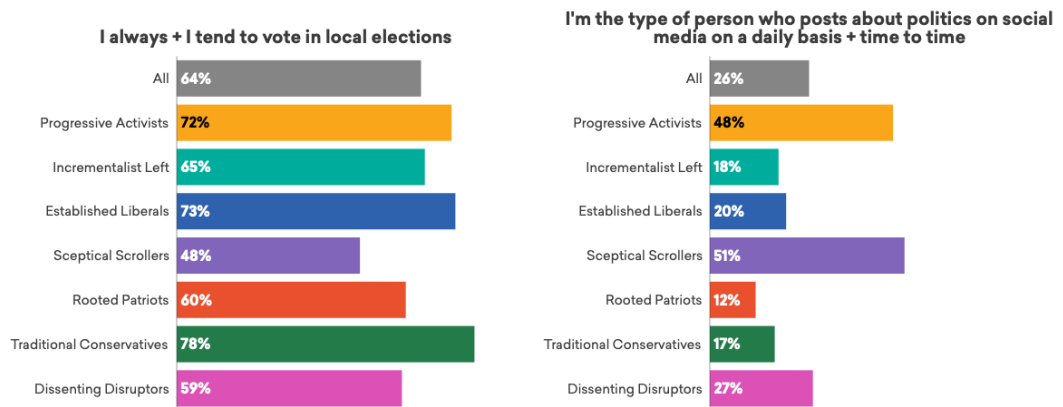
Carolyn, Sceptical Scroller, Glasgow

Sceptical Scrollers' disengagement from traditional political participation such as voting reflects not apathy but alienation. They feel a profound lack of autonomy and do not believe that citizens have a real say over how society is run. Many in this group have no memory of our institutions ever working properly – making their scepticism less like nostalgia for a Britain lost and closer to nihilism. Sceptical Scrollers do not see electoral politics as able to bring about the change to improve their lives.

As such, Sceptical Scrollers are the segment least likely to vote in both general elections and local elections. But they are not switched off from politics altogether – they read about

what is going on in the world constantly on social media and despite being the least likely to vote, they are also the most likely to post on social media about politics.

Figure 73 | Sceptical Scrollers are the segment least likely to vote, and most likely to post online about politics



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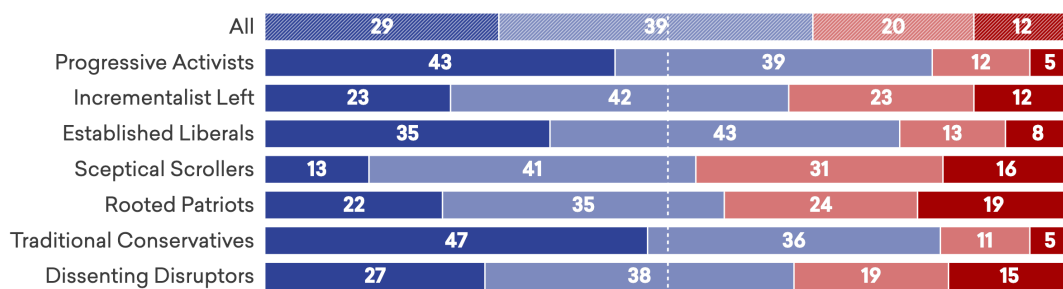
Sceptical Scrollers' attitude to change is a radical one. They have a high appetite for chaos and disruption and believe dramatic changes are necessary if systemic problems are to be addressed. Sceptical Scrollers believe that people who share their values should stick to their principles rather than seeking compromise. This unwillingness to compromise, combined with their high comfort with disruption, makes them natural allies of segments with a greater belief in the need for disruption.

Sceptical Scrollers are much less ideologically defined than other segments with the same belief in the need for change and have a less clear sense of the direction of change they would like to see the country take. Sceptical Scrollers are also the group most likely to say they struggle to keep up with and understand what is going on in government.

Figure 74 | The extent to which people understand current affairs by segment

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and current affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and current affairs...

- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Only now and then
- Hardly at all



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Away from politics, Sceptical Scrollers are more satisfied with their personal lives than other disillusioned groups – they have a low level of perceived threat and feel connected to society around them. They do not see politics as important to their own identity. For now, their frustration with the system is expressed in the Instagram posts they share, or comments they may leave on YouTube videos. But most of the time they will not think about it and do not often think about how politics connects to their day-to-day lives – finding it easier and more enjoyable to switch off from politics altogether and scroll on to the next topic that appears on their feeds.

The coming years will play a key role in how (if at all) Sceptical Scrollers' outlook and world view eventually crystallises.

Nial

Nial graduated from university eighteen months ago with a decent degree but ended up back in his childhood bedroom, working shifts at a garden centre while trying to figure out what comes next. Most evenings he plays FIFA online with his university friends—it's basically the only time they all talk now that they are scattered across the country.

When everyone logs off, Nial usually ends up on YouTube - tonight he started off with a Jonny Harris documentary about the War in Ukraine, then switched to a MrBeast competition video, before putting on a debate by Destiny, following up with Ordinary Things' latest video essay about what goes on in Davos, then ... before long he can't remember how he ended up watching what he has ended up on. Nial trusts many of these YouTubers more than politicians these days—at least the creators seem genuine when they are talking to their cameras.

He always means to go to bed early but often finds himself clicking on just one more video, waking up tired with his phone dead beside him. Nial knows he is stuck in a bit of a rut but is not sure how to get out of it—everything feels temporary right now, from his job, to living at home, which makes it hard to plan anything properly. His friends seem to be figuring things out faster than he is and, while he is not panicking yet, he is starting to wonder when his real life is supposed to begin.

Nial's relationship with news feels fundamentally different from his parents' generation - he gets most of his information through YouTube and TikTok rather than traditional outlets, often finding himself more informed about global events than local politics. When his colleague mentions something she saw on BBC News, he'll usually have already seen three different takes on it from YouTubers he follows, each offering perspectives that feel more honest than whatever sanitised version the mainstream media presented. He has developed his own system for cross-referencing information, checking multiple sources and reading comment sections where he often finds the most interesting insights, though he knows his parents would call this "going down rabbit holes."

The disconnect between what he was promised about post-university life and his current reality has left Nial questioning most of the conventional wisdom he grew up with. He was told that a degree would lead to a good job, that hard work pays off, that the system basically functions - but eighteen months of rejected job applications and temporary work have made him wonder if these were just stories told to keep people under control.

Nial's social media feeds have become his primary window into the world, a constant stream of content that ranges from genuinely informative to completely absurd. He is aware that algorithms are probably manipulating what he sees, but he trusts his ability to think critically about what he encounters - even if that sometimes leads him down paths his university lecturers would have discouraged. The line between entertainment and information has blurred completely in his media consumption.

