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## **Viacom Velocity Study Finds That 68% of Millennials Trust People Online with a Shared Interest More Than News or Government, Almost 2/3 Say They Can Influence Popular Culture, and 50% Say Someone Should Make a Movie about Their Lives**

### **Study is the Basis of Velocity's "The Culture of Proximity" Documentary Which Explores the Impact of the Convergence of Brands, Celebrities, Fans and Mass Media on Pop Culture**

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Viacom Velocity, the in-house branded content agency within the Marketing & Partner Solutions group, today released findings from a study exploring how popular culture is shaped as lines between brands, celebrities, fans, and mass media have faded. The research is the basis of Velocity's original documentary, "The Culture of Proximity," which explores the impact when these groups which once existed distinctly and separately collapse into each other and behave similarly.

"The making of pop culture used to feel very far away, but with the shift from top-down distribution of messaging and content to a reality where many people can communicate together, influence culture, and deeply connect over shared interests there are remarkable implications for marketers and content creators," said Dario Spina, CMO of Viacom Velocity. "Exploring this inflection point through our research and 'The Culture of Proximity' documentary allows us to understand the impact and most effectively work within this new landscape. Our screenings and workshops with marketing partners translate these insights into actionable ideas."

"The Culture of Proximity" features interviews with celebrities, thought leaders, and cultural influencers including Swizz Beatz; YesJulz; Chris Hardwick; Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian; MTV News' Ira Madison; civil rights activist DeRay McKesson; Stanford University's Dr. Brie Linkehoker Ph.D; writer/illustrator Tim Urban; and Chief Strategy Officer of Publicis Rishad Tobaccowala.

"The Culture of Proximity" revealed four key themes:

#### **1. The Conjoint Effect: Brands, celebrities, fans, and content creators have started acting like each other... brands are people, and people are brands.**

- | 50% of Millennials believe their life should be made into a movie
- | Nearly half feel like they know their favorite celebrity, and 1/3 of those say their favorite celebrity is like a friend or family member
- | Only 11% of Millennials DO NOT like when brands have online personalities, as if they were real people

#### **2. New Centers of Gravity: The risks and rewards of shared influence...proximity puts people on the same playing field as the creators of mass culture.**

- | 61% of Millennials say they can influence popular culture
- | 86% of Millennials believe that fans have some ownership of the things they're fans of

#### **3. The New Intimacy: People live with only one degree of separation from everything -- the difference between "in real life" and virtual is blurry, and true intimacy is possible without physical proximity.**

- | 73% of Millennials have made friends with people online or through social media because of a shared passion
- | More than half say they could fall in love with someone they only know online
- | When asked "Which of the following group or groups of people do you trust?"
  - | 68% said people online with a shared interest or cause
  - | 58% said people my age
  - | 56% said people in my community

- | 29% said news media
- | 21% said government

**4. The Filtered Me: The idea of authenticity is being rewritten. The ways people create and broadcast their identities continues to shift, and they are often negotiating the difference between showing the best versions of themselves and the authentic lives they lead.**

- | 70% of Millennials choose activities that will give them items to post and almost 1/3 admit they post things that make their life look better than it is
- | 1/3 say brands are as honest as people try to be
- | Millennials say it is ok to publicly share:
  - | Mental illness: 70%
  - | Coming out: 70%
  - | Going to rehab: 55%
  - | Having a miscarriage: 50%

The documentary will air on MTVU Wednesday, April 19 at 5pm with an encore at 9pm, as well as be released in chapter installments at [Viacom Velocity](#). Additionally, Viacom Velocity will host screenings, discussions and workshops of "The Culture of Proximity" for client and partner agencies, internally across Viacom, and at special events including Cannes Lions.

*Quantitative Study Methodology:*

*Qualitative and quantitative research was conducted between Fall 2016 and Winter 2017. Over 5,000 respondents representing multiple generations were surveyed. The statistics cited in the documentary and in this release represent the findings for a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Millennial respondents age 18-34.*

**About Viacom**

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