

Being Media Literate on...



What is TikTok?



TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short videos. The app is used by young people as an outlet to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy, and lip-syncing, and allows users to create videos and share them across a community.

TikTok has a minimum user age of 13 years-old.



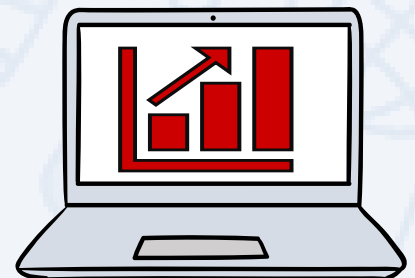
Who Uses TikTok?



It's mostly those under 30, particularly those belonging to Generation Z, the demographic cohort succeeding Millennials. A massive 41 percent of TikTok users are between the ages of 16 and 24.

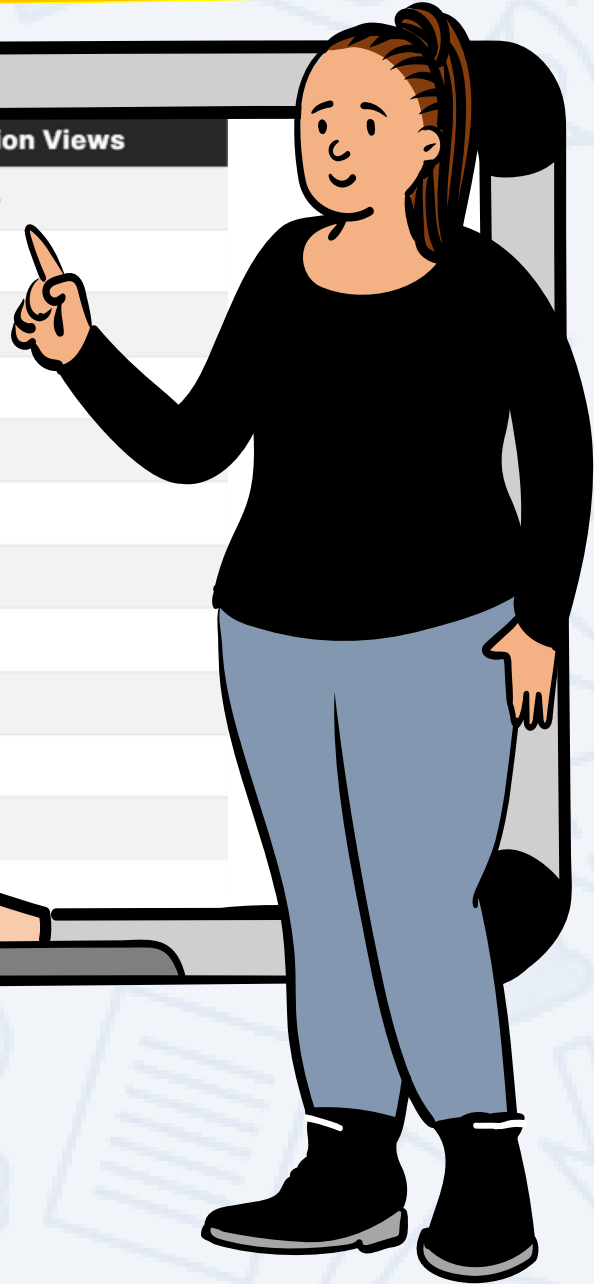
TikTok popularity

TikTok is the 6th most popular social media platform in the world. TikTok has over 1 billion monthly active users, and by the end of 2022 it's predicted this will increase to 1.8 billion.

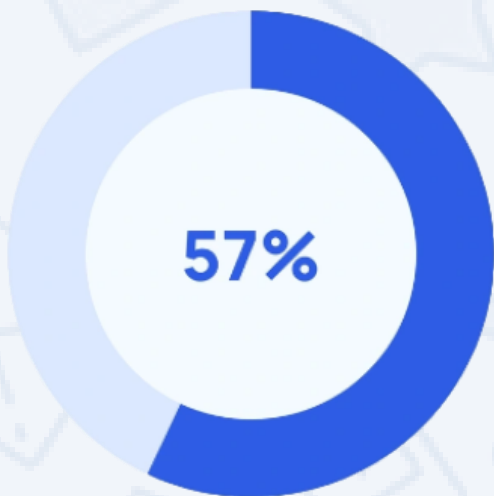


Most watched categories on TikTok*

Category	Billion Views
Entertainment	535
Dance	181
Pranks	79
Fitness/sports	57
Home reno/DIY	39
Beauty/skincare	33
Fashion	27
Recipes/cooking	18
Life hacks/advice etc.	13
Pets	10
Outdoors	2



*Statistics from TikTok



TikTok users by gender*

As of the latest data (January 2022), the majority of TikTok users are female (57%), and 43% are male.

*Statistics from TikTok

Influencers



Influencers are individuals who utilise a variety of social media platforms to express their opinions on specific brands or products, consequently influencing their captive audience.

They have the power to affect the purchase of specific products by reviewing them across platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram among others, effectively

utilising their authority, knowledge, authenticity, leverage or position of power within the industry to engage with their followers.

Product placement is a way of advertising a product by supplying it for use in videos or images.

This is now frequently used on social media platforms, like TikTok, by influencers. In doing so, their videos/images are strategically increasing their own audience, viewing ratings and engagement, but more importantly, they are incentivised and making money in return.

What is product placement?

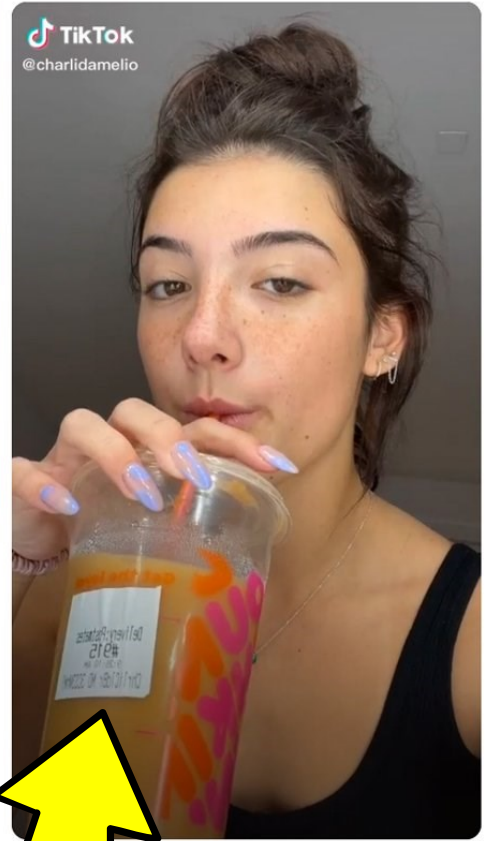




An example of product placement

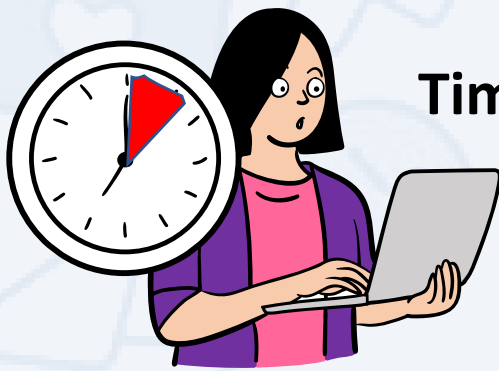
Influencers, such as in the example below, resort to using junk food companies to target children.

The TikTok-star is the social media platform's most-followed person with more than 108 million followers. Keep in mind that about 32 % of TikTok users are between the ages of 10 and 19.



A medium "Charli" has 250 calories and 50 grammes of sugar; a large "Charli" contains 340 calories and 68 grammes of sugar!

"The Charli", a cold brew coffee with whole milk and three pumps of caramel swirl. This will clearly grab young people's attention.

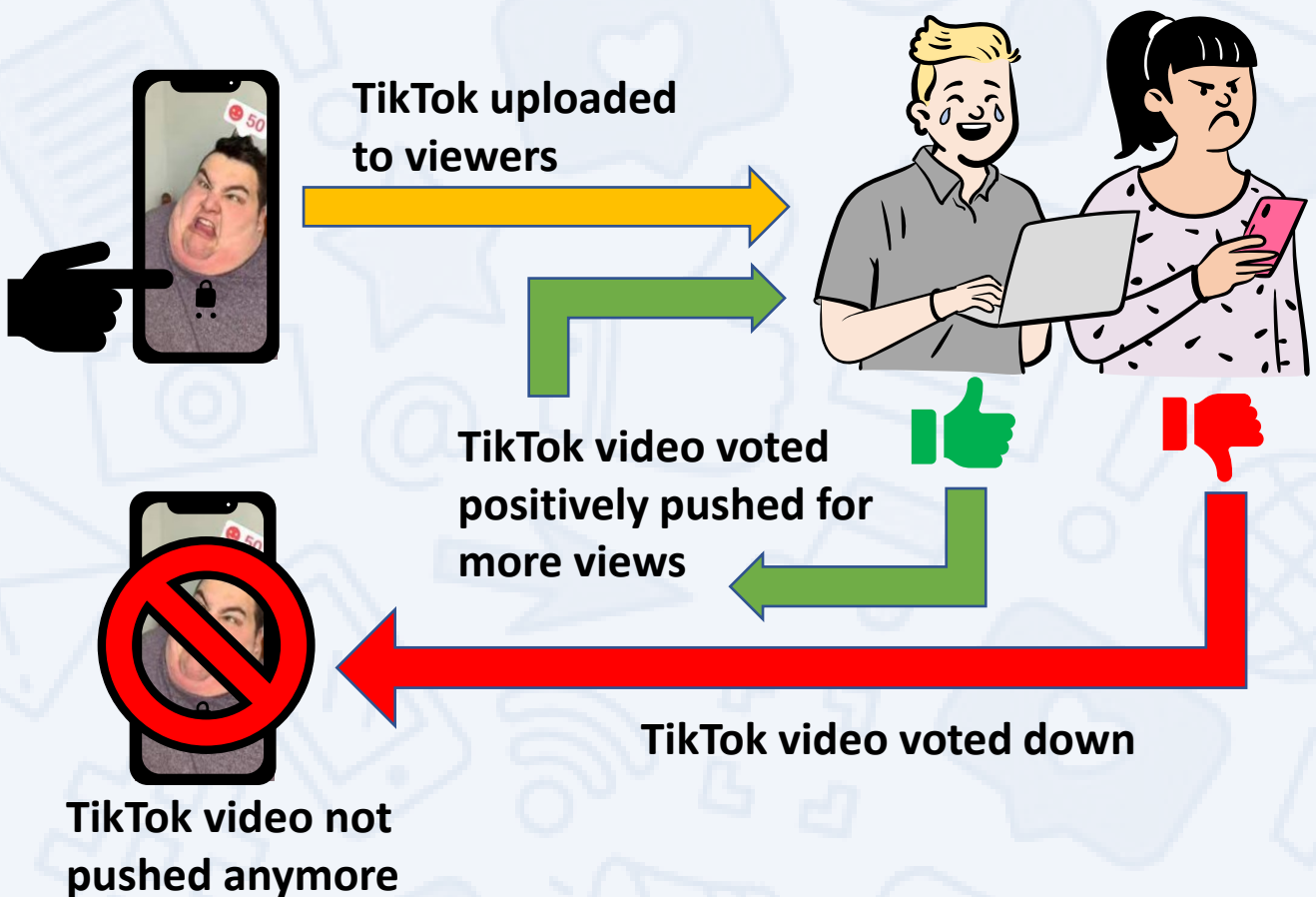


Time spent on TikTok

TikTok users spend an average of 95 minutes per day, that's over 1.5 hours, on the platform.

TikTok's algorithm has long been criticised for leading users down a "content rabbit hole," bringing up similar videos again and again in its main feed (known as the "For You Page") so users are bombarded repeatedly with potentially dangerous content.

How TikTok's Algorithm Works



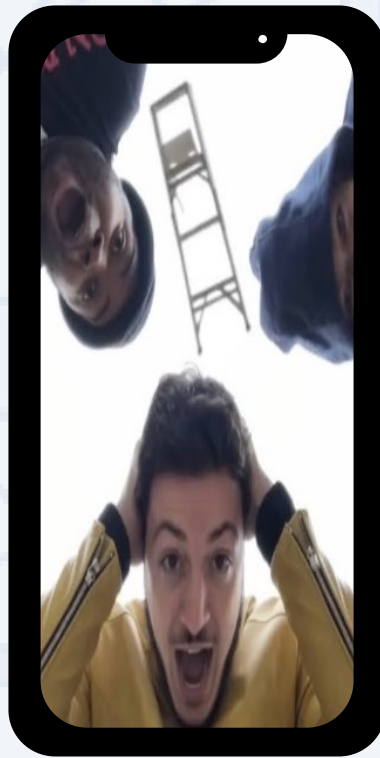


Examples of harmful behaviour

TikTok has worked to reduce its content loop from promoting content that encourages harmful behaviour. However, content creators are finding new ways to exploit the algorithmic flaws to promote their own videos.

Some of these videos are the type that encourage “dares” whereby a viewer is instructed to do something as part of a challenge and record themselves on TikTok whilst doing it.

The screenshots below show how dangerous some of these challenges really are.



Some of these TikTok challenges have resulted in physical injuries and, in some cases, in accidental deaths.



TikTok has a set of [Community Guidelines](#) that all TikTok users must abide to. If a user is in breach of any of the guidelines then they can be reported to TikTok. This can result in videos being taken down or users being banned from the platform.



Disclaimer

Although the information contained in this document forms part of the GRA's Media Literacy Awareness, we must highlight that the GRA has no powers to act when it comes to social media platforms such as TikTok. Therefore, people are encouraged to report any issues directly to the social media platform by following their own complaints procedures.

The GRA's remit is to promote media literacy to bring a better public understanding of how social media platforms work and to help users navigate safely on them.