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How TikTok is Transforming Tech

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### TikTok Transforming Tech

“So if you want to reach 150 Million people, and use 20 people to get there, in a very very fast manner, you can use us... that’s how I pitch it” (The HypeHouse, Entertainment Tonight). The world has never seen this powerful of a grasp on media users and consumers, or further, this level of influence from any form of social media. Normally this type of reach takes millions of advertising dollars and many hours of placement and programming. But a group of teenagers in the Hollywood Hills have figured out how to do this naturally. The HypeHouse, consisting of 20 of the internet's most successful creators and Gen Z’s biggest stars, is a product of the newest, hottest, and fastest growing social media app out there, TikTok. After a quick and explosive rise to fame (literally within weeks), these TikTok stars banded together to create a content house, now known virally as the HypeHouse, where they live, create, and film their lives. They see brand partnerships earning them upwards of \$30,000 per TikTok video, and are collaborating with some of Hollywood’s biggest stars. They are breaking down walls and interrupting silo’s between industries. The HypeHouse, only one tangible example of a TikTok success story, is a testament to the app's rampant growth and how it has taken the media, technology, entertainment, and now music industry, by storm. With now close to 2 billion downloads, TikTok is redefining the social media space one view at a time.

I will be researching and discussing the exponential growth and explosion of the app TikTok. TikTok, owned by Chinese parent company ByteDance, and formally known as Musical.ly, is the leading destination for short-form mobile video. It is the social media platform

that launches viral stars 15 seconds at a time (NPR). Their mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy through 15-second vertical videos. With offices all around the world, the platform has grasped the eyes and hours of users globally, giving rise to new challenges for streamers and other competitors.

In November 2019, TikTok hit 1.5 Billion subscribers, outperforming Instagram (Business Insider), and marking the beginning of a major shift in social media, brand marketing, and digital media consumption overall. “The rise of short video-app TikTok in 2019 is a sure sign that what defines a social network will be very different in 2020” (Emarketer). TikTok was the most downloaded app in Q1 2020, “making it the most downloaded non-gaming app worldwide, according to Sensor Tower, a mobile app store data analytics firm... TikTok is the only app that’s not owned by Facebook to grace the top five downloads in the rankings.” (Forbes). Downloads of TikTok in March 2020 represented a 98.4 percent increase from March 2019 (Sensor Tower). Now, TikTok has nearly 2 Billion downloads (Business Insider) and is currently the fastest growing social media application and platform. It is almost as if COVID-19 was a blessing in disguise for TikTok - having people quarantined at home, bored, and looking to mindlessly scroll, landed TikTok as their perfect destination.

Let’s get some history on this powerhouse of an app. TikTok was initially launched as ‘Douyin’ in September 2016, in China. The following year, in 2017, the app was launched by it’s parent company, ByteDance, for markets outside of China (10 TikTok Statistics, Oberlo). Back around 2015, the western market had a very similar app, called Musical.ly, which was quickly adopted by American teenagers as a lip syncing app. “By July 2015, Musical.ly had built a substantial following, and surpassed Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram in the iOS popularity

list.” In 2016 their success heightened as they were able to legitimize themselves with a deal with Warner Music Group in 2016, licensing its music for use in Musical.ly streams (Influencer Marketing Hub). In November 2017, TikTok’s parent company ByteDance, purchased Musical.ly for an undisclosed amount, predicted around \$1 Billion. “As a result of the merger, TikTok had smooth access to targeting the US teenage market which previously belonged to Musical.ly” (Oberlo). Since the apps joined together, here has been a meteoric rise of TikTok in a relatively short period. This is partly due to smart marketing by parent company, ByteDance. “The story of TikTok is a tale of two halves” (Influencer Marketing Hub). They took two semi successful apps, one from the east and one from the west, and merged them to create something even better. They have advertised TikTok virtually everywhere that young people’s eyes are – including opposition social sites, such as Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube (Influencer Marketing Hub). This brings us to today, where TikTok is globally known, and has been able to further legitimize themselves with major partnerships, brand deals and an unparalleled reach.

So, Why is it so popular? The platform has seen immense growth over the past year, and further, six months. I will later dive into the actual numbers and driving forces for its growth, but on the surface level, the app has seen so much success because of how attractive it is to users. The platform caters to everyone. From niche hobbies to dance trends that go viral, whether you are pop culture and media obsessed or have specific interests, there is something for everyone. It is also creating a brand new space not only for creators, but also for businesses. The edge that the app has is that no one really understands it. While this can provide challenges for advertisers and partners, it also is extremely attractive in terms of opportunity and unknown brand value.

One reason for TikTok's success and edge is that the app is completely driven by user generated content. It is authentic. "Snap CEO Evan Spiegel said in January that he believes TikTok will surpass Instagram in the not too distant future. The reason? No social posturing (in other words, no faking it) but real talent is on show. "People who have spent a couple hours learning a new dance or think about a funny new creative way to tell a story, and they're really making media to entertain other people," he said" (News 18). While many other platforms have this component of UGC and have seen success, like Youtube for example, it is interesting to note how TikTok is one of the first platforms where this business model has caught on. Youtube is very successful, but it's devoted viewers are a specific and niche group, whereas TikTok has somehow broken down those barriers of viewers.

An article in Medium called 'TikTok: the power of user generated content', discusses how TikTok has learned to utilize the best tactics to reach audiences, one of those tactics being user generated content. "Marketing for Gen Z must be S-I-N-C - Short-Form, Influencer Driven, Native and Co-Created. Users are aware of their ability to impact the community and TikTok uses it for good" (Medium).

With user generated content being the driver of content on the app, TikTok promotes a message of equality. Everyone can be a creator. The all inclusive environment gives every user equal opportunity to showcase their content, and also promotes a space where people want to create what they enjoy, without the pressure of having to live up to standards. This also leads into the different types of users that the app holds. There are creators, and there are viewers. Many people just have the app to consume content and scroll endlessly, without ever making or

posting content. Others have the app for that sole purpose, and even use it as a source of personal brand marketing and income. TikTok presents many options, which is one reason for its victory.

With TikTok, everyone has an equal chance to go viral. This is extremely attractive to users, especially in our day and age of influencers and online celebrities, because on other platforms like Instagram and Youtube, it is difficult to build up a following. Because of the way that the TikTok app is designed and integrated, (unless you are previously verified or an already well-established celebrity joining the app), everyone starts from square one. The algorithm, data and technical features within the app then drive traffic.

Features within the app further promote the idea of equal chance for success, like the “for you page”. The platform interface features two different pages on the home screen: the “for you page”, which is a feed of ever-changing content from users all over the world. The strong TikTok algorithm feeds you content that you will like, but the for you page features randomizes users, ranging from very few followers, to some of the most well known users with millions. This means that anyone can show up on your for you page, and everyone has an equal chance of reaching users worldwide. There is also the home page of “following”, which shows you only accounts that you follow. Both of these features allow users to best tailor their own viewing experience, while offering endless content with just the swipe of a finger.

An example of a user who started from the bottom, just like any of us, is Charli D’amelio. Charli D’amelio is now the most popular creator on TikTok with over 49 million followers (the most on the platform). 15-year-old Connecticut native has seen her rise to fame in under 5 months, and has taken over as the most popular teen on the internet. She joined the app in June 2019, boasting under 30 followers, only being her school friends. Her first post was a duet with a

pre-existing account, and after that went viral, she gained 5 million followers within a month. Since then, it has only gone up (Insider). “D’Amelio choreographs her own dances and posts several TikToks a day, some of which include lip sync videos, vlogs, and more casual takes of her doing various activities' ' (Insider). She held her first meet and greet in her home town in November 2019, had the opportunity to dance on stage at the Jonas Brothers World Tour, and started gaining more and more recognition. She then created her own merchandise, Youtube Channel, and her internet stardom really exploded after she joined the Hype House in December. In January, her entire family (she, her older sister, mother and father) signed with talent agency UTA. In February, she wrapped up her first major commercial venture, a Super bowl commercial. She has since been seen on Ellen, Jimmy Fallon, and other major news platforms, and partnered with brands such as Dunkin Donuts, Prada, UNICEF, Disney and the World Health Organization. Charli D’amelio is the prime example of a user who has seen skyrocketed success in a short amount of time, parallel to the growth of the TikTok app overall. However, each day more and more users are gaining followings, brand deals and online fame because of the power of user generated content.

Something interesting to note about the TikTok app and overall reach is how greatly the demographic has shifted in such a short period of time. Originally their target age was 18-24, but has since expanded to many different age groups and demographics - there is something for everyone. When the app first started really gaining popularity in Fall 2019, the demographic was primarily younger users - say around age 12 to 18, pure Gen Z. Now as the app has developed and given more rise to the social media scene in general, the demographic is starting to fall closer to their target age. 41 percent of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24, with roughly 50% of

TikTok's global audience being under the age of 34 (Omnicores Agency). The gender demographics seem to be split nearly 50/50 between male and female. Wallaroo says that "If your brand's target audience includes anyone between the age 13 and 30, you should be on TikTok right now" (Wallaroo). While TikTok's demographic has expanded, this shows another reason why they are a powerful force, shifting how media is consumed and created among numerous audiences.

I spoke earlier about some features that stand out that really drive traffic and different ways of measuring success on the app, like the 'for you page'. However, the app holds various notable features which stand out to content creators. For example, first, duetting. You can duet another user's video, which would then put both of your videos side by side into one. This is a great way to enhance co-creation, an aspect of SINC (the best tactic to market to Gen Z as according to Medium). Duetting allows you to create content off the back of someone else - whether it be a random user or your favorite brand or influencer. This helps promote someone else's content while also promoting yourself, and can also help spearhead views and impressions. Fanbytes, a brand marketing engagement platform, discussed how duetting is one of the strongest features within the app. "If your brand is looking to become viral on TikTok - one of the best ways to do this is to try and shape a duet challenge. Challenges as a whole are a massive part of TikTok culture - but Duet Challenges are special in the fact that they inherently demand user generated content - which is really the strongest form of engagement you can get on social today. If you're using influencers to advertise on TikTok, Duet's are a great way to massively increase your maximum reach - you're no longer capped by the influencers following. Now people can experience your content from any of the users taking part in a duet with the



influencer” (Fanbytes). It seems like TikTok provides us all the tools to be a revenue machine - and has created astronomical measures to reach audiences like never before. Other features in the app include editing videos with special effects, filters (many of which are user made and uploaded, which adds another dimension to the idea of user generated content), on-text video, and sounds. With all of these features being mainly user generated, the app is essentially set up to be for users, and by users. It has taken the social media experience to a new level.

Another feature in the app, probably the most important one, is the algorithm. From my own first hand experience, and having been a user of the app since its inception as Muscial.ly, I can most definitely say that I have seen the algorithm improve so much over time, especially over the last 4-6 months. “The TikTok algorithm is mysterious, powerful, and frustrating. It finds and promotes quality content with superhuman accuracy” (Kapwing). A consumer tech and lifestyle communications blog broke down in simpler terms how TikTok’s algorithm works, one that has challenged many of media’s best: “TikTok is using machine learning to evaluate the quality of every video uploaded. Good content = social success. When a video is uploaded, TikTok shows it to a small number of users in between popular trending videos. This way, the user doesn’t get bored. The algorithm then measures how much of your video is actually watched, as well as how many likes, comments, and shares it gets. It’s the viral videos that ultimately act as the carrot on the stick, hooking users to watch more, and more, and more... The sweet spot ratio brands or users should aim for is one “like” for every 10 views, which triggers the algorithm to show your video to more people. In essence, the algorithm is triggered by the velocity of the engagement it receives. Content that gets less than that 1/10 like to view ratio will stop growing. The beauty of TikTok is that you don’t need a strong following to go viral.

Anyone can record a video, upload it into TikTok and start getting views based on this algorithm” (Understanding the TikTok algorithm, Ranieri).

One last aspect of the TikTok app that has greatly developed through its popularity, is challenges. TikTok places a huge emphasis on challenges which can also be known as trends. These are even featured on TikTok’s discover page, which features the most popular trends and challenges each day, and shows the number of impressions (usually over 1 billion for each one), further highlighting the vast volume and reach of this social media platform. The focus of challenges and trends ties back to the idea that the app is almost completely generated and controlled by its users. These challenges allow for a lot of interactivity, and frankly, have changed the whole social media scene. The New York Times released an article named ‘How TikTok is rewriting the world’. They noted how “TikTok will change the way your social media works — even if you’re avoiding it” (New York Times). This shows that even if you are not using the actual app, the way in which the platform has now shaped social media challenges and the power of trends, it will begin to infiltrate all social platforms, shifting the whole media scene. The power of trends on TikTok are unparalleled to anything we have ever seen before. Within minutes, a trend can go viral, reaching users worldwide and becoming the most talked about thing for days on end. Some of the most notable trends on TikTok recently have included the #fyp, the renegade dance, and whipped coffee. Users will put the hashtag #fyp on their videos, hoping that it will gain more eyes in front of their content, landing on someone’s for you page. The hashtag #fyp has 1496.9 BILLION views. Next, the renegade dance. The trend can be traced back to fall 2019 and has been done at least over 35 million times, and been reported on by platforms as big as the NBA, New York Times, Ellen, and even Michelle Obama. Renegade’s

rise to popularity was also one of the driving factors which skyrocketed TikTok as a dance app. One more notable trend that gained massive recognition, especially through March 2020 (during Quarantine), is the whipped coffee trend. This is a recipe that went viral and had users all over the world making this whipped coffee.

While all of these trends have become benchmarks of TikTok's rise, there is more to it than just the hashtag or video. Each one of these videos has a sound behind it. This then brings us to how TikTok has almost single handedly taken over the music industry. Just as quickly as users adapt to trends, so do the music charts. The app has become a hitmaker. Sometimes it can bring starving artists up from the bottom, and sometimes it will bring back a hit of the past and land it right back at number one on the charts. Almost every song on the top charts right now, whether it be Billboard, Apple Music, Spotify, has had some presence on TikTok. And vice versa, every song that backs a TikTok trend on the app has seen major growth in the music charts. Most people don't like to admit it - when a song comes on the radio or on the Top 100 and you hear "oh this is from TikTok", many quickly argue that it's not FROM TikTok. Maybe it didn't originate on the app, but the app has surely been the tool to launch it right back up to number 1. "While TikTok has the power to expose the world to new music, it can even dig up blasts from the past, allowing them to make a comeback" (Pipe Dream). The insane reach that TikTok has allows music to explode in the media scene, and stretch to new audiences like never before.

"Forbes writes of Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road," explaining, "The track, which holds the title as the longest-reigning Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 in the chart's history, first went viral on the popular social media video app, TikTok.... It is incredible to think that Lil Nas X, a 20-year-old

who just won two Grammys, was propelled to fame by TikTok” (Pipe Dream). Lil Nas X is one example of a top charting artist who is a complete product of TikTok. Others include Megan Thee Stallion, Doja Cat, BENEE, Roddy Ricch, to name a few.

Although this is all very recent, the immense impact of TikTok on the music industry is already starting to show in the release of new music. “While TikTok users are crafting their videos to fit the punchy songs spreading on the platform, musicians are also tailoring their songs to suit the format” (NPR). It is now common to hear a song that sounds as if it was created for the sole purpose of a TikTok video - punchy, drama filled bops that allow for animated choreography and with a catchy thirst to go viral. Alyssa Bereznack argues that artists are beginning to adapt to this shift already; “Artists are very savvy, and they know that they need to rise above the noise,” she says. “And in some cases, that means catering to the latest hot social network.” The newest development now is that artists are using the app to make their songs hits on TikTok before they are even released. A snippet of Drake’s song “Toosie Slide”, released on TikTok before it was released on music platforms, quickly became a TikTok trend and dance, and the #ToosieSlide amassed several million videos, tags and views before Drake even made the track available on streaming services (Rolling Stone). Not only the social media space is being altered by TikTok’s growth, but also the music industry.

When I was discussing trends earlier, it is important to note that these TikTok trends exist in many different genres of content creation. And users don’t seem to have a problem with it. While Musical.ly was originally a platform for users to lip-sync and dance, this has given way for TikTok to only capitalize on that. The TikTok rebrand broadened the app’s horizons to more: dancing, viral challenges, lip dubbing, comedy - “funny, shareable videos with a potentially

“viral” quality, only in tight, digestible time frames: 15 seconds or less” (Parade). While the app primarily gained popularity for dance videos, and that is still a huge element, it has since evolved into comedy, cooking, art, health, and more, with so many genres to cater to many different audiences. Because the app is driven completely by user generated content, users have been able to capitalize on what they want to see, the content they want to consume, and how they can work on building their own accounts. As mentioned earlier, on TikTok there is something for everyone. To name a few areas and genres that have seen a lot of growth and content creation: The app has a diverse portfolio of users, creators, and content. Some of the most mainstream trends fall within dance, but everyday we see different areas grow. For example, there is a huge space for the health and fitness community, featuring videos such as short at-home workouts, and ‘what I eat in a day’ videos. This attracts health professionals also, such as dietitians and nutritionists, who help bash the health rumours and keep everything 100. We have also seen a rise in the art and music community, with art tutorials, endless singing videos, trends and mashups, and a lot of singing duets. The cooking community has a huge hold on TikTok with short, easy cooking recipes, one being the infamous whipped coffee trend, or the 5-ingredient peanut butter cookies. The makeup community has also created a space for themselves, almost as an extension of youtube, and is allowing for smaller beauty gurus to also get their foot in the door. Other genres include lifestyle, vloggers, and of course, comedy. “All this being said, TikTok can be utilized by us in more ways than we can imagine. We can use it to popularize our favorite songs, find new cooking recipes, learn ASL and so much more. I definitely have a new respect for the app after watching it propel some of my favorite artists from anonymity to stardom” (Pipe Dream).

While there is something for everyone on TikTok, this has also paved the way for a new dimension and hub for brand marketing and advertiser opportunities. They have the capability to reach so many eyes all at once, and can generalize their reach or have it directly shown to niche audiences. This is the newest Gen Z marketing strategy. Depending on their reach, some TikTok stars can make up to \$200,000 for a sponsored post. TikTok has seen sponsorships with some of the world's most powerful brands; 19 year old Addison Rae just landed a partnership with NBCUniversal's Trolls movie (TikTok), and Charli D'amelio has worked with Disney Channel, Dunkin Donuts, and even the World Health Organization. While this marketing tactic creates huge opportunities and big bucks for creators, it also has opened new doors on the brand side and for advertisers. It seems as if everyone these days is gaga for TikTok. Maybe it's because of quarantine, or maybe the app entered the playing field at exactly the right angle. "And with the advertising floodgates wide open, brands are too. Chipotle, Nike, Skittles, Fenty Beauty, Pepsi, and Universal Pictures are among the many companies that have already been lured by TikTok's warpspeed success" (Hootsuite). Influencer Marketing Hub has compiled reasons that they attribute to TikTok's success, specifically for brands. First, they use a data driven approach, which allows brands to understand important data around influencer metrics and demographics before doing a campaign, and therefore re-defining how these may look. Next, TikTok is treated like TV, which sets it apart from other social media platforms, because it creates more of an experience. This is attractive to users, creators, brands, and most importantly, advertisers. Lastly, the TikTok interface and platform really highlights putting a face to the brand, and emphasizing the purpose of influencers; "Unfortunately, brands don't have a face, but people do. So, providing insight into your company culture and showing the real and diverse faces of your

brand can provide users the ideal space to connect with you”. This emphasizes the authenticity factor, while creating a seamless user experience.

Another huge driver for the app is cross platform sharing. Part of TikTok’s growth is due to the fact that a lot of the content on TikTok doesn’t just stay on TikTok. “ In many cases, users share their content on other social networks like Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Instagram. Integration for sharing on these apps and others is built in” (Hootsuite). This cross platform sharing allows for the content and short videos to gain a lot more exposure, reach new audiences and people who do not have the TikTok app itself, and further increase traction, views and brand awareness.

A major catalyst for TikTok’s growth has been COVID-19. “CORONAVIRUS QUARANTINE APPEARS TO BE DRIVING A GLOBAL TIKTOK DOWNLOAD BOOM” (Music Business Worldwide). With large parts of the US being ordered to stay at home, and with consumers looking for ways to entertain themselves while doing so, TikTok has become the place to be. This has manifested in many different ways; “a 27 percent increase in the first 23 days of March compared to February with 6.2 million downloads” (NewsWeek), many users itching to go viral, as well as the rise of new trends and a huge flow of Coronavirus content - how users are staying #happyathome, new tips and tricks, as well as some very out of the box entertainment. The explosive rise of TikTok can be directly tied to the coronavirus pandemic timeline.

Even the World Health Organization is on TikTok, if that tells you anything. The WHO took to TikTok to utilize it as a tool to best reach the audiences, and communicate with them in a way in which they would listen and be receptive. Generally, millennials and Gen Z’ers are

demographics that in the past have been nearly impossible to reach, measure and track their media behavior and trends. No one seems to be able to put a finger on their habits and behavior, probably due to the fast-paced and ever changing media environment that we live in. With that being said, many brands have started to use TikTok as an advertising platform to best reach these audiences. Most recently, the WHO took advantage of this platform in the best way possible. In the middle of a pandemic, they realized that communicating with the younger generations through TikTok would be the best way to reach them and speak to them in a language they understand. “The World Health Organization is on TikTok. Sh\*t just got real. As in, some real information from a reputable source has finally made its way to the popular social media platform... The United Nations’ health agency debuted on TikTok with a couple of dry, but enlightening, public service announcements about coronavirus in an attempt to reach teens with reliable information.” (Forbes).

Following the WHO, other health brands and officials are also catching on and utilizing the power of influencers, like TikTok made celebrity Charli D'amelio, to get us through COVID-19. P&G teamed up with D’amelio to create the “Distance Dance”, a dance challenge to promote social distancing. This is now the 15 year olds most-watched video on the platform, with 189 million views. While this challenge would enforce social distancing and health precautions, it was also a fundraising campaign for organizations that are serving populations that have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Smart, right?

While TikTok has seen such exponential growth and success over the past few months, it is important to note that just like every trend we see on social media, nothing lasts forever. Social media platforms usually see an apex in usage and have a shelf life before the newer, bigger, and



better platform comes along. In the fast paced media environment that we live in, change is inevitable. With all of this in mind, TikTok does face some possible risks.

First comes the issue of privacy. There has definitely been issues with privacy and online safety. The app is owned by a Chinese company which has raised a lot of questions regarding cybersecurity. In November 2019, the app was under national security review (New York Times), and the media giant has faced some legal issues, with claims that they “have been illegally and secretly harvesting vast amounts of personally identifiable user data and sending it to China” (Cnet). Lawyers have alleged that “TikTok's lighthearted fun comes at a heavy cost,” (Cnet), only one example of the growing security concerns surrounding TikTok. However, the media giant quickly responded to save their reputation and ensure their 1.5 billion users of their internet safety. “Social media app TikTok is launching a content moderation center in a bid to boost transparency, the Chinese company said on Wednesday, as it faces scrutiny from U.S. lawmakers who have accused it of sharing user data with the Chinese government” (Reuters). The Washington Post, however, reveals that they believe Gen Z users will keep using TikTok even if they don’t trust it. Despite the growing privacy concerns, it doesn’t look like TikTok is going anywhere anytime soon, unless we see some receipts.

Another risk that is two-fold, is the threats of TikTok on Silicon Valley. Big tech is worried. NPR reports that “As TikTok grows in popularity, it’s also setting off alarms in Silicon Valley”. Similarly, the New York Times states that “Teens love TikTok. Silicon Valley is trying to stage an intervention”. Apparently, Facebook is really feeling the heat. According to an NPR article, “CEO Mark Zuckerberg has really seized on TikTok as a foil. So he touts Facebook as an American company with American values versus TikTok as a company that reflects China's

interests” (NPR). As a new player in the field, and one that has grown in the manner that it did, it’s no question that the media giant is already finding its enemies. The new kid on the block. TikTok has now opened an office in Silicon Valley, adding to its inventory of offices globally, like in New York, LA, Beijing, Germany, London, and more. Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook expressed her concern, noting that “In the world of tech, we compete for every minute of your attention. Every day you pick up your phone, I mean my kids pick up the phone and they're on TikTok," (News 18). This means less eyes on pre-existing socials, and more on TikTok - the new kid. While this is fabulous for TikTok and parent company ByteDance, they are most certainly causing some turbulence in the tech scene.

One last threat that TikTok faces is future competition. With privacy concerns in mind, as well as the knowledge that social media platforms tend to have a shelf life and trends come and go within seconds, TikTok is bound to have some competition. It is interesting to analyze: Is the app something that’s easy to copy? If someone comes in with the same product, a bigger user base, wider reach, better security, and perhaps it is a platform that is more trustworthy because it is owned by a U.S. company, then what? Is TikTok substitutable? Sustainable? TikTok must not be myopic. They must have their 2020 lenses on (ha!) and be ready for whatever is to come, if they want to stay at the top. Next, there is the first mover effect. TikTok was the first mover. Originally Musical.ly, now TikTok; they moved first. They were ahead of the curve, and able to predict what trends and media behaviors would be best received. They were first in this new area of media consumption, but there will be competition ahead. What will this look like? It is very interesting to examine the balance between the platforms quick rise to success, with the

ever-changing media environment that we live in, full scope; threats, opportunities, partners, and more.

In conclusion, TikTok is big news. Even more so now with COVID19, it is the place to be, however that looks for you; whether you are a viewer, a creator, an advertiser, or even part of the late majority just now joining the app. TikTok is posing big questions for everyone. While it is shifting the media landscape, tech scene and business and marketing models, it is also creating a plethora of opportunities for every single user.

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