


Special section: TikTok Methodologies


Guest editors: Crystal Abidin and Jin Lee

Key Concepts and Research Methods to Analyze TikTok Journalism

JORGE VÁZQUEZ-HERRERO

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain; jorge.vazquez@usc.es,  0000-0002-9081-3018

MARÍA-CRUZ NEGREIRA-REY

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain; cruz.negreira@usc.es,  0000-0001-8945-2641

DANIEL KLUG

Carnegie Mellon University, USA; dklug@cs.cmu.edu,  0000-0003-2320-3321

Keywords: TikTok, journalism, research methods, content analysis, quantitative analysis, user studies

Abstract: In this paper, we propose a mixed methodological approach to frame journalism research on the emerging platform TikTok. We define the parameters and objects of study that can be analyzed in the framework of TikTok journalism and adapt the most commonly used methods in social media research, designing qualitative and quantitative methods to build mixed methodologies that are necessary to address complex objects of study. We present a phased method for data collection, a multidimensional analysis of content and messages on TikTok, and the implementation of user studies, qualitative interviews and surveys. Finally, we propose a framework for the development of future lines of research in TikTok journalism, from the perspectives of content, audiences, technology and platform, and business and strategy. All this occurs at an early stage in which TikTok journalism is dealing with adaptation to trends, social media logic and journalism values.



OPEN ACCESS

Copyright: © 2023 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Cultural Science Journal is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Erfurt University, Tallinn University and Sciendo.

Introduction

The emergence of new social media platforms transforms methods of communication and relationships, and also impacts the dynamics of journalism itself (Bruns 2018; Hermida 2012). Journalists in digital media must produce and distribute content with a high pace on a growing number of platforms, in working conditions that depend on the political and economic structures of their media organizations (Cohen 2019). The consolidation of a new conversation space or a new technology requires renewed approaches to contribute to an advancement of the field of knowledge. We focus on the case of TikTok as a highly popular short-video social media platform (Kaye, Chen, and Zeng 2021) that has aroused great interest in academia for its popularity (Zeng, Abidin, and Schäfer 2021) and its distinctive logic – shared with Douyin – which also influences the creative process (Kaye, Chen, and Zeng 2021). The circulation of content on TikTok is closely linked to virality and it is characterized by the recommendation algorithm, its challenges and agile, visual language with musical features. In the field of journalism, the first studies on media and journalists on TikTok appeared in 2020, but the interest and need for research has grown as TikTok is an increasingly popular and relevant platform in the journalistic profession. This implies a shift in the academic subfield of TikTok journalism that requires adjusted methods and analytical approaches and instruments.

We understand ‘TikTok journalism’ as journalistic content that is specifically and intentionally produced for this platform. Therefore, TikTok journalism content shows a high degree of adaptation to audiovisual styles and modes of presentation that are characteristic of TikTok. Furthermore, ‘journalism on TikTok’ in general refers to any type of journalistic content that circulates on this platform, for example, content that was replicated from other channels or news sources or content that does not apply specific adjustments to the logic of TikTok videos. Consequently, both terms can be used, but TikTok journalism more specifically describes the concept of journalistic content that adapts to TikTok’s platform characteristics¹ and eventually beyond to other platforms and channels.

In this article we address TikTok journalism research with the following objectives:

- O1: Define an analysis sheet with parameters for the objects of study that can be approached on TikTok from the field of journalism.
- O2: Adapt quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches to apply mixed-method designs to research TikTok journalism.
- O3: Propose different perspectives from which to study TikTok journalism and establish future lines of research.

We, therefore, position our research within the framework of journalism and media studies. We first provide background on the most common methodological approaches in social media research, then discuss the characteristics and functionality of TikTok, and review previous work on analyzing journalism on the platform. In this way, we can evaluate how methodologies have been adapted for researching different social media platforms, particularly TikTok, and which methods and topics have so far been used to study journalism on TikTok.

¹ Adaptation of the news to the agile, brief and entertaining style of TikTok. An example of TikTok Journalism can be an explainer video that uses the sound tag with a popular song and is adapted to a trend on the platform. Also, videos with a summary of news of the day or where a journalist tells us about what happens behind the cameras. *The Washington Post* profile (with more than 1.5 million followers) uses humor and everyday situations in the news media as the common thread of its presence on TikTok, also known by its description ‘We are a newspaper’, targeting a new audience.

We formulate four methodological approaches to study TikTok journalism and we propose a journalistic analysis framework in the platform. These methods are based on how they relate to the field of communication studies, how they can be adapted to research objects that are relevant at this early stage of researching TikTok journalism, and the characteristic content, structure and communicative logic of the platform. All methods have been previously applied and tested in research. First, we propose a phased method for data collection and exploration on TikTok to search for profiles of media outlets, journalists, news programs, or news contents. Next, we discuss content analysis as an approach to better understand the function of messages on TikTok in relation to journalism, and quantitative methods to measure metrics relevant for analyzing TikTok journalism. We discuss forms of qualitative interviews and surveys as methods to analyze user related perspectives on TikTok journalism. Finally, we establish a framework for future studies involving the convergence of the journalistic field and the TikTok platform.

Background

Social media and journalism

News media and journalists have arrived in social media platforms and developed new routines and rules to operate, for example, on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. They have adjusted to different platform logics and modified their journalistic production, distribution and consumption processes (Klinger and Svensson 2015; Van Dijck and Poell 2013). This entails the adaptation of languages, formats, aesthetics, and forms of interaction specific to each platform (Hermida and Mellado 2020), as well as an understanding of the values that determine the shareability of content (Harcup and O'Neill 2017), and the codes that allow news media and journalists to connect emotionally with audiences (Wahl-Jorgensen 2020).

Methods for social media research

The use of social media platforms for journalistic purposes by media outlets and professionals coincided with academic study of its impact on communication. Mixed methods (Snelson 2016) have been applied to a wide variety of research objects and purposes (Kapoor et al. 2018), combining big and broad data analysis (Sloan and Quan-Haase 2017) with qualitative research based on small corpuses (Latzko-Toth, Bonneau, and Millette 2017). Research moved from opportunities to use social media platforms' APIs (application programming interfaces) to obtain large volumes of data (Lomborg and Bechmann 2014) to major technology companies increasingly restricting such access (Bruns 2019), which forced researchers to explore new sources and ways of sampling (Venturini and Rogers 2019). At the same time, limited access to such data is occasionally allowed through agreements between companies and researchers. The challenge still lies in adapting digital methods to the characteristics of each social media platform, especially because visual content now prevails over textual (Hutchinson 2016). Therefore, the conceptual and methodological framework must be adapted to the logic of each social media platform, which is essential to understand how it affects the practice of journalism and its rules (Hermida and Mellado 2020).

Facebook and Twitter were among the first social media platforms studied by scholars from different areas, defining specific research objects and mixed-method designs for each platform (Wilson, Gosling, and Graham 2012; Zimmer and Proferes 2014). For example, previous research applied new forms of sampling Twitter data for content analysis (Kim et al. 2018) or combined quantitative and qualitative methods for big and small data analysis (Pal and Gonawela 2017). The adaptation of methods and techniques is a complex issue when studying characteristics specific to

the functionality of each platform, such as algorithmic content selection criteria on Facebook (DeVito 2017) or the tracking of hashtags on Twitter in news coverage and discussion (Bruns and Burgess 2012).

Other social media platforms like Instagram also turned out to be difficult for data collection and analysis (Yang 2021), or for data mining in mixed-methods fieldwork or case studies (Cornelio and Roig 2020). For example, Instagram presents a challenge for the analysis of its content, its language, and the ethical implications involved because its content is predominately visual (Highfield and Leaver 2016; McCrow-Young 2021). Some studies designed instruments to analyze user activity on Instagram around hashtags (Highfield and Leaver 2014), or the ephemeral content of Instagram Stories (Bainotti, Caliandro, and Gandini 2020; Vázquez-Herrero, Direito-Rebollal, and López-García 2019; Villaespesa and Wowkowych 2020), which had already been addressed with similar methods on Snapchat (Kannenbergh and Sousa 2017).

The development of research applied to these social media platforms has required the design of specific methods adapted to the functionalities of each platform. TikTok has different features, which are detailed in the next section. Early studies in the field of journalism on the platform are addressed in the section *Previous Research on TikTok Journalism*. This platform requires an exploration of new methodological approaches for data collection, content analysis, metrics, and user behavior on the platform, which we present in the *Methodological Approaches* section of this article.

TikTok: Platform characteristics and features

TikTok is a social entertainment platform on which users can create and engage with short-form video content through likes, shares, comments and specific app features (e.g., 'duet', 'stitch') which allow users to remix others' content. As of June 2022, TikTok reported around 1.7 billion monthly users worldwide (Statista, 2021b), who in the U.S. are predominantly aged from 10 to 29 years (Statista, 2021a). TikTok started as a lightweight and funny video creation app but has since turned into a platform that incorporates, for example, health information (Basch et al. 2021), social activism content (Le Compte and Klug 2021; Subramanian 2021), or informative news content (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020) provided by the accounts of legacy newspapers, digital native news outlets, or news channels (Newman et al. 2020).

TikTok videos commonly run around 15 seconds and up to 10 minutes and are often based on popular sounds or music provided by the app or on original sounds created and uploaded or remixed by users (Lu and Lu 2019). TikTok videos are mostly characterized by trending visual or performative elements, such as filters or memes with additional text elements, hashtags and video captions (Zulli and Zulli 2020). They are often minimally edited, single takes, and direct addresses or presentations of users as video authors (Kennedy 2020). However, depending on the subject or trend, TikTok videos can also present rather complex narrative structures or feature third-party material or prepared content to communicate messages beyond viral trends. By default, TikTok shows users video feeds on their 'For You' Page which are generated individually by the platforms' recommendation algorithm based on previous and continuous interaction with the presented content of any user (Klug et al. 2021). Videos by users they follow are presented on a separate 'Following' page, and videos by the latter can also appear in the 'For You' Page feed (Simpson and Semaan 2021).

Previous Research on TikTok Journalism

Research on the practice of TikTok journalism is still in its early stages, but the platform has attracted growing interest from the academia. A systematic literature review on Web of Science, Scopus and

Google Scholar – following the parameters in Table 1 – allows for a well-informed selection of published works on this topic.

Source	Search	Result	Final sample
Web of Science	TOPIC (tiktok AND (journalism OR news))	16 documents	11 documents*
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (tiktok AND (journalism OR news))	17 documents	
Google Scholar	intitle:tiktok AND (journalism OR news)	348 documents	

Table 1. Systematized bibliographic review (October 26, 2021).

* About TikTok journalism (1st review: title and abstract; 2nd review: full text); only articles, conferences, book chapters and books.

For example, some of the reviewed studies point out that the language, aesthetics and dynamics of TikTok, that is, hashtags, challenges and sound tagging, have been adopted by news media and programs (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and Rodríguez-Vázquez 2021). Moreover, prior research shows that TikTok indeed comprises content that brings journalism closer to young people (Marx 2020) by utilizing narratives, formats and its relationship with audiences (Apesteuguía 2021; Sidorenko-Bautista et al. 2020). Furthermore, previous research demonstrates that while journalists and news media use TikTok to distribute information, they also post funny and silly videos and promotional messages and participate in viral trends and challenges (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020). TV channels and programs mostly use TikTok as an extension of the television experience (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and Rodríguez-Vázquez 2021) since young people are less engaged in traditional media.

However, the emergence of TikTok journalism poses challenges due to the predominance of entertainment content (Alonso-López, Sidorenko-Bautista, and Giacomelli 2021). For more traditional journalism, this idea may appear threatening, yet it is not new (Franklin 1997). In social media it is reinforced with the figure of 'parajournalists' (Schudson 2011) – sources and actors that have influence on journalists, and that in the current context can also be identified with 'technology-based companies that influence journalism's production and circulation' (Cohen 2019, p. 5). 'Parajournalists' make journalists adapt to the algorithmic functioning of each platform, forcing them to seek a balance between their identity as reporters and influencers. The journalistic content adapted to TikTok uses certain audiovisual aesthetics in informative messages to reach younger audiences has been shown to generate confusion (Sidorenko-Bautista, Herranz de la Casa, and Cantero de Julián 2020). For example, the use of parody elements can result in 'misleading content, false context or other misinformation types' (Rogers 2021, 4) and frame TikTok as a platform that facilitates misinformation and, at the same time, as 'a tool for debunking hoaxes beyond the range of action of conventional media' (Alonso-López, Sidorenko-Bautista, and Giacomelli 2021, 65). Moreover, the influence of the recommendation algorithm on viralization complicates reporting on daily news. The TikTok algorithm does not prioritize content by posting time but by popularity, therefore making it more difficult to use it as a platform to be informed about current events (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020); however, the option of starting a livestream on TikTok might pose a possibility of incorporating time-based news information into one's profile and the platform.

In social media platforms, journalists and news media can search for and access newsworthy content published by users and then appropriate it (Usher 2017). TikTok's own affordances, such as the recommendation and viralization of content regardless of the number of followers, favor the

dissemination of content generated by grassroots users, which can offer an alternative view to traditional media on some events, such as social protests (Jian, Jin and Deng 2022). The reach of citizen journalism on TikTok has been observed in relevant events such as the Australian bushfires of 2019 (Wilson 2019) or the war in Ukraine in 2022 (Chayka, 2022).

The rise of TikTok directly affects how journalists present themselves online and how they present news content (Krasavina and Zolina 2020). Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero and López-García (2022) find that 'journalists adapt their presence to the TikTok social media logic, seeking a space of influence on a platform that is the natural habitat of younger generations'. Among young future journalists there is a prevailing view that it is acceptable to use the platform for journalistic purposes (Henneman 2020).

Based on this existing research, we can conclude that TikTok journalism includes: (a) the practices and strategies of the media outlets and journalists in the distribution of information through their presence, participation, and use of the platform, and (b) the characterization of journalistic content on the platform, its logics and dynamics – it also includes news use, which is a relevant perspective to be studied in the platform to understand how the audiences inform themselves, create content or take part in informative initiatives.

Methodological Approaches to TikTok Journalism

Based on the above-mentioned literature review on TikTok journalism, we note that scientific research has adapted by taking characteristics of the field of journalism studies (object of study) and social media (communicative space). To address this type of research on TikTok journalism, researchers have experimented with different exploratory searches on the platform to identify accounts and create analysis samples (Beynenson 2021; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020), or with terminological search to locate thematic content (Sidorenko-Bautista, Herranz de la Casa, and Cantero de Julián 2020). Most of the previous studies have used the content analysis method, applying general parameters for the study of user profiles, narrative characteristics and formats of publications, or the relationship with audiences (Alonso-López, Sidorenko-Bautista, and Giacomelli 2021; Apesteguía 2021; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020). Also, for the study of the informative content of videos (Kong et al. 2021; Krasavina and Zolina 2020; Sidorenko-Bautista, Herranz de la Casa, and Cantero de Julián 2020), in some cases performing a cross-platform analysis to analyze a single phenomenon across several platforms (Rogers 2021). With a qualitative approach, some researchers have used interviews to get the perspective of news content creators (Alonso-López, Sidorenko-Bautista, and Giacomelli 2021), case studies to describe innovative media initiatives on TikTok (Marx 2020) or experimental teaching with self-reported data (Henneman 2020).

The need to make a shift in this academic subfield requires adjusted methods and analytical approaches and instruments. Our methodological approach aims to answer the formulated objectives: definition of analysis parameters (O1), adaptation of methods (O2), and proposal of a research framework (O3). We propose a mixed-method approach to frame journalism research on the emerging platform TikTok. These methods are useful for data gathering and analysis and they can be applied to different objects of study – individually or combined: (1) data collection and database creation; (2) content analysis; (3) quantitative data analysis; and (4) user studies. These methods are developed in the following section, along with a description of their adaptation and application to TikTok journalism.

Considering TikTok as a research object demands the use of parameters and adequate analytical designs, as the platform’s characteristics require an adaptation of methods. Dimensions for sampling, analyzing user profiles and audiovisual content, and for other quantitative analytics and qualitative approaches were identified. Tables 2 shows these parameters, which are described in more detail in the following sections.

A. Sampling	Users		News media, news agencies, fact-checkers, journalists, journalism students, citizen journalists, NGOs, government, private organizations, political parties, etc.
	Topics		Hashtag
			Keywords
	Trends		Hashtag
			Sound
	Parameters		Followers
			Country
B. User profile	User identification		Name
			Nickname
			Bio
			Verification
			First published and available video
			Published videos
	Management		Contact
			Person in charge
C. Content	Post identification		URL
			Date
			Duration
			Topic
	Purpose	Information	News
			Headlines
			Explanation
			Summary & rankings
		Promotion	Content promotion
			Advertising (product)
		Humor	Funny and silly things
			Reactions & comments
		Trends	Dance (at home/outdoors; at work)
			Challenge
Personal	Daily life (home scenes; work scenes)		

Table 2 List of sampling and analysis parameters (continued next page)

Table 2 continued: List of sampling and analysis parameters

C. Content	Language and format	Caption		
		Edition	Filters & in-app edition (visual effects, sticker, transition, split, time, etc.)	
			Used elements (stickers, GIF, emojis, text, poll)	
		Audio	Type (voice, music, ambient, effects, silence)	
		Branding	Visible presence of journalist	
			Corporate brand elements	
		Content adaptation	Original content	
			Adapted content (from other platform)	
	Identification of original channel or support			
	External source: user and source identification			
	Interaction	Audio	Original	
			Reused (identification of original audio's creator)	
		Hashtags	Used hashtags	
			Identification of challenge or branded trend	
		Mentions	Users mentioned	
Duets		User reacted to		
User-generated content		Identification of user and source		
Comments		Identification of user and content		
Cross-platform	Circulation beyond TikTok			
D. Analytics	User profile		Number of published videos	
			Likes (hearts)	
			Followers (fans)	
			Following	
	Video	Engagement	Views	
			Likes (hearts)	
			Shared	
			Comments	
		Audio	Views	
			Videos with same audio	
			Duets	
		Hashtag	Views	
	Videos with same hashtag			
	Live		Audience	
Circulation		Views/followers		
		Shared/views		
		Correlation views per video & hashtag		
E. Perception, reception and strategies	Workflow and production			
	Professional profile			
	Social media guidelines			
	Patterns of use and consumption			
	Strategies and management			

Method 1: Data Collection Techniques and Database Creation

Data exploration and analysis approaches to TikTok as a new social media platform are initially difficult because of the non-existence of databases or repositories of news media and journalists' accounts on the platform. One exception is the collaborative initiative started by journalist Francesco Zaffarano² and scattered mentions and reports of prominent examples. Given the need to systematize the search for journalists' and news media outlets' profiles to achieve meaningful results, we approached how to create corpuses and databases from which to extract samples.

In general, APIs have been used in social media research to obtain larger data sets for empirical analysis (Lomborg and Bechmann 2014), but following several data privacy scandals, many social media platforms have increasingly restricted access, which also limits critical scholarly research (Bruns 2019). While TikTok is slowly starting to provide API access for researchers, so far no public API exists to access data outside of ByteDance, except for specific marketing campaigns and brand-creator relationship management.

The TikTok app has a search system with certain limitations, where a query presents results in several categories: 'popular' (trends, viral content), 'users' (with the search term in username or description), 'videos' (in the caption), 'sounds' (in the title) or 'hashtags' (in the tag expression), and the option to filter by time and relevance. Search options on the app also lack advanced search, thematic tags or a typology to locate accounts in certain fields such as journalism.

Although manual searching is a possible approach, together with reviewing previous case studies, press releases, reports, etc., it is useful to consult existing lists of media outlets³ or journalists and review the profiles that news providers follow on TikTok to find more journalism-related accounts. This is the strategy we followed (and recommend) to start building our repository, which was completed with a semi-automated search in the following steps.

There are some alternatives to accessing TikTok data via the API, for example, the commercial web service *TikApi*, which since late 2020 allows data retrieval through a proprietary RESTful API. Since August 2021, *Scraping Bot* has offered paid data collection by TikTok user profile and hashtag. In 2019, *TikTok-scraper*⁴ and the open-source *TikTok-API*⁵ project in Python were available – the latter based on reverse engineering of the website.

With *TikTok-API* we were able to retrieve lists of videos posted with a hashtag (e.g., #journalism, #journalist, or #news) and review the content or user profiles to meet the criteria of our search related to research interest⁶ (Table 2, Section A). This method facilitates identifying content based on a query with related terms – we suggest performing an exploratory search pre-test (e.g., by hashtags, sounds) to locate them. Other functions allow for the download of the list of videos published by a user, videos using a certain sound, or trending videos and hashtags.

² <https://bit.ly/3IW0F6s>

³ A useful source is the Reuters Institute's *Digital News Report*, country-specific media audience reports or media observatories and maps.

⁴ <https://github.com/drawrowfly/tiktok-scraper>

⁵ <https://github.com/davidteather/TikTok-API>

⁶ The selection of search terms is key and should be tailored to the research objectives (e.g., a study on media outlets may require validation of TikTok accounts with additional sources such as the media outlet's website; a study on users doing journalism may need a broader approach incorporating different professional roles and thus adding more terms, e.g. reporter, photojournalist or news anchor). One of the important aspects of the research will be to define what the authors understand by journalism (or what they consider to be journalistic) based on literature review.

To identify TikTok accounts of media outlets and journalists, we applied additional network sampling techniques to previously identified profiles. It is possible to expand the repository manually or automatically with Python and TikTok-API –or other modules– by including profiles the algorithm recommends because they are similar to profiles of media outlets or journalists, we had previously located through a snowball effect and several iterations, verifying that the profiles meet the inclusion criteria.

We applied these techniques and created separate databases with TikTok accounts of 234 media and news programs, 133 TV channels and programs, and 212 journalists on TikTok (Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero, and López-García 2022; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and Rodríguez-Vázquez 2021). In summary, we propose the process represented in Figure 1.

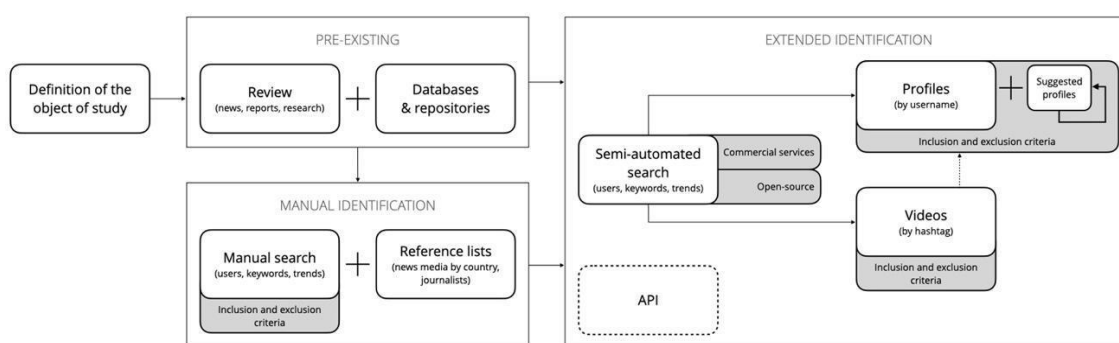


Figure 1. Flow of identification of elements for analysis and corpus creation on TikTok (source: the authors)

Once the repository has been created, basic identification data can be added for each profile (Table 2, Section B). We also use a sampling frame and extract samples of news media and journalists accounts for analysis. These approaches are exploratory due to the search activity and validation of analyzable elements, which poses a limitation for this research. However, this approach allows for generating random and representative samples and is therefore an opportunity for initial TikTok journalism research.

Method 2: Content Analysis

A common scientific approach to social media is to study the nature and characteristics of their messages (Snelson 2016). Content analysis allows for a description analysis of messages, even if there is a diversity of communicators, types of messages or contexts in which they are emitted and consumed (Maier 2017). As a communicative environment, TikTok has a complex structure; its own communicative forms are based on short videos and specific visual, textual, and verbal expressions shared by the community (Schellewald 2021), as well as the relevant dimension of sound. When we approach TikTok from the field of journalism with the goal of analyzing its messages, several questions arise: what are the communicative characteristics of this platform and which variables can be defined to perform a systematized analysis of them; how does the communicative flow work and how does it affect the audiovisual content; and what are the possible impacts for the communicators and the audience of the journalistic messages?

As audiovisual media artifacts, TikTok videos are multidimensional and complex messages, which are generated through the creator's action and the community's reaction (Figure 2). Some videos

show distinct forms of relational authorship derived from the distribution and reuse of content elements on TikTok (Kaye et al. 2021). Therefore, content analysis needs to focus on accompanying text elements, such as mentions of other users and hashtags, on the sound or music used in the video, and on other paratextual elements, such as comments, that complement a video post.

The purpose of content analysis on TikTok is to analyze the communicative goal of a video's message and its origin, and to make inferences about possible communicative intentions as reflected in the content. In more detail, content analysis targets the language, format and interaction with which a creator expresses their communicative goal and how they construct the video's audiovisual message.

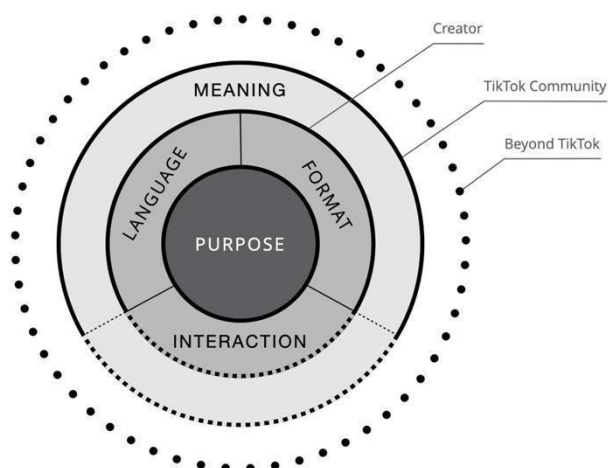


Figure 2. Dimensions of content-based analysis on TikTok.

Messages in TikTok videos are generally communicated through audiovisual content and paratextual elements, such as video descriptions, meaning the communicated message depends on the way visual and auditive elements are used and edited. User interaction with or around video content takes place through likes, shares, or comments on videos and through specific app features, such as duet, stitch, or video replies, which the video author may choose to include.

While creators can decide which audiovisual elements or formats they want to use to convey their video's message, interaction with and around video content depends on the users who decide to engage with a video. All this builds the meaning of the message, which can evolve according to the impact it generates in the community, for example virality, reactions, or reinterpretations of video messages. Interaction on TikTok can go beyond the original video; it can modify the meaning of its message and relate it to other content or users on TikTok or even on other social media platforms.

The content analysis of messages on TikTok can combine three perspectives: meaning or purpose analysis, formal analysis, and relational analysis. In the purpose analysis or semantic dimension of the message (Table 2, Section C, Purpose), the study of both audiovisual and textual language allows us to approach the purpose of the created video post, the topic addressed or the tone of the discourse. Applied to news media, programs or journalists' messages on TikTok, it is possible to identify different types of informative content, such as news, headlines, explanation, summary, ranking, and information elements, like sources, data, or spatio-temporal references, as well as video posts with promotional purposes, for example, content promotion, advertising, and branding of news media. It is relevant to analyze how journalistic actors adapt to content trends on the platform,

posting content related to their private life, their workspace and routines, humorous videos, dances and challenges, or tips and educational content.

The formal analysis of TikTok videos (Table 2, Section C, Language and format) needs to consider the audiovisual editing (duration of takes, montage) and the textual and visual video elements (text on screen, images, visualizations, stickers, emojis). These formal characteristics of the video post are relevant to observing the degree of adaptation to the language and aesthetics of the platform that primarily manifest in its visual effects or filters, in terms of differentiation from other platforms and not simply a replication of content or a forced adaptation with features specific to other platforms.

In the case of TikTok videos created by news media or journalists, it is useful to analyze whether the content is original, whether it has been edited specifically for TikTok, or whether it is duplicated from other platforms. It is also relevant to note where third-party content is used, whether the sources of the material are named, and whether other user-generated content is integrated in the videos. For journalistic TikTok content, it is also important in terms of media identification, proximity, trust and emotional connection with the user to note whether the journalist is present in the video.

Regarding the relational analysis (Table 2, Section C, Interaction) – for analyzing user interaction with or around TikTok videos – the use of sounds or hashtags should be analyzed, since they allow tagging and making content accessible, relate it to other media artifacts and increase its distribution and possibilities for viralization. In terms of audience interaction and participation, it is possible to observe whether news media or journalists make direct calls to action to users, respond to their comments, react to content of other accounts in duets, or mention other users.

The analysis of these dimensions and variables of messages on TikTok allows for a holistic view of the content. The analysis sheet we present as a tool (Table 2, Section C) has been tested in previous studies and various samples (Le Compte and Klug 2021; Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero, and López-García 2022; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García 2020). It is recommended to pre-test the analysis sheet and verify the intercoder reliability, using Cohen's kappa or other measures – researchers should select a sample sub-sample (e.g. 10% of the total to be analyzed) and code all the researchers the same contents on those variables where they want to know the intercoder reliability; a Cohen's Kappa coefficient above 0.80 is considered a very good result.

Method 3: Quantitative Data Analysis

When researching journalism on social media, quantitative approaches are highly relevant because social media platforms are generally characterized by quantifiable interactions, as reflected in metrics which are associated with the idea of 'influence' – authority and status of profiles on the platform– (Lewis and Molyneux 2018). This aspect allows for comparative and longitudinal studies centered on the dissemination of messages or the popularity of profiles. Previous research considers, for example, metrics for audience knowledge and news dissemination (Dwyer and Martin 2017). Although their analysis is limited due to the opacity of the platforms or ethical implications of the use of data (Mackay 2017), metrics have an impact on journalistic quality (Fürst 2020), evaluation of journalistic activity based on the impact quantification of their contents (Papanagnou 2021), analysis of audience feedback with a consumer orientation (Hanusch and Tandoc 2017), and are therefore crucial for management.

Quantitative approaches to studying TikTok journalism can focus on the level of publication (short video, live), user profile, sound and tagging (trends, challenges), as detailed in Table 2, Section D. When analyzing TikTok videos, the reach metrics measure the impact in views and the interactivity metrics show user engagement through liking (heart) or sharing content (shared).

When estimating averages for a set of videos, it is recommended to use the median, since it is common for a small number of outliers to appear in the sample, which would have drastic effects on the average. In the analysis of live broadcasts, the reference data is the number of viewers. In the user profile, the number of videos published, likes received, and numbers of followers and users followed are observed, also considering their temporal evolution in longitudinal studies. Sounds on TikTok can be looked at to identify the number of videos created with it; however, hashtags are only linked to the number of views for linked videos.

From the data provided by TikTok, coefficients are formulated to estimate the circulation of content (Table 2, Section D). The median number of views per video divided by the number of followers makes it possible to determine the level of viewing weighted by the audience. In this way, highly viral content has been identified where the views/followers ratio is low and, in this way, we can assess whether there is a high algorithmic recommendation of that content beyond followers. The correlation between circulation and the impact of hashtags the content is associated with reflects the relevance of strategic tagging in video distribution. In addition, the shared/views coefficient explains the role of audience sharing behavior in the circulation of videos. Based on platform data, these metrics facilitate further analysis of the determining characteristics, segmenting content according to its circulation.

Method 4: User Studies

User studies are employed to analyze the perception, reception, and strategies of people as users of products, services, or technology (Table 2, Section E). They often apply ethnographic approaches, such as participant observations, field studies, usability studies, and, primarily, interviews (Roulston and Choi 2018) to analyze motivations, strategies, or practices within social, cultural, or political contexts.

Interviews are useful tools for collecting information to understand participants' social reality (Hopf 2000). We focus on semi-structured interviews and expert interviews as a way to reconstruct complex journalistic production and publishing processes through collecting first-hand experiences of journalists (Reich and Barnoy 2016).

On social media, journalists are producers as well as consumers of news content. Semi-structured interviews are a common method to analyze journalists' social media practices (Bossio and Sacco 2017). They follow questions informed by hypotheses on the research subject which can lead to follow-up questions to generate a conversation. For researching TikTok journalism, semi-structured interviews can, for example, enquire into how journalists and news providers use TikTok to connect their brand to a young audience. This helps to better differentiate between producers and consumers of news on social media and study how news becomes hybridized. Semi-structured interviews can serve to gain insight into differences between traditional newsroom presentation and individual styles and practices of social media-savvy journalists (Hermida 2016), and how they adapt news content to TikTok. In this way, semi-structured interviews allow explorative data on strategies, practices, and motivations of journalists and news providers to be generated, which is potentially open-ended and can lead to more personal or detailed information.

Expert interviews are a specific variant of semi-structured interviews (Flick 2018) to collect detailed information from participants who are experts in their field, in this case journalists using TikTok. Experts can produce exclusive insights (Meuser and Nagel 2009) and interview questions address greater detail in relation to participants' field, position, and expertise to guide a focused conversation. The goal is to understand expert knowledge in institutional and professional contexts (Bogner, Littig, and Menz 2009).

Expert interviews with journalists or social media representatives of news providers on TikTok can provide rich insights into individual strategies and successful concepts concerning how to use TikTok as a specific media outlet. TikTok generally adds more possibilities to mobile and especially visual journalism and enables accentuated information and news. Expert interviews can add further details to how journalists use the immediacy of social media to extend existing journalistic practices and channels (Hermida 2013).

They can be used to research motivations to add TikTok to social media outlets, how to use TikTok as a digital storytelling tool, or production contexts of creating news content specifically for TikTok. Thus, journalists who report on tech and digital culture seem to be ideal interviewees to evaluate the use of TikTok for news and information communication in the context of online culture (Romero 2021).

Moreover, expert interviews can address journalists' ethical positions on TikTok as a platform of viral and popular news formats and how they ensure personal credible information. This further relates to questions about how journalists present themselves as trustworthy individuals on TikTok, aside from their connection to an employer or brand (Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012), how journalists understand and use the TikTok algorithm, and how they use TikTok as a resource for newsworthy content or for authentic material to add to stories.

In addition to interviews, surveys are useful for researching news media representatives, journalists, and users on TikTok from a quantitative and qualitative approach. For example, questionnaires are a survey variant for experiments and cross-sectional and qualitative studies (Hesse 2017). Surveys can be used to achieve a wider representation of the situation of journalists regarding their activity on TikTok (Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero, and López-García 2022).

Semi-structured interviews, expert interviews and surveys can be used for methodological triangulation to gather data from multiple individuals within or across different social or cultural groups and in addition to other qualitative or quantitative user data (Roulston and Choi 2018).

Conclusion

This article makes three contributions to the literature on social media within journalism studies, based on the key concepts and methodological approaches tested and adapted for TikTok. First, we present a list of sampling and analysis parameters in a coding sheet. Second, we provide an adapted and tested selection of methods for TikTok journalism research, its dimensions, and tensions. Third, we suggest a research framework for this emerging field. These methods consider how the platform determines the news media strategies of incorporating it into established news presentation online, analyzing journalists' content creation practices, modes of self-presentation, and the relations between information communication, viral content distribution and audience expectations.

We define the objects and parameters that can be studied in TikTok (O1) and how the most commonly used methods in social media research can be adapted, designing and applying qualitative and quantitative research methods to build mixed methodologies that are necessary to address complex objects of study (O2). Thus, we present a theoretical proposal of methodological options and tools for the construction of databases and analysis corpus, considering the limitations of access to data and the difficulty of identifying user profiles, trends or videos on specific topics in a platform in which algorithmic recommendation determines our access to content. Based on a multidimensional analysis of TikTok messages – purpose, formal, relational – we propose parameters and perspectives for the analysis of their content, taking into account the interactive dynamics of the platform. Finally, we propose the application of user studies, qualitative interviews, and surveys to

relate TikTok videos and journalists' strategies and practices to understanding human behavior from an informant's perspective within a rather dynamic and negotiated reality.

The current development of TikTok journalism presents some tensions between journalistic practice and the characteristics of TikTok (Figure 3), in the context of the platformization of journalism: on the one hand, journalism principles and news primacy versus TikTok content trends; on the other hand, the principles of traditional media logic versus the social media logic of TikTok. Journalism studies should transfer to TikTok the questions that arise about the development of journalism, from different perspectives that raise new lines of research (O3) regarding content, audiences, technology and platforms, and business and strategies (Figure 4).

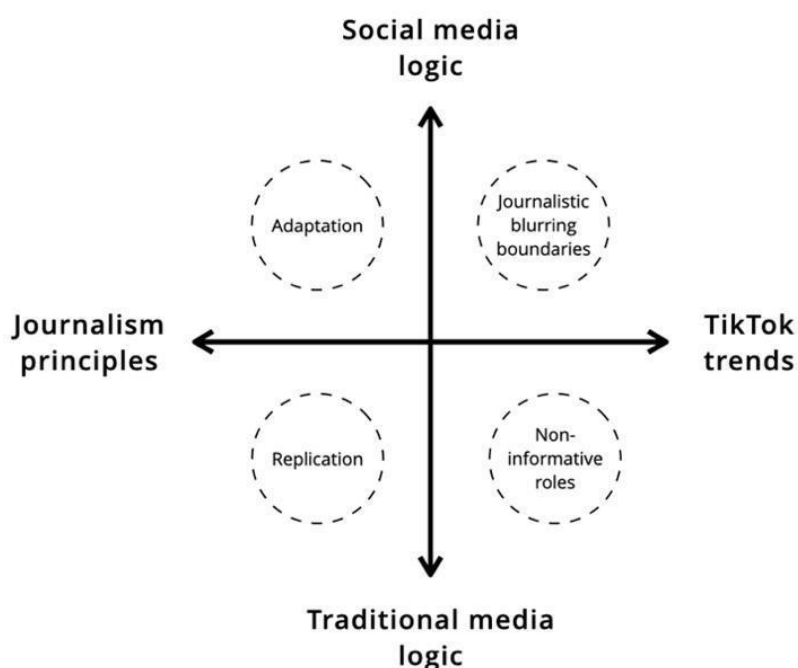


Figure 3. Tensions on TikTok journalism (source: the authors)

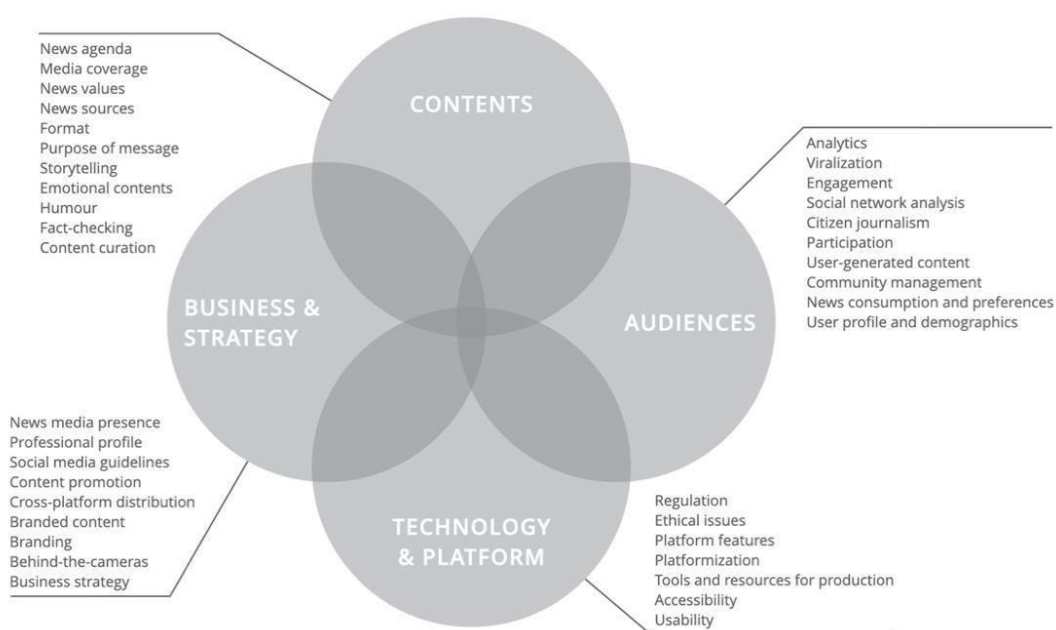


Figure 4. Research frameworks for TikTok journalism (source: the authors)

The application of the proposed methodological approaches for TikTok journalism research will involve some ethical issues: how informative activity can be developed and studied on a platform where entertainment and humor predominate – and how it affects banalization or trust in the media; how the mission of the media and journalists should be understood in the face of disinformation on the social network; what use should be made of users' personal data or how sensitive viral content should be analyzed; or how the regulation on access and use of the platform in different countries and contexts affects it, among other considerations.

The methodological proposals should be understood at an early stage of TikTok journalism, when news media and journalists are still initiating and experimenting with their presence and content on the social network. Assuming this challenge, future research should adapt to the trends of use that are being consolidated. The rapid change of the platform, its functionalities and the methods of accessing data may cause some of the specific analysis parameters to become outdated, so they will also need to be monitored and updated, although the proposal is methodologically sustainable in essence.

Acknowledgements

This research is part of the R&D project *Digital-native media in Spain: Strategies, competencies, social involvement and (re)definition of practices in journalistic production and diffusion* (PID2021-122534OB-C21), funded by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by 'ERDF/EU'.

References

- Alonso-López, N.; Sidorenko-Bautista, P. and Giacomelli, F.** 2021. Beyond Challenges and Viral Dance Moves: TikTok as a Vehicle for Disinformation and Fact-Checking in Spain, Portugal, Brazil, and the USA. *Anàlisi* 64: 65–84. doi:10.5565/rev/analisi.3411.
- Apesteguía, E.** 2021. Experiencias Periodísticas Nacionales en Twitch y TikTok. In *Nuevas Narrativas en Periodismo*, edited by Alejandro Rost, María Teresa Bernardi, and Fabián Bergero, 109–30. General Roca: Publifadecs.
- Bainotti, L.; Caliendo, A. and Gandini, A.** 2020. From Archive Cultures to Ephemeral Content, and Back: Studying Instagram Stories with Digital Methods. *New Media & Society*. doi:10.1177/1461444820960071.
- Basch, CH.; Fera, J.; Pierce, I. and Basch, CE.** 2021. Promoting Mask Use on TikTok: Descriptive, Cross-Sectional Study. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* 7 (2). doi:10.2196/26392.
- Beynenson, VA.** 2021. Formats and Strategies of Domestic Mass Media in TikTok Social Network. In *Communication in Today's World*, edited by V. V. Tulupov, 8–9. Voronezh State University.
- Bogner, A.; Littig, B. and Menz, W.** 2009. Introduction: Expert Interviews — An Introduction to a New Methodological Debate. In *Interviewing Experts*, edited by Alexander Bogner, Beate Littig, and Wolfgang Menz, 1–13. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bossio, D. and Sacco, V.** 2017. From 'Selfies' to Breaking Tweets. *Journalism Practice* 11 (5): 527–43. doi:10.1080/17512786.2016.1175314.

- Bruns, A.** 2018. *Gatewatching and News Curation: Journalism, Social Media, and the Public Sphere*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Bruns, A.** 2019. After the 'APIcalypse': Social Media Platforms and Their Fight against Critical Scholarly Research. *Information, Communication & Society* 22 (11): 1544–66. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637447.
- Bruns, A. and Burgess, J.** 2012. Researching News Discussion on Twitter. *Journalism Studies* 13 (5–6): 801–14. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2012.664r428.
- Chayka, K.** 2022. Watching the World's First TikTok War. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/watching-the-worlds-first-tiktok-war>
- Cohen, NS.** 2019. At Work in the Digital Newsroom. *Digital Journalism* 7 (5): 571–591. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1419821
- San Cornelio, G. and Roig, A.** 2020. Mixed Methods on Instagram Research: Methodological Challenges in Data Analysis and Visualization. *Convergence* 26 (5–6): 1125–43. doi:10.1177/1354856520941613.
- DeVito, MA.** 2017. From Editors to Algorithms. *Digital Journalism* 5 (6): 753–73. doi:10.1080/21670811.2016.1178592.
- Van Dijck, J. and Poell, T.** 2013. Understanding Social Media Logic. *Media and Communication* 1 (1): 2–14. doi:10.12924/mac2013.01010002.
- Dwyer, T. and Martin, F.** 2017. Sharing News Online. *Digital Journalism* 5 (8): 1080–1100. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1338527.
- Flick, U.** 2018. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE.
- Franklin, B.** 1997. *Newszak and News Media*. London: Arnold.
- Fürst, S.** 2020. In the Service of Good Journalism and Audience Interests? How Audience Metrics Affect News Quality. *Media and Communication* 8 (3): 270–80. doi:10.17645/mac.v8i3.3228.
- Hanusch, F. and Edson, TC.** 2019. Comments, analytics, and social media: The impact of audience feedback on journalists' market orientation. *Journalism*, 20 (6), 695–713. doi:10.1177/1464884917720305.
- Harcup, T. and O'Neill, D.** 2017. What Is News? *Journalism Studies* 18 (12): 1470–88. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2016.1150193.
- Henneman, T.** 2020. Beyond Lip-Synching: Experimenting with TikTok Storytelling. *Teaching Journalism & Mass Communication* 10 (2): 1–14.
- Hermida, A.** 2012. Social Journalism: Exploring How Social Media Is Shaping Journalism. In *The Handbook of Global Online Journalism*, edited by Eugenia Siapera and Andreas Veglis, 309–28. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. doi:10.1002/9781118313978.ch17.
- Hermida, A.** 2013. #Journalism: Reconfiguring Journalism Research about Twitter, One Tweet at a Time. *Digital Journalism* 1 (3): 295–313. doi:10.1080/21670811.2013.808456.
- Hermida, A.** 2016. Social Media and the News. In *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by Tamara Witschge, Chris W. Anderson, David Domingo, and Alfred Hermida, 81–94. London: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781473957909.n6.
- Hermida, A. and Mellado, C.** 2020. Dimensions of Social Media Logics: Mapping Forms of Journalistic Norms and Practices on Twitter and Instagram. *Digital Journalism* 8 (7): 864–84. doi:10.1080/21670811.2020.1805779.
- Hesse, C.** 2017. Survey: Questionnaire. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, edited by Mike Allen. Thousand Oaks: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781483381411.

- Highfield, T. and Leaver, T.** 2014. A Methodology for Mapping Instagram Hashtags. *First Monday*. doi:10.5210/fm.v20i1.5563.
- Highfield, T. and Leaver, T.** 2016. Instagrammatics and Digital Methods: Studying Visual Social Media, from Selfies and GIFs to Memes and Emoji. *Communication Research and Practice* 2 (1): 47–62. doi:10.1080/22041451.2016.1155332.
- Hopf, C.** 2000. Qualitative Interviews: An Overview. In *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, edited by Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff, and Ines Steinke, 203–8. London: SAGE.
- Hutchinson, J.** 2016. An Introduction to Digital Media Research Methods: How to Research and the Implications of New Media Data. *Communication Research and Practice* 2 (1): 1–6. doi:10.1080/22041451.2016.1155307.
- Jiang, YJ.; Jin, X. and Deng, Q.** 2022. Short video uprising: how# BlackLivesMatter content on TikTok challenges the protest paradigm. *arXiv* (preprint). doi: 10.48550/arXiv.2206.09946
- Kannenbergh, V. and de Sousa, ME.** 2017. O fantasmagórico site de rede social: como o Snapchat está sendo apropriado para a circulação de conteúdo jornalístico. *Intercom* 40 (3): 151–67. doi:10.1590/1809-5844201739.
- Kapoor, KK.; Tamilmani, K.; Rana, NP.; Patil, P.; Dwivedi, YK. and Nerur, S.** 2018. Advances in Social Media Research: Past, Present and Future. *Information Systems Frontiers* 20 (3): 531–58. doi:10.1007/s10796-017-9810-y.
- Kaye, DBV.; Chen, X and Zeng, J.** 2021. The Co-Evolution of Two Chinese Mobile Short Video Apps: Parallel Platformization of Douyin and TikTok. *Mobile Media & Communication* 9 (2): 229–53. doi:10.1177/2050157920952120.
- Kaye, DBV.; Rodriguez, A.; Langton, K. and Wikström, P.** 2021. You Made This? I Made This: Practices of Authorship and (Mis)Attribution on TikTok. *International Journal of Communication* 15: 3195–3215.
- Kennedy, M.** 2020. 'If the rise of the TikTok dance and e-girl aesthetic has taught us anything, it's that teenage girls rule the internet right now': TikTok celebrity, girls and the Coronavirus crisis. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(6), 1069-1076. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549420945341>
- Kim, H.; Jang, SM.; Kim, S-H and Wan, A.** 2018. Evaluating Sampling Methods for Content Analysis of Twitter Data. *Social Media+Society* 4 (2). doi:10.1177/2056305118772836.
- Klinger, U. and Svensson, J.** 2015. The Emergence of Network Media Logic in Political Communication: A Theoretical Approach. *New Media & Society* 17 (8): 1241–57. doi:10.1177/1461444814522952.
- Klug, D.; Qin, Y.; Evans, M. and Kaufman, G.** 2021. Trick and Please. A Mixed-Method Study On User Assumptions About the TikTok Algorithm. 13th ACM Web Science Conference 2021 (WebSci'21), 84–92.
- Kong, W.; Song, S.; Zhao, YC.; Zhu, Q. and Sha, L.** 2021. TikTok as a Health Information Source: Assessment of the Quality of Information in Diabetes-Related Videos. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 23 (9). doi:10.2196/30409.
- Krasavina, AV. and Zolina, DO.** 2020. 'TikTok-Journalism' as a New Media Format. In *Media Education: Media as Total Daily*, 90–95. Chelyabinsk: Chelyabinsk State University.
- Lasorsa, DL.; Lewis, SC. and Holton, AE.** 2012. Normalizing Twitter: Journalism Practice in an Emerging Communication Space. *Journalism Studies* 13 (1): 19–36. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2011.571825.

- Latzko-Toth, G.; Bonneau, C. and Millette, M.** 2017. Small Data, Thick Data: Thickening Strategies for Trace-Based Social Media Research. In *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, edited by Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase, 199–214. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Le Compte, D. and Klug, D.** 2021. It's Viral! A study of the behaviors, practices, and motivations of TikTok Users and Social Activism. 24th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW'21 Companion).
- Lewis, SC. and Molyneux, L.** 2018. A decade of research on social media and journalism: Assumptions, blind spots, and a way forward. *Media and Communication* 6 (4): 11–23. doi: 10.17645/mac.v6i4.1562.
- Lomborg, S. and Bechmann, A.** 2014. Using APIs for Data Collection on Social Media. *The Information Society* 30 (4): 256–265. doi:10.1080/01972243.2014.915276.
- Lu, X. and Lu, Z.** 2019. Fifteen Seconds of Fame: A Qualitative Study of Douyin, A Short Video Sharing Mobile Application in China. In *Social Computing and Social Media. Design, Human Behavior and Analytics*, edited by Gabriele Meiselwitz, 233–244. Cham: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-21902-4_17.
- Mackay, H.** 2017. Social Media Analytics: Implications for Journalism and Democracy. *Journal of Information Ethics* 26 (1): 34–48.
- Maier, MA.** 2017. Definition of Content Analysis. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Marx, M.** 2020. Nachrichten via Instagram, YouTube Und Tiktok—Journalistische Angebote Für Junge Menschen. In *Jugendliche Mediennutzung Und Die Zukunft Des Qualitätsjournalismus*, edited by Katharina Gallner-Holzmann, Theo Hug, and Günther Pallaver, 23–36. Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press.
- McCrow-Young, A.** 2021. Approaching Instagram Data: Reflections on Accessing, Archiving and Anonymising Visual Social Media. *Communication Research and Practice* 7 (1): 21–34. doi:10.1080/22041451.2020.1847820.
- Meuser, M. and Nagel, U.** 2009. The Expert Interview and Changes in Knowledge Production. In *Interviewing Experts*, edited by Alexander Bogner, Beate Littig, and Wolfgang Menz, 17–42. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Negreira-Rey, M.-C.; Vázquez-Herrero, J. and López-García, X.** 2022. Blurring Boundaries between Journalists and Tiktokers: Journalistic Role Performance on TikTok. *Media and Communication*, 10(1). doi:10.17645/mac.v10i1.4699.
- Newman, N.; Fletcher, R.; Schulz, A.; Andi, S. and Nielsen, RK.** 2020. *Digital News Report 2020*. Oxford: Reuters Institute.
- Pal, J. and Gonawela, A.** 2017. Studying Political Communication on Twitter: The Case for Small Data. Current Opinion in *Behavioral Sciences* 18: 97–102. doi:10.1016/j.cobeha.2017.09.009.
- Papanagnou, V.** 2021. Who is a good journalist? Evaluations of journalistic worth in the era of social media. *Journalism*. doi:10.1177/14648849211036848.
- Reich, Z. and Barnoy, A.** 2016. Reconstructing Production Practices through Interviewing. In *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by Tamara Witschge, Chris W. Anderson, David Domingo, and Alfred Hermida, 477–93. London: SAGE. doi:10.4135/9781473957909.n32.
- Rogers, R.** 2021. Marginalizing the Mainstream: How Social Media Privilege Political Information. *Frontiers in Big Data* 4. doi:10.3389/fdata.2021.689036.

- Romero, A.** 2021. Journalists Are Adapting to the Culture of TikTok. *Digital Diplomacy*, April 20, 2021. <https://medium.com/digital-diplomacy/journalists-are-adapting-to-the-culture-of-tiktok-ee000d9cb45d>.
- Roulston, K.** and **Choi, M.** 2018. Qualitative Interviews. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, edited by Uwe Flick, 233–49. London: SAGE.
- Schellewald, A.** 2021. Communicative forms on TikTok: Perspectives from digital ethnography. *International Journal of Communication* 15: 1437–1457.
- Schudson, M.** 2011. *The Sociology of News*. New York: Norton.
- Sidorenko-Bautista, P.; de la Casa, JMH.** and **de Julián, JIC.** 2020. Use of New Narratives for COVID-19 Reporting: From 360o Videos to Ephemeral TikTok Videos in Online Media. *Trípodos* 47 (1): 105–122.
- Simpson, E.** and **Semaan, B.** 2021. For You, or For “You”? Everyday LGBTQ+ Encounters with TikTok. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 4(CSCW3): 1–34.
- Sloan, L.** and **Quan-Haase, A.** 2017. *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Snelson, CL.** 2016. Qualitative and Mixed Methods Social Media Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 15 (1). doi:10.1177/1609406915624574.
- Statista.** 2021a. *Distribution of TikTok users in the United States as of March 2021, by age group.* <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1095186/tiktok-us-users-age/>.
- Statista.** 2021b. *The Rapid Rise of TikTok.* <https://www.statista.com/chart/28412/social-media-users-by-network-amo/>
- Subramanian, S.** 2021. Bahun Girls’ Anti-Caste Activism on TikTok. *Feminist Media Studies* 21 (1): 154–56. doi:10.1080/14680777.2021.1864875.
- Usher, N.** 2017. The Appropriation/Amplification Model of Citizen Journalism. *Journalism Practice* 11 (2-3): 247–265. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2016.1223552
- Vázquez-Herrero, J.; Direito-Rebollal, S.;** and **López-García, X.** 2019. Ephemeral Journalism: News Distribution Through Instagram Stories. *Social Media + Society*, 5(4). doi:10.1177/2056305119888657
- Vázquez-Herrero, J.; Negreira-Rey, M-C.** and **López-García, X.** 2020. Let’s dance the news! How the news media are adapting to the logic of TikTok. *Journalism* (Online First). doi:10.1177/1464884920969092
- Venturini, T.** and **Rogers, R.** 2019. ‘API-Based Research’ or How Can Digital Sociology and Journalism Studies Learn from the Facebook and Cambridge Analytica Data Breach. *Digital Journalism* 7 (4): 532–40. doi:10.1080/21670811.2019.1591927.
- Villaespesa, E.** and **Wowkowych, S.** 2020. Ephemeral storytelling with social media: Snapchat and Instagram Stories at the Brooklyn Museum. *Social Media+ Society*, 6(1). doi:10.1177/2056305119898776
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K.** 2020. An Emotional Turn in Journalism Studies? *Digital Journalism* 8 (2): 175–94. doi:10.1080/21670811.2019.1697626.
- Wilson, C.** 2019. *Australian teens are using tiktok to show the world how bad the bushfires are.* *BuzzFeed.* <https://www.buzzfeed.com/cameronwilson/bushfires-tiktok-australia-safety-information-world>
- Wilson, RE., Gosling, SD.** and **Graham, LT.** 2012. A Review of Facebook Research in the Social Sciences. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 7 (3): 203–20. doi:10.1177/1745691612442904.

- Yang, C.** 2021. Research in the Instagram Context: Approaches and Methods. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research* 7 (1): 15–21.
- Zeng, J.; Abidin, C. and Schäfer, MS.** 2021. Research Perspectives on TikTok & Its Legacy Apps. Introduction. *International Journal of Communication* 15: 3161–3172.
- Zimmer, M. and Proferes, NJ.** 2014. A Topology of Twitter Research: Disciplines, Methods, and Ethics. *Aslib Journal of Information Management* 66 (3): 250–61. doi:10.1108/AJIM-09-2013-0083.
- Zulli, D. and Zulli, DJ.** 2020. Extending the Internet Meme: Conceptualizing Technological Mimesis and Imitation Publics on the TikTok Platform. *New Media & Society*. doi:10.1177/1461444820983603.

Author information

Jorge Vázquez-Herrero, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain): Associate Professor at the Department of Communication Sciences, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (USC). PhD in Communication (USC). He is a member of Novos Medios research group, the Galician Institute of Studies and Development (IDEGA) and the Latin American Chair of Transmedia Narratives. His research focuses on the impact of technology and platforms in digital journalism and narratives. His most recent studies analyze news media and journalists on TikTok. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9081-3018>.

María-Cruz Negreira-Rey, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain): Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication Sciences, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (USC). PhD in Communication (USC). Member of Novos Medios research group the Galician Institute of Studies and Development (IDEGA). Her research focuses on digital media, local and hyperlocal journalism, social media, and audiences. Her most recent studies analyze news media and journalists on TikTok. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8945-2641>.

Daniel Klug, Carnegie Mellon University (United States) & University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons (Switzerland): Faculty member at the Software and Societal Systems Department (S3D), Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. PhD in Media Studies (University of Basel, Switzerland). His research focuses on qualitative analysis of media, interaction, and technology in contexts of social media and socio-technical systems. His most recent work on TikTok covers algospeak, social activism content, privacy perception, and user understanding of the app's algorithm. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2320-3321>

- First draft submitted 23Nov21
- Editorial review by Crystal Abidin & Patrik Wikstrom
- Second draft submitted 19Dec21
- Editorial review by Crystal Abidin & D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye
- Third draft submitted 11Feb22
- Peer review by Arantxa Vizcaíno-Verdú/Daniela Jaramillo-Dent & Aidan Moir
- Fourth draft submitted 07Dec22