

An opportunity for European creators: The rise of vertical video and TikTok

Research document | February 2022



Executive Summary

Note: TikTok has freedom of speech and censorship issues that need to be addressed. However, in interest of focus and brevity, this report focuses on market analysis and the technical and operational aspects of the platform and the broader vertical video space.

TikTok – a disruptive force amidst a rising vertical video scene

- **Smartphone growth powered vertical video** use since the 2010s. This led to multiple **platforms offering vertical video** as a core value proposition
- **TikTok disrupted this space** – the recommendation engine offers a unique opportunity even small media and creators a chance to **quickly build large followings**
- TikTok is currently the **fastest growing platform for media and creators** to build loyal communities. As a result, it has been embraced by many news orgs and Gen Z creators alike

European TikTok: market structure and consumption habits

- Despite its older population **Europe is second only to Asia when it comes to TikTok adoption.**
- **Western European countries have the highest user bases**, both in absolute and relative terms, with the United Kingdom and Ireland in pole position
- Deep dives on priority markets (FR, DE, UK, NL, ES, IT), underscore market specificities and key characteristics

Trendmapping top TikTok creators and trends

- Top creators in European countries are typically young, English-speaking (often a share of their content is in English), and **create content in such categories as music-dance, personal information, comedy and beauty**
- An **analysis of 1650 videos** (50 videos for 33 creators from 11 countries) identifies top tactics used to build an audience – including the need of **ultra-short videos (<25 seconds) to drive comments and likes**

Issues that matter: Deep dive on climate change, LGBTQ and social activism TikTok

- TikTok and the broader vertical video space may be best known for music and lip-syncing videos – but it is also a **space for impactful content on important issues**
- **The LGBTQ space in particular is rich in content**, with many creators discuss both social/ cultural aspects and gender identity.
- The climate change and social justice TikToks meanwhile show **significant potential of turning online discussions into offline mobilization.**

Appendix

- Insights from interviews with content creators, content strategy and steps to launch a TikTok

Contents

TikTok – a disruptive force amidst a rising vertical video scene	3
▪ The rise of vertical of video	4
▪ Vertical video platforms deep-dives	7
▪ TikTok’s disruptive global conquest	9
▪ Who consumes TikTok? – Gen Z and Co.	12
European TikTok: market structure and consumption habits	15
▪ TikTok in Europe: key figures	16
▪ Deep-dives on the priority markets (1/3)	20
▪ Top European publishers and news accounts on TikTok	23
Mapping top TikTok creators and trends across Europe	25
▪ Insights from analyzing Europe’s top creators	26
▪ Keys to success – recommendations from top creators	28
▪ Deep-dives on selected top creators	30
Trendmapping climate change, LGBTQ and social activism TikTok	32
▪ Trendmapping overview	33
▪ Climate change	34
▪ LGBTQ	37
▪ Social activism	40
Report background & Contacts	43
Appendix	44

TikTok – a disruptive force amidst a rising vertical video scene



The rise of vertical of video

The rise of vertical video has been a long time coming. The format's success is built on multiple pillars – the ubiquity of smartphones, the app ecosystem, generational leaps in data availability and the emergence of social platforms catering to this segment.

Since the late 2010s this space has been disrupted by the arrival of TikTok (and its lookalikes, rolled out by competitors). As a result, it is now both the fastest growing platform and the best opportunity for smaller creators and media to scale and build loyal, engaged communities.

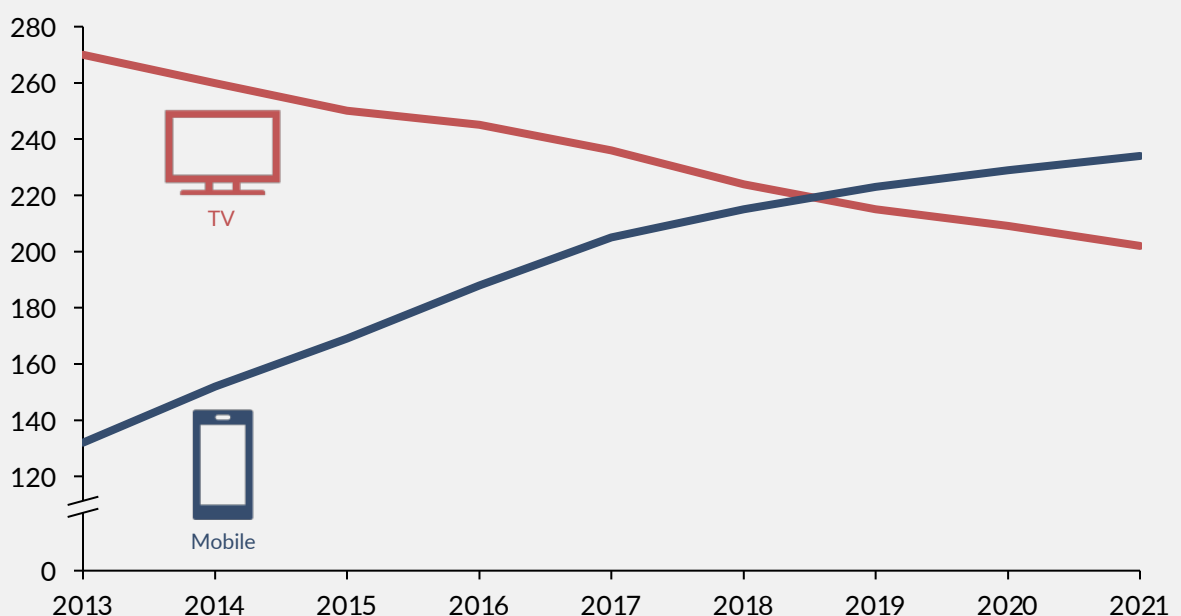
The smartphone era

Smartphones have been a pivotal technology changing the communication, business and cultural space. Shipments of smartphones eclipsed PC sales in 2011¹, while cheaper and faster data (incl. 4G) increased their utility. Video consumption via mobile has since grown, largely at the expense of TV and desktop/ laptop/ tablet usage (see Figure 1).

For most users accessing the internet via smartphone the natural position is upright. Turning the phone horizontally (which may require changes in settings) creates an additional step and decision point – something advertisers, publishers and IT companies try to avoid at all costs.

Figure 1

Average time spent daily with TV and mobile devices by US adults,
of minutes spent with device per day



Source: eMarketer

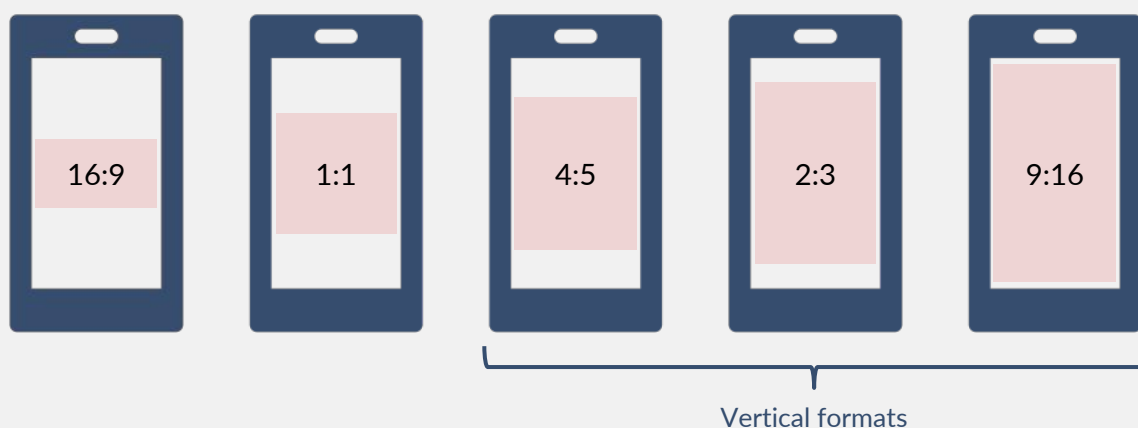
In addition to creating an additional step in consumption patterns, horizontal videos often failed to fully utilize space on people's screens (especially when scrolling on newsfeeds or websites). This meant valuable real estate was going unused – and leaving lots of value on the table (see figure 2).

As a result, since the early 2010s platforms have been gradually shifting to increasingly vertical formats. Given the impact on consumer experience, this move was central to a platform's brand. Instagram's square 1:1 format is still recognizable (and has played a huge role in influencing digital photography).

Advertisers jumped on the opportunity to leverage additional space to engage potential customers. The shift to horizontal was especially painful for them, as users were least likely to turn their phone sideways for short advertising content. As a result, experimentation with vertical ads flourished, driven by such industries as entertainment, gaming, fashion, tech and pharma.

Figure 2

Different phone screen formats



Source: The Fix Research

The evolution of short-form video platforms

Launched in 2011, Snapchat arguably opened the era of video-first social platforms (see figure 3, next page). The app offered a chance to send encrypted photos and videos that would disappear after a short period of time.

While this feature led to many problems (notably teens sharing explicit content), the idea of sharing imperfect non-"Kodak moments" (unlike glamour focused Instagram) resonated with audiences. By May 2015 users were sending 2 billion videos a day – a number that increased to 6 billion by November that year².

Data requirements and server capacity were a major challenge for platforms in the early 2010s. Indeed, many of the previously launched platforms (e.g., Twitter in 2006, WhatsApp in 2009 or Viber in 2010) focused on messaging and relatively low bandwidth content.

² TechCrunch, November 9, 2015, <https://techcrunch.com/2015/11/09/snapchat-reaches-6-billion-daily-videos-views-tripling-from-2-billion-in-may/>

Vine’s 6-second looping videos worked around this constraint. But many creators found this too limiting and Twitter, who acquired the platform in 2012, lacked vision for growing it, leading to an eventual 2016 shutdown. (Note: Instagram launched 15 second videos in 2013, both were stuck in the square format though).

The next leap came from Paris-based app Mindie, which allowed users to put a soundtrack on a short video and share to Twitter and Facebook³. While Mindie never grew to the scale of its US counterparts, the concept of making mediocre videos enticing with music has been a central feature of platforms since.

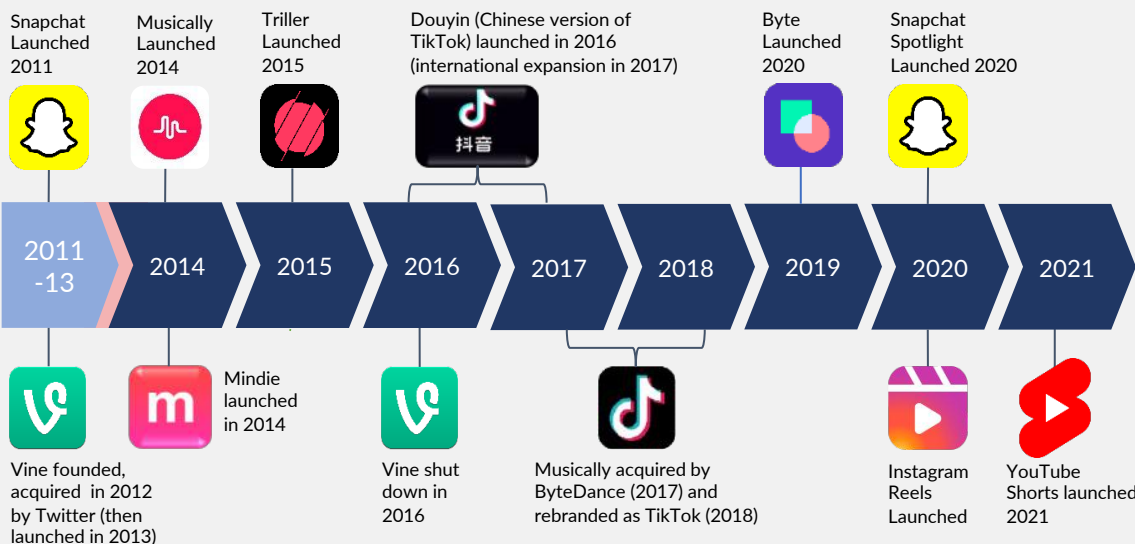
Two additional, noteworthy players in the development of vertical are Triller and Musical.ly. The former introduced AI-powered video-editing capabilities (prized by creators with limited technical skills). Meanwhile, Shanghai-headquartered Musical.ly, helped creators scale their reach by using a combination of hashtags, trending songs and challenges.

All these new features found their way in TikTok, which first made its debut in 2016 on the Chinese market under the name Douyin. A year later it launched an international version, later expanded with Musical.ly’s user base (ByteDance acquired Musical.ly in 2017).

But what truly differentiated TikTok was a unique, personalized recommendation algorithm. This created an addictive feed that would keep users glued to their phones longer, but also gave small creators a chance at reaching global audiences if they were good enough. None of the lookalikes that have appeared since have been able to replicate it.

Figure 3

A brief history of short-form and vertical video platforms



Source: Mediakix, The Fix research

Vertical video platforms deep-dives (1/2)



Platform: YouTube Shorts

Date launched: March, 2021

Peak number of MAU (for YouTube): 2 billion

Notable features and characteristics:

- 72% of videos are between 16 and 60 seconds
- 15 billion daily average views
- Tool for creators to gain long-form subscribers

Source: Mediakix, The Fix research

Platform: Snapchat Spotlight

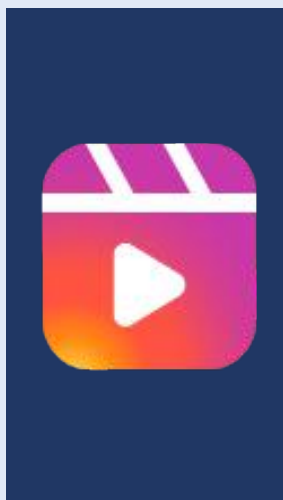
Date launched: November 20, 2020

Peak number of MAU: 125 million

Notable features and characteristics :

- Snapchat Spotlight has a daily \$1million pool from which creators of the top-performing videos are paid
- 525,000 video submissions daily

Source: Backlinko, The Fix research



Platform: Instagram Reels

Date launched: August 20, 2020

Peak number of MAU (for Instagram): 1 billion

Notable features and characteristics :

- Reels receive more engagement than regular videos by 22%
- 87% of Gen Z agree that Reels is almost the same as TikTok

Source: Growthoid, The Fix research

Vertical video platforms deep-dives (2/2)

Platform: Triller

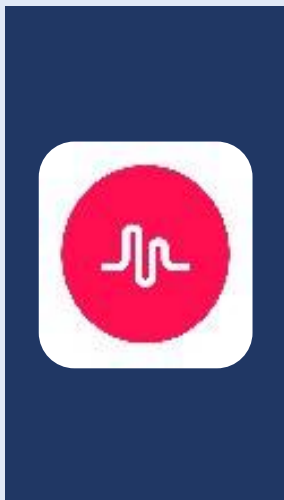
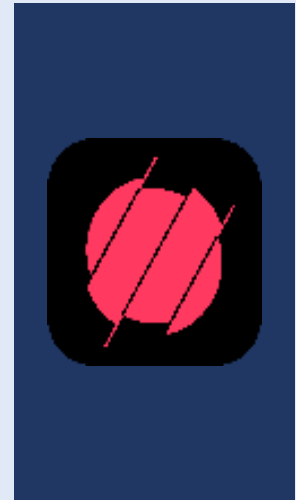
Date launched: July 15, 2015

Peak number of MAU: 65 million

Notable features and characteristics :

- Top countries: US, UK, Canada, Australia and France
- 3 TikTok influencers hold executive titles at Triller.
- Has grown by over 500%.

Source: Mediakix, The Fix research



Platform: Musically

Date launched: August 14, 2014

Peak number of MAU: 60 million

Notable features and characteristics :

- Had 13 million daily posts.
- Had more registered users in 2017 than Snapchat by 30 million.

Source: Mediakix, The Fix research

Platform: Vine

Date launched: January 24, 2013

Peak number of MAU: 200 million

Notable features and characteristics :

- Grew from 77,000 to 3.6 million unique desktop visitors in 5 months.
- Top 10 viners accounted for 1.62 billion loops in February 2016.

Source: Mediakix, The Fix research



TikTok's disruptive global conquest

TikTok is a platform developed and owned by ByteDance, a Chinese multinational headquartered in Beijing. Initially launched in China under the name Douyin, this was ByteDance's second big app, after the ultra-popular news aggregator Toutiao.

Today's international TikTok is in fact a merger between Musical.ly, an app launched in Shanghai in 2014 with strong links to the US market and Douyin, launched in 2016. Douyin attracted 100 million users within a year. Motivated by the rapid growth, it changed its name into TikTok to expand internationally, using the acquired Musical.ly's user base to speed up growth.

Record growth to 1 billion

In July 2019 the app already had one billion downloads worldwide, of which 500 million were active users. A year later there were two billion downloads and about 800 million active users according to Statista.

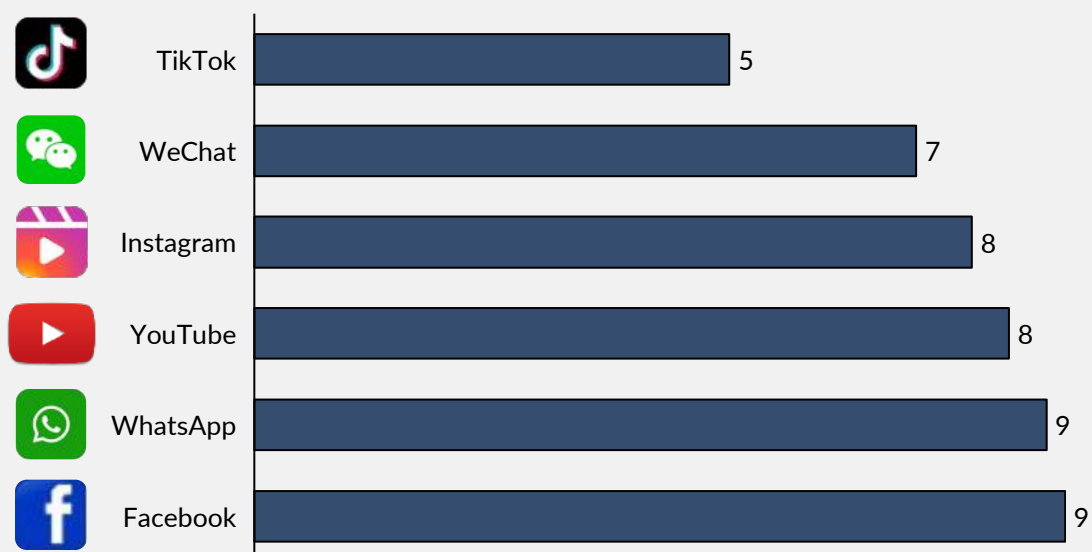
TikTok reached 1 billion monthly active users in September 2021 – a record 5-year timeline, according to Forbes. That's faster than Facebook and Instagram, which had taken 8 years each to reach the same milestone (see figure 4).

The greatest catalyst for TikTok happened to be the pandemic. People stayed indoors which created the ideal environment for TikTok. People spent more time online using their phones and that is when TikTok became big.

Figure 4

The road to one billion

of years to reach 1 billion monthly active users



The secret sauce: A superpowered algorithm

TikTok's secret lies in its extraordinarily powerful algorithm, which learns what content users like to see faster than other apps. Unlike YouTube or Instagram, the number of followers does not determine an account's success.

The result is in some ways more meritocratic – being famous isn't enough. It has also allowed some creators to grow incredibly fast, provided they tapped into popular trends or interests.

This algorithm-powered approach goes back to Toutiao – Bytedance's first star app. By personalizing newsfeeds Toutiao would engage news readers for over an hour a day⁴ (several times more than typical top-performing media).

According to an internal document called "TikTok Algo 101", produced by company engineer's, TikTok's algorithm has four main goals: user value, long-term user value, creator value and platform value.

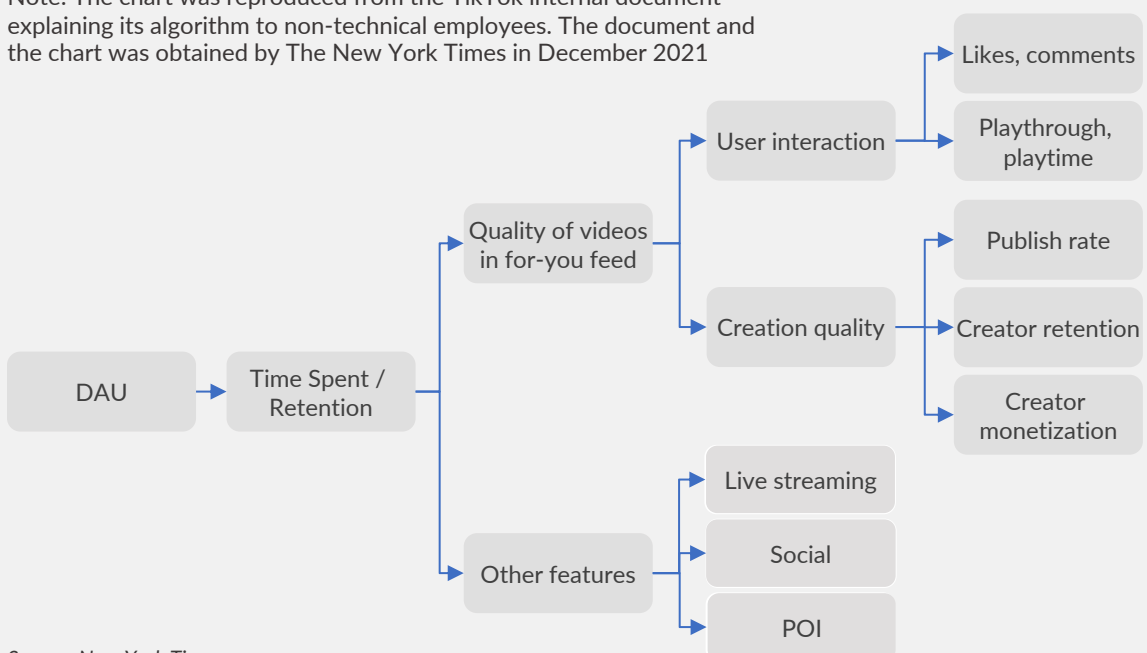
TikTok heavily relies on "Time Spent" watching a video and "Retention" (users coming back). On top of that, videos are scored by likes, comments, playtime and an indication of whether the video was played.

High scores result in recommendations to ever larger groups of people. The result is an addictive For-You-Page with endless top-performing content.

Figure 5

TikTok's algorithm issue-tree

Note: The chart was reproduced from the TikTok internal document explaining its algorithm to non-technical employees. The document and the chart was obtained by The New York Times in December 2021



Source: New York Times

TikTok's ability to go viral

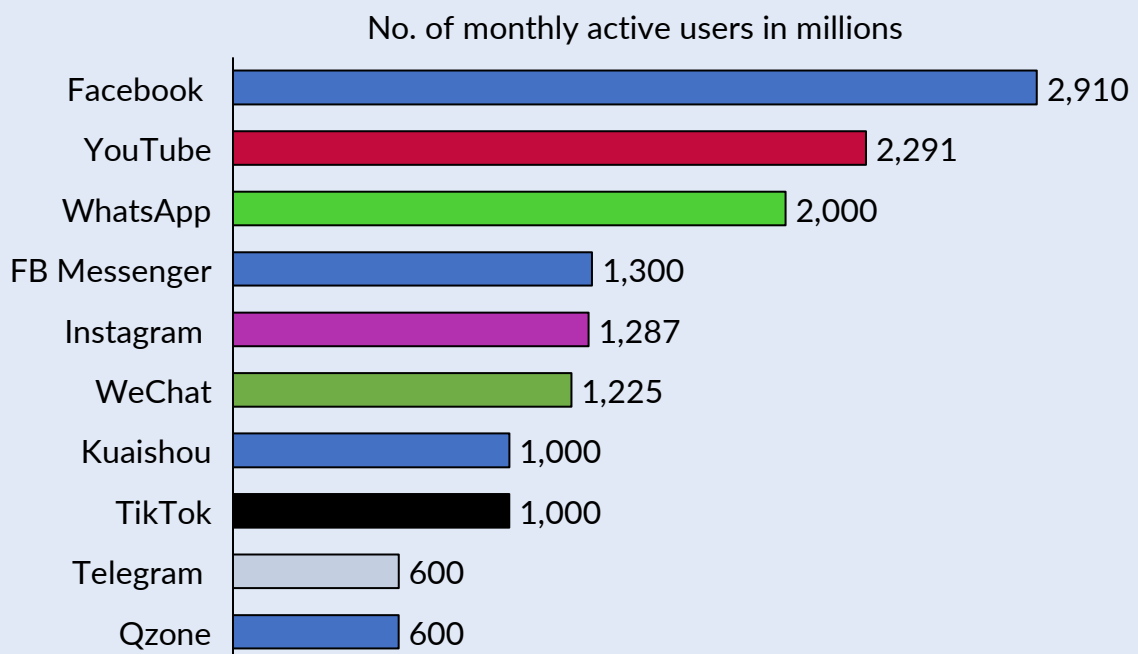
Here are the key factors that determined TikTok's success within 5 years:

1. **Content matters:** Creators can go viral without growing a large follower base first
2. **Simplicity of usage:** Anyone with a smartphone can easily upload content on TikTok and as soon as you open the app you dive directly into content
3. **Brevity:** The video length fits a short concentration span
4. **Strong algorithm:** The app masters adapting the content to the preferences of the user
5. **Music:** It was already proven through Twitter's Vine that people of all age groups enjoy music related content
6. **Instagram:** Creators can share their videos on the popular platform. The merge is of advertising value for TikTok

Figure 6

The world's biggest social media

Monthly active users as of Sept. 2021



Sources: [Forbes](#) & [Visual Capitalist](#)

Who consumes TikTok? – Gen Z and Co.

TikTok offers a huge opportunity for marketing managers looking to reach a global audience of 825 million people (aged over 18).

Arguably even more interesting is the possibility to reach young audiences, 44% of whom are women aged 18-34 – a highly prized demographic with strong spending potential (note: due to child protection regulations in many countries, a sizable part of the audience – roughly a quarter – that is under-age is not included in advertising analyses).

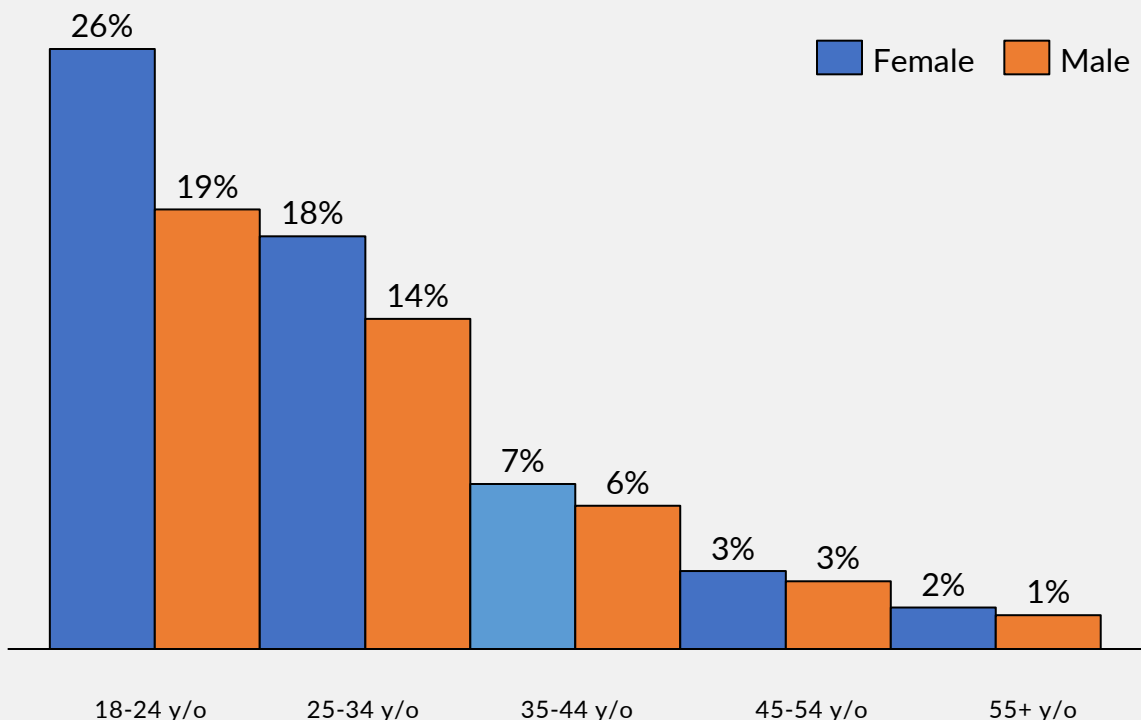
Looking more broadly, TikTok offers a unique opportunity to connect with younger audiences than most of the competitor social media (especially Facebook, which has become the social media of older relatives).

But it is not limited to teens and tweens. The average of users is steadily rising. At present, a total of 13% of adults aged 35-44 are consuming TikTok, that is approximately 107 million.

Figure 7

Not just for teens

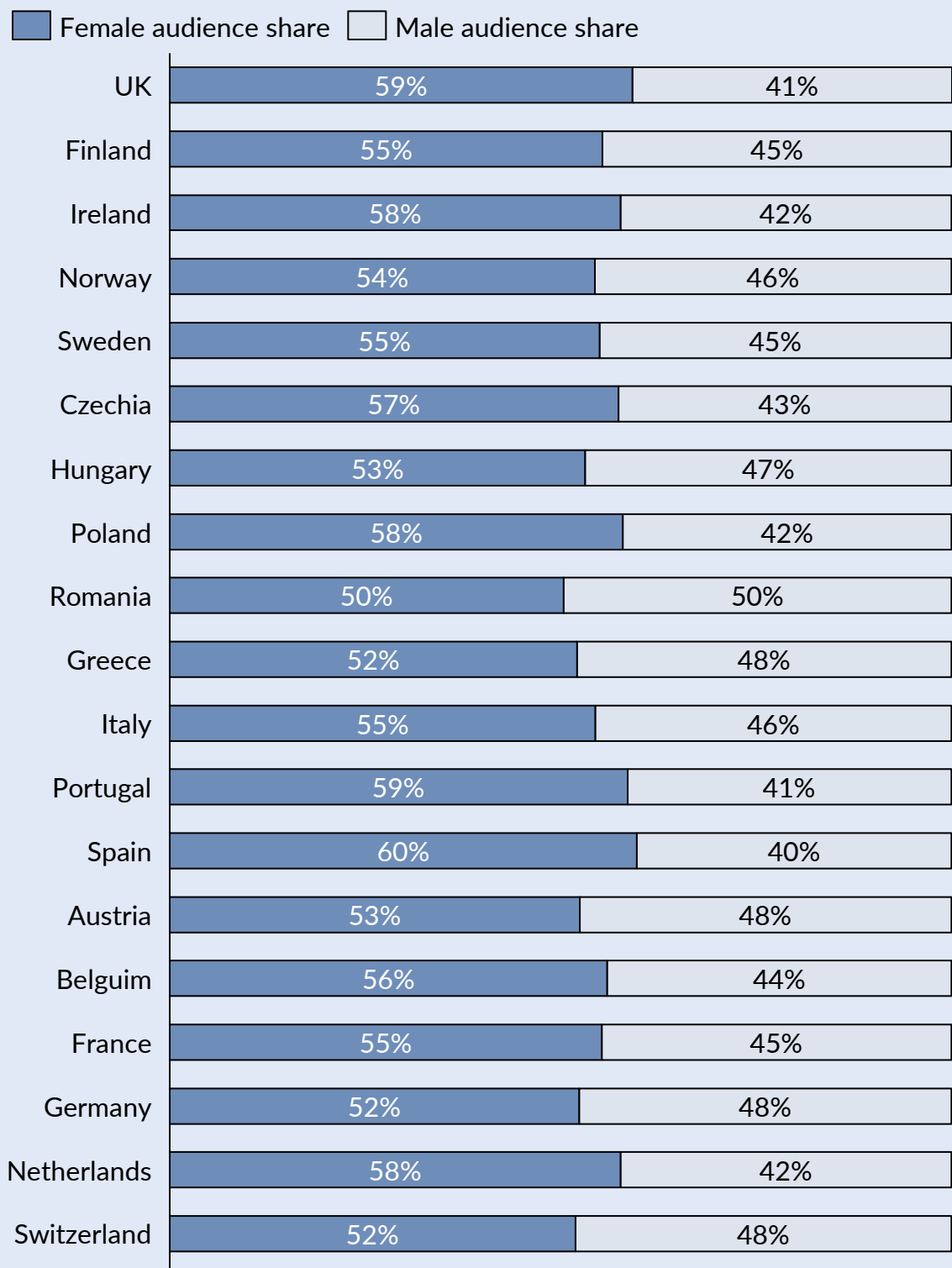
TikTok audience demographic breakdown by percent



Sources: Hootsuite

Female audiences first

Figure 8
Part of the audience which is female or male in percentage %



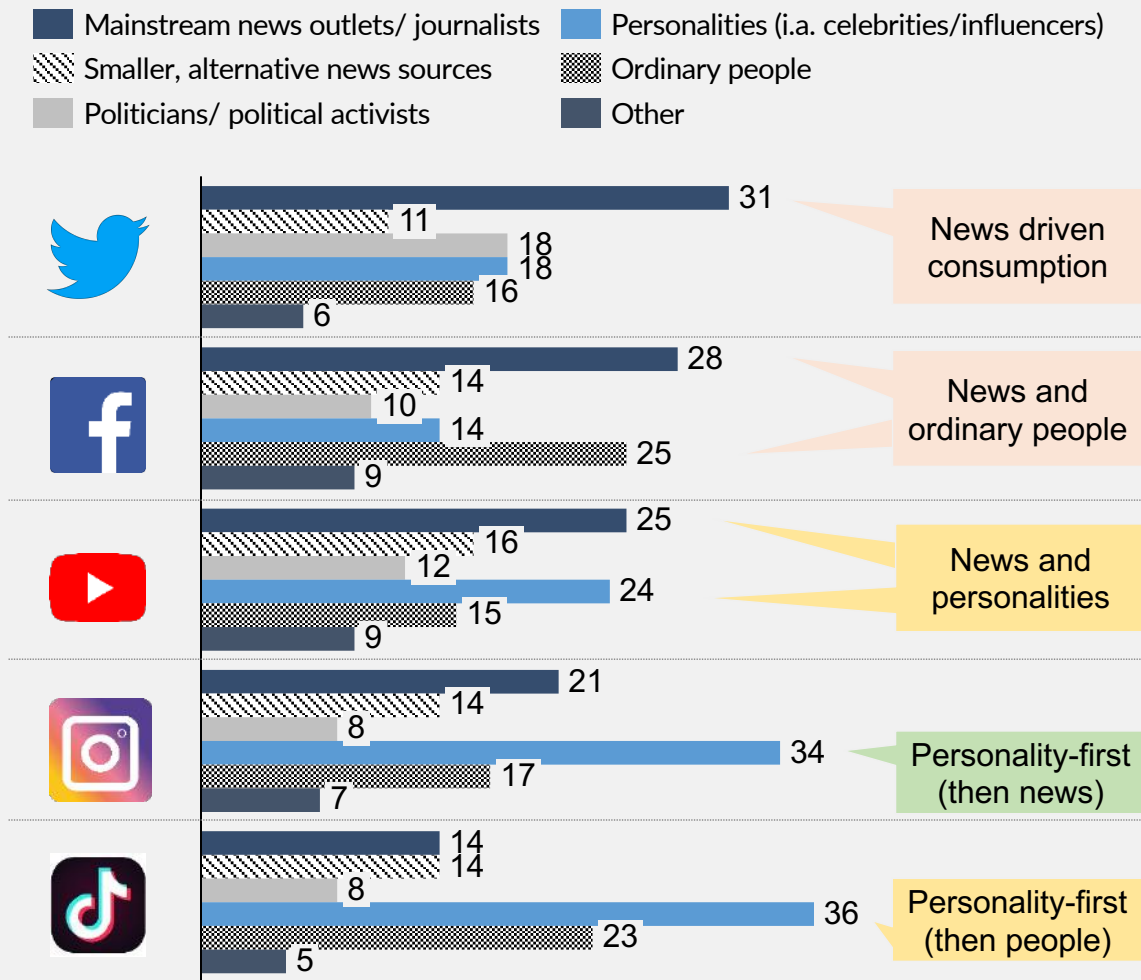
Source: Hootsuite 2021, The Fix Research

Personal engagement

Unlike Twitter or even Facebook/ YouTube, TikTok is a platform that is driven by personalities and people. This means that creators who struggle to build a persona (or media that focus on dry news reporting) will struggle to build a following. Conversely, bringing out the human side will be appreciated.

Figure 9

Who people pay most attention to when using social network for news, %



Takeaways

- Instagram (followed by YouTube and TikTok), is the most important channels for promotion of personality focused content
- Twitter is great for news, but offers limited opportunities in case creator is not a news-generator

European TikTok: market structure and consumption habits



TikTok in Europe

The European TikTok market is smaller compared to the Asian (and smaller than the US in advertising dollar terms). However, it's on the rise. As TikTok initially had an Asian origin, this region has been in the lead for a while.

While the number of TikTok users in North America grew 3.7 times from 2018 till 2020, Europe grew 4.6 times, from 21 to 98 million in 2020.

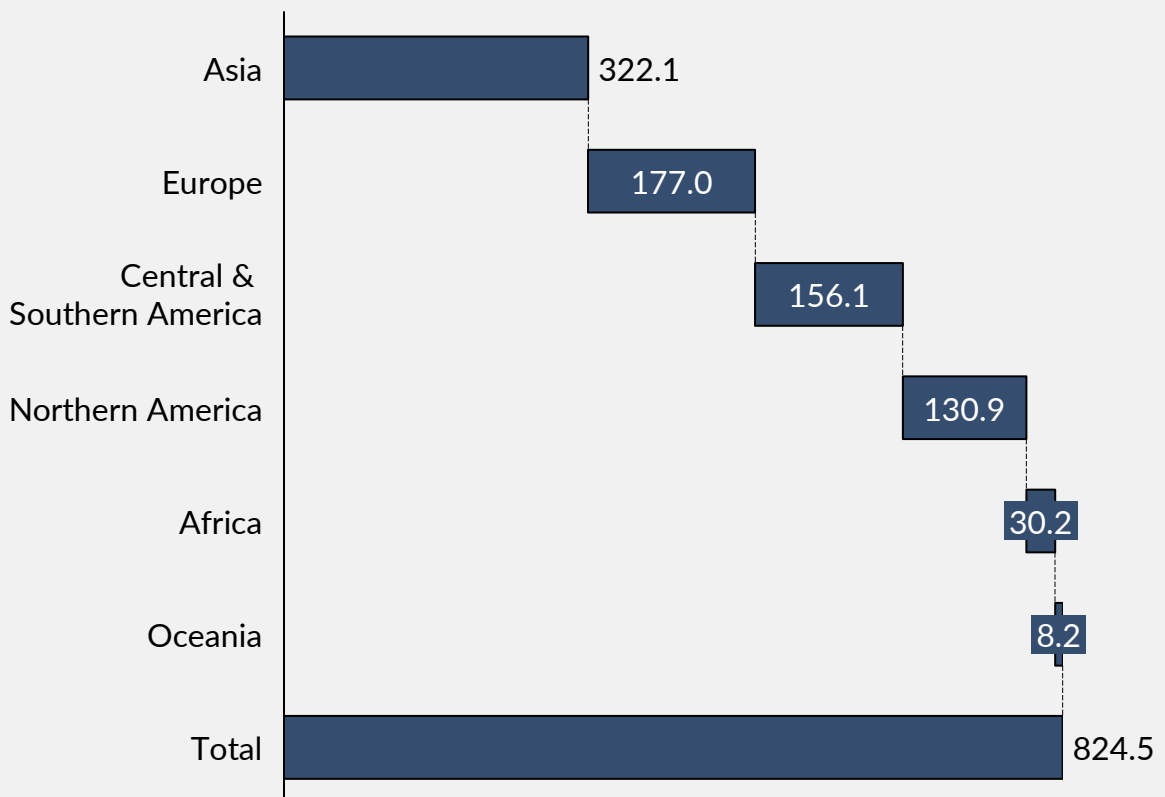
According to the 2021 Hootsuite research, Europe now has bigger audience reach (users aged 18+) than Northern America as well Central & Southern America.

Asia remains the biggest market (even excluding China that uses Douyin, ByteDance's local version of TikTok). Central & Southern America is on the third place with more than 150 million of users aged 18+

Europe, with the reach of 177 million, is one of the priority markets for ByteDance.

Figure 10

TikTok global advertising reach by region,
mil. of users aged 18+



TikTok growth in Europe is taking place at different speeds. However, all countries surveyed had over 10% of the population being present on the platform.

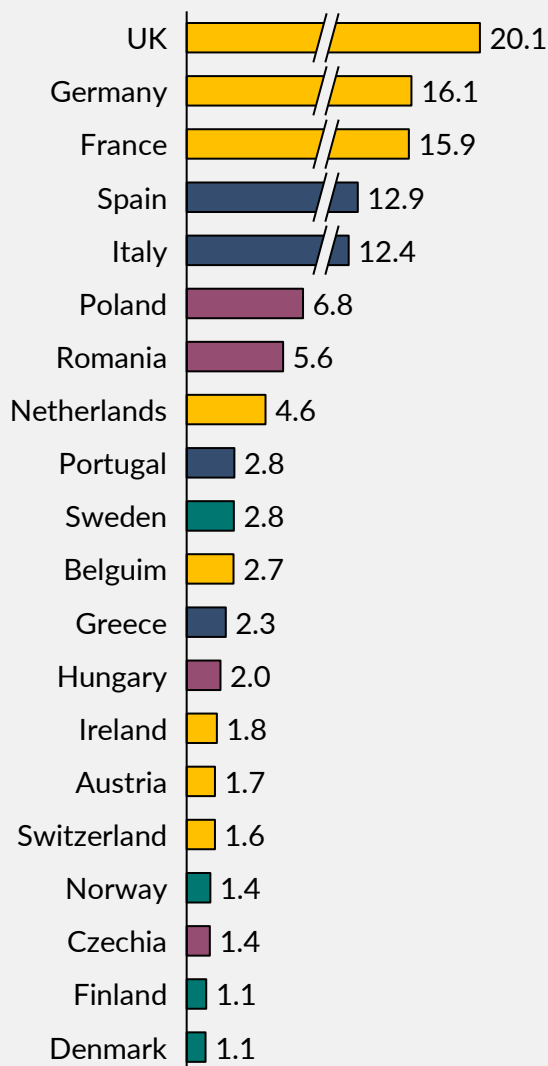
While Western Europe clearly dominates in terms of the number of users, consumption per capita shows slightly different picture. Countries from Northern Europe show relatively higher number of penetration, Romania is at the third highest reach with 29%.

Figure 11

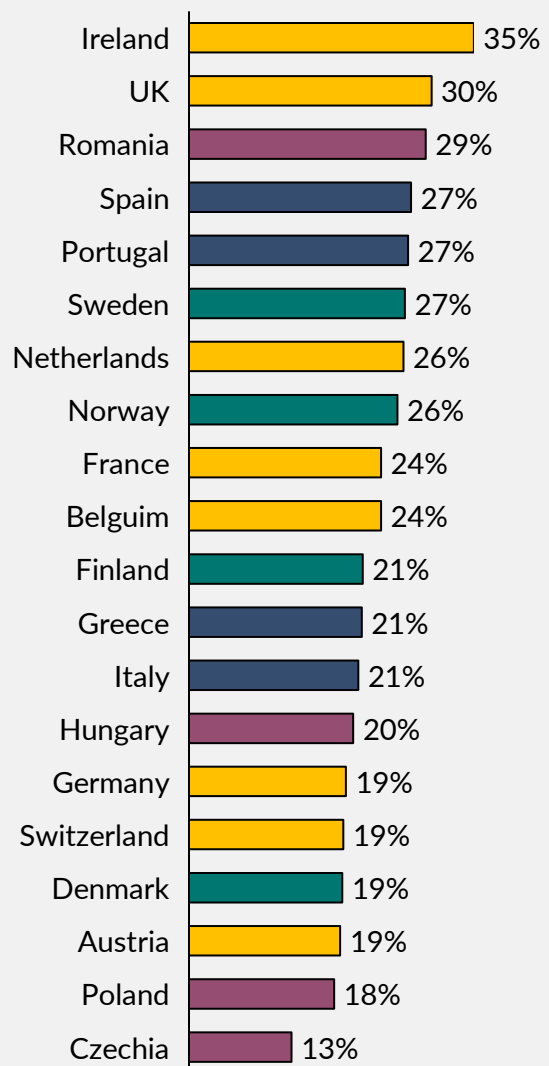
TikTok users across selected European countries,

■ Western Europe
 ■ Southern Europe
 ■ Northern Europe
 ■ CEE

Millions of users (aged 18+)



Share of 18+ population



Source: Hootsuite 2021, The Fix Research

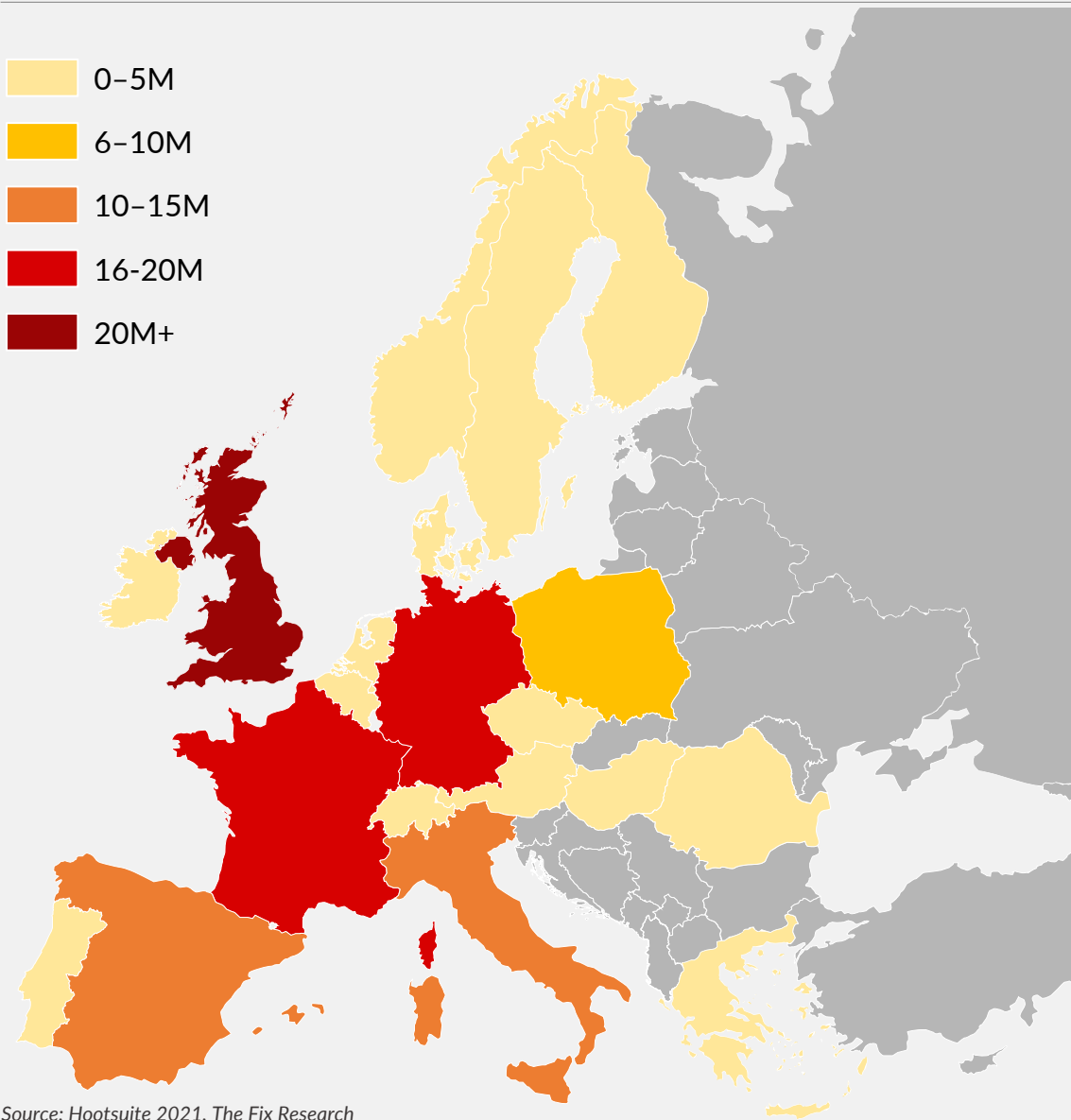
In terms of absolute user numbers Western European countries are clearly in the lead. The UK has the highest number of TikTok monthly active users in the European Union, with Germany and France being on its tail.

This aligns closely to Sphera’s priority markets – meaning the potential impact of content projects can be even greater. However, it is also worth considering per-capita numbers (see figure 13, next page), as the absolute figures are closely aligned to population sizes and hence overlook potentially fast-growing local communities of users.

Figure 12

TikTok users reach across selected European countries

Millions of users aged 18+



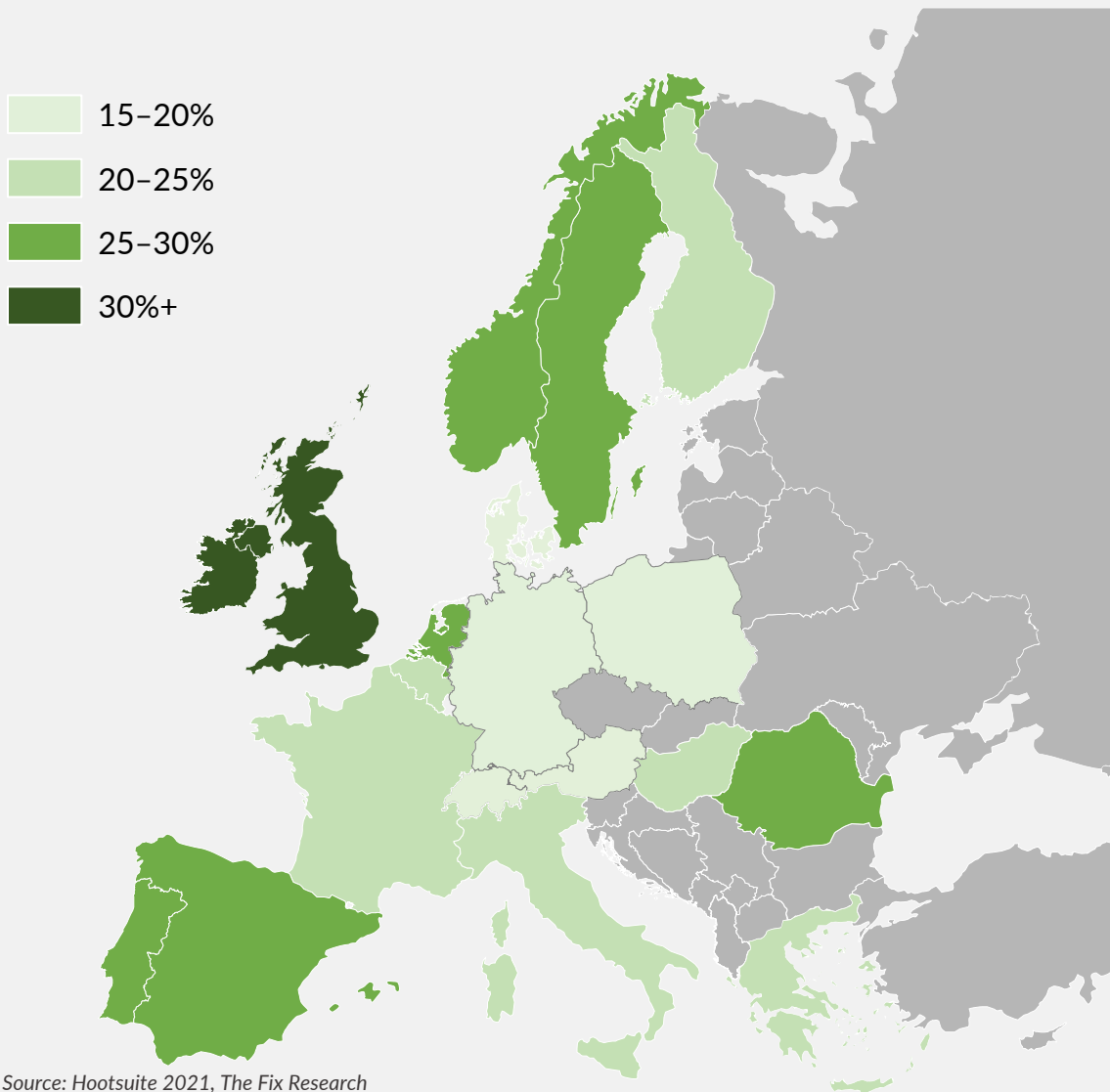
UK, Germany and France (as well as Russia and Turkey) are the biggest European markets for TikTok. Yet, analysis of the platform’s users per capita gives a better picture of TikTok penetration in Sphera’s priority markets.

UK, Spain and the Netherlands are three EU countries where the percentage of users is above 25%. For comparison, the United States has 36%. While Germany is the second biggest EU market in the ranking, it lags behind other markets.

It seems that TikTok will only be growing in Europe. According to the recent CNBC analysis, the company’s staff in Europe grew six times – from 208 in 2019 to 1,294 in 2020, suggesting TikTok’s growing interest in expansion.

Figure 13

TikTok users reach across selected European countries
Millions of users aged 18+



Source: Hootsuite 2021, The Fix Research

Deep-dives on the priority markets (1/4)

France



Key metrics

- Audience reach: 15.9M
- Audience reach per capita: 23.6%

Key insights

- Over 4 million active daily users
- France is one of the biggest European TikTok markets, with only UK and Germany having more active users.
- France has a lot of popular influencers and is ranked as the 9th country with the highest number of influencers

- Top country account:
 - PSG football club (@psg)
 - 23.5M followers
 - 266.4M likes

Germany



Key metrics

- Audience reach: 16M
- Audience reach per capita: 19.3%

Key insights

- While Germans are still catching up on the TikTok usage per capita compared to its European peers, it's already the second biggest market in the EU
- According to a 2020 survey, around half of TikTok users in Germany use the app daily

- Top country account:
 - Younes Zarou (@youneszarou)
 - 44.1M followers
 - 885.1M likes

Deep-dives on the priority markets (2/4)

United Kingdom



Key metrics

- Audience reach: 20.1M
- Audience reach per capita: 29.9%

Key insights

- UK is Europe's biggest and the most lucrative TikTok market. It's one of the biggest revenue-drivers for the company, with only China and US being ahead
- Many of UK influencers consolidated audiences around the globe due to low language barrier (English is by far the most popular language on the platform)

- **Top country account:**
 - Kyle Thomas (@kylethomas)
 - 31.5M followers
 - 1.5B likes

Netherlands



Key metrics

- Audience reach: 4.6M
- Audience reach per capita: 26.4%

Key insights

- The Netherlands have seen a tremendous user growth in the last two years – reaching more than 4.5 million active monthly users
- Per Bytedance's last year data, the average Dutch user spends 61 minute per day consuming TikTok – (vs. UK and France at 60, and the US leading with 68 minutes per day)

- **Top country account:**
 - Nikkie de Jager (@nikkietutorials)
 - 4.6M followers
 - 92.5M likes

Deep-dives on the priority markets (3/4)

Spain



Key insights

- Spain is the biggest TikTok market in Southern Europe, both in absolute and per capita numbers
- TikTok in Spain is very popular among kids – according to the 2020 Qustodio study, TikTok is used by 88% of kids (69% in the UK, 74% in the UK)

Key metrics

- Audience reach: 12.9M
- Audience reach per capita: 27.3%
- Top country account:
 - Naim Darrechi (naimdarrechi)
 - 27.6M followers
 - 2.4B likes

Italy



Key insights

- Italy is another big European TikTok market. Having almost the same reach as Spain, it holds a significant influence in the region
- Italian regulators have taken a hard line over the use of privacy data by TikTok. In 2021, authorities ordered to stop using children's data with unconfirmed age. As a result, TikTok removed 500k+ accounts

Key metrics

- Audience reach: 12.4M
- Audience reach per capita: 20.8%
- Top country account:
 - Khabane lame (@khaby.lame)
 - 128.5M followers
 - 2B likes

Deep-dives on the priority markets (4/4)

Poland



Key insights

- TikTok was most popular app for users between 18 and 24 years. They made up 40 percent of the app's users in the first quarter of 2021.
- TikTok opened an office in Warsaw that will act as a regional hub for Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic

Key metrics

- Audience reach: 6.78M
- Audience reach per capita: 21.9%
- Top country account:
 - Maria Jeleniewska (@Jeneliewska)
 - 13M followers
 - 385.2M likes

Hungary



Key insights

- The Hungarian government has had issues with TikTok. Investigations were conducted of whether TikTok informed the customers properly of its terms and conditions.
- It is projected that the number of Hungarian TikTok users are to triple in the next 2-3 years, putting it ahead of other CEE markets.



























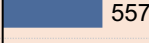
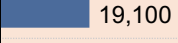



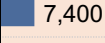






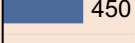











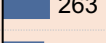





































































Key metrics


- Audience reach: 1.97M
- Audience reach per capita: 24.8%
- Top country account:
 - @jozsi_official
 - 5.5M followers
 - 71.4M likes

Figure 14

Top European publishers and news accounts on TikTok,

TikTok statistics, thousands

Country	Media	Type	# followers	Growth*	# likes	Multiple**
	Daily Mail			+24%		43x
	ac2alitiespanol			+7%		56x
	Xataka			+14%		5x
	Tagesschau			+11%		25x
	BBC			+46%		21x
	Chip			-1%		27x
	BBC Radio 1			+30%		34x
	Konbini			+5%		16x
	Tataki (RTS)			na		13x
	1 Live WDR			na		24x
	Radio Jam			na		25x
	Le Monde			+40%		12x
	Finanztip			na		17x
	BR24			+13%		39x
	Corriere d. Sport			+41%		6x
	BFMTV			+77%		9x
	NOS Stories			+33%		15x
	1+1 TV Channel			+2%		12x
	NU.nl			+15%		23x
	Berlin Fresh (DW)			+36%		27x
	The Telegraph			+1%		13x
	France TV			+28%		13x
	Das Ding			+1%		20x
	Radio Svaboda			+1%		16x
	NPO 3			+5%		23x
	Dein Puls			-2%		12x
	Tut.by			-4%		20x
	Novaya Gazeta			+58%		47x
	20 Minuten			+50%		15x
	Hromadske			+21%		51x

 Broadcaster (both radio and TV)  Legacy publication  Gen Z/ Digital native  Tech focus

*% change between July 7 and Oct. 24 (no data for accounts not featured in earlier ranking); ** Rate of likes to followers;
Source: www.tiktok.com (as of October 24, 2021); Icons created by Freepik

Mapping top TikTok creators and trends across Europe

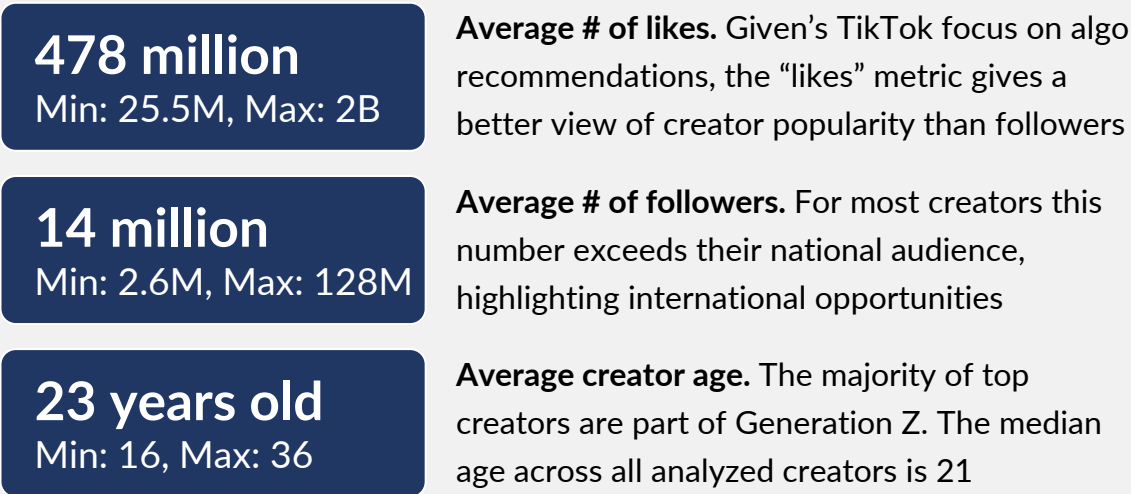
Insights from analysing Europe’s top creators

An analysis of the top 3 TikTok creators (defined by number of likes) from 11 major European markets (33 in total). Below you can find their key statistics, the type of content they create (see figure 14) and an overview of the top creator for each of the 11 countries (see figure 15, next page).

Figure 15

Top 3-content creator demographics

Demographic figures for 33 creators surveyed



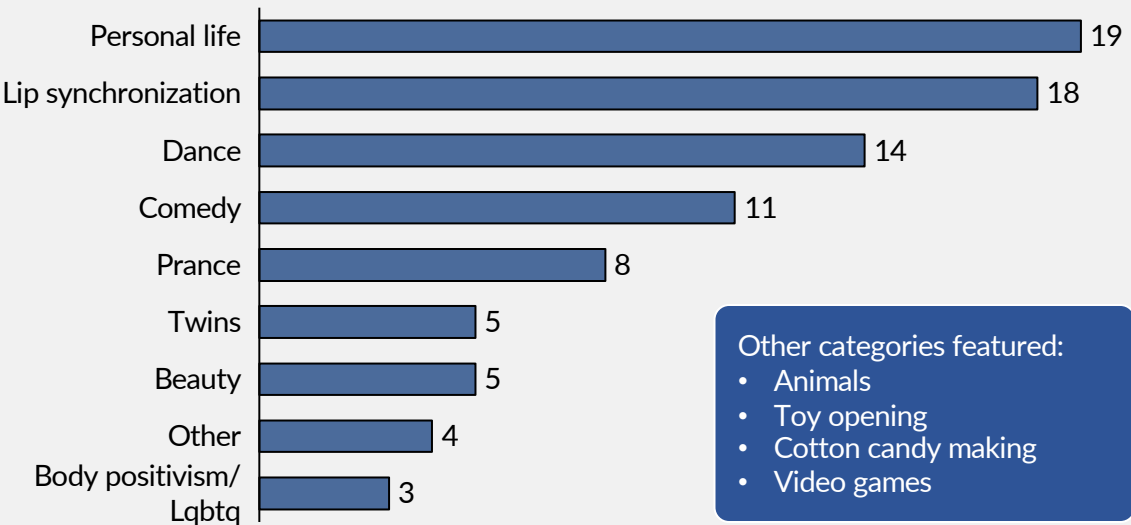
Source: The Fix Research

Further, identified 9 categories that best describe a creator’s thematic focus.

Figure 16

Content labels of TikTok creators in selected European markets

of creators active by content category



Note: Some creators fall into multiple categories hence the overall number is greater than 33



























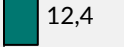



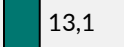













Source: The Fix Research


Creator focus on personal life often comes as a subsequent feature of their content creation (i.e., after finding their niche and building a community, creators start to respond to audience questions about their personal lives).


However, most top creators initially “build up” fame with music and dance videos – 7 out of 11 biggest creators were music/dance-first. Other major categories for growth are comedy and animal-based content (i.e., pet videos)


Figure 17


Biggest TikTok creators in selected European markets, as of Jan 14th

Market	Top account	Type	# followers, M	# likes	Multiple
 Germany	▪ Younes Zarou @younesarou		 44,1	 883	20x
 UK	▪ Kyle Thomas @kylethomas		 31,5	 1.500	48x
 France	▪ PSG Football Club @psg		 22,5	 246	56x
 Spain	▪ Naim Darrechi @naimdarrechi		 27,6	 2.300	84x
 Italy	▪ Khabane lame @khaby.lame		 128,6	 2.000	26x
 NL	▪ Nikkie de Jager @nikkietutorials		 4,6	 93	98x
 Belgium	▪ Celine Dept @celinedept		 12,4	 449	36x
 Poland	▪ Mary Jeleniewska @jeleniewska		 13,1	 383	29x
 Sweden	▪ Elvir Aljicevic @elvir_aljicevic		 7,3	 90	12x
 Norway	▪ Guro Elde Paulsen @gurobelly		 5,9	 173	17x
 Austria	▪ Christoph Brückner @con`dsty		 22,0	 346	16x

 Music & Dance

 Comedy & Pranks

 Animals

 ... Other

Source: The Fix Research

Note: Ranking includes the biggest creators in different markets, not the biggest accounts (e.g. brand, TikTok office in the country). Creator with the biggest # of followers in Poland was excluded due to suspicions of fraudulent numbers

Keys to success – insights from creator analysis

In order to better understand criteria for success on TikTok we analyzed 1650 videos by the top-3 creators in 11 European markets (33 in total, see figure 19). The figures show a very strong correlation between video success and the overall length – short videos fare far better (although being short is not in itself enough to guarantee success).

However, these results are not homogenous for different metrics. Longer videos in the 30-60 second range (or more), for example, tend to fare worse when it comes to comments and plays. But they perform better in terms of shares – suggesting that if somebody finds something valuable and informative, they will forward it to other users and non-TikTok platforms.

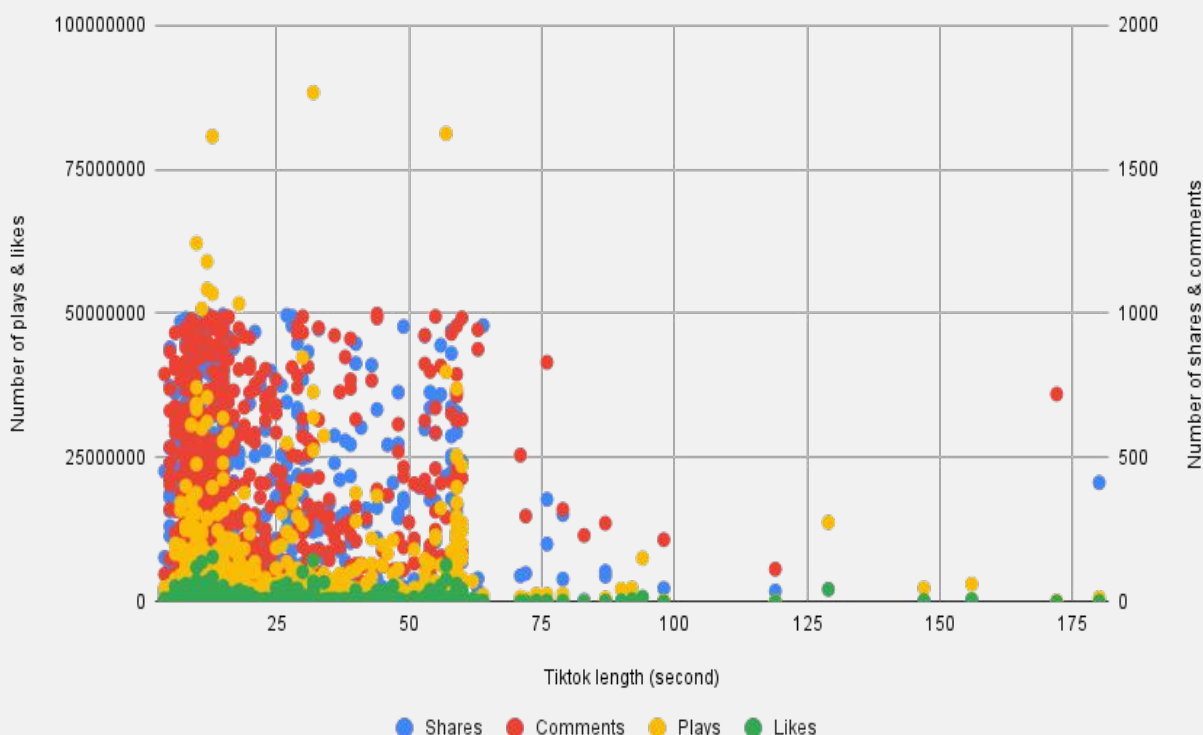
Conversely, videos up to 15-25 seconds fare much better in generating comments and repeat plays. The latter is not surprising – most creators try to loop videos so that ending and start match up, making it easy for people to go through 1.5 or more loops on a short video before scrolling further.

The significant correlation between comments and super short-videos suggests these may be a good tactic in a creator's community-building phase.

Figure 18

Correlation between TikTok length and engagement metrics,

Plot of 1650 videos by 33 creators by type of metric



Source: The Fix Research

Furthermore, the analysis of top creator activity provided a spotlight on ways for creators to maximize their chances of making it big. In addition to the aforementioned looping of videos, below are 5 of the most commonly observed tactics used by top creators to boost video performance (figure 19).

Figure 19

Top tactics to boost video performance,

Plot of 1650 video by 33 creators

- 1 Keep your videos short and to the point**
There is a strong correlation between how short a video is and how well it does on TikTok – 30 seconds is a good rule of thumb.
- 2 Collaborate with other creators**
Most top creators regularly collaborate with others. This increases recognition and helps put you in the heard of the conversation.
- 3 Leverage hashtags to find your audience**
Unlike other social media, hashtags in TikTok matter. They are especially relevant for reaching audiences with niche interests.
- 4 Keep up with trends and challenges**
A clear majority of the analyzed creators took part in trending challenges – all used trending music.
- 5 Leverage TikTok to boost your other social media**
TikTok is the fastest way to build a community. But concerns about monetization, censorship and stability mean most creators try to funnel their audiences to other social media

It is worth noting the last of these – namely the use of TikTok as a funnel to other social media. Many creators have reported their content taken down, or accounts closed somewhat arbitrarily. This phenomenon is both tied to China-driven censorship (which started with Toutiao⁵ for ByteDance), as well as an automated process with a sizable share of false-positives⁶ (TikTok seemingly tries to err on the “safe side”).

⁵ A Saucy App Knows China's Taste in News. The Censors Are Worried, NYT, 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/01/02/business/china-toutiao-censorship.html

⁶ TikTok removed 81 million videos for violations in Q2, representing 1% of uploads, TechCrunch, Oct. 2021, www.techcrunch.com/2021/10/13/tiktok-removed-81-million-videos-for-violations-in-q2-representing-1-of-uploads/

Deep dives on selected performers (1/2)



Shauni (@itshauni)

UK-based TikTok influencer that creates videos about personal life, toy openings, funny sketches



KEY METRICS

- # of likes: 504.5M
- # of followers: 16.6M
- Multiple: 30x
- Instagram # of followers: 330k
- Age: 21
- YouTube # of subscribers: 940k

INSIGHTS

- Shauni rarely speaks in videos, relying instead on photos and subtitles/ text
- Most of her videos don't have hashtags.
- She combines entertainment with the message of body positivity, which seems to be an important factor of support for her audience
- Shauni has a very diversified audience – while her TikTok account is by far the biggest, she also has considerable presence on Instagram (330k) and YouTube (940k) with and subscribers

50 VIDEOS ANALYSIS

- Average # of views: 1.3M
- Average # of comments: 624
- Average # of shares: 207
- Average # of likes: 92K
- Frequency of posting: 2 times/day
- Average video length: 23.16 seconds

IDEA FROM CREATOR

- TikTok has the strongest funnel potential. Use it as a funnel to boost your other platforms, with better monetization opportunities

Deep dives on selected performers (2/2)



Christoph Brückner (@condsty)

Austria-based artist that creates short drawing sketches



KEY METRICS

- # of likes: 356.6M
- # of followers: 22M
- Multiple: 16x
- Instagram # of followers: 1M
- Age: 36
- YouTube # of subscribers: 746k

INSIGHTS

- Unlike most analyzed creators, Christoph doesn't record lip syncing or dancing videos (by far the most popular category)
- He pursues a diversified platform strategy, with 1M subscribers on Instagram and 746k on YouTube
- His videos are very short, the average is 11.5 seconds.
- His videos' popularity is driven by the simplicity of the drawings. They can often be recreated using instructions he gives, making the content more sharable and accessible

50 VIDEOS ANALYSIS

- Average # of views: 3.9M
- Average # of comments: 3605
- Average # of shares: 5600
- Average # of likes: 231K
- Frequency of posting: 2 times/day
- Average video length: 11.5 seconds

IDEA FROM CREATOR

- Leverage simplicity and keep videos short. TikTok encourages quick consumption, and you can use it to stay laconic and up to the point

Issues that matter: Trendmapping climate change, LGBTQ and social activism TikTok



Topic and content analysis

TikTok is not just about dances and lip-syncing – the platform has increasingly become a platform for discussions on important social issues and even building trends and communities around political purposes (please note .

This trendmapping analysis focused on three especially timely and relevant topic areas: climate change, LGBTQ and social justice & activism.

TikTok has been a great place for building the conversation around these topics, with many creators building their editorial line around them and getting millions of views and likes.

We analysed the performance of these topics on the platform, identified interesting creators and assessed their editorial and distribution strategies. This is the first iteration of the trendmapping analysis, which will be expanded in the following months.

Figure 20

Overview of analyzed creators and related topic hashtags

Topic in focus	Recommended creators	Relevant hashtags	# of hashtag plays
Climate Change	▪ @Howtonachhaltig	• #climatechange	▪ 1.4B
	▪ @Nachhaltigerleben	▪ #climateaction	▪ 637.1M
	▪ @Bottegazero	▪ #cop26	▪ 99.8M
	▪ @Umberto.Greco	▪ #globalwarming	▪ 809M
	▪ @Solanathagreenfair	▪ #eco-friendly	▪ 2.3B
		▪ #zerowaste	▪ 1.7B
LGBTQ	▪ @Justinetheizen	▪ #lgbt	▪ 165.4B
	▪ @Mrs potatoqueen	▪ #gay	▪ 109.1B
	▪ @Rea1le	▪ #lgbtq	▪ 97B
	▪ @charazinsky	▪ #transgender	▪ 9.3B
	▪ @janineandgen	▪ #pride	▪ 19.1B
		▪ #lesbian	▪ 44.6B
Social justice, Activism	▪ @Benjy_lookbook	▪ #blacklivesmatter	▪ 29.7B
	▪ @Lenagryszko	▪ #racism	▪ 6.8B
	▪ @Silviabatticelli	▪ #blackvoicesheard	▪ 757.7M
	▪ @Nayyeeohhhmeee	▪ #whiteprivilege	▪ 512.5M
		▪ #imblack	▪ 299.0M
		▪ #blackcreator	▪ 168.3M

Climate change deep dive

Climate change topic has been steadily growing on the platform. Some hashtags related to eco-activism now have more than a billion views (#climatechange, #eco-friendly, #zerowaste) and there are a lot of new creators that start accounts devoted to the topic.

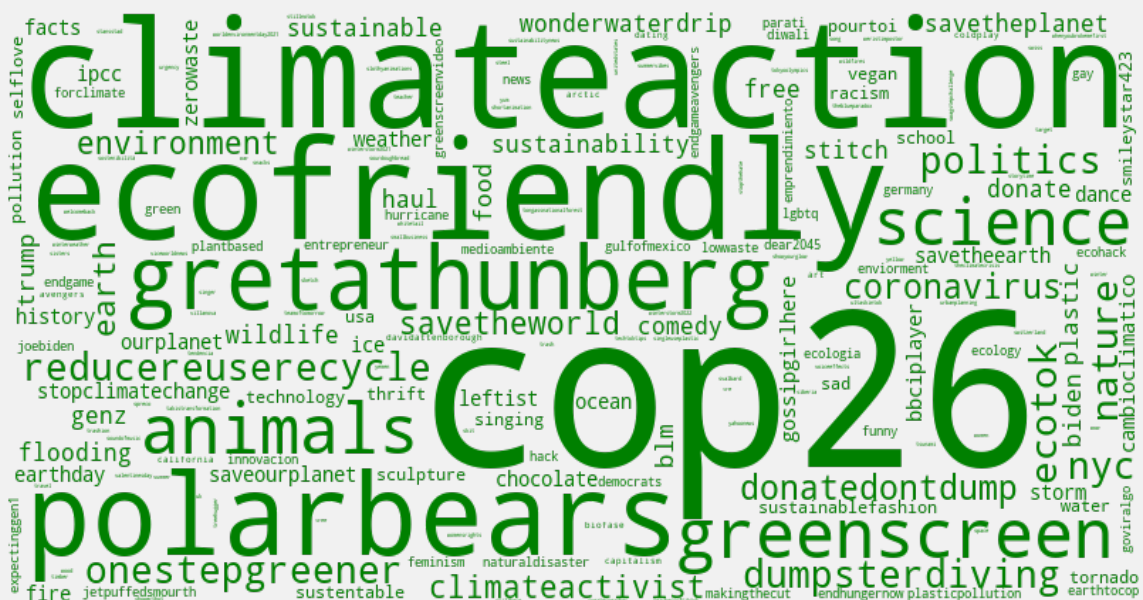
Many climate scientists and climate advocates found TikTok to be an efficient channel to deliver their message. Accounts, like EcoTok (@eco_tok), run by a collective of climate activists, get hundreds of thousands of views.

In our analysis of hashtags used together with #climatechange, we found that the most popular hashtags used around the topic would be: #climateaction, #ecofriendly, #cop26, #polarbears, #gretathunberg.

This year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) has been a big driver of discussions and videos on TikTok with hashtag #cop26 reaching 100 million views. The overall movement around the summit showed the platform's ability to turn online content into offline activism: a considerable part of the activists campaigning in Glasgow during the conference were TikTok users.

Figure 21

Wordcloud of hashtags used together with #climatechange








Source: The Fix Research

Climate change – selected creator examples

While the majority of #climatechange content is coming from the US, there are a lot of interesting European creators focused on climate change topic that create content in both English and other European languages.

Figure 22

European creators focused on climate change – selected examples

Creator	Description	Approach	#of likes, millions
 @Howtonachhaltig 91.3K 6.7K	<ul style="list-style-type: none">German-based creator that talks about lifehacks and ways to improve the planet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prefers short videos (avg is 16 sec), with quick cuts and focus on consumption lifehacks	3.7
 @Nachhaltigerleben 41.5K 34.3K	<ul style="list-style-type: none">German-based blogger that educates on greenhouse gases connects it to everyday products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fast paced narration with no music. Shows attention grabbing objects at the start.	0.6
 @Bottegazero 270K 70.1K	<ul style="list-style-type: none">DYI instructions to replace body care products with a zero waste approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Very vibrant colours with soothing music and quick narration. Doesn't show face.	4.0
 @Umberto.greco 58.5K 36 1K	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Created a web plugin that helps the planet. Mostly showcases it his creation and links it to climate issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lip syncs to music and speech fragments related to climate change	1.6
 @Solanathagreen 625K 16.5K	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mainly produces lifestyle videos. Visited COP26 and discussed it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Vlog style approach with soothing music.	25.1

Climate change deep dive – selected creator case study



Liza (@Howtonachhaltig)

Germany-based creator that focuses on practical videos about sustainability and eco-consumption

KEY METRICS

- # of likes: 3.7M
- # of followers: 91.3K
- Language: German
- Multiple: 34x
- # Instagram followers: 6.6K
- Age: 19

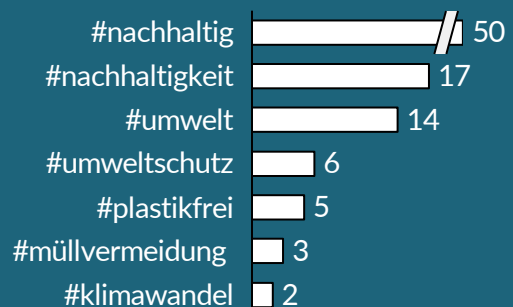
INSIGHTS

- Liza's content approach is all about consistency and stability – she uploads videos with everyday sustainability lifehacks every 2 or 3 days
- All the videos reviewed have similar length and music (the reaction to the videos is also quite consistent in the range of 2-3K likes)

50 VIDEOS ANALYSIS

- Average # of likes: 3283
- Frequency of posting: 1 video per 2-3 days
- Average video length: 16.2 seconds

HASHTAGS ANALYSIS



LGBTQ deep dive

LGBTQ community is vibrant on TikTok. Being driven by Gen Z creators that often lack representation in other media channels, TikTok became an important place for their community building and self-expression.

Some of the hashtags related to the topic have now more than a 100 billion views (significantly outpaces climate change discussion): #lgbt - 165B, #gay - 109B, #lgbtq - 97B.

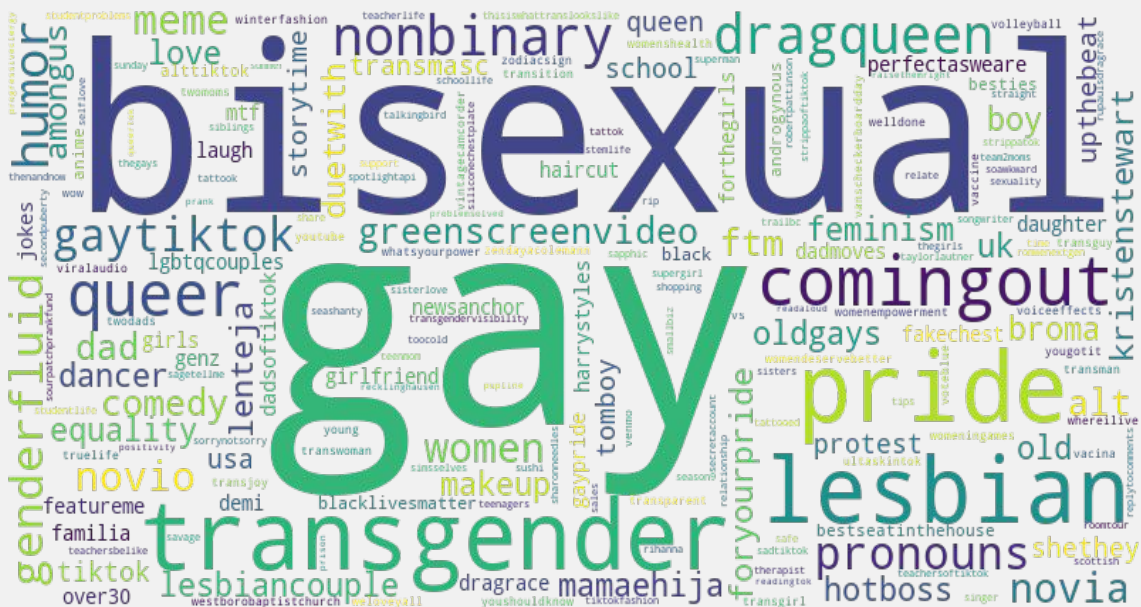
There are many tweets and stories of TikTok consumers that say TikTok helped them understand their gender identity better. Indeed, TikTok algorithms have been seen to identify a person's sexual orientation before they manage to do so themselves⁷.

The European LGBTQ discussion in TikTok is mainly based in national languages. However, English is the most popular and is often used alongside the main language of the creator (for example, a French creator with 70% of videos in French and 30% in English with French subtitles).

In our analysis of hashtags used together with the #lgbtq hashtag, we found that the most popular hashtags used around the topic would be: #bisexual, #gay, #transgender, #lesbian, #pride

Figure 23

Wordcloud of hashtags used together with #lgbtq








Source: The Fix Research

LGBTQ – selected creator examples

LGBTQ TikTok is full of interesting creators. Some of them create educational content with longer video length, while others focus on LGBTQ humor and related personal stories. Here’s the short list of interesting European creators on the topic worth following.

Figure 24

European creators focused on LGBTQ – selected examples

Creator	Description	Approach	# of likes, millions
<div><div><div>TikTok72.3K</div><div>Instagram12K</div></div><div>Justinetheizen</div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creates humorous content on LGBTQ and daily life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Roleplays scenarios and takes part in challenges. Has popular and relevant music.	1.7
<div><div><div>TikTok104K</div><div>Twitter588</div><div>Instagram35.5K</div></div><div>Mrspotatoqueen</div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gay Muslim living in London. Share about her life and what’s it like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Alternates between upbeat and downbeat music. Mainly does challenges.	7.7
<div><div><div>TikTok145K</div><div>Twitter12</div><div>Instagram4.5K</div></div><div>Rea1le</div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Based in London and creates lifestyle videos on LGBTQ.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Uses trending music and lip syncs.	3.2
<div><div><div>TikTok1.8M</div><div>Twitter1.4K</div><div>Instagram271K</div></div><div>charazinsky</div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Is an LGBTQ member and mostly creates entertainment videos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Uses trending music, lip syncs and produces comedic skits.	1.8
<div><div><div>TikTok18.4K</div><div>Instagram19.4K</div></div><div>janineandgen</div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Share their single gender relationship and talk about their daily lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce videos showcasing struggles in a comedic manner. Lip sync a lot	0.5

LGBTQ deep dive – selected creator case study



Justine Theizen (@Justinetheizen)

Belgium-based creator that funny, personal videos on LGBTQ-related topics

KEY METRICS

- # of likes: 1.7M
- Content language: French
- # of followers: 72.4k
- Multiple: 24x
- # Instagram followers: 12k

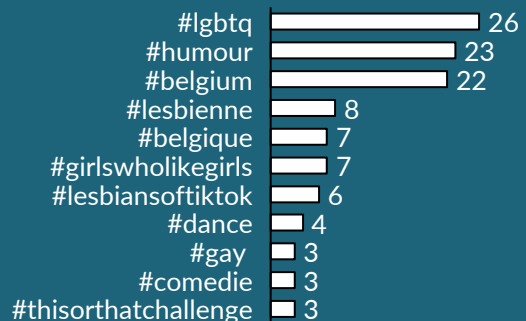
INSIGHTS

- Justine creates a lot of funny sketches related to being lesbian,
- Most of her videos are aimed at mocking other people's stereotypes about being lesbian and also empowering gay women
- She mixes English and French languages quite often. Most of her videos are in French and some are in English with French subtitles.
- Significant part of her videos are not with the original voice. Often she lip syncs a message related to LGBTQ topics with her own video footage

50 VIDEOS ANALYSIS

- Average # of likes: 5378
- Frequency of posting: 1 video per 3 days
- Average video length: 21 seconds

HASHTAGS ANALYSIS



Social justice & activism deep dive

The role of TikTok as a tool for political and social activism is growing. A study⁸ by Nuurianti Jalli from Northern State University shows the influence of TikTok on the protests in Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar.

She sees TikTok as a powerful tool for political consolidation and spreading knowledge about the status way beyond the geography of the country.

According to analysis by Reach3, a market research firm, TikTok users are more likely to engage in political activities because of TikTok, express their political views and participate in offline events.

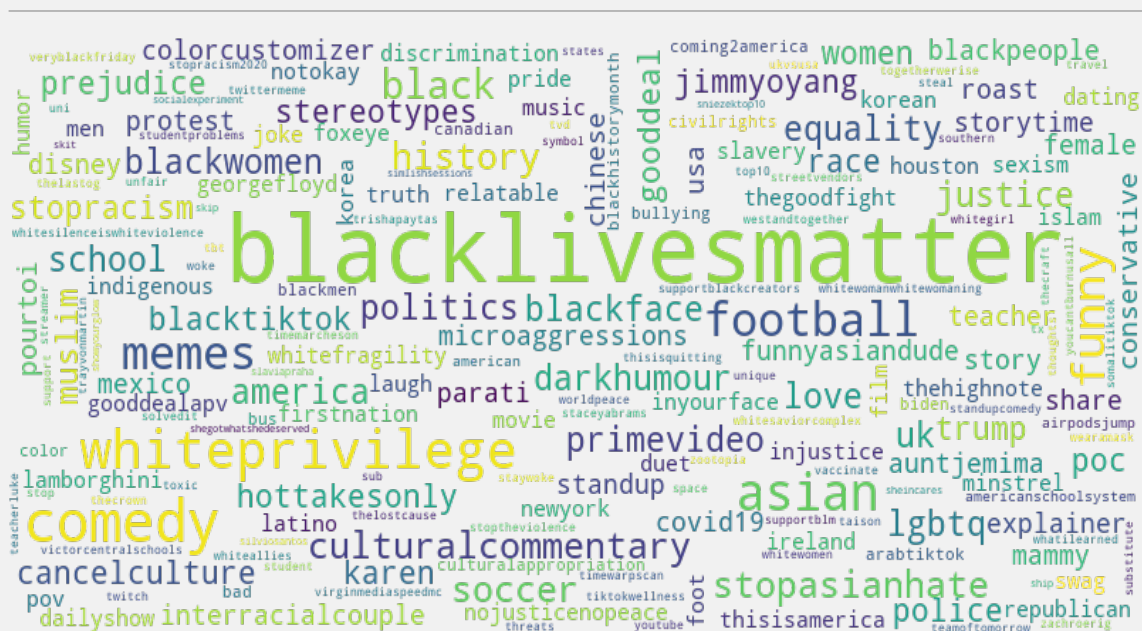
Their research found that over a quarter of TikTok users said they attended a Black Lives Matter protest, while only 13% of non-users did. They also found that three-quarters of survey respondents aged 13-24 said TikTok has helped them learn about social justice and politics and stay up to date on the news

Social activism and discussions around racism are vibrant on TikTok, with hashtags like #blacklivesmatter having 30B views. While the views and the discussion about racism is led by the US, it also has a noticeable traction in Europe, especially in the English-language TikTok.

Hashtags used the most often with #racism are #blacklivesmatter, #whiteprivilege, #comedy

Figure 25

Wordcloud of hashtags used together with #racism







Source: The Fix Research

Social justice & activism deep dive – selected creator examples

Europe’s social justice & activism community on TikTok is spread out across many countries. We’ve identified several creators that produce content in both English and national languages and could be a great inspiration for future projects on the topic.

Figure 26

European creators focused on social justice – selected examples

Creator	Description	Approach	#of likes, millions
<div>  <div> <div>TikTok icon</div> <div>202K</div> </div> <div> <div>Instagram icon</div> <div>3.3K</div> </div> </div> <div>Benjy_lookbook</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK-based creator that records explanatory videos on racism and social movements. Part of the TikTok campaign “Black History Month”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a very attention grabbing greeting. Talks quickly and without music. 	<div>4.3</div>
<div>  <div> <div>TikTok icon</div> <div>94K</div> </div> <div> <div>Twitter icon</div> <div>6K</div> </div> <div> <div>Instagram icon</div> <div>78.8K</div> </div> </div> <div>Malihazart</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK-based feminist and activist. Uses art to communicate her message and educates on women rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses trending but not offending music. Narrates at a normal pace and showcases her achievements and projects. 	<div>3.6</div>
<div>  <div> <div>TikTok icon</div> <div>232K</div> </div> <div> <div>Instagram icon</div> <div>9.9K</div> </div> </div> <div>Silviabbatticelli</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italy-based creator that showcases her unusual life and motivates others regardless of body type. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lip syncs and demonstrates how she can live with her bodily differences. 	<div>5.4</div>
<div>  <div> <div>TikTok icon</div> <div>74.3K</div> </div> <div> <div>Instagram icon</div> <div>1.2K</div> </div> </div> <div>Nayyeeohhhmeeee</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educates on black history, LGBTQ and rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vlog style short videos and lip syncs. 	<div>4.3</div>

Social justice & activism deep dive – selected creator case study



Benjy (@benjy_lookbook)

UK-based creator that records explanatory videos on racism and social equality.

KEY METRICS

- # of likes: 4.3M
- Content language: English
- # of followers: 201k
- Multiple: 20x
- Instagram # of followers: 3.3k
- Age: 26

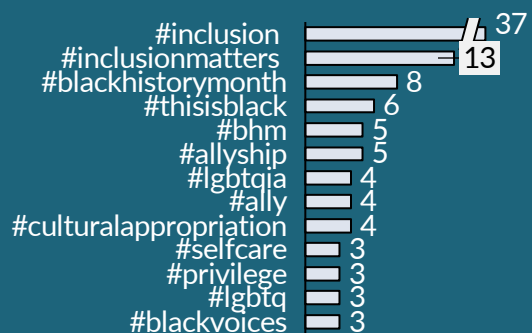
50 VIDEOS ANALYSIS

- Average # of likes: 13058
- Average # of views: 84000
- Frequency of posting: 1 video per 3-4 days
- Average video length: 48 seconds

INSIGHTS

- Part of the TikTok campaign “Black History Month”.
- Although his videos are significantly longer than the average lengths of other top creator, his engagement metrics are high – it also differentiates him from other creators
- His videos are usually short explainers diving into a term, case or relevant news.
- While the people in comments below his video are quite often offensive, he continues to engage with his audience via comments

HASHTAGS ANALYSIS



Report background

To be continued. Working document.

Note: final bits of work interrupted by outbreak of war in Ukraine.

Page 3: Photo Johan Mouchet (Unsplash)

Page 15: Photo by NASA on Unsplash

Page 24: Photo credit Ars Electronica / Robert Bauernhansl

Page 31: Photo credit Marius Masalar via Unsplash



We would like to thank all the people who helped put this report together.

For further information reach out to mick@areweeurope.eu or research@thefix.media

Appendix

Europe's top creators by country

LEGEND

#

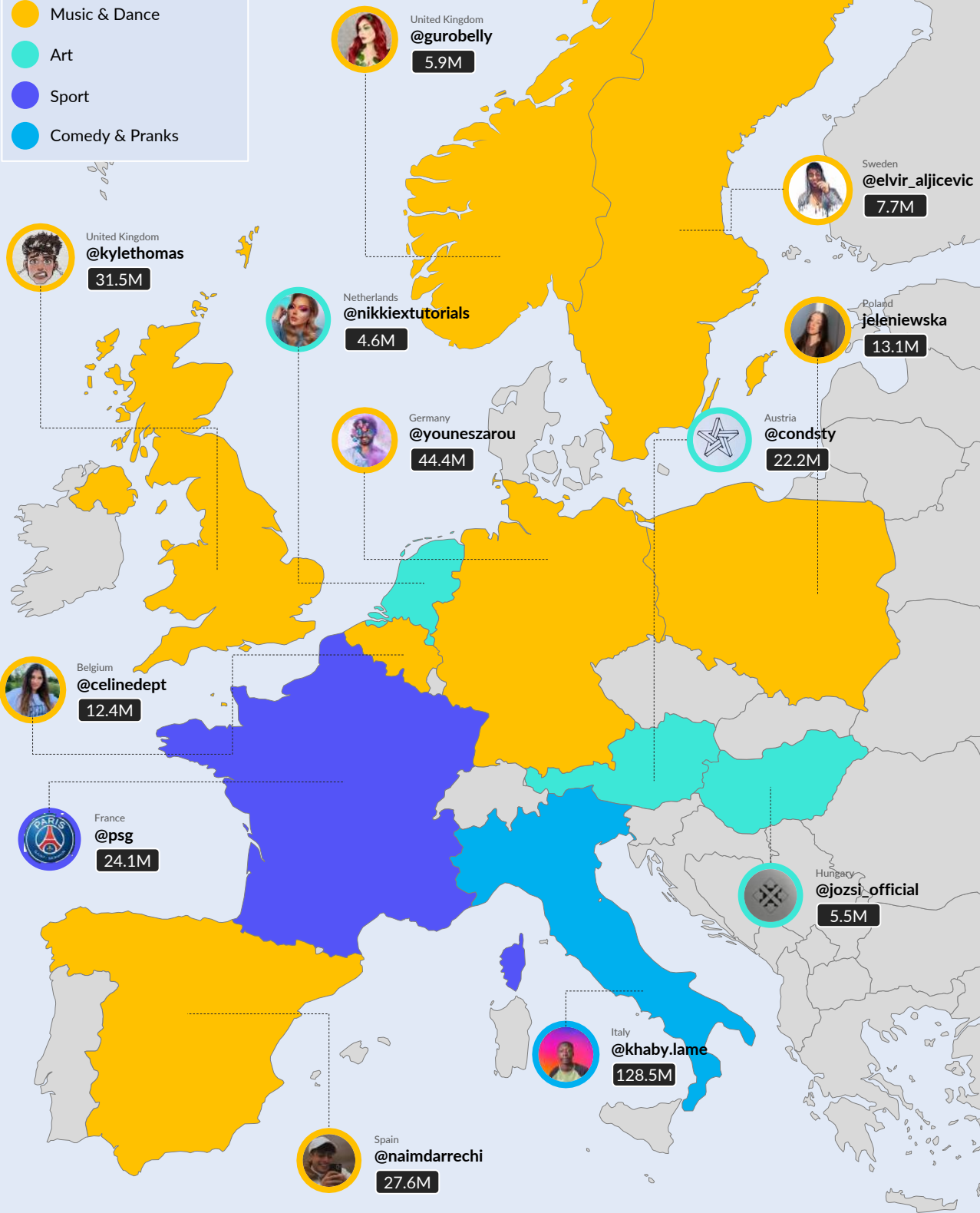
of followers

Music & Dance

Art

Sport

Comedy & Pranks



Source: The Fix Research
*Data as of January 15th

Europe's upcoming creators: selected list

LEGEND

#

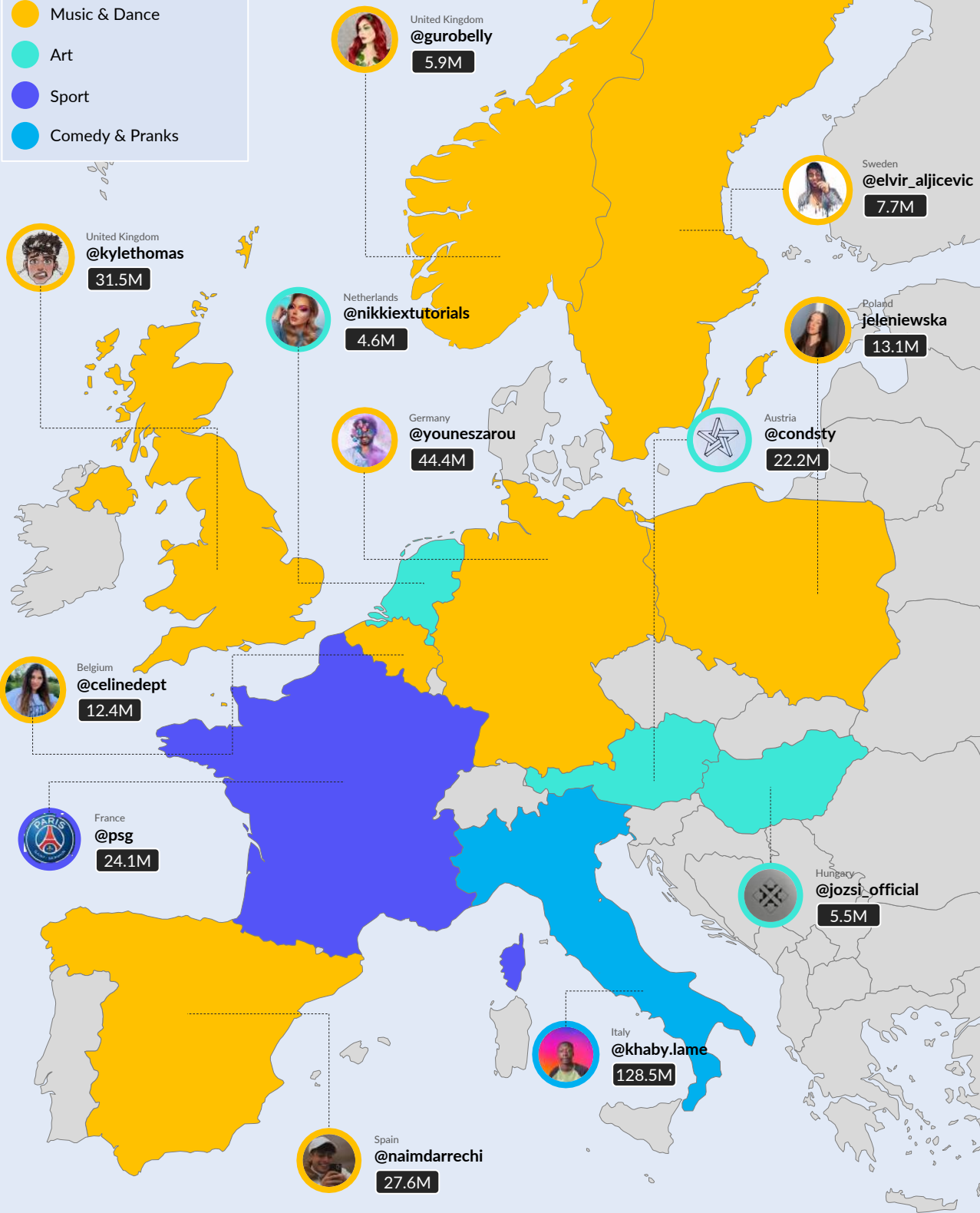
 # of followers

Music & Dance

Art

Sport

Comedy & Pranks



Note: Creators in the list launched their accounts in 2020-21

Insights from deep dive interview with TikTok consumer (1/3)



Marria

France

AVERAGE TIME / DAY



7 Hours

GENERAL INFO

- Name: Marria
- Age: 20
- Occupation: Art & History student
- Preferred content: cat videos, nature, beauty, student life in France & lifestyles.
- TikTok user: 5 months
- Languages: French, Russian, English and Ukrainian.

INSIGHTS

- Uses Instagram Reels occasionally but prefers TikTok due to better recommendations.
- Favourite social media is Instagram because she follows her friends' life.
- Has seen dedicated accounts about human rights and LGBTQ+ in France and would like to see more
- Dislikes long videos and stretching videos unnecessarily too long with no entertaining and educational content.

CREATORS

- Does not remember any creators to recommend and follows very few.
- Consumes content strictly in the "For you" page on TikTok.

LESSONS LEARNED

- There are many accounts that cover topics on minorities, but more is required.
- Creating content on people's life's is engaging

QUOTE

- **"On TikTok, there is more freedom to show your personality. No pressure. No judgement."**

Note: The picture of the consumer is changed for privacy reasons

Insights from deep dive interview with TikTok consumer (1/3)



Marria

France

AVERAGE TIME / DAY



7 Hours

GENERAL INFO

- Name: Marria
- Age: 20
- Occupation: Art & History student
- Preferred content: cat videos, nature, beauty, student life in France & lifestyles.
- TikTok user: 5 months
- Languages: French, Russian, English and Ukrainian.

INSIGHTS

- Uses Instagram Reels occasionally but prefers TikTok due to better recommendations.
- Favourite social media is Instagram because she follows her friends' life.
- Has seen dedicated accounts about human rights and LGBTQ+ in France and would like to see more
- Dislikes long videos and stretching videos unnecessarily too long with no entertaining and educational content.

CREATORS

- Does not remember any creators to recommend and follows very few.
- Consumes content strictly in the "For you" page on TikTok.

LESSONS LEARNED

- There are many accounts that cover topics on minorities, but more is required.
- Creating content on people's life's is engaging

QUOTE

- **"On TikTok, there is more freedom to show your personality. No pressure. No judgement."**

Note: The picture of the consumer is changed for privacy reasons

Insights from deep dive interview with TikTok consumer (2/3)



Illia

Ukraine

AVERAGE TIME / DAY



4-5 Hours

GENERAL INFO

- Name: Illia
- Age: 22
- Occupation: web developer with a degree in computer science
- Preferred content: art, mathematics, science, baking & fashion
- TikTok user: 2 years
- Languages: Russian, English and Ukrainian.

INSIGHTS

- Dislikes long videos up to 3 min and stretching videos unnecessarily too long.
- Wants to see more educational, coding content and some serious news.
- Tried to use Instagram Reels, not comfortable as TikTok is and has "more dumber videos".

CREATORS

- Does not remember any creators to recommend and follows very few.
- Consumes content strictly in the "For you" page on TikTok.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Keep videos interesting, to the point and short.
- Followers numbers shouldn't matter much as number of views is more important. – You will not be remembered by many, but instead recognized.
- Need signature style intros to be recognized.

QUOTE

- "TikTok must be interesting and Instagram should be beautiful."

Insights from deep dive interview with TikTok consumer (2/3)



Marta

Italy

AVERAGE TIME / DAY



0.5 - 1 Hour(s)

GENERAL INFO

- Name: Marta
- Age: 24
- Occupation: last year medicine student
- Preferred content: comedy, LGBTQ+, education, racism, leftist topics, socialist, daily struggle (comedic)
- TikTok user: 1 year
- Languages: English and Italian

INSIGHTS

- Ignores Italian content.
- Wants more content on human rights, personal rights (with sources linked) and science.
- Does not enjoy videos up to 2 minutes.
- Does not mind seeing more content on the environment.

CREATORS

- Does not remember any creators to recommend and follows very few.
- Consumes content strictly in the "For you" page on TikTok.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Important to link/mention resources and sources to the information used in videos.

QUOTE

- "sometimes too scary ... within one hour of using TikTok it knew that I was gay"

Types of content strategy for publishers on TikTok

There are several dimensions that determine a media's approach to creating TikTok content, including the number of hosts (one vs. many), the information vs. entertainment balance, and the choice of topics (current events, important social/ political issues, trending themes etc.).

Success on TikTok is all about finding a unique and creative way to tell your story (and making sure it aligns with your goals). That said, here are a few types of content strategy:



News reporting

Given that users personalized feeds are not chronological, TikTok is not the best platform for break news or current events.

But that doesn't mean publishers can't cover news, especially if it will stay relevant for a while. Argentina's La Nación successfully covered the Global Climate Strike with posts on making a positive eco-impact. Keys to success include a balance between info and entertainment, and a charismatic host (usually one or a very limited number so viewers can build a relationship).

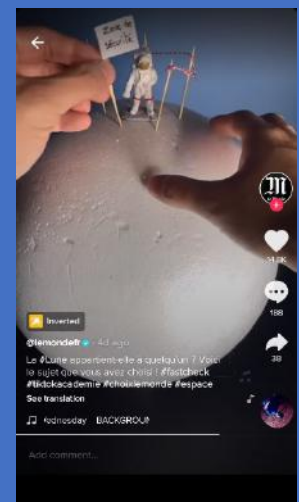
You can also take popular memes and inject news-related content, or insert fun facts into reports (e.g., USA Today explained that during the impeachment trial senators could only to drink water and milk).

Explainers

Several publishers have cracked the code for injecting educational content into their TikTok feeds with well-produced explainer videos on big stories. Interestingly, these usually come from a team of hosts rather than a single anchor (focus on content vs. personality)

In Australia, The Guardian had a very successful explainer on the bushfires earlier this years (it got 10k likes vs. their typical couple hundred), while Germany's Tagesschau broke the 100k mark with a recent explainer on the COVID-19 outbreak.

In turn, France's Le Monde produces a lot on science, tech, sociology and history, ranging from lunar property rights to dinosaur rankings.



Types of content strategy for publishers on TikTok



Journalist v-log

People connect with people, which is why some media have gone for the v-log approach – typically focusing on a single, charismatic host who is running the account (or at most a small team).

TikTok appears to be a place for people, not for brands, argues Adriana Lacy, audience engagement editor at The Los Angeles Times, adding that Gen Z is more invested in people and relationships than companies and institutions.

When The Dallas Morning News launched their TikTok account, they posted a Full House-style intro of their whole audience team. In Switzerland, 20 Minuten achieved this “personal feeling” by posting relatable moments from around the office such as a recent video about the excitement of leaving work on a Friday.

Entertainment

While many media have struggled to turn fact-filled newsfeeds into TikTok videos, others have gone the opposite direction.

Arguably the best example of this approach is the UK’s Daily Mail, which has embraced funny sketches and cute pets – often filmed by the viewers themselves (thus reducing costs) – to build a following of 1.2 million and over 33 million likes. In turn, the BBC opted to focus on posting short clips from its shows, rather than news content.






This approach is most likely aimed the future monetization of the account, or brand recognition. Just remember to bring viewers back to your main products/ have a call to action, to not waste the effort.



5 steps to launch a TikTok account for publishers

-  **1 DEFINE WHY YOU NEED A TIKTOK** – TikTok gives you access to a huge audience, but you need to know what you want to do with it. Media and businesses use it for a range of reasons – to get younger crowds to learn about them, to distribute content, earn money or drive people into their main funnel. Figure out why you need the platform before jumping in
-  **2 DEFINE THE TARGET AUDIENCE** – learn more about your audience to understand them better and create a product that will really meet their needs. Think about what your viewers like, what makes them smile, their demographics and what device they use (types and operating systems). In short anything that can both help you tailor content and set precise targets
-  **3 PICK A CONTENT STRATEGY** – choose which type and format of content you will use to reach your audience. Research other TikTok accounts, identify interesting trends and brainstorm with your team to develop your own creative approach. Important questions to resolve are one or many hosts, balance between information and entertainment and types of topics you want to cover
-  **4 HIRE THE RIGHT PERSON TO RUN THE ACCOUNT** – you need an expert with experience in creating video content (especially in vertical format). Pick someone who naturally fits the platform and “speaks its language.” This person will register and run your account, so make sure they fully understand who you’re targeting, your business model, and priorities, as well as your monetization strategy
-  **5 PREPARE THE RELEASE AND PROMO ACTIVITIES** – plan how you will promote you account, which channels of communications will be used to reach the target audience. Build a funnel to drive traffic to your TikTok! Make sure you account has enough cool content before the release (prepare some spare, evergreen videos)






Extended list of top 3 creators per country (1/3)

Market	Top creator	Type	# followers, M	# likes, M	Multiple
 Germany	▪ Youneszarou	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 44	<div><div></div></div> 874	20x
	▪ Nickaufmann	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 14	<div><div></div></div> 392	28x
	▪ Lisaandlena	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 14	<div><div></div></div> 477	35x
 UK	▪ Kyle Thomas	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 31	<div><div></div></div> 1.500	48x
	▪ Jamil Jamel Neffati	▪ Comedy & pranks	<div><div></div></div> 17	<div><div></div></div> 411	24x
	▪ Shauni	▪ Other	<div><div></div></div> 17	<div><div></div></div> 501	18x
 France	▪ Lea Elui	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 17	<div><div></div></div> 506	30x
	▪ Akamz	▪ Comedy & pranks	<div><div></div></div> 15	<div><div></div></div> 344	23x
	▪ Benoit_chevalier	▪ other	<div><div></div></div> 8	<div><div></div></div> 428	56x
 Spain	▪ Naim Darrechi	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 28	<div><div></div></div> 2.300	84x
	▪ Benji Krol	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div></div> 27	<div><div></div></div> 1.300	48x
	▪ Julia Menu Garcia	▪ Comedy & pranks	<div><div></div></div> 23	<div><div></div></div> 919	41x
 Italy	▪ Khabane lame	▪ Comedy & pranks	<div><div></div></div> 129	<div><div></div></div> 2.000	16x
	▪ Paky	▪ Comedy & pranks	<div><div></div></div> 15	<div><div></div></div> 395	26x
	▪ Faffapix	▪ Comedy & pranks	<div><div></div></div> 12	<div><div></div></div> 205	17x


Note #1: Top country creators numbers are updated last on January 14th

Note #2: Ranking includes the biggest creators in different markets, not the biggest accounts (e.g. brand, TikTok office in the country). Creator with the biggest # of followers in Poland was excluded due to suspicions of fraudulent numbers

Extended list of top 3 creators per country (1/3)

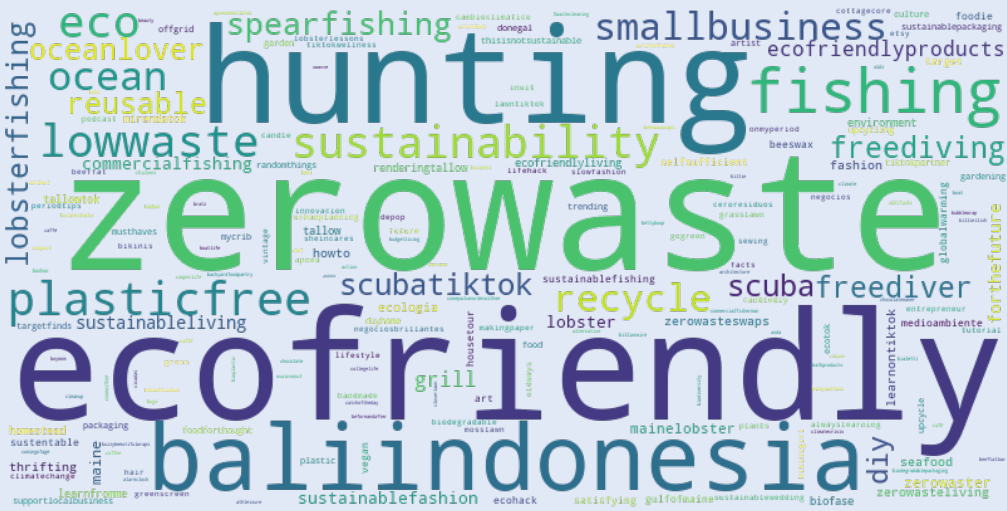
Market	Top creator	Type	# followers, M	# likes, M	Multiple
 NL	▪ Nikkietutorials	▪ Other	<div><div></div>5</div>	<div><div></div>91</div>	20x
	▪ Atro55	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>3</div>	<div><div></div>36</div>	11x
	▪ Indigojael	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>3</div>	<div><div></div>284</div>	98x
 Belgium	▪ Celine Dept	▪ Other	<div><div></div>12</div>	<div><div></div>449</div>	36x
	▪ That French Guy	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>8</div>	<div><div></div>355</div>	45x
	▪ Chris Lobanzo	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>6</div>	<div><div></div>165</div>	27x
 Poland	▪ Jeleniewska	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>13</div>	<div><div></div>384</div>	29x
	▪ Marlenasojka	▪ Personal life	<div><div></div>11</div>	<div><div></div>207</div>	28x
	▪ fredziownik_art	▪ Other	<div><div></div>9</div>	<div><div></div>247</div>	29x
 Sweden	▪ Elvir Aljicevic	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>7</div>	<div><div></div>91</div>	12x
	▪ Izaandelle	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>6</div>	<div><div></div>281</div>	48x
	▪ Amanda Edmundsson	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>3</div>	<div><div></div>381</div>	146x
 Norway	▪ Guro Elde Paulsen	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>6</div>	<div><div></div>173</div>	29x
	▪ Marcusand-martinus	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>5</div>	<div><div></div>191</div>	42x
	▪ Alan Walker	▪ Other	<div><div></div>4</div>	<div><div></div>24</div>	6x

Extended list of top 3 creators per country (1/3)

Market	Top creator	Type	# followers	# likes	Multiple
<div> Austria</div>	▪ Condsty	▪ Other	<div><div></div>22</div>	<div><div></div>352</div>	16x
	▪ Candyken	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>16</div>	<div><div></div>553</div>	35x
	▪ Joshuamonis	▪ Music & dance	<div><div></div>13</div>	<div><div></div>273</div>	21x

Hashtag wordclouds

Hashtags used together with #sustainability



Hashtags used together with #europe



Hashtags used together with #europeanunion

