Unit 2 Media

Lesson 3

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2025-11-4

Text 1

How TikTok broke social media?

Interesting words!

Wean off 使戒除

- 字面意思：断奶

词源：

O.E. **wenian** "**to accustom,**"

from *P.Gmc.* ***wanjanan*** (*cf. O.N.* **venja**, *Du.* **wennen**, *O.H.G.* **giwennan**, *Ger.* **gewöhnen** "to accustom"), from ***wanaz*** "accustomed" (related to wont). The sense of **weaning a child from the breast** in *O.E.* was generally expressed by **gewenian** or **awenian**, which has a sense of "**unaccustom**" (*cf. Ger.* **abgewöhnen**, **entwöhnen** "to wean," *lit.* "to unaccustom"). The prefix subsequently wore off. Figurative extension to any pursuit or habit is from 1526.
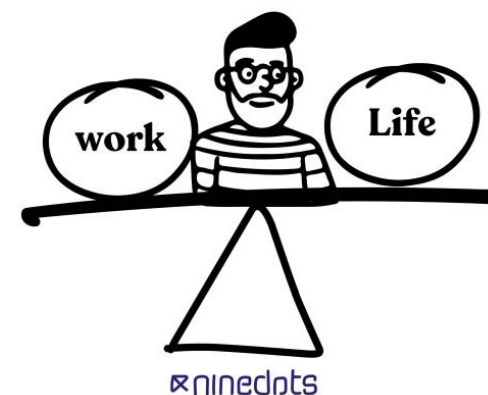
Interesting words!

Work / Life
HANGING IN THE BALANCE
work   Life
ninedots

Hang in the balance 悬而未决

- 字面意思：在天平上荡来荡去

词源：

late 13*c.*, "**apparatus for weighing**," from *O.Fr.* **balance** (12*c.*) "balance, scales for weighing," also in the figurative sense; from *M.L.* **bilancia**, from *L.L.* **bilanx** (*acc.* **bilancem**), from *L.* **(libra) bilanx** "(scale) having two pans," possibly from *L.* **bis** "twice" + **lanx** "dish, plate, scale of a balance." The accounting sense is from 1580s; the meaning "general harmony between parts" is from 1732; sense of "physical equipoise" is from 1660s. The verb is attested from 1570s. **Balance of power** in the geopolitical sense is from 1701; **balanced** meal, diet, *etc.* is from 1908.

Text structure

Text (Para. 3)

TikTok's success has **prompted** its rivals to reinvent themselves.

Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, has turned both apps' main **feeds** into algorithmically sorted "discovery engines" and launched Reels, a TikTok clone **bolted** onto Facebook and Instagram.

TikTok's Chinese sister app, Douyin, is having a similar effect in its home market, where **digital giants** like Tencent are increasingly putting short videos at the center of their offerings.

Translation

TikTok 的成功促使它的竞争对手们彻底重塑自我。

拥有 *Facebook* 和 *Instagram* 的 *Meta* 公司，已经将这两款应用的主页信息流转变为由算法分类的"发现引擎"，并推出了 *Reels*，这是一个快速附加到 *Facebook* 和 *Instagram* 上的 *TikTok* 克隆产品。

TikTok 的中国姐妹应用"抖音"，在本土市场也正产生着类似的影响，在中国，像腾讯这样的数字巨头们正越来越多地将短视频置于其产品服务的核心位置。

The result is that short-form video has **taken over** social media.

Of the 64 minutes that the average American spends viewing such services each day, 40 minutes are spent watching video clips, up from 28 minutes just three years ago, estimates Bernstein, a **broker**.

However, this transformation comes with a **snag**.

Although users have a seemingly endless appetite for short video, the format is proving less **profitable** than the old news feed.

结果就是，短视频已经**占据**了社交媒体的主导地位。

据**券商**伯恩斯坦 *(Bernstein)* 估计，美国人平均每天花费 *64* 分钟观看此类服务，其中有 *40* 分钟用于观看视频剪辑，而就在三年前，这一时长仅为 *28* 分钟。
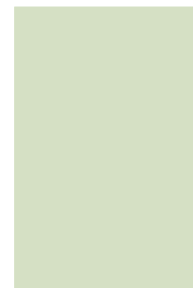
然而，这场变革也伴随着一个**障碍**。

尽管用户对短视频的需求似乎无穷无尽，但事实证明，这种格式的**盈利能力**不如旧式的新闻信息流。

Words and phrases

Prompt (v.) 促使；推动
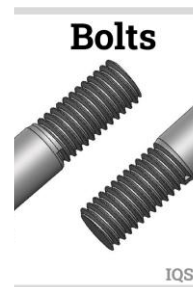- **prompt** a review/a crisis/a decision/rivals to act

Reinvent (v.) 重塑、革新
- **reinvent** the business model/oneself/the product
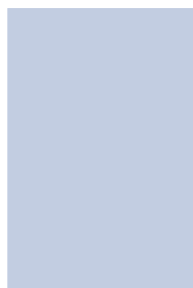
Feeds (n.) 信息流，推送内容
- news **feed** / social **feeds**

Bolt (v.) 快速连接、集成
- **bolt** onto a platform/a structure/an existing system

Offering 产品；服务
- product **offering** / service **offering** / core **offering**

Words and phrases

take over 接管；收购

- Take over the job 接管工作
- take over the factories 接管工厂

Broker 经纪人、中介人、金融机构

- **Securities Broker** (证券经纪人)
- **To broker a deal/agreement** (撮合交易/协议)

snag (n.) 障碍、难题

- **Hit a snag** (遇到障碍)
- **To smooth out snags** (解决难题/消除障碍)

profitable (adj.) 可盈利的，有利润的

- **Sustainably Profitable** (可持续盈利的)
- **To make something profitable** (使某事盈利)

Game time! Monetization problems (P5-P9)

For each individual paragraph (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9), identify the following:

- ✓ The **Key Sentence** that best summarizes the paragraph's main idea

- ✓ **3–5 Core Vocabulary or Terms** essential for understanding that paragraph's content

Key sentences

Para 5: **Problem**: Tiktok **monetizes** at a **lower rate** than Facebook and Instagram.

Para 6: **Opinion**: the **gap** might **not be closed**.

Para 7: **Reason 1**: Video's **ad load** is **lower** than text and images.

Para 8: **Reason 2**: **Weaker targeting** also **hampers** monetization.

Para 9: **Conclusion**: Both social apps and **advertisers** are **losers**.

TikTok **monetizes** its American audience at a rate of just $0.31 for every hour the typical user spends on the app, **a third** the rate of Facebook and **a fifth** the rate of Instagram (see Chart 3 on the next page). The most comforting explanation for the *earnings gap* is that TikTok is **immature**. "TikTok is still a **toddler** in the social media ad landscape," says Jasmine Enberg of Insider Intelligence, who points out that the app introduced ads only in 2019. Platforms tend to keep their **ad load** low while getting new users **on board**, and **advertisers** take time to **warm to** new products.

Monetize (v.) 变现；货币化
monetize content/traffic (内容/流量变现)
- (n.) monetization 货币化

immature (adj.)不成熟的；早期的
immature market/product (不成熟的市场/产品)
- 反义词：mature, developed

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Toddler (n.) 学步儿童；（比喻）初期事物
e.g., still in the toddler stage (仍处于初期阶段)

Ad load (n.) 广告负载量；广告密度
- high/low ad load (高/低广告密度)

Get on board 加入；接受（并支持）
- get investors on board (让投资者加入)

Warm to (v.) 渐渐产生兴趣；开始喜欢
- warm to the idea/suggestion (开始喜欢某个想法)

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TikTok在美国用户身上的变现效率仅为每小时0.31美元——相当于 Facebook的三分之一、Instagram的五分之一（见下页图表 3）。关于这一盈利差距，最主流的解释是TikTok尚不成熟。行业分析师Jasmine Enberg指出："在社交广告领域，TikTok仍处于'幼儿'阶段"，她强调该平台直到 2019 年才引入广告系统。新兴平台为吸引用户，通常刻意控制广告负载量，且广告商也需要时间适应新产品。
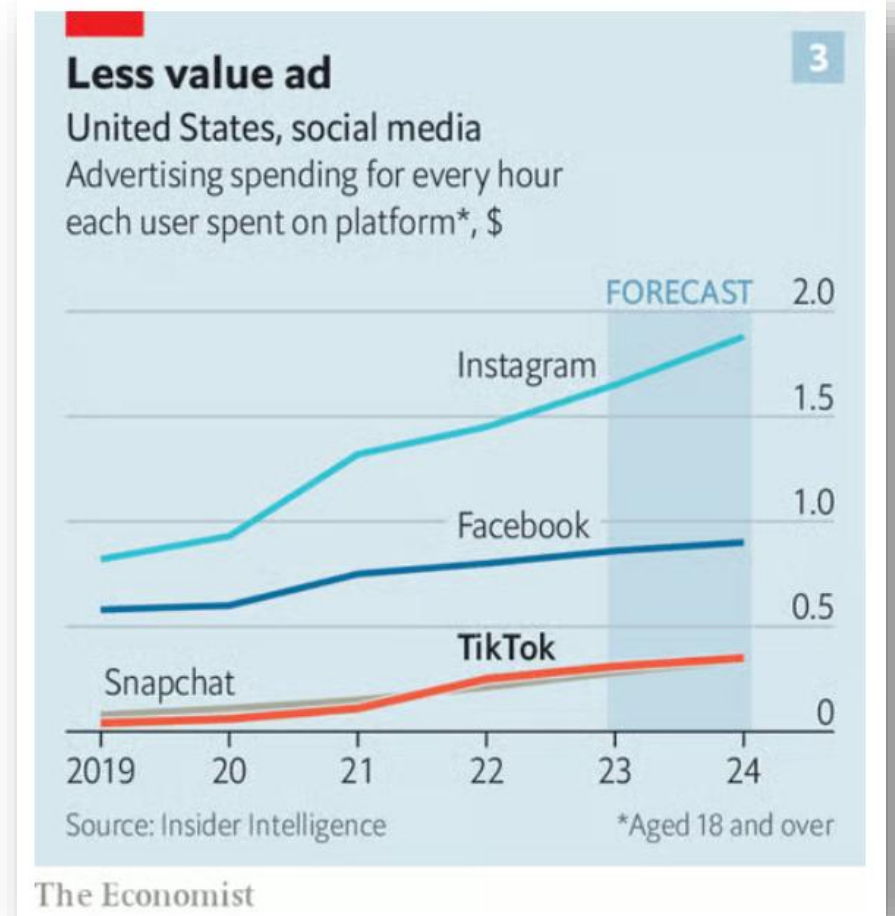
Game time! Paragraph 6:

✓ Find out all the **descriptions of figures** in *Paragraph 6*.

✓ Let's try to make sentences out of them!

Comparisons and percentages

- **Make less than half as much money** per user-hour as Facebook or Instagram…

- **Monetize at only about 15% the rate of** ads…

What else can you read from the figure (图表)?

Write a sentence of a new finding from the figure.

提示：描述**22-24**年间，四家公司的广告收入的排名对比情况。

Key words:

- maintained its dominant position

- ranked second/occupied third position

- far below/significantly higher than

Less value ad
United States, social media
Advertising spending for every hour
each user spent on platform*, $

FORECAST

Instagram

Facebook

TikTok

Snapchat

2019 20 21 22 23 24

Source: Insider Intelligence *Aged 18 and over

The Economist
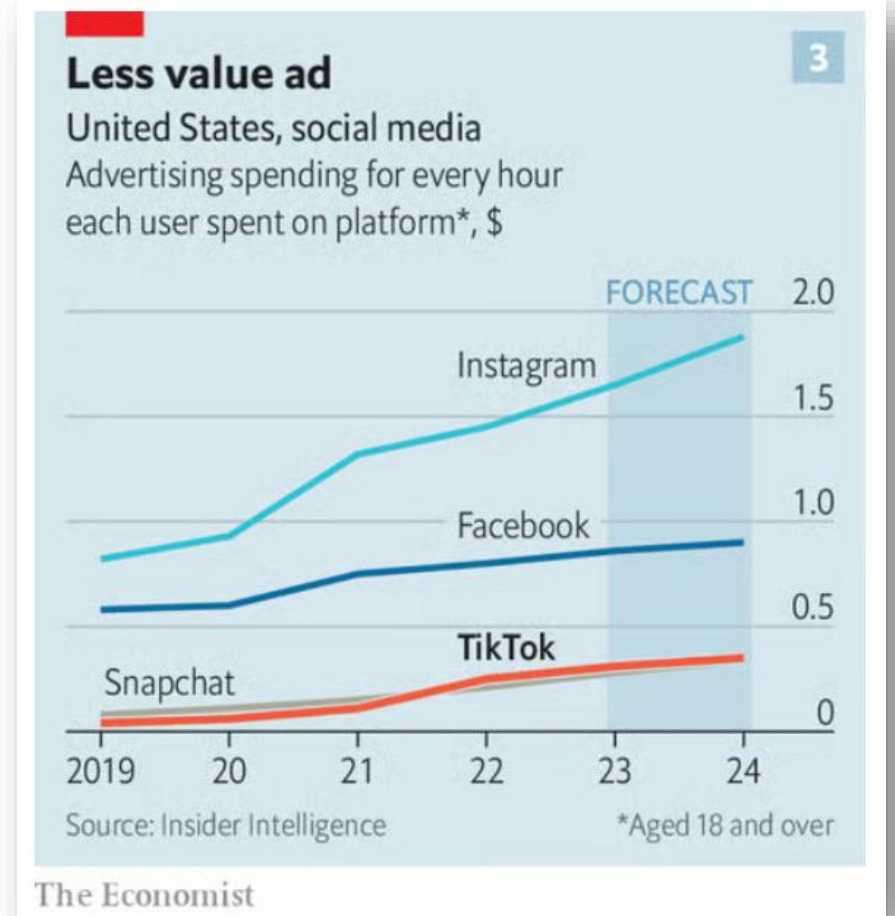
Write a sentence of a new finding from the figure.

参考写作:

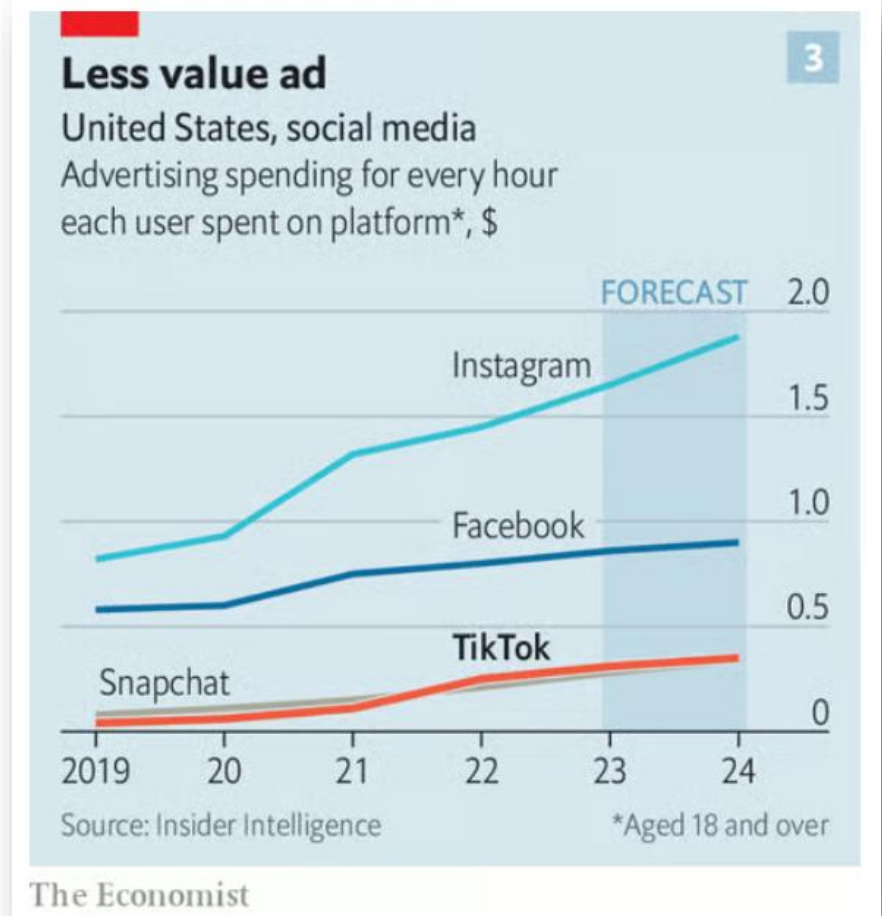**Instagram** maintained its dominant position, reaching nearly 2.00 per user–hour in 2024. **Facebook** ranked second at 0.80, while **Tiktok** occupied third position at $0.30–far below the top two platforms. **Snapchat** remained close to zero, with **Instagram**'s revenue significantly higher than all competitors.

Less value ad
United States, social media
Advertising spending for every hour each user spent on platform*, $

FORECAST

Instagram

Facebook

TikTok

Snapchat

2019 20 21 22 23 24

Source: Insider Intelligence

*Aged 18 and over

The Economist

Some wonder if the **gap** will in fact ever be **closed**. Even mature video-apps cannot **keep up with** the old social networks when it comes to monetizing their users' time. YouTube, which has been around for 18 years, makes less than half as much money per user-hour as Facebook or Instagram, estimates Bernstein. In China, where short-form video **took off** a few years before it did in the West, short-video ads in 2022 monetized at only about 15% the rate of ads on local **e-commerce** apps.

- **gap … be closed** 弥合差距
    - 类似：bridge the gap

- **keep up with** 跟上，赶上
    ~ the tide 顺应时事
    ~ the news 关心新闻

- **take off** 起飞、突然流行
    e.g. His career took off after meeting his partner.

- **e-commerce** 电子商务

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但质疑在于：这一**差距**是否真能**弥合**？即便是成熟的视频平台，在用户时间变现效率上也**难以匹敌**传统社交网络。伯恩斯坦公司估计，成立 18 年的 *YouTube*，其单用户每小时收益仍不足 *Facebook* 或 *Instagram* 的一半。而在短视频更早**兴起**的中国市场，2022 年短视频广告的变现效率仅相当于本地**电商**类应用的 15%。

Question for Paragraph 7

- Why is the ad load lower in short-form videos than in the news feed of text and images? 为什么说短视频中的广告投放量 (ad load) 不可避免地低于图文新闻推送？

1. **The format** of the text and image news feed allows for a far greater volume of advertising than video content.

2. Watching video seems to put consumers in a more **passive mood** than scrolling a feed of friends' update. This passive state makes users less likely to click through to buy.

For one thing, the ad load in video is **inescapably** lower than on a news feed of text and images. Watch a five-minute YouTube clip and you might see three ads; **scroll** Instagram for five minutes and you could see dozens. Watching video also seems to put consumers in a more passive mood than scrolling a feed of friends' updates, making them less likely to click through to buy.

- **Inescapably (adv.) 不可避免地**
in- (not) + escape (逃脱) + -ably (副词后缀)
-同义词：**inevitably, unavoidably**

- **scroll (v.) 滚动浏览、刷（手机/网页）**
scroll through (浏览)
scroll down/up (向下/上滚动)
e.g. Stop scrolling and go to sleep!
别刷手机了，赶紧睡觉！

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首先，视频中的广告加载量不可避免地低于文字和图片信息流。观看一个五分钟的*YouTube*视频片段，你可能只会看到三个广告；而刷五分钟*Instagram*，你可能会看到几十个广告。此外，观看视频似乎也会让消费者比浏览朋友动态时更处于一种被动状态，使他们不太可能点击广告进行购买。

Question for Paragraph 8

Match the features with corresponding social apps.

Short-video apps	Old-school social networks
only watch and swipe	Loosely targeted brand advertising
Persuade users to fill in a lengthy profile	Hyper-personalized direct response ads

Question for Paragraph 8

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only watch and swipe	Persuade users to fill in a lengthy profile
Loosely targeted brand advertising	Hyper-personalized direct response ads

Short-video apps are also **hampered** by weaker targeting. For audiences, part of the appeal of TikTok is that users need do no more than watch, and **swipe** when they get bored. The **algorithm** uses this to learn what kinds of videos—and therefore ads—they like. But this guesswork is no **substitute** for the hard personal data **harvested** by the previous generation of social networks, which persuaded users to fill in a **lengthy** profile including everything from their education to their **marital** status.

- **Hamper (v.) 阻碍、妨碍**
  同义词： hinder, obstruct, impede
  反义词： help, facilitate
  e.g. Bad weather hampered rescue efforts. 恶劣天气阻碍了营救任务。

- **Swipe (v.) 划、滑动（屏幕）**
  - swipe left/right/up/down (向左/右/上/下滑)
  - swipe through (滑动浏览)

- **Substitute (n.) 替代品**
  - no substitute for... (无法替代...)
  - a poor substitute (差劲的替代品)
  - substitute A for B / substitute A with B (用B替代A)

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- **Harvest (v. & n.)** 收割；收集（数据）
  - Farmers harvest wheat in autumn. (原意)
  - Facebook harvests personal data from users. (引申义)

- **Lengthy (adj.)** 冗长的；详细的
  同义词： long, detailed, extensive
  反义词： brief, short, concise

- **Marital (adj.)** 婚姻的；婚姻状况的
  /ˈmærɪtl/
  - marital status (婚姻状况) ✓✓✓
  - marital problems/issues (婚姻问题)
  - marital relationship (婚姻关系)

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短视频应用还面临一个劣势：广告定向不够精准。TikTok吸引用户的一个原因恰恰是操作简单——只需要看视频，看腻了就滑走。算法会根据这些行为推测用户的喜好，并据此推荐视频和广告。然而，这种推测远不如传统社交网络掌握的真实用户数据可靠。Facebook等平台曾说服用户填写非常详细的个人档案，涵盖教育程度、婚姻状况等方方面面的信息。

The **upshot** is that many advertisers still treat short-form video as a place for loosely targeted so-called brand advertising, to raise general awareness of their product, rather than the **hyper-personalized** (and more valuable) direct response ads that **old-school** social networks **specialize** in.

- **Upshot (n.) 结果、结局、要点**
  - What's the upshot? (结论是什么？)
  - The upshot of... is... (...的结果是...)
  同义词： outcome, result, consequence, conclusion

- **hyper-personalized (adj.) 高度个性化的**
  - e.g. Hyper-personalized recommendations increase sales.
  - 其他 hyper- 词汇: hyper-competitive (竞争极其激烈的) hyper-focused (高度专注的)

- **Old-school (adj.) 老派的、旧式的、传统的**

- **Specialize in (v.) 专门从事；专攻；擅长**
  同义词： focus on, concentrate on, excel in

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因此，许多广告商仍然只是把短视频平台当作投放品牌广告的渠道，目的是提升产品的整体知名度，而不是投放传统社交网络所擅长的那种高度个性化（且更有价值）的直接响应广告。

Social apps will not be the only losers in this new, **trickier** ad environment. If social- media advertising becomes less effective across the board, it will be bad news not just for the **platforms** that sell those ads, but for the advertisers that buy them.

- **Tricky (adj.) 棘手的；复杂的；**
  trick (诡计；技巧) - 名词
  tricky (棘手的) - 形容词
  同义词：difficult, complicated, challenging, problematic
  使用场景：
  a tricky situation/question (棘手的局面、难题)
  tricky to navigate (难以驾驭)

- **Platform (n.) 平台**
  技术/商业语境：
  　　social media platforms (社交媒体平台)
  　　e-commerce platforms (电商平台)
  　　digital platforms (数字平台)
  物理语境：
  　　train platform (火车站台)
  　　stage platform (舞台)
  政治语境：
  　　political platform (政治纲领)

Social apps will not be the only losers in this new, **trickier** ad environment. If social- media advertising becomes less effective across the board, it will be bad news not just for the **platforms** that sell those ads, but for the advertisers that buy them.

社交应用不会是这个新的、更加棘手的广告环境中唯一的输家。如果社交媒体广告整体上变得效果更差，这不仅对销售这些广告的平台来说是坏消息，对购买这些广告的广告商来说也是坏消息。

Summary: How Tiktok Broke Social Media
TikTok 如何改变社交媒体

模式转变
(Format Shift)

用户喜爱度高
(High User Engagement)

盈利能力挑战
(Profitability Challenge)

- TikTok 驱动了社交媒体的巨大转型，用户从传统的**社交网络**转向了**算法推荐的短视频**模式。对手如 Meta 也被迫模仿 (Reels)，将主页转为"发现引擎"。

- 转变速度惊人。年轻受众尤其青睐 TikTok，美国 18-24 岁用户每天花在 TikTok 上的时间是 Instagram 和 Snapchat 的两倍。

- **新模式的盈利效率不如旧模式**，且这种差距可能长期存在。

Summary (continued)

盈利低下的结构性原因
(Structural Reasons for Low Profitability)

- **1.** 货币化效率低 (Low Monetization Rate)
- **2.** 广告负载限制 (Ad Load Restriction)
- **3.** 用户被动性高 (High User Passivity)
- **4.** 定位能力弱 (Weaker Targeting)
- 总结：更棘手的广告环境 (A Trickier Ad Environment)

Text 1 Exploring the text

1 **Decide whether the following statements about the text are true (T) or false (F).**

(**F**) **1** TikTok monetizes its American audience at a higher rate than Facebook and Instagram.

(**T**) **2** TikTok has gained more users than most social media apps despite being around for a shorter time.

(**F**) **3** Consumers are more likely to click through and make a purchase while watching videos than when scrolling through a feed.

(**F**) **4** Short-form video apps have access to more personal data than previous social networks.

(**F**) **5** Short-form video is primarily used for hyper-personalized direct response advertising.

Text 1 Exploring the text

2 **Based on the three charts in the text, describe the data of TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram in terms of active users, age groups, and monetization rate. Then complete the table below.**

	TikTok	Facebook	Instagram
Active users	Rapid growth to over 100 million.	The number of users has held steady at around 180 million.	Rapid growth to 140 million.
Age groups	Users aged 18 to 34 all saw a significant increase in the time spent, with the 18-24-year-old user group spending far more time than the 25–34-year-old user group.	The time spent by users aged 18 to 34 has declined, with the 18-24-year-old user group spending less time than the 25-34-year-old user group.	Users aged 18 to 34 experienced a slight increase in hours of use, which was roughly equivalent in duration.
Monetization rate	It grew slowly from 0 to 0.3	It grew slowly from 0.5 to 0.9	It grew rapidly from 0.8 to 1.8

Text 1 *Exploring the text*

3 **Read the text again and answer the following questions.**

1. How has TikTok affected other social media apps?

2. Why are short-form video apps like TikTok facing challenges in monetization compared with traditional social networking platforms?

3. What broader impact could the challenges in social media advertising have on both the platforms and the advertisers?

3 **Read the text again and answer the following questions.**

Recommended answers:

1. TikTok has shifted the focus of social media from old-fashioned social networking to algorithmically selected short videos, making it harder for incumbent social apps to adapt to this new model.

2. Short-form video apps, such as TikTok, face challenges in monetization due to lower ad load, weaker targeting, and a more passive viewer mindset compared to traditional social networks.

3. The challenges in social media advertising could lead to a less effective advertising environment across the board. This would negatively impact:

- Platforms: Social media platforms may struggle to generate revenue due to lower ad effectiveness, making it harder for them to monetize their user base.

- Advertisers: Companies that rely on these platforms for advertising may find it more difficult to reach targeted audiences effectively, leading to reduced return on investment and potentially affecting their overall marketing strategies.

- Overall, both platforms and advertisers could face financial repercussions as the effectiveness of social media advertising diminishes.

Text 1 *Exploring the text*

4 **Discuss the following questions in groups.**

1. How has the rise of short-form video content impacted the way people consume social media? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this format compared with the traditional news feed?

2. Why do you think TikTok (or Douyin) has become so popular among young audiences?

3. How do you think the shift towards short-form video content has affected the overall quality of social media content?

END