

Consent

Participant Information Sheet

Project title:	TikTok Censorship
Principal investigator:	Björn Ross
Researcher collecting data:	Eddie Ungless, Nina Markl
Funder (if applicable):	UKRI

This study was certified according to the Informatics Research Ethics Process, RT number 747333. Please take time to read the following information carefully. You should keep this page for your records.

Who are the researchers?

Eddie Ungless, he/they, PhD candidate at the Centre for Doctoral Training in NLP, University of Edinburgh

Nina Markl, she/her, PhD candidate at the Centre for Doctoral Training in NLP, University of Edinburgh

Björn Ross, he/him, Lecturer in Computational Social Science at the Institute for Language, Computation and Cognition, University of Edinburgh

What is the purpose of the study?

The goal is to understand TikTok users' perception of being algorithmically censored, and their motivations for using techniques that help to avoiding censorship. The study will comprise of a survey.

Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part because you have indicated that you are or have been a user of TikTok.

Do I have to take part?

No – participation in this study is entirely up to you. You can withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason. Your rights will not be affected. If you wish to withdraw, contact the PI. We will stop using your data in any publications or presentations submitted after you have withdrawn consent. However, we will keep copies of your original consent, and of your withdrawal request.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

This study is a survey involving some multiple choice and some free text questions. You will be asked to respond to questions about your use of TikTok. We will ask about the kinds of content you view and post.

You will be asked about your experience of algorithmic censorship. You will be asked about your experience of the techniques people use to avoid censorship. You will be asked how censorship makes you feel.

You will also be asked to provide demographic information including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability status, religion, socioeconomic status and political beliefs. We are gathering this sensitive information as we want to understand how users of different social identities behave on TikTok.

We are only recording your answers to these questions.

This survey should take around 14 minutes to complete.

Compensation.

You will be paid £1.70 (equivalent to £6/hr) for your participation in this study.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

There are no significant risks associated with participation. Your answers will be anonymised so the risk of sensitive information becoming known is extremely low.

Are there any benefits associated with taking part?

No, other than contributing to our understanding of users' experiences of censorship on social media.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of this study may be summarised in published articles, reports and presentations. Quotes or key findings will be anonymized: We will remove any information that could, in our assessment, allow anyone to identify you. With your consent, information can also be used for future research. Your data may be archived for a minimum of 2 years.

Data protection and confidentiality.

Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law. All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Your data will be referred to by a

unique participant number rather than by name. Your data will only be viewed by the research team Eddie Ungless, Nina Markl and Björn Ross.

All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected encrypted computer, on the School of Informatics' secure file servers, on the University's secure encrypted cloud storage services (DataShare, ownCloud, or Sharepoint) or held securely by Qualtrics, the questionnaire software provider.

What are my data protection rights?

The University of Edinburgh is a Data Controller for the information you provide. You have the right to access information held about you. Your right of access can be exercised in accordance Data Protection Law. You also have other rights including rights of correction, erasure and objection. For more details, including the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office, please visit

www.ico.org.uk. Questions, comments and requests about your personal data can also be sent to the University Data Protection Officer at dpo@ed.ac.uk.

For general information about how we use your data, go to: edin.ac/privacy-research

Who can I contact?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the lead researcher, Eddie Ungless, e.i.ungless@sms.ed.ac.uk

If you wish to make a complaint about the study, please contact inf-ethics@inf.ed.ac.uk. When you contact us, please provide the study title and detail the nature of your complaint.

Updated information.

If the research project changes in any way, an updated Participant Information Sheet will be made available on <http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/research/study-updates>.

Consent

By proceeding with the study, I agree to all of the following statements:

- I have read and understood the above information.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time.
- I consent to my anonymised data being used in academic publications and presentations.
- I allow my data to be used in future ethically approved research.

Refuse and exit Agree and continue



Use of TikTok

What is your Prolific ID?

Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID

Do you use TikTok?

- ☐ Yes I currently use TikTok
- ☐ I previously used TikTok but am not a current user
- ☐ I have never used TikTok

When did you first use TikTok?

- ☐ More than three years ago
- ☐ Between three and one years ago
- ☐ Between 12 and 6 months ago
- ☐ Between six and three months ago
- ☐ Between three and one month ago
- ☐ Less than one month ago

When did you stop using TikTok

- ☐ More than three years ago
- ☐ Between three and one years ago
- ☐ Between 12 and 6 months ago
- ☐ Between six and three months ago
- ☐ Between three and one month ago
- ☐ Less than one month ago

What were your reasons for stopping using TikTok?

- ☐ It was negatively impacting my quality of life
- ☐ The content was too negative
- ☐ To escape harassment / bullying
- ☐ A loved one asked me to stop using the app
- ☐ My account was deleted / banned
- ☐ Too much data use / phone storage use

- ☐ Too much moderation / censorship
- ☐ The amount of advertising
- ☐ Concerns about security / privacy
- ☐ To have more free time
- ☐ Not enough of my friends were using it
- ☐ The content wasn't entertaining anymore
- ☐ The format of the app / content
- ☐ Other

On average, how often did/do you use TikTok to view content?

- ☐ I have never viewed content
- ☐ 0-3 times a month
- ☐ 1-2 times a week
- ☐ Multiple times a week
- ☐ 1-2 times a day
- ☐ >3 times a day

On average, how often did/do you use TikTok to post content?

- ☐ I have never posted content
- ☐ 0-3 times a month
- ☐ 1-2 times a week
- ☐ Multiple times a week
- ☐ 1-2 times a day
- ☐ >3 times a day

On average, how long did/do you spend on TikTok on the days that you use(d) the app?

- ☐ Less than 15 minutes a day
- ☐ Between 15 and 30 minutes
- ☐ Between 30 minutes and 1 hour
- ☐ Between 1 and 2 hours
- ☐ Between 2 and 4 hours
- ☐ More than four hours a day

What type of content have you viewed on TikTok (select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telling jokes | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telling stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Expose someone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completing sound trend/ challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> Duet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster making fun of themselves | <input type="checkbox"/> Show off body (e.g. flexing, revealing clothing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prank | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing personal information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learn something | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribute to recently deceased person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty/makeup | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip Sync | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing (real voice) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="text"/> |

What type of content have you posted on TikTok (select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telling jokes | <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telling stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Expose someone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Completing sound trend/ challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> Duet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster making fun of themselves | <input type="checkbox"/> Show off body (e.g. flexing, revealing clothing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prank | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing personal information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teach something | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribute to recently deceased person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty/makeup | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip Sync | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing (real voice) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="text"/> |

Did/do you view content in English on TikTok?

- ☐ Yes, exclusively in English
- ☐ Yes, in addition to other languages
- ☐ No

What languages do/did you view content on TikTok in? List in order of most to least content viewed in that language.

Did/do you post content in English on TikTok?

- ☐ Yes, exclusively in English
- ☐ Yes, in addition to other languages
- ☐ No

What languages do/did you post content on TikTok in? List in order of most to least content posted in that language.

Please note for the remainder of this survey we are interested in your use of TikTok to view and post **English language** content.

Removal and suppression of content

We are going to ask you about your experience of algorithmic censorship by TikTok.

On TikTok, some users are concerned about algorithmic censorship, which refers to when a computer program or algorithm designed to moderate content removes or suppresses the content they post i.e. when a video gets very few views and you believe it is because it is being suppressed by the platform.

In this study, when we say **censorship** we mean both when content is **removed** and when content is **suppressed**.

Have you had content removed by TikTok?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Please select which of the types of content you have had removed by the platform.

I have had posts removed that contained (you can select multiple):

- ☐ Covid-related content
- ☐ Sex related content for an erotic purpose
- ☐ Content some may find offensive or inappropriate
- ☐ Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian
- ☐ Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)
- ☐ Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences
- ☐ Political content
- ☐ Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust
- ☐ Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime
- ☐ Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism
- ☐ Curse words
- ☐ Hate speech
- ☐ Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate
- ☐ Other (please describe)

Please select how frequently your posts get removed when you post this kind of content:

	Never (this kind of content is never removed)	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always (all my content about this topic is removed)
Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hate speech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curse words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Never (this kind of content is never removed)	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always (all my content about this topic is removed)
Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex related content for an erotic purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covid-related content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content some may find offensive or inappropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you paying attention?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Do you believe you have had content suppressed by TikTok?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Please select which of the types of content you believe have been suppressed by the platform.

I believe I have had posts suppressed that contained (you can select multiple):

- ☐ Covid-related content
- ☐ Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences
- ☐ Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)
- ☐ Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate
- ☐ Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime
- ☐ Sex related content for an erotic purpose
- ☐ Curse words
- ☐ Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian
- ☐ Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust
- ☐ Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism
- ☐ Political content
- ☐ Hate speech
- ☐ Content some may find offensive or inappropriate
- ☐ Other (please describe)

Please select how frequently you believe your posts get suppressed when you post this kind of content:

	Never (this kind of content is never removed)	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always (all my content about this topic is removed)
Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content some may find offensive or inappropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex related content for an erotic purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covid-related content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Never (this kind of content is never removed)	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always (all my content about this topic is removed)
Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curse words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hate speech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We are interested in how algorithmic censorship make you feel. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Algorithmic censorship makes me feel:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
glad, happy, joyful					<input type="text"/>
content, serene, peaceful					<input type="text"/>
ashamed, humiliated, disgraced					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
scared, fearful, afraid					<input type="text"/>
angry, irritated, annoyed					<input type="text"/>
disgust, distaste, revulsion					<input type="text"/>
awe, wonder, amazement					<input type="text"/>
embarrassed, self-conscious, blushing					<input type="text"/>
amused, fun-loving, silly					<input type="text"/>
grateful, appreciative, thankful.					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
love, closeness, trust					<input type="text"/>
repentant, guilty, blameworthy					<input type="text"/>
hate, distrust, suspicion					<input type="text"/>
stressed, nervous, overwhelmed					<input type="text"/>
contemptuous, scornful, disdainful					<input type="text"/>
hopeful, optimistic, encouraged					<input type="text"/>
interested, alert, curious					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
sad, downhearted, unhappy					<input type="text"/>
inspired, uplifted, elevated					<input type="text"/>
proud, confident, self-assured					<input type="text"/>

Awareness of obfuscation

Some TikTok users are concerned about algorithmic censorship, which as we stated earlier refers to when an algorithm removes or suppresses the content they post. For example, users are concerned that the moderation system may censor content which includes words such as "lesbian" or "dead" in the text in the video or in the captions.

To avoid such censorship, some users employ different techniques to conceal what they are writing about. For example, users might write "le\$bean" instead of "lesbian". This has been called "[algospeak](#)" and can be thought of as a kind of code, but we will use the term "obfuscation" which is used in research. People obfuscate certain words to conceal what they are saying to avoid algorithmic censorship.

Here are some examples of the techniques being used.



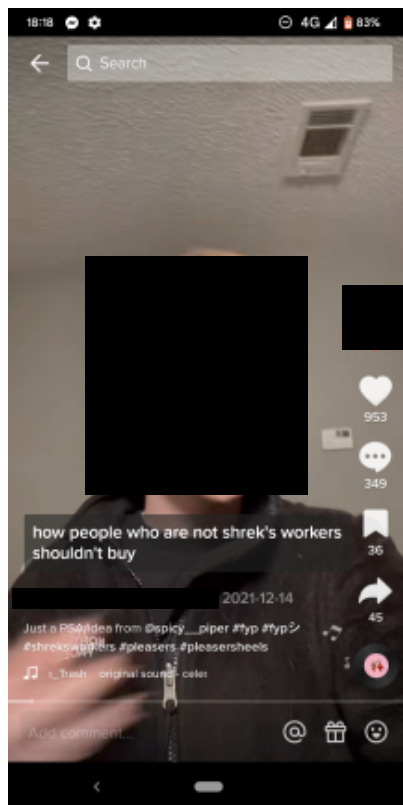
User substitutes numbers and symbols for letters.



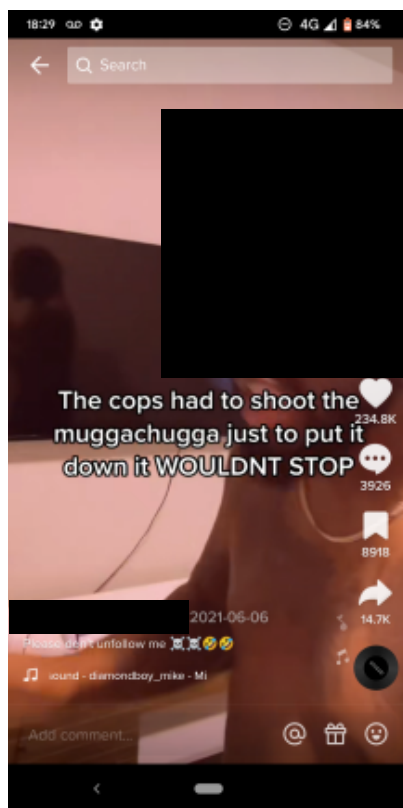
User substitutes a symbol for a letter. They also use the hashtag #alphabetmafia instead of #lgbtcommunity



User has changed the spelling of "white" to "yt".



User has substituted the word "sex" for "shrek's".



User has changed the word "motherfucker" with some sound changes and repeated letters.

Researchers have identified 7 key obfuscation techniques used by English language users ([Calhoun & Fawcett, 2022](#)). We will give specific examples of each technique below, taken from this research.

Users may also use these techniques for other reasons, such as making sure only certain TikTok users can understand what they are saying. We will ask about these motivations in the next section.

IMPORTANT: On mobile, please scroll right to see the explanations and examples which will help you understand these techniques.

[via GIPHY](#)

Non-technical Label	Explanation / description	Examples
---------------------	---------------------------	----------

Use of non-letters	Numbers, symbols, diacritics [marks added to letters like for é], emojis, spaces (including leaving the word "blank")	Gay > 🍌 smoke crack > sm o ke cr a ck
Innovative subword combinations	Combining words and meaningful parts of words in new ways	dead > unalive [un + alive]
Word substitution (meaning or sound)	Replacing words with those with similar meanings or which sound similar	LGBTQ+ community > alphabet mafia faggot > baguette Sex work > shrek work
Sound changes	Spelling out a mispronounced version of the word	sexy > seggsy, sessy drugs > droogs faggot > fuhgoot
Spelling changes	Spelling out the word with homonyms Spelling out an initialism/acronym as words	circumcised > sircomesized LGBT > leg booty LGBT > los jibbities
Word substitution (structure)	Replacing word with one with the same number of syllables, with the emphasis put on matching syllables, and with some similar sounds	homophobic > hookedonphonics homophobia > cornucopia
Sound changes with repetition	Changing consonants to match	mother fucker > mugga chugga
Flip-flop version	Replacing word with phrase following the vowel pattern in "flip flop", "hip hop", "tip top" (or "zig zag", "tic tac" etc)	nipples > nip nops

Which of these techniques have you seen others using?

☐ Use of non-letters (gay > 🍌)

☐ Sound changes with repetition (mother
fucker > mugga chugga)

☐ Innovative subword combinations (unalive
[un + alive])

☐ Flip-flop version (nipples > nip nops)

- ☐ Word substitution (meaning or sound) (sex work > shrek work)
- ☐ Sound changes (sexy > seggsy)
- ☐ Spelling changes (LGBT > leg booty)
- ☐ Word substitution (structure) (homophobia > cornucopia)
- ☐ Other (please describe)
- ☐ None
- ☐ Unsure

How often do you understand what people's real intended meaning is when they use these techniques?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ About half the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Always

Which of these techniques have you used yourself when you have posted content?

- ☐ Use of non-letters (gay > 🍆)
- ☐ Innovative subword combinations (unalive [un + alive])
- ☐ Word substitution (meaning or sound) (sex work > shrek work)
- ☐ Sound changes (sexy > seggsy)
- ☐ Spelling changes (LGBT > leg booty)
- ☐ Word substitution (structure) (homophobia > cornucopia)
- ☐ Sound changes with repetition (mother fucker > mugga chugga)
- ☐ Flip-flop version (nipples > nip nops)
- ☐ Other (please describe)
- ☐ None

How effective do you consider these techniques to be for avoiding algorithmic censorship?

	Not effective at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
	1	2	3	4	5
Use of non-letters (gay > 🍆)					<div></div>
Innovative subword combinations (unalive [un + alive])					<div></div>

	Not effective at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
	1	2	3	4	5
Word substitution (meaning or sound) (sex work > shrek work)					<input type="text"/>
Sound changes (sexy > seggsy)					<input type="text"/>
Spelling changes (LGBT > leg booty)					<input type="text"/>
Word substitution (structure) (homophobia > cornucopia)					<input type="text"/>
Sound changes with repetition (mother fucker > mugga chugga)					<input type="text"/>
Flip-flop version (nipples > nip nops)					<input type="text"/>

Is there anything you would like to add? If you have mentioned any additional techniques you have seen or used above, please indicate how effective you think they are for evading algorithmic censorship.

Feelings about obfuscation use

We are interested in how obfuscation techniques (when users conceal what they are writing about) make you feel. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Using or seeing obfuscation techniques makes me feel:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
awe, wonder, amazement					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
content, serene, peaceful					<input type="text"/>
scared, fearful, afraid					<input type="text"/>
embarrassed, self- conscious, blushing					<input type="text"/>
angry, irritated, annoyed					<input type="text"/>
grateful, appreciative, thankful.					<input type="text"/>
amused, fun-loving, silly					<input type="text"/>
ashamed, humiliated, disgraced					<input type="text"/>
glad, happy, joyful					<input type="text"/>
disgust, distaste, revulsion					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
hopeful, optimistic, encouraged					<input type="text"/>
inspired, uplifted, elevated					<input type="text"/>
stressed, nervous, overwhelmed					<input type="text"/>
interested, alert, curious					<input type="text"/>
proud, confident, self-assured					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
love, closeness, trust					<input type="text"/>
contemptuous, scornful, disdainful					<input type="text"/>
hate, distrust, suspicion					<input type="text"/>
sad, downhearted, unhappy					<input type="text"/>
repentant, guilty, blameworthy					<input type="text"/>

Motivations (own use)

We are going to ask you about the types of content you post. Please select how frequently you post content about:

	Never (I never post content about this)	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always (all my content is about this)
Sex related content for an erotic purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hate speech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Never (I never post content about this)	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always (all my content is about this)
Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curse words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covid-related content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content some may find offensive or inappropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other types of content do you post about? Please indicate how frequently you post this type of content.

We are going to ask you about your use of the obfuscation techniques we introduced you to earlier.

Please select how strongly you agree with each of the following statements relating to the types of content you are posting when you use obfuscation techniques.

I use obfuscation techniques when I post:

	Never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
Political content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content some may find offensive or inappropriate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sex related content for an erotic purpose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covid-related content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hate speech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curse words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any other types of content you post where you use obfuscation techniques?
Please indicate how frequently you use obfuscation techniques for this kind of content

We are interested in your motivations for using obfuscation techniques when posting content. Please select how strongly you agree with the following statements.

I use obfuscation techniques:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
To feel part of the community of TikTok users					<input type="text"/>
So the algorithm does not censor my posts					<input type="text"/>
So human moderators can't understand what I am writing					<input type="text"/>
Because it's fun					<input type="text"/>
So only certain TikTok users can understand me					<input type="text"/>
To express my creativity					<input type="text"/>
To protest algorithmic moderation					<input type="text"/>
To show which communities I belong to					<input type="text"/>
Select somewhat agree					<input type="text"/>

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about when and why you use obfuscation techniques?

Beliefs about algorithmic censorship

Please select how strongly you agree with each of the following statements relating to your perception of algorithmic censorship by the platform. Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

The **TikTok moderation algorithm censors** at least some posts about:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime					<input type="text"/>
Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences					<input type="text"/>
Political content					<input type="text"/>
Hate speech					<input type="text"/>
Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust					<input type="text"/>
Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian					<input type="text"/>
Sex related content for an erotic purpose					<input type="text"/>
Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism					<input type="text"/>
Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate					<input type="text"/>
Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)					<input type="text"/>
Covid-related content					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Curse words					<input type="text"/>
Content some may find offensive or inappropriate					<input type="text"/>

Is there anything that you would like to add about what you believe about the TikTok moderation algorithm?

Beliefs about community guidelines

Please select how strongly you agree with each of the following statements relating to your knowledge of the TikTok community guidelines.

TikTok community guidelines do not allow posts about:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Content insulting or criticizing dominant group (e.g., men, white people)					<input type="text"/>
Content about violence that is not intended to shock or disgust i.e. reporting on a violent crime					<input type="text"/>
Sex related content for a non-erotic purpose i.e. that is intended to educate					<input type="text"/>
Hate speech					<input type="text"/>
Content relating to a social justice movement, for example feminism or anti-racism					<input type="text"/>

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Sex related content for an erotic purpose					<input type="text"/>
Political content					<input type="text"/>
Content about violence that is intended to shock or disgust					<input type="text"/>
Content relating to minority identity experience i.e. queer content, content about Black experiences					<input type="text"/>
Self-referential use of slur i.e. d*ke by a lesbian					<input type="text"/>
Curse words					<input type="text"/>
Covid-related content					<input type="text"/>
Content some may find offensive or inappropriate					<input type="text"/>
Select somewhat disagree					<input type="text"/>

Is there anything that you would like to add about what you believe about the TikTok community guidelines?

We will now ask you some questions about your thoughts on TikTok's moderation process (both algorithmic and human moderation).

Sometimes users feel that content that seems to be in line with the community guidelines is censored. For example, the TikTok community guidelines do not disallow content about LGBT+ individuals (so long as this content does not violate their other policies such as the banning of sexually explicit content). However, LGBT+ creators talk about their content being suppressed or removed (Haimson et al., 2022; Lorenz

2022; Zeng and Kaye, 2022). We are interested in your beliefs about what is occurring when content that does not seem to violate the community guidelines is being removed.

When content is suppressed or removed that does not go against the community guidelines, this is because:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
The algorithm has misunderstood the content / made a one-time mistake					<input type="text"/>
Other user(s) have reported the content					<input type="text"/>
TikTok has unpublished guidelines that are given to human moderators which are stricter					<input type="text"/>
TikTok has unpublished guidelines that are used to train the algorithm which are stricter					<input type="text"/>
Human moderators have their own opinions about what should be allowed on the platform					<input type="text"/>
The algorithm has not learned to follow the guidelines (it is not a good algorithm overall)					<input type="text"/>

Do you think there are any other reasons why this occurs (content that is in line with the community guidelines being removed by the algorithmic censorship system).

Demographic

What is your age? (Please give number of years)

What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you identify as trans?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your sexuality?

- ☐ Straight / heterosexual
- ☐ Gay / homosexual / lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual / pansexual / bi+
- ☐ Asexual / Acespec
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

- ☐ Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Black, African, Black British or Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- ☐ White
- ☐ Another ethnic group (please specify)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What religious group do you belong to?

- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Political beliefs can be thought of on a spectrum from left to right. Where would you place yourself on this spectrum?

- ☐ Left
- ☐ Center left
- ☐ Center
- ☐ Center right
- ☐ Right
- ☐ I'm not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in the UK.



At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off – those who have the least money, least education, the least respected jobs, or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.

Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

Please indicate with a number (1-10) on which rung you think you stand at this time in your life relative to other people in the UK.

Do you identify as belonging to any other minority or marginalised group e.g. people with HIV, sex workers, care leavers, from a Gypsy, Roma & Traveller community etc

"Social identity" has been used to describe aspects of your identity related "to belonging to a certain social group, such as a certain race, gender or class" (Karizat et al., 2021).

We are interested in how connected to your social identity communities you feel on TikTok.

On TikTok...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like I am part of my communities					<input type="text"/>
I feel a connection with other members of my communities					<input type="text"/>
I feel accepted by other members of my community					<input type="text"/>
I feel respected by other members of my communities					<input type="text"/>
I feel valued by other members of my communities					<input type="text"/>

What is/are your first language(s)? (learned before age 5)