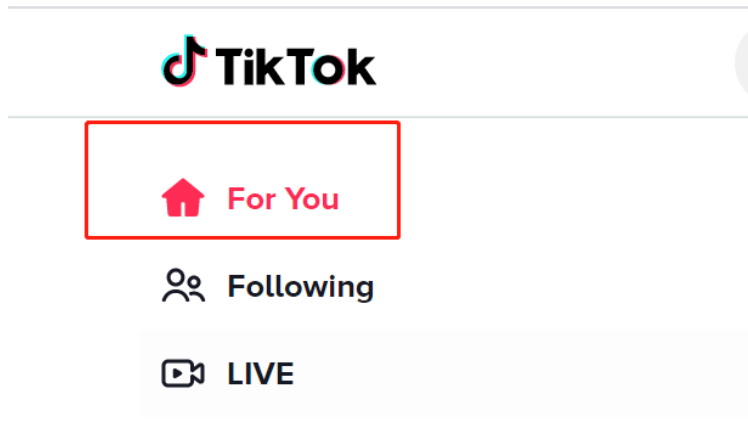
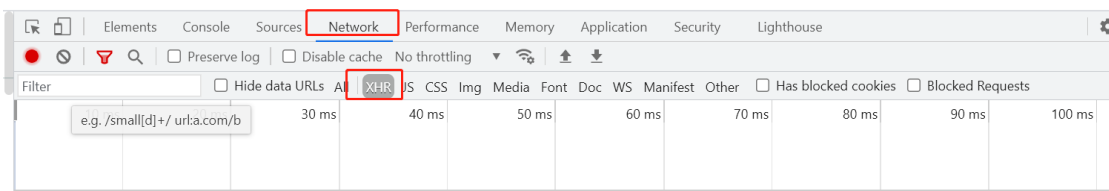


This is the design document for this crawler. I will record the process of how I designed and coded it.

1. Open TikTok in your browser (Chrome prefer) and go to the **For You** page.



2. Go to [Inspect](#) and open the [Network](#) tab on top, then click on the [XHR](#).



3. Refresh the page to reload. Find the API for the video list. The API is called [itemList](#).

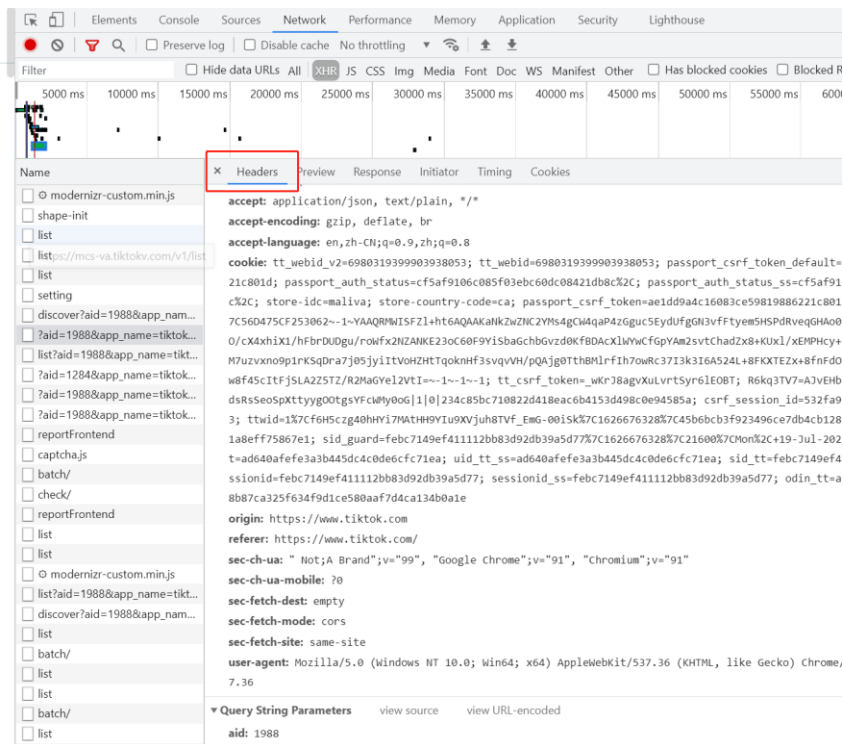
The screenshot shows the Chrome DevTools Network tab with a filter set to 'XHR'. A request is selected, and the 'Preview' pane displays the JSON response. The response structure is as follows:

```

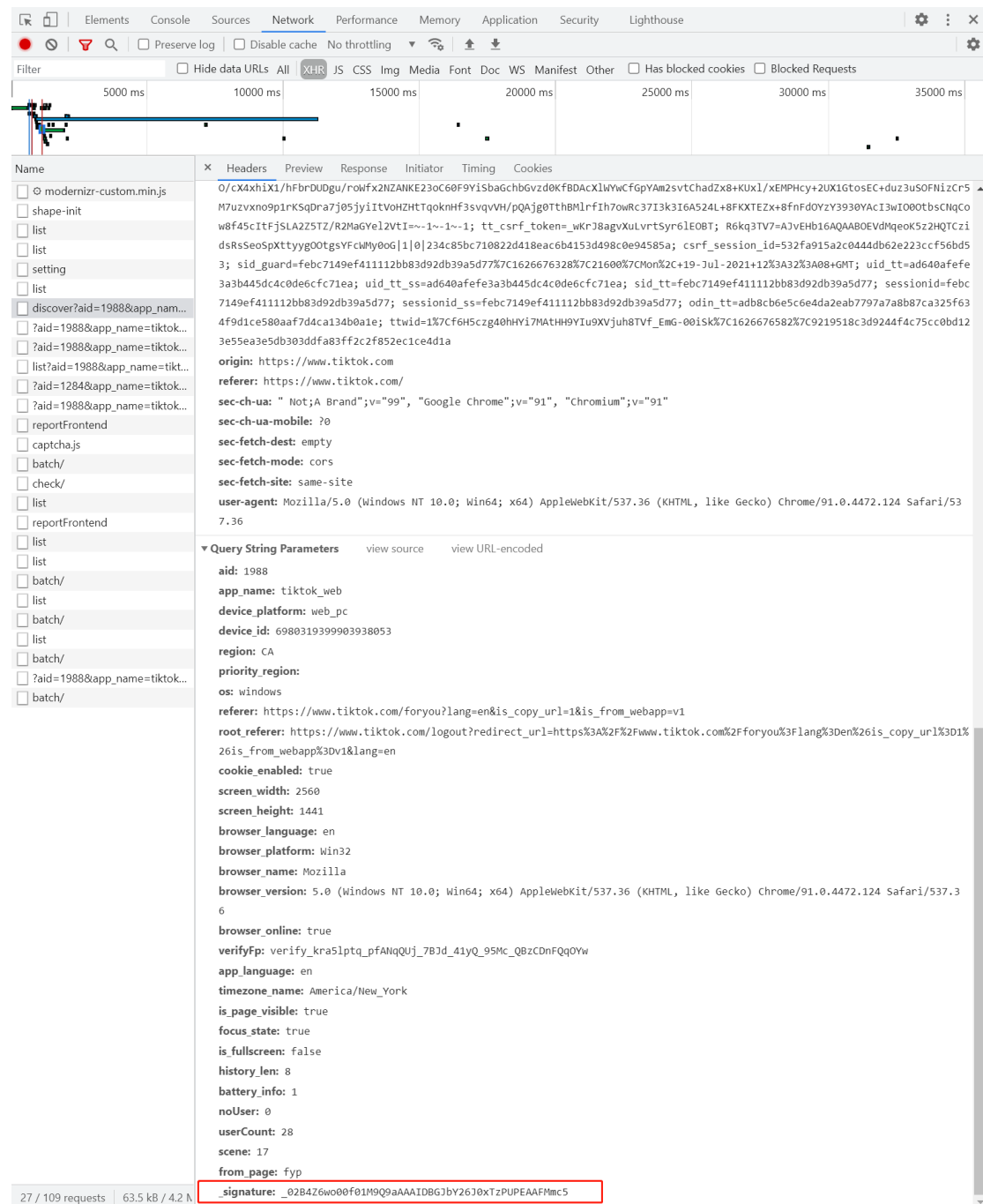
{
  "statusCode": 0,
  "itemList": [
    {
      "id": "6985192979615157509",
      "desc": "Delicioso 🍷 flan 🍷 #postre #flan #dessert",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6978838727590235398",
      "desc": "hit it hit it get it get it #fyp",
      "createTime": 1623373601
    },
    {
      "id": "6985192979615157509",
      "desc": "hit it hit it get it get it #fyp",
      "createTime": 1623373601
    },
    {
      "id": "6978838727590235398",
      "desc": "hit it hit it get it get it #fyp",
      "createTime": 1623373601
    },
    {
      "id": "6977445503810161926",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1624563130
    },
    {
      "id": "6981390281639857413",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6975458068104629510",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6966613373593062661",
      "desc": "#hwy#401#foryoupage#toronto#fyp#foryou",
      "createTime": 1622041079
    },
    {
      "id": "6975290751383096582",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "698561517756462342",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6982336171011525889",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6985614523210190085",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6976314543802682629",
      "desc": "Delicioso 🍷 flan 🍷 #postre #flan #dessert",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6972336505935187206",
      "desc": "hit it hit it get it get it #fyp",
      "createTime": 1623373601
    },
    {
      "id": "6985859598037159173",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6984910748430388486",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6980021969152478470",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6978200157787655430",
      "desc": "It worked, kinda. #fyp #foryou #foryoupage #clown #clowns #viral",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6976692379549977861",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6981450637905104134",
      "desc": "Fed up #fyp #[as]",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6984258850329316614",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6959047964430060806",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6977174002846403846",
      "desc": "Rips the hole lime. 2003 DOB style. #fyp #yycc",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6986292965132061957",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6984755734302969093",
      "desc": "Daaaang #fy #techtok #apple #iphone #android #destroy #viral",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6978556594502028550",
      "desc": "This huge tick was in my sister 🍷 #greenscreenvideo #fyp #ticks",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6980925827814935814",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625373461
    },
    {
      "id": "6975750764048272646",
      "desc": "Watch this video, the mobile phone is flowing agin #panda #eat",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6975921624260381957",
      "desc": "#fyp",
      "createTime": 1625495650
    },
    {
      "id": "6978337847375875334",
      "desc": "#greenscreensticker",
      "createTime": 1624770900
    },
    {
      "id": "6981535898148113669",
      "desc": "",
      "createTime": 1625515500
    },
    {
      "id": "6979104504906059014",
      "desc": "wish every morning started like this",
      "createTime": 1624949405
    }
  ],
  "statusCode": 0
}

```

- However, there are only under 30 videos in this list so what we need to do is to scroll down to the next page. To do this, we need to find the variable related to the page number. This variable usually would be saved in the headers.



What we need to do now is to scroll your browser to go to the next page and refresh the browser to see which variable is changed. After doing so, I realized that the only variable changing is the one at the end called signature



The screenshot shows the Chrome DevTools Network tab with a request to `https://www.tiktok.com/discover?aid=1988&app_name=tiktok_web&device_platform=web_pc&device_id=6980319399903938053&region=CA&priority_region=&os=windows&referer=https://www.tiktok.com/foryou?lang=en&is_copy_url=1&is_from_webapp=v1&root_referer=https://www.tiktok.com/logout?redirect_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Fforyou%3F%3D%26is_from_webapp%3Dv1&lang=en&cookie_enabled=true&screen_width=2560&screen_height=1441&browser_language=en&browser_platform=Win32&browser_name=Mozilla&browser_version=5.0%20(Windows%20NT%2010.0%3B%20Win64%3B%20x64)%20AppleWebKit%2F537.36%28KHTML%2C%20like%20Gecko%29%20Chrome%2F91.0.4472.124%20Safari%2F537.36&verifyfp=verify_kraslptq_pFANqUj_7B3d_41yQ_95Mc_Q8zCdnFQqOYw&app_language=en&timezone_name=America%2FNew_York&is_page_visible=true&focus_state=true&is_fullscreen=false&history_len=8&battery_info=1&noUser=0&userCount=28&scene=17&from_page=fyp`. The 'signature' parameter is highlighted with a red box.

**Headers**

**Query String Parameters**

**signature:** `_0284Z6wo0f01.1-ukgAAIDCLrIXMa5QAf5fr7AAJ6028`

Obviously, this is an encrypted variable. I found the encrypt method under `setting->verify->js->sg`



Uhm never mind, this is absolutely out of my ability to decrypt it. Therefore, I choose to find some other way to fetch the data.

- To do so, I first opened a URL with valid video list. (Notice, you can find it under the one has the itemList, just find that one and click on headers)

The screenshot shows the Chrome DevTools Network tab with a list of requests on the left. The selected request is a GET request to the TikTok API. The details pane on the right shows the request and response headers.

**Request URL:** [https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item\\_list/?aid=1988&app\\_name=tiktok\\_web&device\\_platform=web\\_pc&device\\_id=6980319399903938053&region=CA&priority\\_region=&os=windows&referer=https:%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Fforyou%3Fflang%3Den%26is\\_copy\\_url%3D1%26is\\_from\\_webapp%3Dv1&root\\_referer=https:%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Flogout%3Fredirect\\_url%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.tiktok.com%252Fforyou%253Fflang%253Den%2526is\\_copy\\_url%253D1%2526is\\_from\\_webapp%253Dv1%26lang%3Den&cookie\\_enabled=true&screen\\_width=2560&screen\\_height=1441&browser\\_language=en&browser\\_platform=win32&browser\\_name=Mozilla&browser\\_version=5.0+\(Windows+NT+10.0%3B+Win64%3B+x64\)+AppleWebKit%2F537.36+\(KHTML,+like+Gecko\)+Chrome%2F91.0.4472.124+Safari%2F537.36&browser\\_online=true&verifyfp=verify\\_kra5lptq\\_pfANqUj\\_7BJd\\_41yQ\\_95Mc\\_QBzCDnFQq0Yw&app\\_language=en&timezone\\_name=America%2FNew\\_York&is\\_page\\_visible=true&focus\\_state=false&is\\_fullscreen=false&history\\_len=8&battery\\_info=1&count=30&itemID=1&language=en&from\\_page=fyp&insertedItemID=&signature=\\_028426wo0f01.1-ukgAAIDCLriXMa57rf5fr7AAJ6073](https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item_list/?aid=1988&app_name=tiktok_web&device_platform=web_pc&device_id=6980319399903938053&region=CA&priority_region=&os=windows&referer=https:%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Fforyou%3Fflang%3Den%26is_copy_url%3D1%26is_from_webapp%3Dv1&root_referer=https:%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Flogout%3Fredirect_url%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.tiktok.com%252Fforyou%253Fflang%253Den%2526is_copy_url%253D1%2526is_from_webapp%253Dv1%26lang%3Den&cookie_enabled=true&screen_width=2560&screen_height=1441&browser_language=en&browser_platform=win32&browser_name=Mozilla&browser_version=5.0+(Windows+NT+10.0%3B+Win64%3B+x64)+AppleWebKit%2F537.36+(KHTML,+like+Gecko)+Chrome%2F91.0.4472.124+Safari%2F537.36&browser_online=true&verifyfp=verify_kra5lptq_pfANqUj_7BJd_41yQ_95Mc_QBzCDnFQq0Yw&app_language=en&timezone_name=America%2FNew_York&is_page_visible=true&focus_state=false&is_fullscreen=false&history_len=8&battery_info=1&count=30&itemID=1&language=en&from_page=fyp&insertedItemID=&signature=_028426wo0f01.1-ukgAAIDCLriXMa57rf5fr7AAJ6073)

**Request Method:** GET

**Status Code:** 200

**Remote Address:** 72.136.197.98:443

**Referrer Policy:** strict-origin-when-cross-origin

**Response Headers:**

- access-control-allow-credentials: true
- access-control-allow-headers: Origin, X-Requested-With, Content-Type, Accept, x-secsdk-csrf-token, tt-csrf-token, x-secsdk-csrf-version, x-secsdk-csrf-request, x-tt-params
- access-control-allow-methods: GET, OPTIONS, POST, PUT
- access-control-allow-origin: https://www.tiktok.com
- access-control-expose-headers: X-Tt-Logid
- allow: GET, OPTIONS, POST, PUT
- content-encoding: gzip
- content-length: 37134
- content-type: application/json; charset=utf-8
- date: Mon, 19 Jul 2021 06:38:36 GMT
- protocol: json
- server: nginx
- server-timing: cdn-cache; desc=MISS, edge; dur=17, origin; dur=622
- server-timing: inner; dur=620
- strict-transport-security: max-age=31536000
- vary: Accept-Encoding
- x-janus-mini-api-forward: Janus-Mini(fast)
- x-origin-response-time: 622,23.50.51.228
- x-parent-response-time: 639,72.136.197.94
- x-tt-logid: 202107190638350101890560344C06D863
- x-tt-trace-host: 018a2cada2bae0d6438e1fc8d856ccfaefbb81f7b8d9f3c3379f5e79bf165360e28b0c4cf73622884987bcd0b544588c85137d5d859be5c029bb852872eb17dfb74a43884936b561a8bc59ba2aef12abffe5be380a03886c286878f8093fda90ad692b14e268b684f239619f931cf1d
- x-tt-trace-tag: id=16;cdn-cache=miss;type=dyn

**Request Headers:**

- authority: m.tiktok.com
- method: GET
- path: /api/recommend/item\_list/?aid=1988&app\_name=tiktok\_web&device\_platform=web\_pc&device\_id=6980319399903938053&region=CA&priority\_region=&os=windows&referer=https:%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Fforyou%3Fflang%3Den%26is\_copy\_url%3D1%26is\_from\_webapp%3Dv1&root\_referer=https:%2F%2Fwww.tiktok.com%2Flogout%3Fredirect\_url%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.tiktok.com%252Fforyou%253Fflang%253Den%2526is\_copy\_url%253D1%2526is\_from\_webapp%253Dv1%26lang%3Den&cookie\_enabled=true&screen\_width=2560&screen\_height=1441&browser\_language=en&browser\_platform=win32&browser\_name=Mozilla&browser\_version=5.0+(Windows+NT+10.0%3B+Win64%3B+x64)+AppleWebKit%2F537.36+(KHTML,+like+Gecko)+Chrome%2F91.0.4472.124+Safari%2F537.36&browser\_online=true&verifyfp=verify\_kra5lptq\_pfANqUj\_7BJd\_41yQ\_95Mc\_QBzCDnFQq0Yw&app\_language=en&timezone\_name=America%2FNew\_York&is\_page\_visible=true&focus\_state=false&is\_fullscreen=false&history\_len=8&battery\_info=1&count=30&itemID=1&language=en&from\_page=fyp&insertedItemID=&signature=\_028426wo0f01.1-ukgAAIDCLriXMa57rf5fr7AAJ6073

It should start with [https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item\\_list/](https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item_list/).....

- Then I tried to open this URL in my browser, and I noticed that videos I am getting from this same \_signature variable are different. Which means I do not need to decrypt that variable to get different videos. However, this could cause a problem – I would probably get repeat videos since I am getting them all randomly. (I would discuss this problem later)
- Try to request this URL



```

import requests
import re
import csv

url = 'https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item_list?aid=1988&app_name=tiktok_web&device_platform=web_pc&device_id='

headers = {
    'cookie': 'tt_webid_v2=6980332468541769218; tt_webid=6980332468541769218; _abck=ED0A47101D299D43655EA43F58',
    'user-agent': 'Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/91.0.4471.170 Safari/537.36'
}

response = requests.get(url = url, headers = headers).json()[0]['itemList']
for i in response:
    print(i)

```

As we can see here, this URL is valid, and we could get data from it.

8. Then we just need to extract the info we need from these data and write in our csv file.
9. There is one problem we need to take care. Sometimes, there are emojis in the username or comment and they cannot be written into our csv file because of Unicode error.

[illegible]

10. To solve this problem, we need to 'clean' the data we got.



```

def string_clean(a):#Tiktok: special characters in the jitter text
    m=''
    fl=open('special.csv','w')
    wf=csv.writer(fl)
    for i in list(a):
        try:
            if i=='\n' or i=='\\' or i=='\n' or i=='/' :
                continue
            wf.writerow([i])
            m=m+i
        except UnicodeEncodeError:
            continue
    fl.close()
    return m

```

If we are dealing with a special character, we just skip them.

11. Then we need to remove the redundant data(mentioned before in step 6).

```

videoidlist=[]
for i in range(1,100):
    url = 'https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item_list'
    # url='https://m.tiktok.com/api/recommend/item_list'
    headers = {
        'upgrade-insecure-requests': '1',
        'sec-ch-ua': '" Not;A Brand";v="99", "Microsoft Edge";v="100"',
        'cookie': 'tt_webid_v2=6980332468541769218; tt_webid=6980332468541769218',
        'user-agent': 'Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/100.0.0.0 Safari/537.36'
    }
    response = requests.get(url=url, headers=headers, timeout=10)
    print(len(response))
    for i in response.json():
        print(i)
        video_commentCount = i['stats']['commentCount']
        video_diggCount = i['stats']['diggCount']
        video_playCount=i['stats']['playCount']
        video_shareCount=i['stats']['shareCount']
        video_id = i['id']
        if video_id in videoidlist:
            continue
        videoidlist.append(video_id)

```

If the video is already fetched, we just skip it, otherwise, add this video's id to our list.

12. It could fetch under 30 videos in this process, so we just add a large for loop outside.