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Project Proposal



MARKET RESEARCH TEAM PROJECT
MSC STRATEGIC MARKETING 2023-24

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<https://youtu.be/rCGgBJcAtCw>

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Executive Summary

In response to the evolving landscape of social media and the surge in short-form video content, YouTube introduced YouTube Shorts. To assess its effectiveness and potential, this research focused on qualitative research, with two primary objectives: understanding user perceptions and providing recommendations for capturing a significant share of the UK short-form video market.

The research comprised qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observational research. Through ten IDIs and five observational research, three key findings emerged: Users' unawareness of certain features, user consciousness towards data privacy, and distinct content quality and feature preferences between YouTube Shorts and TikTok users.

To enhance the YouTube Shorts platform, we propose three strategic recommendations:

- 1) *Experimentation and Innovation*: Introduce an automated Shorts generation feature that allows creators to use most-replayed segments from long-form videos, encouraging original content creation and increasing interaction.
- 2) *User Onboarding and Building Awareness*: Implement targeted tutorials and feature alerts to enhance user navigation, dispel misconceptions, and improve user experience.
- 3) *Strategic Brand Positioning*: Leverage the trust and security associated with the YouTube brand by consistently communicating privacy protection, quality content, and ethical responsibility. Differentiate YouTube Shorts from competitors by upholding user trust and a positive reputation.

This study acknowledges its limitations, including the potential interviewer bias, lack of generalisability due to the limited sample size and the Hawthorne Effect. Future research should aim for a more rigorous approach with a larger and more diverse sample, standardised protocols, and observer training for more robust and widely applicable results. In summary, YouTube Shorts has significant potential, and these recommendations can enhance its usability, user engagement and reputation, positioning it as a strong contender in the short-form video industry.



→ Background

For years, YouTube has reigned as the industry's leading social media platform. Its transformative impact on video content creation has solidified its position as the second most popular social media network globally by monthly users, surpassed only by Facebook (Shepherd, 2023). However, the ever-changing landscape of social media, combined with the skyrocketing popularity of short-form video content, has propelled competitors to the forefront. TikTok, in particular, has emerged as a significant rival to YouTube. In response to the growing demand for short-form content, YouTube Shorts was launched worldwide in the fall of 2020 (Spangler, 2023) and introduced to the UK market in July 2021 (Beveridge, 2023). This report will primarily focus on qualitative research, aiming to provide YouTube Shorts with:

Research objective 1: Insights into the perception, utilisation, and efficiency of the application features from its users within the UK.

Research objective 2: Recommendations and strategies on how to secure a more significant share of the UK short-form video market.

With its global recognition and existing YouTube user base, Shorts possesses the potential to become a more desirable platform in the short-form video segment. The culmination of findings from secondary and qualitative research will reveal significant insights into the factors influencing users' choices between Shorts and TikTok. The expected benefits of this research are twofold. First, it will provide YouTube with a comprehensive understanding of the short-form video landscape, enabling the company to tailor its strategies effectively. Second, it will provide a path to securing a larger share of the UK short-form market. Through the assessment of key features, personalised content delivery, community perceptions and potential areas of improvement, this research will guide YouTube towards a more competitive stance within the industry.

→ Research Methodology

To address the research questions concisely, we adopted qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observational research. A total of ten IDIs were conducted to delve deeper into consumer behaviour and perceptions. The interviewees included viewers and one content creator who use both YouTube Shorts and TikTok. In addition to IDIs, we conducted observational research on five participants to analyse user interactions on the platforms, aiming for a holistic understanding of user behaviour and engagement.

The IDI questions were carefully designed to elicit information regarding the participants' social media usage and its underlying purpose based on secondary research articles. In the context of YouTube Shorts, our questions aimed to uncover various aspects including usage patterns, preconceived notions, engagement levels, feature and content preferences, perception of content quality, community participation, algorithmic recommendations, data security concerns, and ultimately, platform loyalty. To establish a framework for general comparisons, the contrast between YouTube Shorts and TikTok was introduced in later questions, allowing for a consistent comparative analysis throughout the interview process.



Ten IDIs were conducted with young adults residing in the UK. Participants were selected using a screener questionnaire (Appendix A) with no prior education or work in the marketing industry. Their ages fell within the range of 18-26, as primary consumers of short-form video content tend to be younger adults (Google, 2020.) Additionally, the inclusion of participants from diverse backgrounds was a deliberate strategy to gather a broad spectrum of perspectives. We decided to conduct IDIs, instead of focus groups because IDIs allow greater flexibility, depth of findings, unbiased responses, detailed probing and therefore overall better quality insights. An additional AI-based interview was conducted using Chat GPT where it was given the persona of a 20-year-old student living in a flat in Shoreditch, London who studies political science at King's College. The Chat GPT persona was asked the same IDI questions. The responses were compared and coded against the other respondents' responses and observations (Appendix C.)

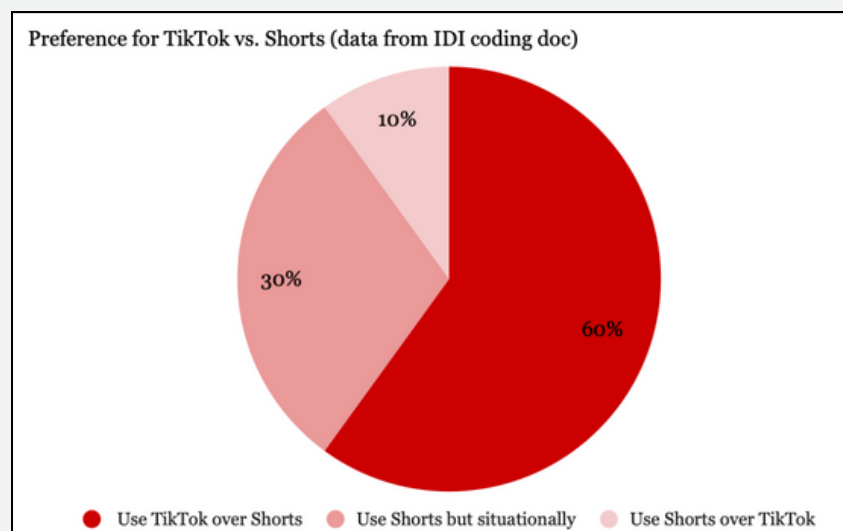
Observational research was conducted to systematically record the behaviour of individuals without any external manipulation. The objective was to identify the features and aspects of user experience, particularly in terms of UI/UX, security concerns, and content quality, that either attracted or discouraged users from these platforms. The research process involved inviting users to freely engage with YouTube Shorts for a duration of their choice. If they opted to stop viewing, they were encouraged to create and upload a Short. Subsequently, users were asked to share a video without prior knowledge of the research topic. These observations were conducted individually, followed by post-observational interviews to gain insights into user decisions. The interviews occurred without additional observers, ensuring a one-on-one setting.

➔ Results & Analysis

The primary goal of this study was to provide insights into the perception and utilisation of YouTube Shorts among its users and to gather valuable insights that could help guide strategies.

Preconceived notions:

When asked to describe YouTube Shorts in one word, many users felt that it was 'additional' and 'informational' whereas TikTok was described as more 'attention-seeking' and 'emotional.'

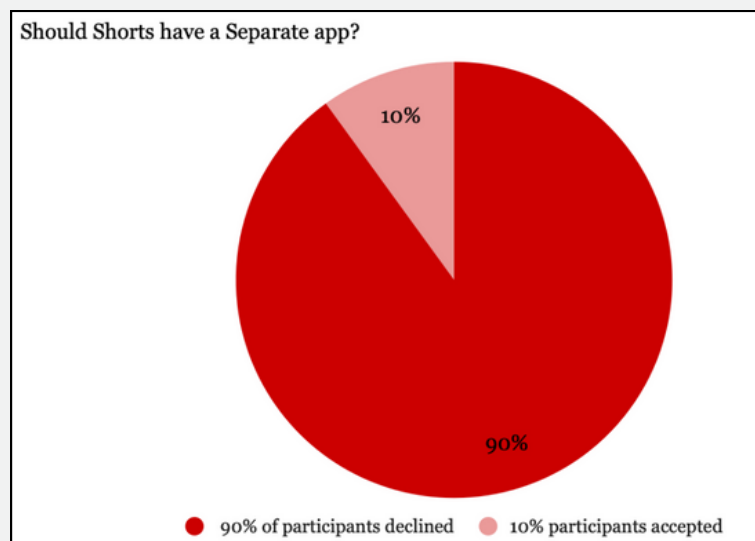




These responses were particularly helpful in understanding the users' preconceived notions and preferences for YouTube Shorts versus TikTok, thereby informing report recommendations.

Usage patterns, engagement levels and algorithmic recommendations:

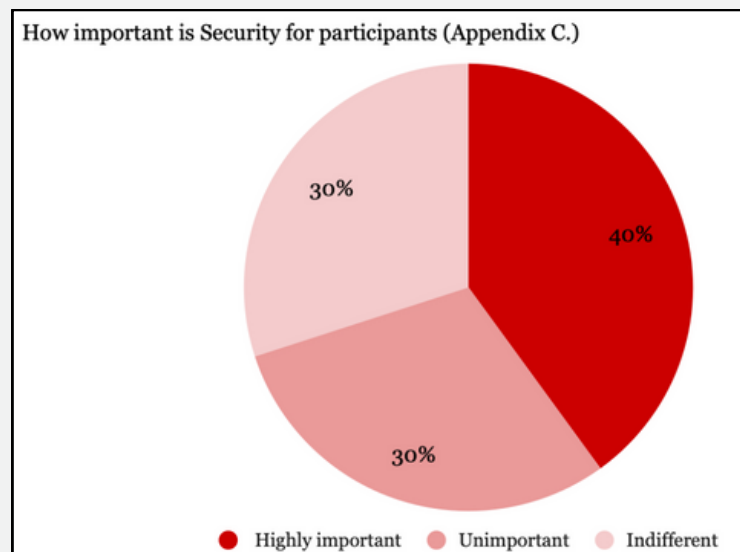
In our IDIs, most user participants primarily used social media apps, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, to maintain connections with friends and family. Six out of ten interviewees categorised their use of Shorts as medium, ie. every other day and for the content creator, the primary motivation for creating Shorts was to increase the reach of their long-form videos (Interviewee 9.) They found that Shorts made it easier to remain consistent, reducing the effort and time required to create content, thus simplifying the creative process. The interviewed users and content creator both found that TikTok's original content did not format well on YouTube Shorts. Based on our IDI research, Shorts are seen as an addition to YouTube as a whole and 90% of participants prefer not having a separate app for Shorts, therefore YouTube should embrace this ideology and emphasise Shorts as an addition to their existing content.



Additionally, most participants preferred the Shorts algorithm to the TikTok algorithm stating: "...the videos that it recommends are catered to what you want to watch" (Interviewee 6) and "are a bit more relevant than TikTok" (Interviewee 3.) In asking about the positives and negatives of app features and overall UX, we found that all participants liked having the 'dislike' button on Shorts, affirming that they appreciated the option of further personalising their content.

Data security:

Recently, TikTok, confirmed in June 2023 that [the company] stores financial information of its biggest American and European stars on servers in China (Levine, 2023.) Based on these findings we wanted to understand how important security was to the user and if it had an effect in deciding which social media platform they used.



The graph above is particularly compelling statistical evidence that proves security may not be a significant factor in attracting or deterring users to a specific social media platform. Notably, TikTok faced a \$15.9 million fine for permitting 1.4 million children under the age of 13 to use the service without obtaining parental consent, thereby violating British data protection regulations (Singer, 2023.) Seeing as data protection and security concerns for TikTok within the UK are growing, it can be predicted that users could have to confront their usage, thereby switching to Shorts.

Content preferences:

Another valuable insight gathered was the users' perceptions about the quality and editing style of videos on Shorts versus TikTok. Many participants believed Shorts videos were better overall because, "famous YouTubers have been creating content for much longer than TikTok has existed so storytelling ability and editing skills are better," leading to more polished content (Interviewee 6.) The interviews also revealed that Shorts creators are typically YouTubers who have an existing channel and fanbase, typically using Shorts to tease or preview long-form content. Furthermore, participants expressed a desire for more videos on the discovery page and improvements in repurposed TikTok content on Shorts.

Post-observational interviews yielded valuable insights into user behaviour and UX, concluding that users were unaware of at least three app functions and consequently were unable to optimise their UX. Firstly, users were under the impression that the 'dislike' button would curate video recommendations and for this reason, never pressed dislike (Exhibit 1). Secondly, users were unfamiliar with the 'Don't recommend this channel' button, which would allow them to have better control over recommended content within the algorithm. Thirdly, users were unaware of the 'playlist' and '+' upload functions, thus leading to confusion and wasted time (Exhibit 2 & 3.)

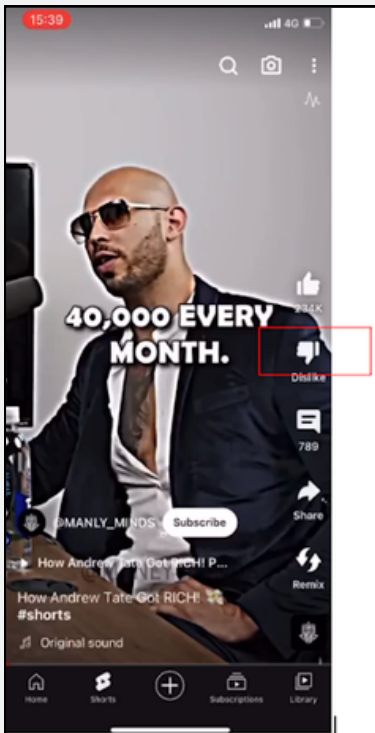


Exhibit 1: A user had Andrew Tate in his feed who he is not interested in but never pressed dislike

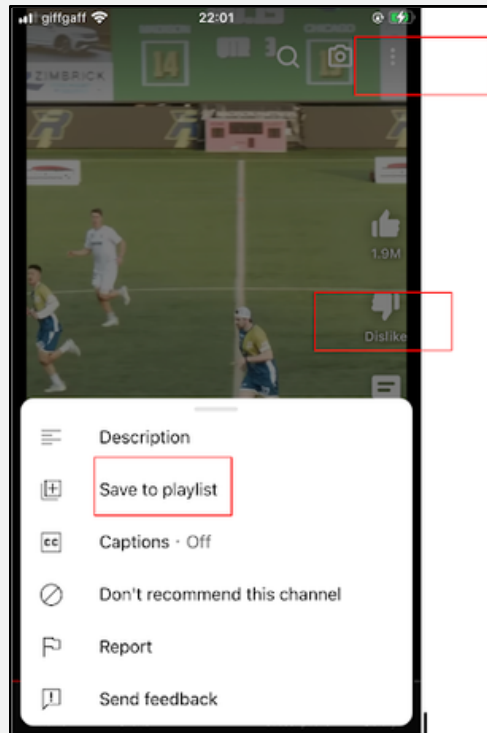


Exhibit 2: Users were unaware of three dots and "Save to Playlist" function

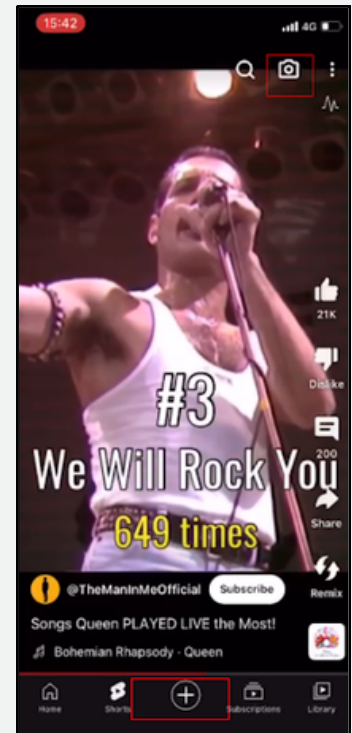


Exhibit 3: Most users did not know to press '+' or use camera for uploading content

After comprehensive analysis, our findings affirm that the reputation of YouTube Shorts is primarily tailored towards an audience of existing YouTube users who favour long-form over short-form video content. The platform's design caters to a community that prefers anonymity and the allure of connecting with both peer content creators and established figures, rather than peer-to-peer interactions. Notably, Shorts' integration within the YouTube app offers a streamlined solution for entertainment needs. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that Shorts still underperforms compared to TikTok with 60% of our respondents preferring TikTok. Consequently, our recommendations aim to enhance the platform's UI/UX, while simultaneously fostering a transformation in the perception and brand image associated with YouTube Shorts. (Appendix B)

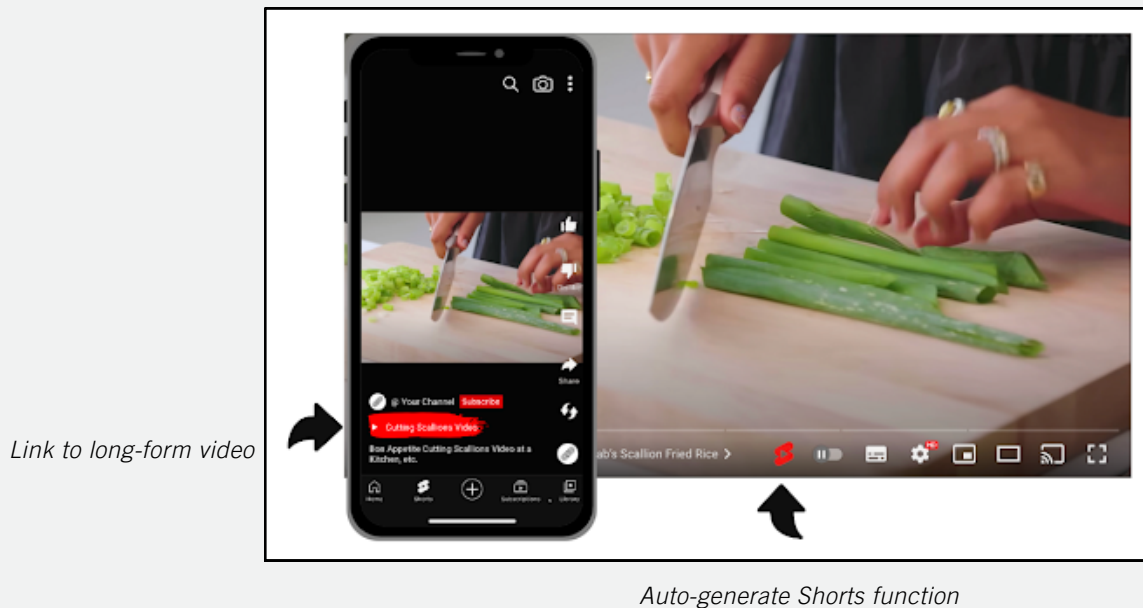
➔ Recommendations

Experimentation and Innovation

YouTube could add an automated Shorts generating function for creators that uses the most played segments from long-form videos. YouTube should highlight the feature in Shorts that links short-form to long-form videos. This strategy preserves existing Shorts material while allowing creators to develop interest in their long-form videos, increasing interaction and content variety on the platform. Instead of trying to replicate TikTok's purpose in users' lives, we recommend that YouTube design a different strategy that is new, not reactionary.



We believe that positioning YouTube Shorts to users as ‘movie-trailers’ for long-form videos will not only incentivise existing YouTube creators to generate more original content by creating new ways of marketing Shorts but also lead to more users on the platform.



Building Awareness: User/Creator Onboarding Tutorials

YouTube should enhance user awareness and engagement by implementing targeted tutorials and feature alerts. Specifically, targeting users unfamiliar with Shorts functions and those struggling with video saving. For infrequent or suboptimal Shorts users, a tutorial can be introduced, enhancing their platform navigation and understanding. Per our research, users believe that the dislike feature controls the recommendation algorithm when in reality researchers found that YouTube’s ‘dislike’ button reduced similar, unwanted recommendations by only 12% and is primarily user feedback for creators (Grant, 2022.) From observational research, we understand that users had issues with how to save videos and thus, saved videos they wanted to watch later by sharing to themselves through social media intermediaries. YouTube already has a feature to easily save and track individual videos, however, it lacks awareness. By educating users and increasing awareness, YouTube can improve user experience, boost engagement, and capitalise on its unique features, thereby differentiating itself from competitors like TikTok.

Strategic Brand Positioning: Leveraging existing brand trust and loyalty

Strategic Brand Positioning will help YouTube Shorts maintain pre-existing notions about the platform. YouTube should prioritise and leverage user trust and security through transparent communication, privacy protection, and quality content. By consistently demonstrating their commitment to these values, YouTube can enhance its existing trustworthiness. IBD’s study (Seitz, 2021) concludes that YouTube has a user trust index of 61.7 while TikTok has an index of 41.1. Another study by Forbes Advisor (Advisor, 2023) reveals that TikTok is among the least trusted technology companies among Brits. It is critical for YouTube to lead with open communication and to adjust its practices in response to criticism and changing conditions.



By upholding these standards consistently, YouTube can strengthen user trust and maintain a positive reputation. This can be implemented by popularising YouTube's security standards in ad campaigns and marketing strategies in regard to data privacy and ethical responsibility, setting itself apart.

Limitations & Future Research

In the course of our market research, we leveraged IDIs and observational research, two valuable qualitative data-gathering methods. However, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations associated with these approaches.

To ensure a diverse participant pool, we assigned five of the six group members to conduct ten IDIs, each member interviewing two respondents. This approach introduced an unintentional element of interviewer bias, as the quality and consistency of each interview depended on the individual skills of the interviewers. Consequently, the responses were potentially influenced by the personal opinions or subtle tone of voice of each interviewer. Furthermore, the results lack generalisability because the selection of respondents was guided by the screener questionnaire (Appendix A), rather than being a representative sample of the target customer demographic. Therefore the small sample size only reflected the perspectives of a small cohort, thus limiting the broader applicability of our findings. Additionally, differences in respondents' familiarity with Shorts led to varying levels of detail in their responses, ranging from extensive elaboration to concise answers. Another notable limitation is the responses from Chat GPT since it is a language model based on historical data and therefore cannot access data after 2021.

The observational research component was not immune to biases either, notably the Hawthorne Effect, originally conceptualised by Roethlisberger, where subjects in behavioural studies may modify their performance in response to being observed (Anteby and Khurana, n/a.) As a result, some participants may have adjusted their behaviour and post-interview responses under observation. Furthermore, the interpretation of observed behaviours may differ among observers, potentially introducing subjectivity into the data analysis process.

Future research efforts could benefit from a more rigorous approach to mitigate biases and enhance the generalisability of the findings. Employing a larger and more diverse sample, standardised interview protocols, and observer training could help alleviate some of the issues outlined, paving the way for more widely applicable results (Appendix B). YouTube can also conduct a quantitative study on its existing user base through surveys on its short video platform to inquire about their awareness of certain functionalities, as well as to offer feedback on the existing features. This would help YouTube understand the misconceptions that users currently have.



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→ Appendix

Appendix A: Screener Questionnaire

Brief Description of Research:

- Participants should be informed that we are performing research on YouTube Shorts and that we want to understand why they use YouTube Shorts over other short-form social media platforms. All participants are asked to be willing to engage with us in-depth and that the in-depth interviews should take 30-45 minutes and the observational interviews should take however long they wish to interact with the platform.

Date / Time of Session:

- Participants are given a specific date/time that the in-depth interview and/or observational interview will take place. These were then recorded and transcribed per interviewer.

Characteristics for Inclusion:

- Participants were carefully selected based on the following criteria:
 - 1. Currently uses and engages with the platform (use of TikTok is not required, but accepted)
 - 2. Content creators on YouTube Shorts (not required, but encouraged)
 - 3. Understanding of TikTok (for comparison purposes)
 - 4. No outside knowledge of marketing (ie. does not work in marketing industry)

Basic Demographic Information for each interviewee in a table

- Living in the United Kingdom
- Age group: 18-26 years old

Appendix B: Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Description of AI resource	Series of Prompts used	Excerpts of AI-generated output
Chat GPT	'I'm writing the ____ section of my market research graduate paper and would like you to review and make it sound more professional.' (inserted existing rough draft)	Ex.1: 'To ensure a diverse participant pool, we assigned five of the six group members to conduct ten IDIs, each member interviewing two respondents' Ex. 2: 'After comprehensive analysis, our findings affirm that the reputation of YouTube Shorts is primarily tailored towards an audience of existing YouTube users who seek long-form video content, rather than those more inclined towards short-form video content.' Ex. 3: 'During the preliminary phase of this research, we encountered a notable scarcity of secondary research findings specifically for YouTube Shorts.'



Chat GPT	‘Can you discuss some limitations that can arise when doing in-depth interviews as well as observational research?’	Ex. 3: ‘In-depth interviews: 1. Response Bias: description 2. Small Sample size: description Observational research: 1. Observer effect: description 2. Interpretation bias: description’
Chat GPT	‘Can you come up with a question for how to determine the research results will be implemented for YouTube?’	‘What kind of ongoing research or monitoring mechanisms will YouTube need to employ to stay in tune with user preferences and evolving market dynamics, ensuring that their strategies remain effective and competitive?’
Chat GPT	‘Based on my paper below, can you write an executive summary that includes a brief overview of research results and a preview of the recommendations within a 300 word count limit?’	‘In response to the evolving landscape of social media and the surge in short-form video content, YouTube introduced YouTube Shorts. To assess its effectiveness and potential, this research focused on qualitative analysis, with two primary objectives: understanding user perceptions and providing recommendations for capturing a significant share of the UK short-form video market.’

Appendix C: Coding Example

IDI QUESTIONS	CODING	CODE
Q1: In general, can you explain how you use social media in your day-to-day life ie. What is its purpose to you?	<p>Keeping in touch with friends, entertainment/connection</p> <p>Ie. sending memes, sharing content, information gathering</p> <p>Chat GPT: stay connected, access news, engage in interest-based communities, connect with like-minded individuals.</p>	<p>Usage</p> <p>Sharing</p>
Q3: How frequently do you watch YouTube Shorts? Probing Q: What kind of content do you usually watch? (this can be asked like: How would you describe your use of YouTube Shorts? (light, medium, or heavy)?	<p>Type of use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light: 4 - Medium: 6 <p>Chat GPT: Quite frequently</p>	Usage



<p>Q7: Which platform do you prefer? Probing Q: And what are your motivations behind using that platform?</p>	<p>YT Shorts: 1 TikTok: 6 Depends/Situational: 3</p> <p>Motivation: YT Shorts: Academic/ educational videos, connection to who they are subscribed to on YT keeps them coming back, use for information TikTok: Stay connected/ relevant, larger friend bases so easier to connect, more fun, distraction</p> <p>Chat GPT: I slightly prefer TikTok because it's primarily an entertaining and creative platform that offers a diverse range of content. I enjoy the interactive and engaging community it provides.</p>	<p>Interaction with platform</p> <p>Content</p> <p>Community</p>
<p>Q8: What features attract you most to use YT shorts? Probing Q: What features are lacking in YT Shorts?</p>	<p>YT Pros: like 'dislike button'; embedded into an established platform; don't need to login to watch YT Cons: clunky; refresh rate is low/less content; confused about progress bar of video</p> <p>Chat GPT: Pros: concise format, community in the comments section. Cons: Limitations in monetization for creators and improved algorithm for content diversity, enhanced search and filter features, ability to download shorts for offline viewing, sometimes wish there were more ways to discover specific types of content.</p>	<p>Algorithm</p> <p>Content</p> <p>Interaction with platform</p>
<p>Q11: Have you noticed any specific trends with the kind of Shorts that are suggested to you? (e.g., certain themes, video length, editing style)</p>	<p>Length of Shorts are usually shorter versions of long YT videos; Shorts used as trailers or teasers</p> <p>Chat GPT: Suggests videos related to my past viewing habits, videos on topics I've shown interest in, or content from creators I've engaged with</p>	<p>Content</p>
<p>Q12: Do you think the recommendation algorithm in YT shorts recommends the content you are interested in? (e.g, personalization in the YouTube algorithm)</p>	<p>Algorithm is better</p> <p>TikTok is more focused on demographics</p> <p>Chat GPT: These suggestions align with my preferences and viewing history.</p>	<p>Algorithm</p>



<p>Q13: How important is security to you?</p> <p>Probing Q: If I told you that YT has a more robust system in place to protect your data (over TikTok), how would you feel? (ie. would you switch from TikTok to YT?)</p>	<p>Vote for security as deciding factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Care: 4- Don't care: 3- Indifferent: 3 <p>TikTok: lack of security, data stealing</p> <p>Chat GPT: I would feel reassured. I would view this as a positive aspect of using YouTube. I would be more inclined to use YouTube Shorts or other YouTube services over TikTok.</p>	<p>Security</p>
<p>Q15: What are your future goals regarding YouTube Shorts?</p> <p>Probing Q: Do you plan to continue consuming/ creating Shorts, and if so, how do you envision the platform and content evolving?</p>	<p>Increased security concerns on TikTok means people will move to YT Shorts</p> <p>YT Shorts will try to mimic TikTok</p> <p>More teasers for longer YT videos / Q&A format videos</p> <p>Chat GPT: I anticipate the platform will diversify its content, enhance community engagement, introduce more monetization opportunities for creators, contribute to trending internet challenges, and maintain a global reach.</p>	<p>Security</p> <p>Content</p> <p>Community</p>
<p>Q16: Would you prefer a separate Shorts app rather than it being embedded within YT, why or why not?</p>	<p>Vote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No: 9 <p>Because it would be another app to check; more convenient to have within YT app; would not have as much traction if separate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Yes: 1 <p>Chat GPT: If a separate app offers better functionality, content discovery, and engagement, I'd be open to using it. On the other hand, if it's seamlessly integrated into YouTube and provides a cohesive experience, I would also find that convenient.</p>	<p>Interaction with platform</p> <p>Usage</p>
<p>Q17: What inspired you to start creating YouTube shorts or in general, can you describe your creative process?</p>	<p>To gain traction for main YT channel; short form content creation made it easier to remain consistent; reduced time and effort to create content; increased reach/ simplified process</p>	<p>Interaction with platform</p> <p>Content</p>



Appendix D: In-Depth Interview (IDI) Questions

User Interview Questions:

Q1: In general, can you explain how you use social media in your day-to-day life ie. What is its purpose to you?

Q2: Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your experience with creating or watching YouTube Shorts?

Q3: How frequently do you watch YouTube Shorts? What kind of content do you usually watch? (this can be asked like: How would you describe your use of YouTube Shorts? (light, medium, or heavy)?

Q4: What are your impressions and preconceived notions of YT Shorts?

Q5: What are your impressions and preconceived notions of TikTok?

Q6: If you had to describe YT shorts and TikTok in one word what would that be and why?

Q7: Which platform do you prefer?

Probing Q: And what are your motivations behind using that platform?

Q8: What features attract you most to use YT shorts?

Probing Q: What features are lacking in YT Shorts?

Q9: How much does the actual content really matter to you?

Probing Q: If YouTube were to have better content than TikTok, would you start consuming more content on YouTube Shorts?

Q10: How do you perceive the YouTube Shorts community?

Q11: Have you noticed any specific trends with the kind of Shorts that are suggested to you? (e.g., certain themes, video length, editing style)

Q12: Do you think the recommendation algorithm in YT shorts recommends the content you are interested in? (e.g, personalization in the YouTube algorithm)

Q13: How important is security to you?

Probing Q: If I told you that YT has a more robust system in place to protect your data (over Tik Tok), how would you feel? (ie. would you switch from TikTok to YT?)

Q14: What are your thoughts on the ethical responsibilities of content creators, especially in the context of short-form videos where messages need to be concise and impactful?

Q15: What are your future goals regarding YouTube Shorts?

Probing Q: Do you plan to continue consuming/creating Shorts, and if so, how do you envision the platform and content evolving?

Q16: Would you prefer a separate Shorts app rather than it being embedded within YT, why or why not?

Additional Creator Interview Questions:

Q17: What inspired you to start creating YouTube shorts or in general, can you describe your creative process?

Q18: What are your thoughts on the editing tools provided by YouTube?

Q19: How do you engage with your audience or how do you perceive your audience responses?

Probing Q: What metrics do you find valuable to you if you think about it?



Q20: Did you create separate content altogether for YouTube shorts or were you taking clips out of your long form video and repurposing it for platforms like TikTok and Youtube Shorts?

Q21: Which do you think between YouTube shorts and Tiktok is easier to monetize?

Q22: How important is security to you?

Appendix E: IDI Consolidated Participant Reference Table

<u>IDI</u> nr.	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Origin	Interview Location
1	Tim	21	M	Student	China	In person
2	Erin	22	F	Student	China	In person
3	Calum	26	M	Investment Banking	France	In person
4	Cornelis	25	M	E-commerce	Netherlands	In person
5	Matt	23	M	Private Equity	UK	Zoom
6	Alejandra	21	F	Student	Spain	Zoom
7	Khushi	24	F	Data Analyst	India	Zoom
8	Charmi	26	F	Audit Associate	Dubai	Zoom
9	Kartik	23	M	Content Creator/Industrial Associate	India	Microsoft Teams
10	Saumitra	24	M	Student	India	Microsoft Teams

Appendix F: Chat GPT Persona and Questions for IDI

Take on the persona of a 20-year-old student that lives in London and grew up in Bath, you are studying political science at King's College and live in a flat in Shoreditch. Keep this persona for the following questions.

Chat GPT was asked the same questions as the other participants, see Appendix D: IDI Interview Questions.

Project Commentary

In developing and communicating the recommendations of our study, we first established how the research results would be implemented on behalf of YouTube Shorts and what we wanted the final report to accomplish. In this way, the research results would be actionable and attainable for Shorts under the current market conditions. Although we were limited to only the help of this group and did not have the client to build out this part of the research, we devised a few questions that could help prompt what the final report should contain:

1. How will YouTube adapt its marketing and promotional strategies to make the application more attractive to its users?
2. How can YouTube encourage and support its existing content creators in creating more content, with the goal of attracting additional users?
3. What kind of ongoing research or monitoring mechanisms will YouTube need to employ to stay in tune with user preferences and evolving market dynamics, ensuring that their strategies remain effective and competitive? (Appendix B, Research Report)

In creating questions to prompt backwards research, we were able to structure our findings to assess what data was needed to carry out these analyses. YouTube Shorts is still a relatively new platform so there was not a significant amount of secondary research available. As a result, we opted to design a sampling plan via a screener questionnaire to qualify each participant (Appendix A), which helped ensure that the sample selection and study findings could be generalised for the purpose of this report. After discussing the kind of data needed, we carried out qualitative research through in-depth interviews and observational research. The observational research was conducted in an unstructured, undisguised and natural format because we wanted to: 1. derive coding post-observation to analyse synergies, 2. make sure the respondents were fully aware they were being monitored in order to have screen recordings available, and 3. allow the respondents to navigate the app naturally and freely to elicit authentic responses. As for the IDIs, we went for a structured approach with a set list of questions that were asked similarly across all respondents while still allowing for some flexibility and probing to adjust to each respondent's answers. We decided the structure would begin general at first and then become more specific further on, deliberately phrasing questions to elicit more than yes/no or single word responses (Questions 1-4, Appendix D, Research Report). We also probed certain questions that we wanted our respondents to elaborate on, allowing us to gather deeper insights (Questions 7-9, Appendix D, Research Report.) After the interviews and observational research was completed, we analysed the data by coding response similarities of the respondents and Chat GPT, which informed our insights and recommendations (Appendix C, Research Report.) The coding was able to guide the main themes of our report and inform the context that needed to be explored in greater detail.

To further discuss the implications of our research findings and details of our analysis, please note that we have taken into account limitations in data access and data collection. We are aware that because we are not professionals in market research, that we may have introduced biases to the participants and that some questions may have led to priming. Additionally, since 5 members of the team each interviewed 2 different individuals, not all questions were prompted in exactly the same way, leading to differing insights and responses. In hindsight, we would have had a more strict question structure for our interview and should each have practised the IDIs on a friend before performing it for this study. We also mentioned previously that the secondary and statistical data on YouTube Shorts was limited as it was recently released in the UK, therefore the interpretations and recommendations are confined to the information available. Despite limitations, we still believe the results of this study are important, relevant, reliable and actionable, and can help inform YouTube's decision making.