

Assignment 11

Orli Khaimova

Introduction

TikTok is a social networking app owned by Byte-Dance that is focused on video sharing. Users can create short videos up to 60 seconds long. It was released in 2017 internationally and has amassed 800 million active users and over 2 billion downloads. It is based on Douyin, which is owned by the same company and has more search features.

Scenario Design Analysis

a. Who are TikTok’s target users? The target users of TikTok can be anyone from different backgrounds and ages. It can be used for a multitude of reasons such as advertising, entertainment, outlet of creativity, news sharing, among many others. Users can create, share, and view content and an average user spends around 52 minutes a day on the app. Popular videos can include dancing, lip-syncing, artistic creations, challenges, and comedy.

b. What are their key goals? The key goals of TikTok is to simplify video creation and create a personalized content feed for its users that they would enjoy. Each video is short which allows the user to sort through more content. They want to create a feed in which the videos are tailored to the user’s likings.

c. How can you help them accomplish their goals? In order to accomplish their goals, they can create a recommendation system in which the content is tailored to the user based on their viewing history and search history. For example, it can recommend videos based on the content the user has watched before such as similar sounds, content creators they have viewed before for a few videos, and their search history. They can then tailor the For You page for each individual user based on their findings. It can be based on what the user interacts with by either viewing, liking, or sharing. It can then use the captions, sounds, and hashtags to find similar content the user may like.

Reverse Engineering

TikTok uses collaborative filtering in order to build their recommendation algorithm. It tries to find similar accounts for users. For example, if a user likes a video or follows another user, it would look at other users who also have similar behavior and try to find some overlap. It would then recommend videos based on other users that the targeted user may find interesting. According to Vox, they also believe TikTok uses “automatic featurization.” It may take profile images and try to find others with similar characteristics. For example, sometimes TikTok may recommend a video or profile because a user has viewed one that looked physically similar to it. tikTok also uses content filtering which is where it compares the video characteristics to other videos that may have the same characteristics. This can be based on the content, sounds, captions, or hashtags. It may even look at the duration of the videos and try to recommend videos of similar length.

Recommendations

One recommendation would be to allow the user to have some control over the videos in the search results. For example, TikTok can allow the user to filter out the search results or possibly be able to filter through another account's videos more easily. Another recommendation would be to possibly show why the content is on the For You page for a particular user. TikTok can also allow the user to give it feedback similar to Spotify. For example, the user can upvote or downvote if they would like to see similar content instead of them having to swipe quickly to show they are uninterested.

Sources

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