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Subject: REPORT: virtual Tour Tik Tok Transparency centre

On 4 November 2021, Tik Tok invited COM colleagues (HOME, CNECT, JUST, EU DEL Washington) to a virtual tour of their Transparency Centre in Dublin.

Tik Tok participants:

- Caroline Greer, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations,
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] Head of Product and Process, Europe Trust and Safety
- [REDACTED] Head of Data Public Policy, Europe
- [REDACTED] Head of Global Cyber and Data Defence

Recommendations for user feeds:

Recommendations are designed to create a personalised experience. Recommendations are individual to everyone, based mainly on user's likes, follows, comments and watch time. To a lesser extent, shared info from the user, such as country, language preference and device type are also taken into account. Strong indicators of likes is whether a user finishes watching the full video.

Videos that are recommended are not based on number of followers, each video has a chance to reach people regardless of how many followers a user has.

Tik Tok aims to diversify the content a user sees, and they will not see videos from the same creator until they come across others. The systems is also designed not to see the same videos twice.

Recommendations also have safety considerations, so that spam to artificially increase traffic are ineligible for recommendations.

Content Moderation:

Community guidelines in place to effectively implement strategy to remove bad content or suspend or ban accounts for repeated abuse.

Tik Tok has in place a set of norms and a common code of conduct, and uses a combination of AI and human review (for context), as well as user feedback to moderate the platform.

They work in 60+ languages, and 11 fact checking partners. Moderators are trained, including to understand local nuance.

On safety of minors, Tik Tok does not allow under 13s to open an account. They partner with child safety organisation (We Protect Global Alliance), and disinformation experts, to ensure content is age appropriate and to inform educational efforts. They also partner with civil society and academia to help identify emerging issues.

Removals: 82 million videos removed in Q2, which is less than 1% of total videos, and 93% of those were removed within 24 hours. 94% removed before reported by a user.

Privacy:

TikTok Technology Ltd Ireland provides the service in the EU, and EU privacy rules apply for all EU users. Tik Tok's Office of Data protection is based in Ireland and is the point of contact for the Irish Data Protection Commission.

Tik Tok has 100+ data protection specialists, and their privacy policy describes the type of info collected and purposes for which it is used, such as Email address, user name, date of birth, behavioural info, e.g. how users engage with content on platform, likes, watched videos, accounts users like, shares of videos, comments posted and content created. Info about device settings and systems (operating), IP address, info from third parties, e.g. if user chooses to sign in from other platforms, and contact lists if user transports their contacts from another platform.

Tik Tok uses data to enhance user experience, i.e. features and enhance advertising. Users can manage who can follow them or find their account, and have options to download TikTok data.

Range of industry first privacy setting for under 18s, all registered accounts are set to private by default. Can choose to allow comments only by friends or nobody (do not have option to have comments by everyone). By default users under 16 cannot suggest videos, and have features to ensure only friends can react to videos (friends are users that follow each other).

Tik Tok removed 15 million accounts in Q2, 11 million were for underage, using industry standard age gate, but also have guidelines to proactively determine age of user, which is very difficult to do.

If they self-declare incorrectly, there are different methods, e.g. what pops up in general review flows.

Data Security:

Tik Tok is building a European data centre opening in 2022. They are also establishing a fusion centre, that helps to monitor, digital cyber crimes groups to protect users globally.

Employees of Tik Tok only get access to user data for them to do their job.

Machine learning also checks if behaviour is human or machine (bots). External auditing and ISO certification looking at system evaluating controls to meet security standards.

Tik Tok is also assessing their vulnerabilities, and is openly transparent about this. They use Hacker 1 partnerships to crowdsource hackers to find vulnerabilities and get paid, as treats and security are constantly evolving.

Research on digital well-being:

Tik Tok is not yet allowing researchers to access data for their own research. They want to understand concepts in the DSA, such as what is a vetted researcher?

They do their own research about impacts of their platform, through focus groups with young people and parents groups. They will publish some of this, including on time spent on video to ensure digital well-being. Tik Tok already tries to ensure digital well-being by recommending different types of videos for night time, to ensure young people get enough sleep. Features include muting notifications at night.