

FIGHTING CONSPIRACY THEORIES ON **TIKTOK**



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GREEN EUROPEAN FOUNDATION



Bosch Alumni
Network

Acknowledgements

Produced by the Green European Foundation

July 2022

This publication is the outcome of the “Anti-conspiracy theories on TikTok” project, implemented in January 2022, looking at how could young European activists and non-profits use TikTok to combat existing conspiracy theories and prevent the rise of new ones through a 4-day online bootcamp with young TikTok users, experts and trainers specialised in combatting fake news and building counter-speech strategies on social media.

The implementation of the project “Anti-Conspiracy Bootcamp” within the framework of the Bosch Alumni Network and the Green European Foundation was made possible by the International Alumni Center Berlin and the financial support of the European Parliament.

The European Parliament is not responsible for the content of this publication.

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With special thanks to Matea K., David D., Karla P., Adela S. for their participation in this project and essential input.

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An online version of this publication is available at www.gef.eu

The Green European Foundation (GEF) is a European-level political foundation whose mission is to contribute to a lively European sphere of debate and to foster greater involvement by citizens in European politics. GEF strives to mainstream discussions on European policies and politics both within and beyond the Green political family. The foundation acts as a laboratory for new ideas and offers cross-border political education and a platform for cooperation and exchange at the European level.

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TIKTOK, NOT JUST A “DANCING APP”?

The Chinese app TikTok, often better known for its dance challenges and lip synch videos, launched internationally in 2017 and was the most downloaded app in the world in 2021. It has been since 2018 the favourite social media platform of the under-18s along with Snapchat, with more and more “Zoomers” deciding to stop using Instagram as reported by the [New York Post](#).

It is a place where the generation gap can be felt very strongly: TikTok, its codes and its humour, are both a testimony and a part of the Gen Z culture. But since its launch worldwide, there have been many concerns around its Chinese parent company ByteDance, voiced often in the US around potential surveillance risks, and at EU level around the access of the [app’s engineers to the user data of EU citizens](#) and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). TikTok users have also been reporting issues of censorship, blamed by most on the algorithm: if many accounts have been censored and deleted wrongly because of a faulty algorithm, some were also deleted for commercial and/or political motives, with the platform “adapting” to Russia’s anti-fake news law in 2022 with [95% of foreign content censored for Russian TikTok users](#). But observers and researchers have also been looking at the app’s functions, considering how its unique features allow for the rapid spread of false information.

On the app’s algorithmically curated “For You” page, the user sees videos in an endless and immersive newsfeed format, taking most of the screen for the mobile app (with little visibility for anything else such as credits or sources). Then looking at its basic functions,

you notice how TikTok allows users to upload videos and audio clips without attributing their origins, but also offers all the built-in editing tools to alter them however you like: adding background music, sound effects, filters, on-screen text, stickers, and other effects. For example, it is very easy to upload old footage, and share it on the platform passing as breaking news of real-life events: in 2022, many videos of unrelated explosions were re-posted as if they were from Ukraine, but were actually taken in other locations, with even some uploaded from video games, thus spreading fake news to users unable to verify their authenticity.

The platform that can host videos ranging from a few seconds to 10 minutes, has been used as a political tool early on with for example, several US politicians creating an account in the hope of reaching a younger demographic in the context of the 2020 elections, understanding (as any TikTok newbie quickly does!) that using popular songs or memes in your videos is one of the key ingredients to success with this platform. Speaking of TikTok in a NY Times [article](#), Anna P. Kam-bampaty writes: “TikTok is the latest social media platform that politicians hope will help lure young people to voting booths.”. These efforts from politicians further demonstrate the power shift of the social media era to its influencers whose viral content can spread beyond borders in a matter of minutes using memes as a language to communicate with this global community.

If addictive to any newcomer, the TikTok infrastructure can be a very dangerous one, not only encouraging the spread of misinformation and disinformation but also facilitat-

ing online bullying when a person's image or video is turned into a meme and then boosting said meme through recommended videos. Social media can be ruthless, especially for adolescents: with online hate speech having a strong and harmful impact on social media users through comments but also with online harassment by an individual or a group). Most users will have experienced hate speech online at least once for a post or a simple comment.

Despite the platform launching a fact-checking program in 2020 in partnership with independent fact-checking organisations, the dramatic spread of misinformation and disinformation on TikTok remains alarming.

It has become a breeding ground for conspiracy theories with groups such as QAnon or anti-vaccination conspiracists, who use the platform to continue spreading their ideas this time on a much larger scale, encouraged by its powerful redistribution tools allowing them to reach beyond their networks.

Facebook and Youtube (as well as Instagram lately) have long been criticized for the very same issue on their platforms, with their networks of factcheckers and infrastructure hardly able to effectively contain the spread of false information. But considering its popularity and much younger and susceptible audience, isn't it time we turned to TikTok for a closer look?

Disinformation is the deliberate distribution of false information that intends to cause harm, whereas **misinformation** is when false information is shared but no harm is meant.



WHAT IS A "CONSPIRACY THEORY"?

Based on the presentation by Karen Douglas, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Canterbury, given during the Anti-Conspiracy Bootcamp of the Green European Foundation and Bosch Alumni Network on 22nd January 2022

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a conspiracy theory as follows:

"... a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators..." or "... a theory asserting that a secret of great importance is being kept from the public ...".

If fake news and conspiracy theories have always existed, the era of social media has taken the spread of disinformation (intentional) and misinformation (unintentional) to another level.

We all heard of conspiracy theories such as the Earth is flat, the moon landing was a hoax, many about the JFK assassination, ... and others that might have felt more or less believable.

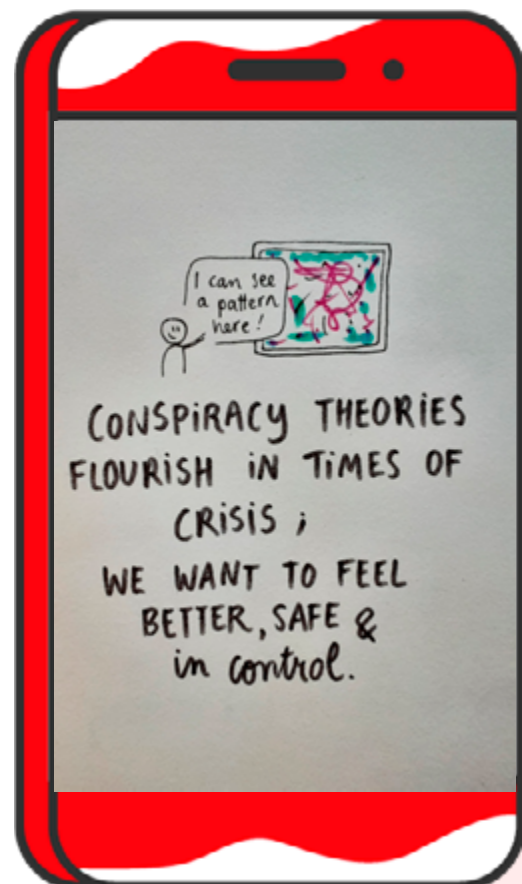
BUT WHY DO PEOPLE BELIEVE IN CONSPIRACY THEORIES?

First, it could answer **epistemic needs**...

People who seek to find meaning and patterns in chaos and uncertainty are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories and in general, to see agency and intentionality where there is none.

Researchers have, for example, asked people to look at a sequence of random coin tosses

and rate the extent to which they saw them as completely random or completely determined. Participants also rated their belief in some well-known conspiracy theories. The results showed that the extent to which people perceived the patterns in the random coin tosses was in direct link with their belief in conspiracy theories.



Believing in conspiracy theories can be seen as an attempt to make some sense in an unpredictable world, to appease one's anxiety, feeling of being helpless, to have an explanation to all the bad things happening around us, especially when they either lack the ability to think analytically, and/or when they lack education.

Or, that belief could answer **existential needs** ...

People can also look for meaning, for patterns through conspiracy theories to feel safe, secure, and in control.

Research shows that people who are anxious, tend to have an insecure (versus secure) attachment style in their close relationships, often feel powerless or lack socio-political control tend to be more drawn to conspiracy theories. If they can in part satisfy these needs, we also see how these beliefs lead to disengagement.

The final set of needs are **social** ...

People have a need to belong, as well as to maintain a positive image of the self and the groups they belong to/identify with.

Research suggests that conspiracy belief tends to be higher among low-status groups, as well as “losers” in political processes who are trying to restore a good sense of self, and by narcissists who want to feel unique, to feel that they know better than others.

Researchers in social psychology have demonstrated that an individual's need for uniqueness predicts the extent to which a person believes in conspiracy theories: those who have a need to be different from others might turn to conspiracy theories because doing so makes them feel that they are in possession of powerful information that other people don't have.

For example, for people politically engaged in an opposition party, taking part in conspira-

cy theories about the government answers to a feeling of mistrust in the people in power. And indeed, if a government has proven to either not be fully transparent with information or distort it, it is normal to mistrust.

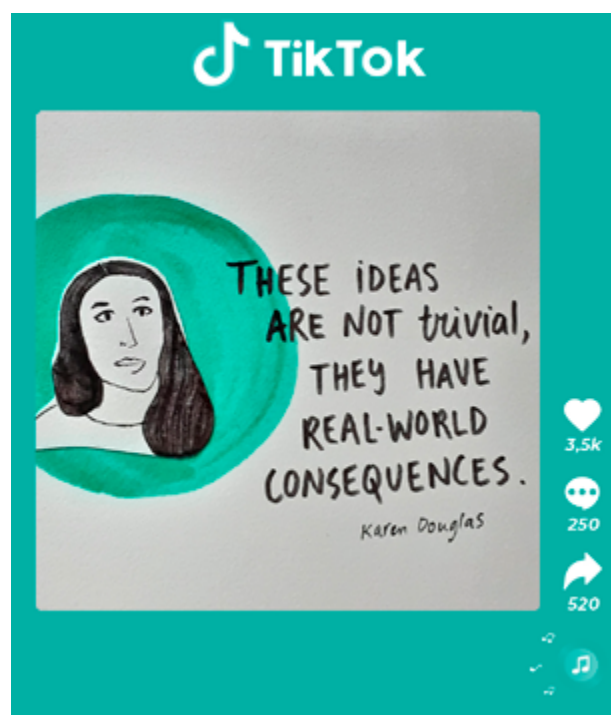
We can also see how some conspiracy theories might be easier to believe, with for example:

- Theories within the reign of possibility (example: diseases spreading due to permafrost melting or because of the opening of an Egyptian tomb.)
- Theories which are more entertaining, fun, and creative than reality. Sometimes the meaning, the explanation of an event or phenomenon can be too “mundane”, too “boring”, almost “disappointing” in a way.

SO, ARE CONSPIRACY THEORIES HELPFUL OR HARMFUL?

Do they make people feel better? Not really ...

Research shows that reading about conspiracy theories increases uncertainty (epistemic needs), makes people feel less powerful, more disengaged (existential needs), and increases



feelings of alienation, and general mistrust of others (social needs). They do not benefit individuals or society.

Academics find that people engaged in conspiracy theories are:

- less likely to engage in politics;
- less likely to engage in the workplace and feel satisfied with their jobs (especially if they believe conspiracies are happening in their workplace);
- more likely to engage in criminal behaviour (research also shows that people who are more inclined toward conspiracy theories are more likely to agree that “violence is sometimes an acceptable way to express disagreement with the government”).

Conspiracy beliefs are also associated with prejudice towards alleged conspirators (that can even target unrelated outgroups).

CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Conspiracy theories have always existed (before all things digital, in written, or by hearsay). And at times the very notion of conspiracy theory is difficult to grasp with for example, conspiracies that can be factual and routed in reality such as mass surveillance, which initially started as a conspiracy theory until proven truthful by Edward Snowden.

But if conspiracy theories have been necessary on a few occasions, opening the debate and (especially when government is the target) increasing accountability, their impact seems in general more negative than positive. They undermine democracy, by eroding trust in democratic institutions, by deepening the divide between citizens over ideological beliefs. Furthermore, researchers like Abbie Richards in her [conspiracy chart](#), have observed that far right extremism is never far with conspiracy theorists.

As another example, looking at COVID-19

conspiracy theories, we see plainly their negative consequences, with vandalism of 5G phone masts, or the health risks caused by non-adherence to government guidelines. But of course, during uncertain times, it is hard to blame people for mistrust in government or in science.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION

With never-ending newsfeeds that one can scroll through for hours at a time, content in always shorter formats designed to go viral, social media platforms, like TikTok, are a powerful accelerant to the ages-old phenomenon of conspiracy theories. And now we can see that the first generations who grew up/are growing up with social media as often their main source of information are even more likely to fall in the trap of fake news and conspiracies.

According to [an academic paper published in the British Journal of Developmental Psychology on adolescents' belief in conspiracy theories](#), they are most likely to start believing in them around the age of 14. At the same time, the paper found that 18-year-olds displayed higher belief in conspiracy theories compared to a mixed-age sample of older adults. It thus seems that adolescence could be a peak time for conspiracy theorizing. Considering that under 18s often represent the largest user group on the platform and that most can spend over 2 hours a day on the platform, this trend is incredibly worrying.

Since it is getting increasingly harder to find reliable information online where the lines between reality and fiction blur, **what can we do about this, especially in a digital age when everyone has access and is exposed to conspiracy theories?**

SEPARATING FACT FROM FAKE

Based on a training session led by Kaja Pavlinić

Now that we have understood what a conspiracy theory is and why some might believe what is fake news to others, let's look at how to distinguish a credible piece of news from a conspiracy theory.

With a lot of information and theories circulating on social media, how can you verify the information for yourself and help others to do the same?

Some first tips to quickly verify the source of said "information":

1. Pay attention to the domain and URL (is this a protected URL? What about the domain? Is it an established institution or news source? Is it a commercial website? ...)
2. Look closely at the quotes used (is the reference somewhere? Who is the person who provided the quote? is the author (or person quoted) anonymous? ...)
3. Check the comments
4. Reverse the image search (by selecting the "search by image" on Google images and copying the URL)

Finding out whether a conspiracy theory is based on some truth or is completely false is all about being thorough with your research. And it takes some time and attention to detail.

You need to answer the following questions:

WHEN AND WHO

- When and how did this conspiracy theory start?
- Has the messaging/theory changed in time?
- Who is behind this theory (organisation or individuals)?
- Is there any funding involved (organisations/individuals/supporters sending or receiving money)?

WHY

- What is the purpose and the goal of this conspiracy theory?

LOOK AT THE FACTS / THE SCIENCE

- What are some of the main arguments used to prove the conspiracy theory?
- Are there any references to scientific proof?
- Who are the sources quoted?
- Is the "scientific proof" credible?

WHERE

- Is the content about this conspiracy theory shared on social media?
- What kind of content is it?
- What types of people/accounts do share this content?

THE MEDIA

- Are there any mainstream media outlets who have written about this conspiracy theory?

DEBUNKING

- Who is debunking this theory?
 - How is this conspiracy theory being debunked?
 - If so, what are the main proofs proving it is fake?
 - Are there any elements that are true?
- For example, some conspiracy theories originate from mixed up historical facts.

One best practice example for the first research steps: Debunking the “Earth is flat” theory

This theory is based on an actual historical fact: in Ancient Greece, Earth was believed to be flat. This was due to the limited knowledge of astronomy at the time and this idea stuck for thousands of years (sometimes for religious reasons). But there has been proof of the earth being round as early as the world’s very first geographer Erastosthenes (thousands of years before Christopher Columbus or Magellan who are often wrongly credited with this discovery!) and then of course later from astronomers, including those from NASA and many other credible sources, with the first photographic evidence that the Earth is curved only arriving in 1946.

But despite the scientific evidence being widely accepted and shared, the theory never really left. And so, in 1963, the Flat earthers association was created. It is to this day very present online, having adapted to social media (there is a hashtag on Instagram for this theory). The debate has been going on for a long time but there is a lot of information on trustworthy websites to verify this and you can even find several short videos from the news channel CNN debunking this theory.

(See the debunking campaign ideas in the next chapter)



BUILDING DEBUNKING STRATEGIES FOR TIKTOK

Building counter-speech strategies for social media

Based on training sessions led by trainers Kaja Pavlinić and Michael Trube, and on a presentation by Abbie Richards, TikTok researcher and activist

After doing our thorough research, how do we build a debunking strategy to spread facts and offer reliable information to counter disinformation

First, a few guiding principles ...

RESPECT

EMPATHY

COMPASSION

When trying to debunk a conspiracy theory or piece of fake news, the rules of respect and compassion apply more than ever: be especially careful with how you speak to others, if you antagonise them and seem disdainful, you will just as fast lose their ear/attention.

It is important to understand that believing in conspiracy theories is not related to one's intelligence, but can be due to a lack of information and reliable sources, a need to belong to a community, or to appease one's anxiety ...

Always in debunking (but especially when you have more time with a longer format), it is essential to show compassion (empathy with emotions a stressful or worrying situation might provoke and lead some to conspiracy theories) and respect: one can acknowledge these emotions without turning to a conspiracy.

WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN?

Content: Pick the main statements/ topics to be covered by your social media posts, assessing your capacities for this campaign

Research: Look for specific information or facts to help debunk the theory, or perhaps think of using different angles when debunking to adapt to different types of "believers" ...

Sources: Gather several credible sources (at least two different ones) that will be consulted in order to support your argument and provide credible information

Target group: Who do you want to reach? Selecting a specific target group, researching that particular demographic and building a persona representing that target group is an essential step in creating your broader strategy as you need to understand the reasoning, challenges, hopes of the person you aim to convince.

Aim of the content: What is your aim when producing the content? Countering an argument? Raising awareness? Creating empathy? ... Think about the impact you want this campaign (or just one video) to have: when someone watches your video, what feelings/ thoughts do you want to evoke? How do you want to reach that objective? How would you feel when empathising with your target group?

Outlook of the content: What mood do you want to transport with your content? Funny? Serious? Furious? ... Do think about the best formats to reach your target group and objective.

Last, but not least, think of a **campaign name** with a hashtag (and perhaps a slogan?).

It is important when trying to debunk fake news and conspiracy theories to always go back to the question of impact: *how do we reach specifically those who disagree, those who do not want to listen?*

SOME EXAMPLES ...

(Directly from the participants in the GEF and BAN Anti-conspiracy bootcamp)

Example 1: Debunking the “Earth is flat” theory

Campaign idea: “Flat is boring” (FIB)

How? Series of small debunking videos and a targeted campaign

For whom? Millennials (people in their late twenties and thirties)

Who can be involved? A famous tech influencer and scientific experts (astronomy) from various countries with respected space programs (US, China, Russia, ...)

Example 2: Anti 5G – debunking campaign

Campaign title: “One true 5G”

How? Short debunking videos with scientists and experts + a social media campaign

For whom? 20-35 year olds who trust science and wish to be educated on this issue

Who can we involve? Scientists and experts

HOW DO YOU ADAPT TO TIKTOK?

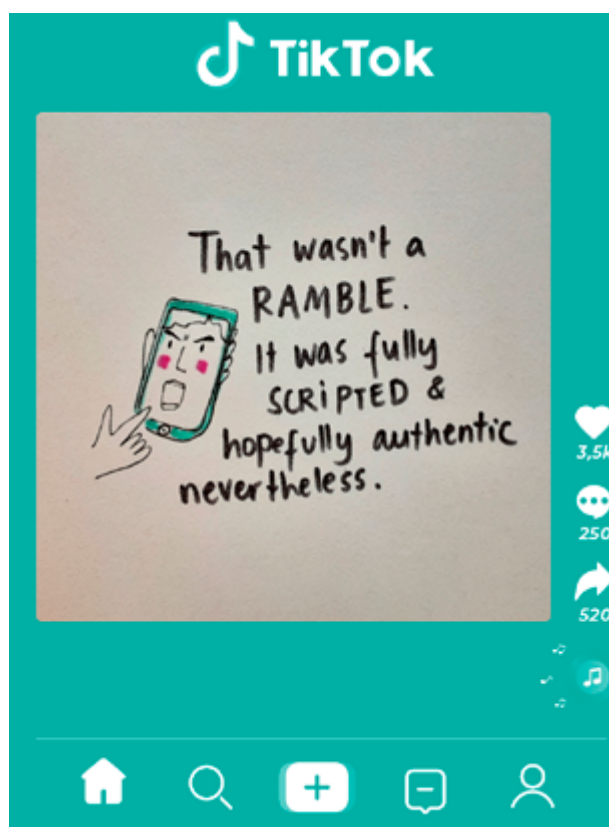
When planning the content of your posts (TikTok videos), it is important to understand how different this format and this platform are, compared to other social media platforms.

Indeed, videos on TikTok are in general filmed using smartphones, either in very spontaneous videos by individual users, or highly planned and structured video posts by professional influencers with more technical means at their disposal.

WHAT TYPES OF TIKTOK VIDEO FOR DEBUNKING?

The Argumentative TikTok

This is often a longer format that resembles an argumentative essay. You can follow the expert’s advice here (Abbie Richards):



1. Start off announcing that you are there to debunk and identify the main points you will make in your TikTok: you should be able to describe your overarching point in one sentence.
Because of the very short attention span you get on the app, you should try to introduce your main point as early as possible to get your viewers' attention. If not, most will continue scrolling.
2. Present clearly and briefly your supporting facts as other points under your main message to reinforce/prove it.
3. Then, use a strong conclusion to your argument and if you want, you can also tell viewers why you made this video and why is this point/issue important.

With this format, you should know as a viewer on TikTok that what looks like a spontaneous monologue facing camera is almost always fully scripted and prepared well in advance. It is, however, important to give the audience the impression of authenticity and spontaneity.

Very short video that can be played in a loop

This format makes it easier to go viral, especially if there is a funny element.

Here you can play it in a loop, so the message has more chances of getting through with one single point: the conspiracy theory + the debunking argument.

For example, you can do a video where two people seem to be debating (either have 2 actors or have the same person with different clothes or accessories to differentiate them) with the pro and against your chosen conspiracy theory to debunk.

Short video using viral audio

You can use a popular song / music, and since it is already well-known, people will recognise it and perhaps be more attentive to the point you are making in that video.

There you might want to have the sound play in a loop.



Using popular memes is always a very efficient way to get views or even go viral: if you use them, it will help you get on the “For you” page of others if they have liked or shared videos with the same memes.

Once you start using the platform regularly, it will be very easy to identify the most popular ones as you will see them trending and appearing often in your “For you” page, but it is also important that you find the meme that will best fit your point.

In general, they seem lighter and funnier, so viewers might be more likely to watch and send your TikTok to friends.

SELECTING THE FORMAT THAT FITS YOUR PURPOSE BEST

For this step in building your strategy, you need to reflect on what kind of TikTok video fits best your purpose and means: a meme? a short video with music and text? A short video with only one person speaking? A longer video? ...

Ask yourself

- Which filmic approach is best suited for you?
- Do you want to go viral or target a very specific audience?
- Can the topic be paired with a popular song or meme as part of your strategy to reach your selected target group?
- What material/equipment do you need?

Then, putting yourself in the shoes of an individual from your target group, reflect on the following:

- What kind of videos do you know?
- What type of video do you like or dislike?
- To what kind of content do you respond most and why?

Afterwards, think of your topic and content:

- How long should the video be?
- What style should the video have?

Fast cuts? POV? Stitch? Voiceover vs. Talking? Karaoke mode?

- What way of filming do we want to do? Professional vs. “Spontaneous”?
- Do you want to appear in the video? Do you need others?
- Etc.

VARIOUS TIPS FOR FILMING

- Think about location (this can either be about you creating a visual identity on TikTok, or support the point you are making and even be used for comedy by picking a place completely unrelated with your topic and playing on this for your argument.)
- What kind of atmosphere do you want to create and show?
- Do you want to create an identity or not really? (Do you want TikTok users to recognise you with a particular setting / look / vibe / format?)
- A basic tool: a ring light (almost all TikTokers have one).
- If you add some text, do not forget to leave it on the video long enough for people to read it!
- In a scene with 2 characters, give them clear (and separate!) locations towards camera even within the same place/room and changing at least one thing with their appearance (hat or glasses on and off / different shirt or hair ...).

USING COMEDY TO DEBUNK CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Humour is a great tool to make yourself and your argument more approachable, to perhaps avoid the aggressive push back you might encounter if the person you are speaking to feels antagonised or ridiculed. But when using comedy to debunk a conspiracy theory, make sure you always point out the absurdity with compassion.

Adapting to the “TikTok sense of humour”

For many, this platform is all about entertainment: comedy is very important on TikTok,

compared to other social media platforms. But the sense of humour you will find there might feel a bit different to older generations as TikTok especially at its beginnings, can be considered Gen Z's kingdom.

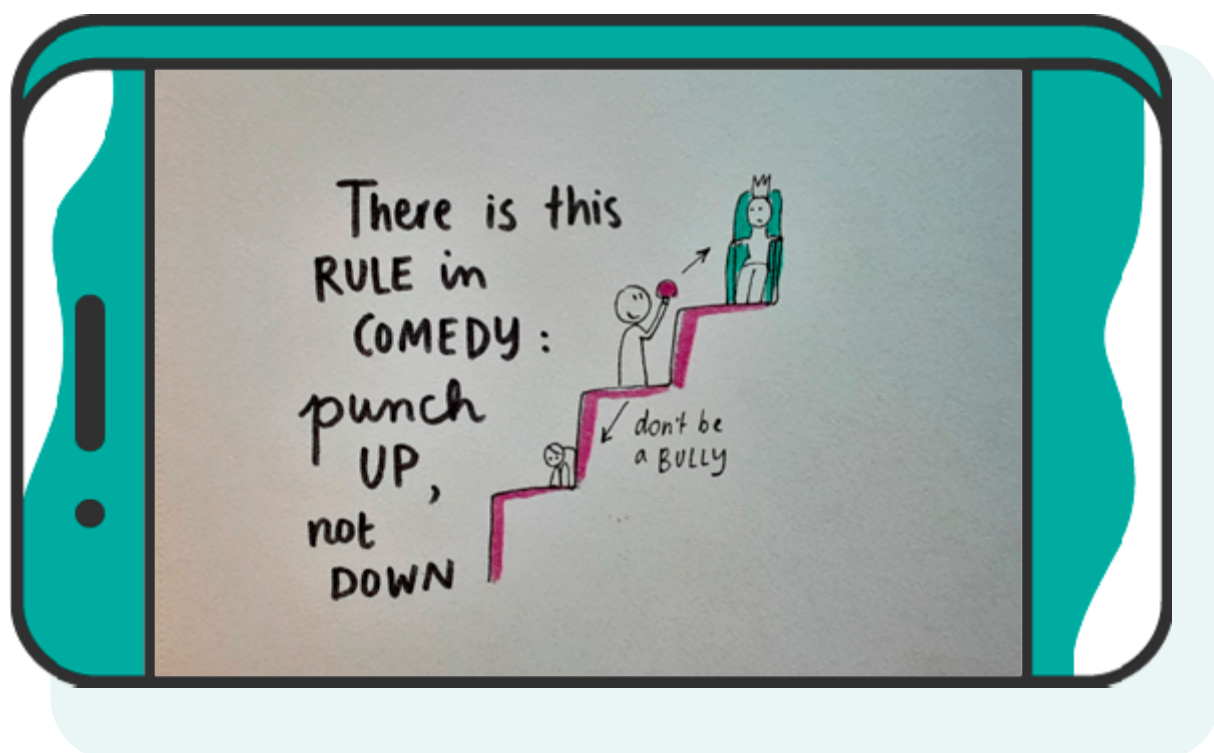
Though every individual has their own sense of humour, Gen Z, especially on social media, seems to share comedy codes built in part around the acknowledgement of this day and age's hardships. Growing up in the internet age with daily access to multiple social media platforms and often terrifying and hard-to-cope-with real-world events and trends, escapism is much needed. This is the generation who has (almost) always known "doomscrolling" and "doomsurfing" (terms which appeared around 2017, referring to the tendency to continue to surf or scroll through bad, depressing news).

And if there is a clear trend of distancing oneself from jokes based on homophobia, sexism and racism, we can see a capacity to laugh off and make light of often horrifying or traumatising events, that previous generations might have struggled to do.

This collective understanding and feeling of community around a sense of humour that is often absurd and escapist is on display with the rise of meme culture and its own satirical codes. Sharing memes is a way to feel like you belong: you are part of the group who gets the private joke; the people who are in on the joke.

Going high – going low

"Punching up – Punching down" is a key comedy rule: especially when speaking to conspiracy theorists, punching down (going after a person or group who has little power and / or has been historically marginalised) is never a good idea and is often how online bullying works, but punching up (mocking someone who is in a position of power with for example memes involving politicians) can be very effective, for example to increase accountability.



END NOTE

In 2017, psychology student Peter McIndoe decided to join a counter protest responding to the Women's Marches after Donald Trump's election with a joke statement: "[Birds Aren't Real](#)": telling people that he was part of a movement that tried in vain to protect American birds as "the 'deep state' had destroyed them all, and replaced them with surveillance drones.", with every bird now a "tiny feathered robot watching you.". It snowballed into a conspiracy theory within weeks and turned out to be for its creator and colleagues a very revealing role-playing experiment, still quoted today as a joke on social media.

But not all conspiracy theories turn out to be jokes or experiments. Indeed, much disinformation and misinformation end up being weaponized against social media users with for-profit disinformation networks and individuals pushing fake news articles for easy money, mimicking news outlets to promote their content on social media, to then collect ad revenue. Platforms like Facebook are trying to fight its spread, but the global misinformation industry remains, benefitting from the popularity of conspiracy movements and far-right theories.

Turning back to TikTok, you see that beyond concerns around censorship, bullying and plain social media addiction, with the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and the war in Ukraine in 2022, the platform, and the impact of its content, has increasingly been in the spotlight for failing to prevent the spread of dangerous and false information to an often very young audience, especially considering that this is a platform that many from the Gen Z age group use for news. Thankfully, it is now at the heart of many research initiatives and programmes.

So, as individuals, as users, what can we do besides educating ourselves and others?

We can push TikTok to:

- provide links to debunking information inside videos distributing disinformation and misinformation;
- stop its algorithms from promoting repeat offenders;
- support users when they report dangerous channels by changing the algorithm that for now often block these attempts;
- do more to tackle false information in videos in non-English language videos;
- provide more transparency on its monitoring processes and criteria for deleting an account/ a video;
- a commitment to fund independent research into disinformation campaigns on TikTok;
- engage with NGOs and organisations protecting children and teenagers online, etc.

Now that TikTok is a key actor in our social media landscape, it is of paramount importance to learn how to use it in a positive way as this is a very effective way to connect with the Gen Z age group, to encourage them to share their experience and expertise of new ways to communicate, to feel a part of a community. In this article from [Wired](#), the author argues that "the platform is poorly designed for accurate information but brilliantly designed for quick human engagement."

We hope these tips and ideas were useful to you but for more, just check the resources toolbox, coming right up!



There are
CONSPIRACIES
inside
CONSPIRACIES
inside
CONSPIRACIES.
There is sooooo
much out there.



RESOURCES TOOLBOX

TOOLS

To understand the platform a bit better

1. To get started, Marcus Bosch from the Mozilla Foundation has a [weekly newsletter](#) to help you.
2. Lots of information to be found on the Mozilla Foundation [TikTok Observatory](#)
3. Look at the [Integrity Institute](#) to understand better how platforms and their algorithms work.
4. The [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) looks closely at disinformation through different thematic and regional angles.
5. Avaaz is fighting disinformation online and in the media. Check out their [resources](#).
6. Using the war in Ukraine, this [Report](#) on mediamanipulation.org highlights the “10 features that make the app vulnerable to misinformation”
7. Abbie Richards and Olivia Little’s [report](#) on how TikTok’s algorithm leads users from transphobic videos to far-right rabbit holes.
8. More resources compiled by the [Mozilla Foundation](#)
9. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue took an in-depth look at extremism and hate speech on TikTok in 2021 with the [Hatescape report](#).
10. The ISD in collaboration with Newsguard also published a report in 2020 looking specifically at the conspiracy theory “QAnon” and Facebook: [The Boom Before the Ban](#).

Learning from the pros:

1. Check out comedian and disinformation expert Abbie Richards’ channel on TikTok, who is combatting conspiracy theories on TikTok one video at a time: @tofology
2. Her interactive conspiracy theories chart can be found here: <https://conspiracychart.com/>
3. [EU DisinfoLab](#) is an independent NGO focused on researching and tackling sophisticated disinformation campaigns targeting the EU, its member states, core institutions, and core values.
4. The [SIFT method](#) developed by academic Michael Caulfield: Stop // Investigate the source // Find trusted coverage // Trace to the original

What the EU is doing to combat disinformation:

1. The EU’s initiatives and [resources](#) to fight online disinformation
2. The EU’s [Code of Practice on Disinformation](#) 2022
3. Repository of EU-wide factchecking projects: <https://edmo.eu/fact-checking-activities/>
4. [Tackling conspiracy theories around Covid-19 – resources from the European Commission](#)

Some organisations working against disinformation:

1. At EU level, check out the NGO [Lie Detectors](#) who trains teachers and school students to separate truth from lie and look at the media with a critical eye.
2. In Germany, [Gegen argument](#) trainers work with people of all ages to learn to defend themselves against hate speech online (especially far-right and fascist rhetoric) and build counter-speech strategies.
3. An NGO working on media education with a focus on disinformation on social media: [mediale pfade - political education for the digital society](#)

(There are many organisations everywhere working on this so do check out the ones closer to you.)

The Greens and fighting disinformation online:

1. The [European Greens' campaign](#) on digital rights fighting for a democratic and safe Internet
2. To learn ways to protect and defend yourself against hate speech online, check out the Green European Foundation's course on Green Academy looking at: <https://www.green-academy.eu/courses/free-sample-course-2/>

You can find the course in EN/ FR / LUX / AUS / DE / ES.

SOME INTERESTING ARTICLES

Check out some of the Green European Journal's articles:

1. [“We Cannot Delete Our Way Out Of This”: Learning In The Maze \(greeneuropeanjournal.eu\)](#)
2. [Mirroring Bias: Online Hate Speech and Polarisation \(greeneuropeanjournal.eu\)](#)
3. Poisoning Politics: The Global Threat of Online Extremism
4. [Reporting Against the Odds: The Struggle to Keep Russia's Independent Journalism Alive](#)
5. Why the EU Needs to Rethink its Approach to Technology
6. [Save the Facts: Journalism as a Weapon against Disinformation](#)

Get inspired by the young climate activists on TikTok

1. Wired article on the “[Climate Change Activists of TikTok](#)”
2. DW article on the “[Gen Z climate activists going viral on TikTok](#)”

More on disinformation mechanisms

1. [Article](#) from BusinessInsider on how the TikTok algorithm can enable far-right radicalization
2. [Article](#) on the rabbit hole of misinformation and disinformation in the NYTimes.

The war in Ukraine and Russian disinformation on TikTok

1. Follow the war in [Ukraine with EDMO](#)
2. [Euronews article](#) “TikTok’s ban on foreign content in Russia ‘risks turning it into a propaganda platform”
3. Newsguard’s reports on the rampant Russian disinformation on TikTok: <https://www.newsguardtech.com/misinformation-monitor/march-2022/>
4. <https://www.newsguardtech.com/newsguard-report-tiktok-false-ukraine-content/>

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