

AMENDED Exhibit 592

PLAINTIFFS' OMNIBUS OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANTS' MOTIONS FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT

Case No.: 4:22-md-03047-YGR

MDL No. 3047

In Re: Social Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Injury Products Liability Litigation

[Findings] Managing time on TikTok

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Last updated: November 2020

TL;DR

- Several studies have shown that effectively managing time on TikTok is a key concern among users. Through semi-structured interviews with 10 TikTok users, this study sought to understand users' motivations, practices, and needs for managing their time on TikTok. Participants were primarily motivated to manage their time on TikTok to mitigate TikTok's interference with their obligations and productivity, experiencing negative emotions after overusing TikTok, and witnessing challenges that others around them experienced with effectively managing their time on TikTok. Participants' practices for managing their time on TikTok included paying attention to how they felt while using it (i.e., a general feeling that they had spent enough or too much time in a session, level of interest in content, and bodily cues), trying to be aware of how much time they spent on TikTok, and periodically deleting the app. Participants' challenges with managing their time on TikTok were inextricably linked to the value they derived from using it. Namely, TikTok reliably delivered highly engaging, quick, and continuous content. Other aspects of TikTok also contributed to their time management challenges (e.g., continuous scroll, no breaks between content, short videos, etc.). Participants needed visible in-app tools to facilitate time awareness and use limits and expanded functionality of the Screen Time Management feature. This report concludes with opportunities for actively empowering and encouraging users to control the amount of time they spend on TikTok.

Background & aims

- Several studies have surfaced time management on TikTok as a key concern among users (e.g., here, here, here, and here). The present study seeks to better understand why and how users manage their time on TikTok and their needs for doing so effectively.

Research questions:

1. What motivates users to manage their time on TikTok?

2. How do users manage their time on TikTok?
 - a. For instance, how do people control how much time they spend on TikTok?
3. What challenges do users experience managing their time on TikTok?
4. What needs do users have regarding time management on TikTok?

Methods

- We conducted remote semi-structured interviews with 10 TikTok users who limited how much time they spent on TikTok.
- Half of the sample ($n = 5$) had a lot of difficulty managing their time on TikTok, and half of the sample ($n = 5$) easily controlled how much time they spent on TikTok.
- Participants were between the ages of 19-35; five were men and five were women.

Key Findings

- **Motivations for managing time on TikTok:** Participants were largely motivated to manage their time on TikTok to mitigate TikTok's interference with their obligations and productivity (e.g., work, school, household duties, and sleep). Participants were also motivated by experiencing negative emotions after overusing TikTok (e.g., guilt, disappointment, etc.) and witnessing the challenges that others around them experienced with effectively managing their time on TikTok.
- **Practices for managing time on TikTok:** Participants tried to manage their time on TikTok by paying attention to how they felt while using it, such as noting a general feeling that they had spent enough or too much time in a session, their level of interest in the content, and bodily cues (e.g., discomfort, physical fatigue, etc.). Most participants also tried to be aware of how much time they spent on TikTok, and some participants periodically deleted the app.
- **Challenges with managing time on TikTok:** Participants' challenges with effectively managing their time on TikTok were the same as why they enjoyed and used TikTok. Namely, TikTok reliably delivered highly engaging, quick, and continuous content. Other aspects of TikTok that contributed to participants' challenges with managing their time included the continuous scroll, few or no breaks between content, short videos, and not knowing what the next video will be.

- **Needs for managing time on TikTok:** Participants needed visible in-app tools to facilitate time awareness and use limits. Additionally, while all participants were unaware of TikTok's Screen Time Management feature, they suggested several opportunities for expanding its functionality and increasing its usefulness (e.g., more complex passcodes, wait times between entering passcode and being allowed to continue watching, and other options for stricter controls).

Detailed Findings

1. What motivates users to manage their time on TikTok?

- **TikTok interfered with participants' obligations and productivity.**
 - In most cases, participants had recent and/or ongoing experiences with their use of TikTok interfering with their lives, such as work duties (clip, clip), schoolwork (clip, clip), and household maintenance (clip).
 - Similarly, many participants described their use of TikTok disturbing their sleep, which limited their productivity and performance the following day (clip).
 - As such, participants tried to manage their time on TikTok so that they could fulfill their obligations and accomplish their goals.
- **Participants experienced negative emotions after overusing TikTok.**
 - Participants described experiencing an array of negative emotions after they felt they had used TikTok for too long, including guilt, frustration, irritation, disappointment, and anxiety (clip, clip, clip, clip).
 - These emotions stemmed from using TikTok instead of accomplishing work and other goals, as well as the sense that they had lost control of their time. In this way, participants often described feeling that they had been "sucked in" to TikTok.
 - Remembering that overusing TikTok can lead to these emotions helped motivate participants to try to better control the time they spent on TikTok.
- **Participants' witnessed the challenges that others experienced with overusing TikTok.**

- Several participants wanted to avoid the struggles they saw their friends experience with controlling the amount of time they spent on TikTok.
- Participants heard their friends describe TikTok as "addictive" and an app that can "suck people in" (clip) and sometimes discussed shared challenges with managing their obligations with their TikTok usage (clip).
- One participant tried to limit his time on social media generally and TikTok specifically because of increased media coverage on the harms of social media and therefore wanted to avoid experiencing any potentially damaging effects (clip).

2. How do users manage their time on TikTok?

- **Participants were conscious of how they felt while using TikTok.**
 - ***A general feeling:*** Most participants noted paying attention to a relatively vague feeling that they had spent enough or too much time on TikTok, which prompted them to end a particular session (clip).
 - This sensation was often linked to feeling the need to do something they perceived as productive.
 - For instance, one participant said he, "has a mental idea of when it seems it's been too long and that I should probably stop and do something else."
 - Another participants said he, "gets a feeling that it's been too much time and it's time to get off. Nothing specifically but a general feeling that it's time to do something else."
 - ***Interest in content:*** Most participants also described being aware of their level of interest in content on their For You pages.
 - Specifically, experiencing a lull in content that they found engaging (e.g., 3 or more videos in a row) prompted most participants to end their session.
 - In this way, participants described noticing when they started to "mindlessly scroll" and saw a string of content that they did not enjoy or find value in (clip, clip, clip) .
 - ***Bodily cues:*** Several participants said they knew it was time to end a session on TikTok when they began experiencing bodily discomfort or other physical sensations, such as:
 - When their eyes started closing because they couldn't stay awake any longer (clip) or falling asleep while using the app
 - Physical fatigue in their arms or leg cramps (clip)
 - Legs tingling (clip)

- **Participants tried to be aware of how much time they spent on TikTok.**

- Several participants made a rough estimation of how much time they spent on TikTok in a session by noting the time they started, periodically checking the time throughout, and having a rough idea of how much time they thought was enough (clip, clip, clip).
- Some participants paid attention to how much time they spent on TikTok by setting timers, using Apple's Screen Time feature, and/or seeing TikTok's Screen Time Prompts, all of which gave participants at least a moment of time awareness (clip, clip).
- Most of these participants noted that relying on the awareness of time was easy to bypass and sometimes not powerful enough to end a session on TikTok.

- **Participants temporarily deleted the TikTok app.**

- A few participants deleted the TikTok app to help them control how much time they spent on TikTok, which was effective at curtailing participants' TikTok usage for specific periods of time, such as while preparing for exams (clip, clip).
- All of these participants eventually reinstalled the app after they had more free time and/or because they missed the entertainment and other value that they received from TikTok.

- **Other strategies:**

- One participant tried to make her experience on TikTok as least engaging as possible by only using the web version of TikTok and not being logged in to her account (clip, clip).
 - She also put her phone out of reach, such as in another room during times that she needed to focus.
- One participant used an app that prevented her from using her phone for a specific period of time (clip).

3. What challenges do users experience managing their time on TikTok?

- **Participants' challenges with effectively managing their time on TikTok were the same as why they enjoyed and used TikTok. Namely, TikTok reliably delivered highly engaging, quick, and continuous content.**

- Participants often found it challenging to turn away from a reliable source of entertainment, emotional uplift, learning, escape, and community (clip).
- As such, the value that participants derived from using TikTok was also what made it challenging to manage their time on it (clip, clip, clip).
- Other key aspects of TikTok also contributed to participants' challenges with managing their time, such as the continuous scroll, few or no breaks between content, short videos, and not knowing what the next video will be (clip, clip).
- Thus, for most participants, the positives associated with TikTok were virtually inseparable from the challenges they had with managing their time on it and the associated negative impacts of those challenges on their lives (e.g., lost sleep, missed deadlines, poor school performance, running late, etc.).

4. What needs do users have regarding time management on TikTok?

- **Participants needed in-app tools to facilitate time awareness and use limits.**
 - Most participants described needing more awareness of how much time they spent on TikTok in a given session, as well as throughout the day (clip).
 - Many of these participants wanted controls for managing how long they could use TikTok before a notification appeared that indicated how much time had passed.
 - Some participants wanted more stringent controls, such as setting an amount of time after which no more videos played for a period of time (clip).
 - Similarly, a couple of participants thought it could be helpful if they could set specific periods of time that they were able to use TikTok (clip).
 - Some participants also noted that greater time awareness could be facilitated with more frequent breaks between videos, such as from TikTok's Screen Time Prompts (e.g., delivering time prompts at 30 minute intervals instead of after 60 minutes) (clip).
- **Participants were unaware of TikTok's Screen Time Management feature, but after reviewing it, desired expanded functionality to increase its usefulness.**
 - Most participants said the feature was difficult to find (clip, clip).
 - While most participants thought TikTok's Screen Time Management feature would be useful, they suggested a number of improvements for it to more effectively help them with their time management, including:

- Allowing the passcode to include letters as well as numbers so it would require more work to enter the passcode (e.g., a passcode phrase instead of just four numbers)
 - A wait time between entering the passcode and being allowed to resume watching videos (clip)
 - Options for setting stricter control, such as setting a period of time during which they could not watch videos (clip, clip)
 - The ability to customize the time that the passcode appears (clip)
 - If continuing to watch videos after entering the passcode, reminders that indicate one's allotted screen time has passed (clip).
- **Some participants indicated their needs for better time management on TikTok would decrease if they saw more useful/relevant content.**
 - Several participants suggested that the guilt associated with using TikTok for too long would at least partially dissipate if they were consuming more content that helped them advance their goals, learn, or otherwise resonated with them (clip, clip, clip).

Recommendations

- Actively empower and encourage users to control the amount of time they spend on TikTok, such as by:
 - a. Increasing the visibility of time management features
 - b. Helping users track the amount of time they've spent on TikTok, such as on particular sessions and days
 - c. Allowing users to self-impose stricter time-based barriers to their consumption of TikTok
 - d. Broadening the functionality of the current Screen Time Management feature (e.g., adding wait times, more complicated passcodes, time customization, reminders after allotted screen time has passed)
 - e. Delivering regular breaks between content

- f. Expanding the use of TikTok's Screen Time Prompts (e.g., showing more often, after shorter time intervals, and to more users)

Appendix

How did participants understand the meaning of "wellness" and "wellness content"?

- **Participants' understanding of "wellness" encompassed physical and mental health.**
 - **Mental health:** Regarding mental health, most participants conceptualized "wellness" as related to managing anxiety, stress, and other mental health issues, such as depression and self-harm.
 - **Physical health:** In terms of physical health, most participants conceptualized "wellness" as dealing with exercise, diet, sleep, hydration, physical manifestations of anxiety (e.g., bodily soreness and tight chest), injuries, and illness.
 - **Wellness content:** For most participants, "wellness content" encompassed content which promoted physical and mental health, including content that encouraged or taught practices for regular exercise, healthy diets, yoga, meditation, ways to cope with anxiety and stress, positivity, and self-awareness.

How did participants use TikTok and other social media?

- **Length of TikTok sessions:** The length of most participants' typical sessions on TikTok were generally between 20 minutes and 1 hour.
 - Participants' sessions were longer in the evenings and shorter in the mornings and throughout the day.
 - Most participants' reported that their total daily use was between 1.5 to 3 hours.
- **TikTok use cases:** Participants primarily used TikTok for entertainment and relaxation (e.g., laughter, emotional uplift), as well as expanding their knowledge.

- One participant described obtaining a strong sense of community and connection from TikTok.
- **Phone/social media use after TikTok sessions:** After participants felt they had enough of TikTok during a particular session, most did little else on their phones besides sometimes engaging in messaging with friends via Instagram, iMessage, or other messaging platforms.
 - Some participants also described briefly checking Instagram, Reddit, or Twitter for any updates from friends or related to current events.
 - One participant sometimes used Duolingo after TikTok.
 - One participant sometimes used Facebook Dating after TikTok.
- **Time management on other social media:** Every participant indicated that time management on TikTok was especially difficult compared to other social media platforms.
 - Indeed, almost no participants described difficulty managing their time on other social media, which they explained by:
 - less engaging content on other social media,
 - the ability to get caught up on other social media,
 - not seeing new content from friends,
 - the reliance on other social media for primarily messaging rather than consuming content
 - and other structural differences between legacy social media and TikTok (see "what challenges do users experience managing their time on TikTok?" above).

☐ [Proposal] Time & attention management research

DOCUMENT METADATA

Bates Number: TIKTOK3047MDL-002-00122100-TIKTOK3047MDL-002-00122108

BEGATTACH: TIKTOK3047MDL-002-00122100

ENDATTACH: TIKTOK3047MDL-002-00122108

Attachment Count: 0

PRODVOL: TIKTOK3047MDL-002

Custodian: [REDACTED]

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Confidentiality Designation: CONFIDENTIAL

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Last Modified Date: 6/29/2021 12:00 AM

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