

A Study on the Experiential Response of Short-Form Video Users

Dong Kyun Lim

*Professor, Department of Computer Science Engineering, Hanyang cyber University, Korea
E-mail eiger07@hycu.ac.kr*

Abstract

As society gradually enters a virtual, non-face-to-face society, the use of online content is increasing as well. In particular, as smartphones are thoroughly established in our daily life, the platforms of webtoons, mobile broadcasting, and education are shifting from personal computers to smartphones. Recently, the development of the Over-The-Top media service (OTT service) enabled streaming services of various media contents through the internet and activation of IPTV. Therefore, the rapid increase of popularity of short-form content is a natural phenomenon with smartphone platforms with fast, improvised, and endless communication. Lately, TikTok became the favored platform with prosumers, defined as people who are both producers and consumers. In this study, I studied the experiential response of YouTube and TikTok users as representative examples of a short-form content platform developed after the 2000s, the flourishing years of digital content with a length of 30 seconds.

Keywords: *Short form, Digital native, Virtual space, Mobile video*

1. INTRODUCTION

As smartphones become a necessity of daily life, available digital contents tend to show characteristics of individuality, improvisation, and accessibility. Currently, the younger generation is mesmerized with short-form videos on YouTube and TikTok conveying concise messages in a simple, convenient, and unique mobile platform. ‘Digital natives’, referring to people under the age of 30, are reestablishing careers as one-person creators by utilizing smartphone high-quality images and easy video editing apps due to the development of artificial intelligence algorithms and smartphone technology [1].

2. SHORT-FORM CONTENTS PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION

YouTube Shorts, characteristically, are a 16:9 vertical video with a length of 15 to 60 seconds while TikTok shorts are a vertical video with a length of 15 seconds to 3 minutes [2]. YouTube Shorts have a simple video upload system and do not provide a sound source, whereas TikTok provides licensed sound for commercial use and a filter function to insert text and stickers, favoring an easier production of good quality videos [3]. Lately, TikTok became the favored platform with prosumers, defined as people who are both producers and consumers. They actively participate in digital content production in the form of comments,

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Corresponding Author: eiger07@hycu.ac.kr

Tel: +82-2-2290-0301, Fax: +82-2-2290-0600

Department of Computer Science Engineering, Hanyang cyber University, Professor, Korea

follow-up, live merging, and video sharing, and are breaking down the boundaries of video production.

2.1 Digital Natives

Digital native, coined in 2001 by Marc Prensky, an American educator, first using the term in his thesis -Digital native, Digital Immigrants- defines one who freely uses digital language and equipment like a native speaker of a specific language exposed to since birth. In 2003, Prof. Rich Holliton from MIT, reports that the digital natives born after 1980 sent and received at least 200,000 text messages and e-mails, spent at least 10,000 hours on a mobile phone, and played video games for at 10,000 hours [4]. These digital natives have prompt access to communication through texts whenever and wherever they want, seeking quick responses, and providing immediate feedback. In addition, they actively express themselves and share opinions on virtual space. After smartphones have become more accessible to most of the population, the form of digital content production and utilization on virtual platforms has changed. A short video is one of the excellent ways to quickly express oneself and communicate with peers without requiring professional skillsets [5]. According to the 2020 Korea Internet White Paper (p62), people in their 20s, out of all age groups, account for 99.3% of video content utilization [6]. In addition, the value of mobile advertisements in 2019 was about KRW 4.6 trillion, which is two or three times that of Internet advertisement at about KRW 2 trillion [7]. All of these data can be considered proportional to the explosive increase in mobile video utilization by digital natives.

2.2 Short Form Platform

TikTok is an independent platform that can create and share short-form videos from 15 seconds to 3 minutes in length. TikTok started the service in 2017 and recorded 250 million views with the ‘Gucci Model Challenge’. [8]. Moreover, TikTok is popular with prosumers. Users can actively participate in the form of comments, follow-up, live merging, video sharing, and breaking the boundaries of video production with easy video editing technology [9]. Furthermore, two-way interaction favors conveying messages in a short time without losing interest. The rapid, convenient, and easy editing available on TikTok escalates the phenomenon of many younger generations producing and consuming short, low-resolution, compressed videos. The digital native generation prefers concise videos with information than text or images. Thus, it can be seen that a short video conveys a stronger message than a long video. Besides TikTok, YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels are competing as leading short-form video platforms [10]. According to the statistical data released by WiseApp, the popularity of short-form videos can be a reason why the most used apps in Korea are a type of video player editors.

3. EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TIKTOK AND YOUTUBE SHORT FORM

In this study, short-form videos were uploaded to TikTok and YouTube Shorts from October 11th to November 30th, respectively, and the number of views over a month was observed. The video was filmed and uploaded in Sokcho, Jeongdongjin, Seoraksan, and Gwanaksan in Gangwon-do. Figure 1 shows the number of views, profile views, likes, comments, and shares of videos uploaded to TikTok.

video views	porfile views	likes	replys	shares
370,967	2,705	6,259	182	1,574

Figure 1. Number of Views and Profile Views, Likes, Comments and Shares

The graph depicting daily views is shown in Figure 2. The number of views was 45,000 after 2 days from the upload. Continually observing data for one month, the number of views for this particular video decreased on the 16th and then increased again on October 22. This second increase in the number of views is suspected to be the effect of uploading a second video on the 22nd. Not only the short-form videos are short in length, but also their popularity can be short-lived with the number of views rising explosively and then, rapidly, dropping down to almost zero after a couple of days. These results well represent the instant, fast, and improvisational characteristics of short-form video.

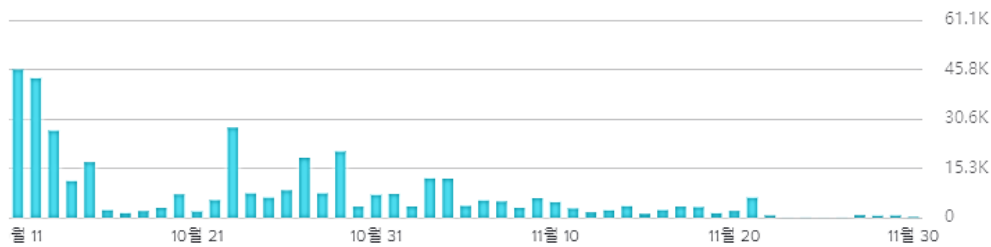


Figure 2. Video Views per Day

Figure 3 shows the videos with the most views on TikTok among all of the videos uploaded during the period of observation. Since posting, this particular video has received 122,600 views, 1,625 likes, and 113,307 comments, including replies from researchers, and sharing the video. Analyzing the number of video views by region, most were viewed in Southeast Asian countries, with 64% in Korea, 6% in Indonesia, 5% in Thailand, 5% in the Philippines, and 5% in Japan. As a result of regional distribution, it is confirmed that TikTok can greatly contribute to promoting the Korean tourism industry in Southeast Asia.



Figure 3. Sun Cruise in Jeongdongjin

On the other hand, Figure 4 shows 114,983 video views on YouTube Shorts from October 11th to November 30th. Likes to TikTok, YouTube videos are also short-lived where the number of views rapidly increased the day of the upload, and then decreased rapidly after two or three days. The biggest difference between TikTok and YouTube is that TikTok videos gain views immediately upon uploads whereas YouTube shorts gain views 24 hours before views start to decrease completely within 3 days.

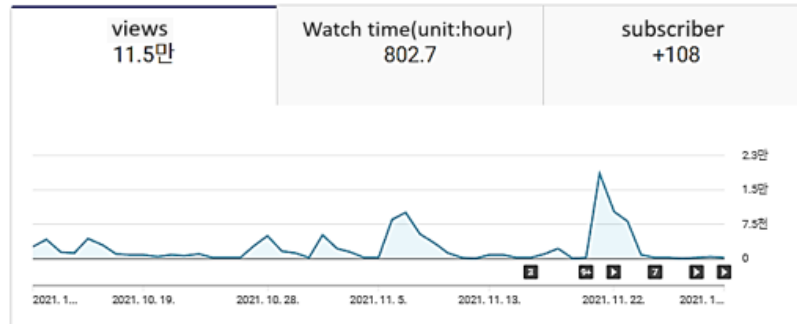


Figure 4. Sun Cruise Views

During those times, YouTube traffic is mainly from 2 sources: 93.3% of shorts feeds and 3.8% of YouTube searches. Analyzing by regions, these sources were 93.8% from Korea, 2.1% from the United States of America, 0.5% from India, 0.4% from Indonesia, and 0.2% from Canada. While foreign viewers of TikTok are mainly from Southeast Asia, YouTube viewers were mostly from the United States of America and Canada. The viewers were 93.8% from men and 6.2% from women while 91% of the views were from middle-aged people over 35 years old. This result was easily correlated to the uploaded videos focusing on travel, tourism, mountain climbing, and rock climbing that would mainly attract middle-aged men. Moreover, 96.9% of views were dominated by smartphones and 2.7% were from computers. Thus, it is natural to expect that vertical short-form content would be the mainstream in the future.

4. CONCLUSION

I was studied on the experiential response to short form based on the number of empirical views and 'Like' clicks for a month of YouTube and TikTok short-form videos. Views of videos uploaded on TikTok and YouTube both exploded within 1 or 2 days and then views immediately vanished. This phenomenon shows the short-lived and improvisational characteristics of short-form videos. Moreover, most of YouTube traffic sources indicate the current trending phenomenon of short forms in video types. YouTube traffic is mainly from 2 sources: 93.3% of shorts feeds and 3.8% of YouTube searches. And The viewers of YouTube were 93.8% from men and 6.2% from women. Additionally, there is a regional difference between TikTok and YouTube users; Excluding Korea, TikTok views were often accessed from Southeast Asia, while YouTube views were accessed mostly from the United States of America and Canada. 96.9% of views were dominated by smartphones and 2.7% were from computers. Thus, it is natural to expect that vertical short-form content would be the mainstream in the future

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