

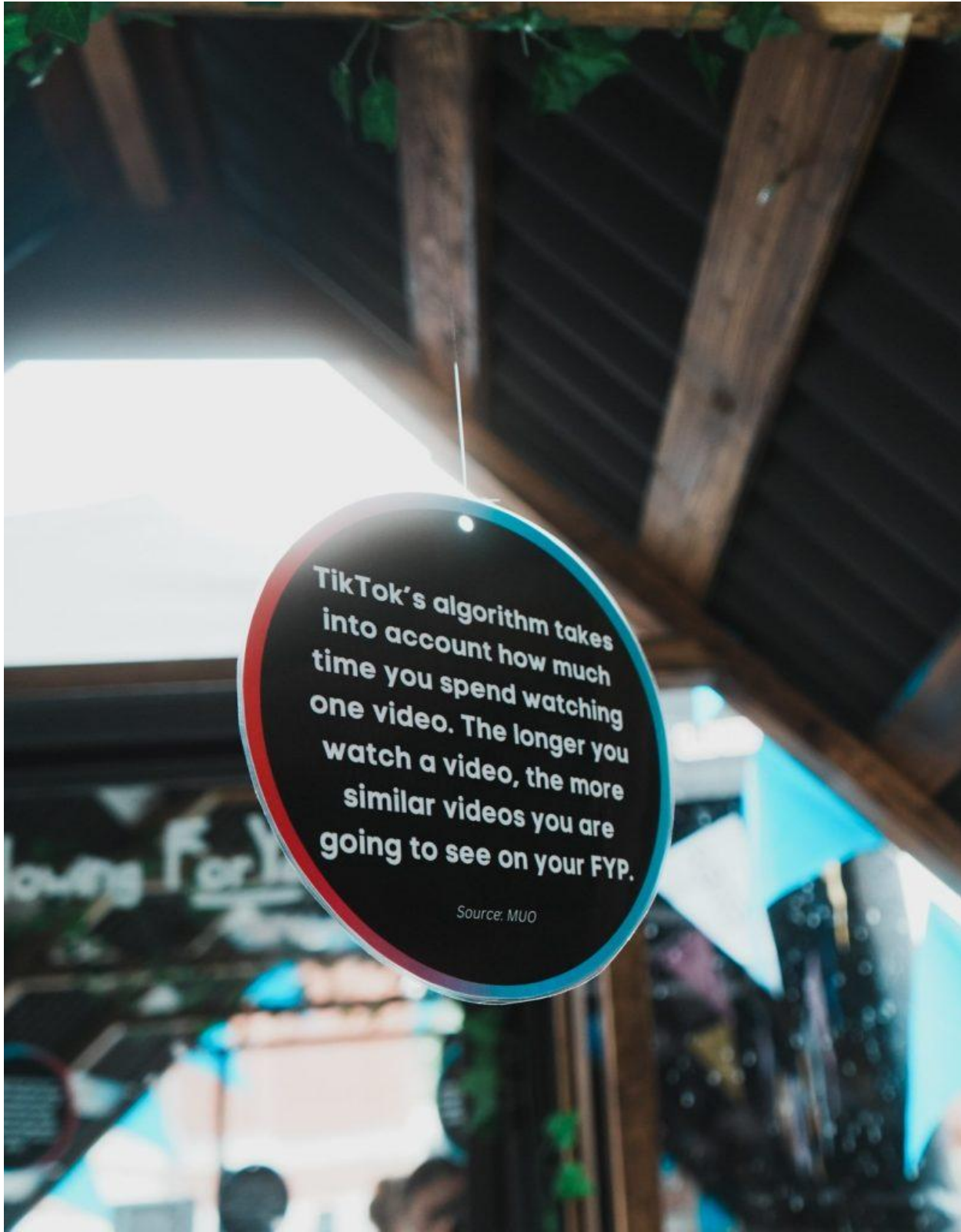
Putting TikTok inside a house

BECID

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A step-by-step guide

This blog post will explain how to build the TikTok house. You can adapt and modify these steps or use the house elements in any physical space. All relevant links and pictures are included, all you need are a few extra ideas, a printer, a pair of scissors, some glue, and a laminator machine (arguably the best purchase you'll ever make).

A circular sign with a black background and a red-to-blue gradient border hangs from a wooden beam. The sign contains white text explaining TikTok's algorithm. The background is a blurred museum exhibit with wooden beams and colorful geometric shapes.

TikTok's algorithm takes into account how much time you spend watching one video. The longer you watch a video, the more similar videos you are going to see on your FYP.

Source: MUO

A TikTok house is a physical space media literacy intervention. It's a space where TikTok comes to life in a relatively small, cosy room. Visitors can quickly learn about the TikTok algorithm, how it works and what data it collects. The main goal of the intervention is to show people that the TikTok algorithm reflects the user themselves and what risks a user takes just by using TikTok. By now, the TikTok house has been built in two different seasons and cities in Estonia for two completely different events. This shows that the intervention can be adapted to any format and time, depending on what is relative and needed.

The basics: how and where to start



As the terms “physical space” and “TikTok house” suggest, you need a house. We were lucky with the first TikTok house, as we came up with the idea just before Christmas time when in our hometown Tartu small (2x4m) glasshouses were built for the Christmas village on the Town hall square. The latest TikTok house was constructed at the Estonian Opinion festival, almost two hours from Tartu. This is where the importance of networking and seeking collaboration between education providers comes in. We contacted the local vocational education centre to see if they’d like to build a house for us. Thanks to an enthusiastic bunch of people, we got our dream house. So our suggestion: see if there are any events/projects with spaces that could be used as a TikTok house or contact people who could build you a house!

Once the giant elephant (house) in the room, aka the exterior, is out of the way, it’s time to think about the interior. The process is divided into two: research and design.



Let's discuss (not at all tedious) research

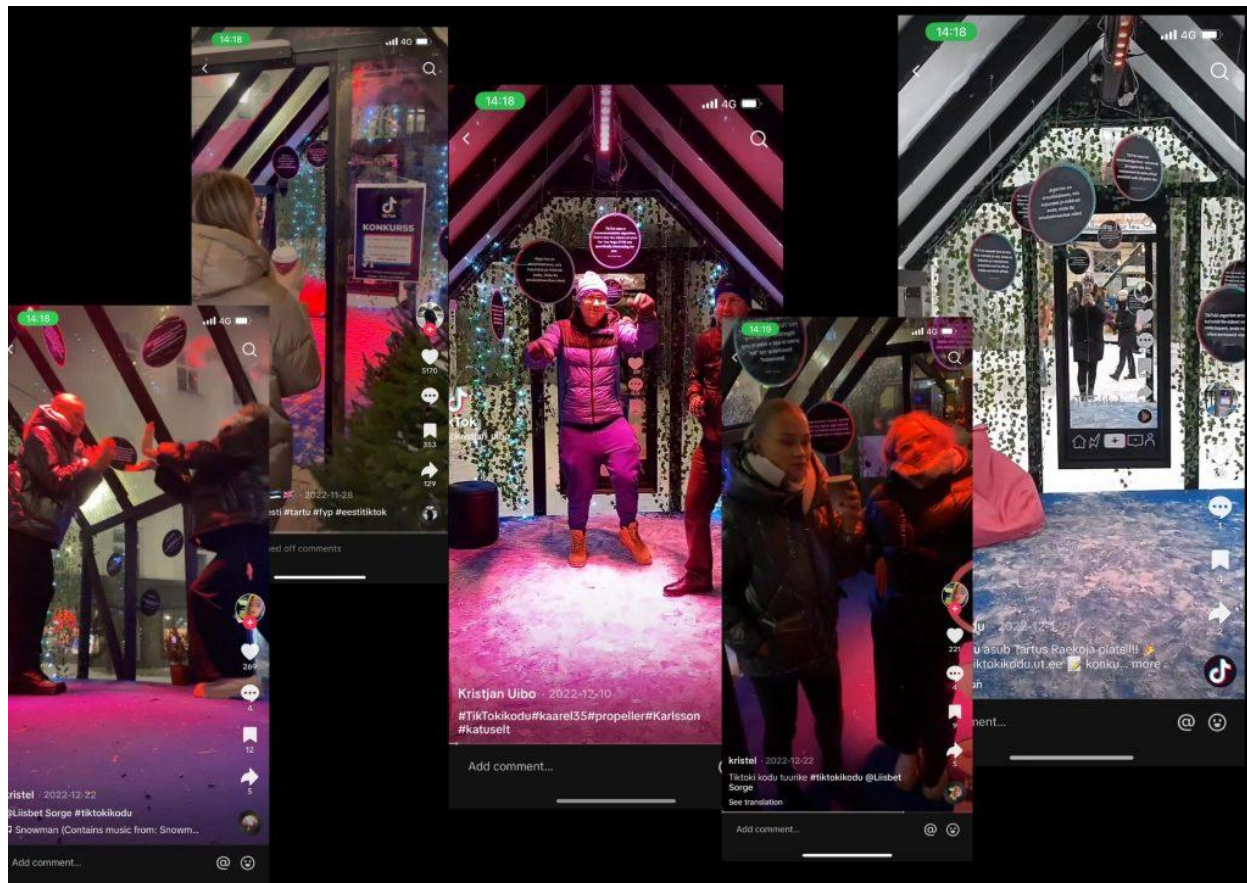
The main idea of the TikTok house is to take people on an adventure. One where they can explore what an algorithm is, get more information on specifically the TikTok algorithm and then get tips on how to influence their TikTok For You Page. The information hangs down from the ceiling on round information bubbles in the previous order. That way, it's easy to read and noticeable, as more than less likely, someone will walk into the papers. We have collected seven different facts about the TikTok algorithm. Any time there is a change or news on it, you can modify the facts or add a new information bubble.

DOWNLOAD INFORMATION BUBBLES AND FUN FACTS

Winter edition



We have also added some extra information in both TikTok houses we have built, depending on what kind of event the house has been made for, who our audience would be or what's relevant. As the first TikTok house was built for an Estonian Christmas village, you can only imagine that temperatures were a bit cold, not to say freezing. In addition, we had to consider that many different age groups would visit the house over the span of almost two months. That's why we decided to stick "fun facts" on the walls of the house. We knew that the extreme temperatures wouldn't harm the laminated paper and that it'd be challenging to damage them by anyone who visited the house. With a physical space intervention, you have to think through everything from the weather to who your visitors are.



Summer edition



The second TikTok house was built during summer and only for two days so that we could experiment more. As many people were talking about sneaky ways of advertisements manifesting themselves on social media, we decided to add examples precisely about that. With a media literacy intervention, you must be close to the topic to keep it relevant no matter the time the information is presented. It's essential to use the youth's perspective, especially when talking about TikTok, to understand what they actually see on the platform. There's no point in mentioning details about something people do not care about/don't know about! To make it more relevant and interactive, we added information to actual physical items representing the examples.

With every example, we made sure to add screenshots or any elements that would be familiar to Estonian TikTok users.



Companies make TikToks as if they are real people

We had seen this phenomenon circulating on TikTok, so we knew we had to bring everyone's attention. We focused the example on the fact that even though the TikToks are lighthearted, it's still a promotional move.



Lives

In Estonia, many TikTokers sell lottery tickets to users. With this example, we just wanted people to think about why they are willing to buy the tickets and

also remind them of how they can avoid falling for online fraud. The colourful propeller hat and notebook are both things you can see in the Estonian TikTok lives, making the example much more familiar.



Beige homes and romanticizing live

Scrolling on TikTok has shown us many beige homes and tips on loving the little things in life. Many people, including us, only sometimes see that the influencers promoting such lifestyles could get money from it by making beige clothes or promoting something in romanticization videos.



Dupes

A prevalent trend on TikTok is people searching for cheaper alternatives for expensive products. We wanted to remind people that you only sometimes need the product, even if every TikToker talks about it.

Let's design a house!

Because we assume that you want people to see the house and step in it, we also believe you are ready for the house to scream TIKTOK! from far away. Every detail in the space is thought out – from only using black, blue, pink and white (the colours of the TikTok logo) to hanging up some fake plants that are

stereotypical for a Gen-Z TikTok creator's room. The house has to be inviting and, without any explanation, make people feel like TikTok has exploded in it.

The most important part of the house, if we do say so ourselves is a mirror, painted like the TikTok For You Page, on the dominant wall of the house. We have seen hundreds of people go into the TikTok house to take a quick look in the mirror or take a selfie but stay for much longer, thanks to the information just surrounding them everywhere. A mirror is also a perfect way to invite people to use a hashtag of your choice and post pictures of themselves in the house. It's familiar, intriguing and (as we all have a bit of Narcissus in ourselves) inviting.

You can access all the designs (in Estonian) on this Canva link. You can adapt these, print them out, use some scissors and a laminator machine and there you go!

So go buy a huge mirror and start painting it to look like the TikTok For You Page! And more importantly – have fun, that way the intervention is even better. — Gretel Juhansoo, *Project Manager*