

PART ONE: TICK TOCK, YOU DON'T STOP

- Every day, billions of people around the world use social media apps like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok. These apps use powerful computer programs called “personalization algorithms” to determine which posts each user will see in their feeds.

Watch the screen recordings of three new TikTok users watching their first 20 posts. For each user, write a ratio comparing how many posts involve their favorite topic to how many that don't. Does the algorithm seem good at providing users with content they like?

FAVORITE TOPIC : OTHER TOPIC (POSTS 1-20)		
ANIMALZZZZZ 🐕 🐓 🐕	DANCE-O-MATIC 🎃 🕺 🎵	GOOOOOOOL ⚾ ⚽ 🏈

- Now watch the next 30 posts that each user sees, and write the *favorite:other* ratio for posts 31-50. Compared to posts 1-20, would you say that the TikTok algorithm got better at providing each user with content that they're interested in? Explain.

FAVORITE TOPIC : OTHER TOPIC (POSTS 21-50)		

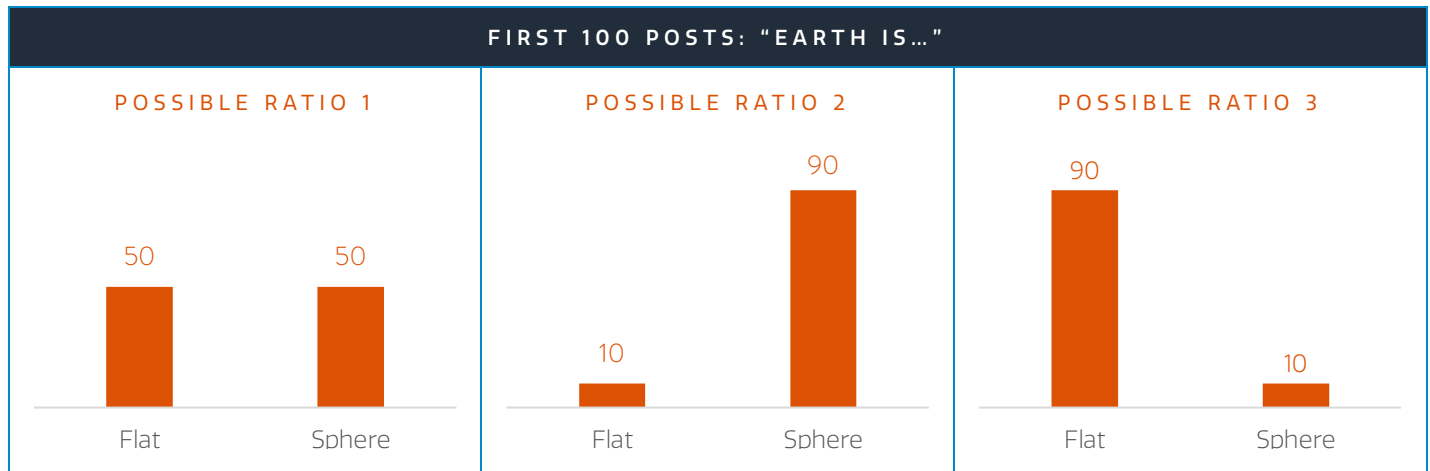
- Watch the final screen recording for each user, and write the *favorite:other* ratio for posts 51-100. Based on this, what do you expect the user's next 100 posts will look like, and do you think this is a good thing? Why or why not?

FAVORITE TOPIC : OTHER TOPIC (POSTS 51-100)		

PART TWO: RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE?

- 4 When TikTok launched, users used it mainly as a source of entertainment: a place to watch videos about animals, dancing, and sports. Today, though, more and more users are using TikTok as something else: a place to get information about science and current events. Watch the screen recordings of the different types of videos that two experienced TikTok users receive about the shape of the Earth.

Then, imagine a new user signs up for an account and watches 100 videos about this topic. *Without knowing anything about this user*, which of the following video distributions do you think is the most realistic and why...and what might be some consequences of this?



- 5 Technology companies use personalization algorithms to engage their users and increase their profits. However, many people think these algorithms are dangerous; some even think they should be illegal. Watch the video from NBC's *Today* about this.

Try to name at least five products (other than TikTok) that use algorithms to personalize the content that users see. In your experience, do you think these algorithms are helpful or harmful, and does knowing how they work influence your willingness to use them?