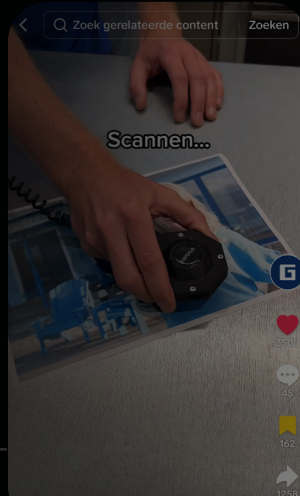
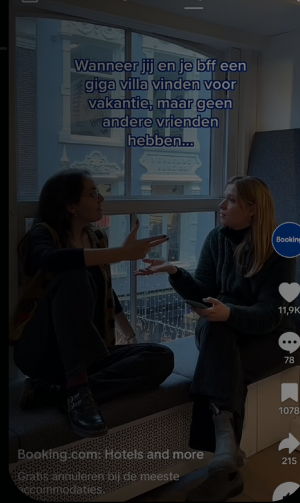
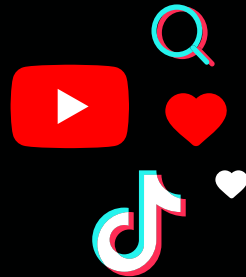


team5pm

# the ultimate guide to social SEO

How to leverage new opportunities in a transforming online world for enhanced brand visibility





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01

# who are we and why a whitepaper about social SEO?



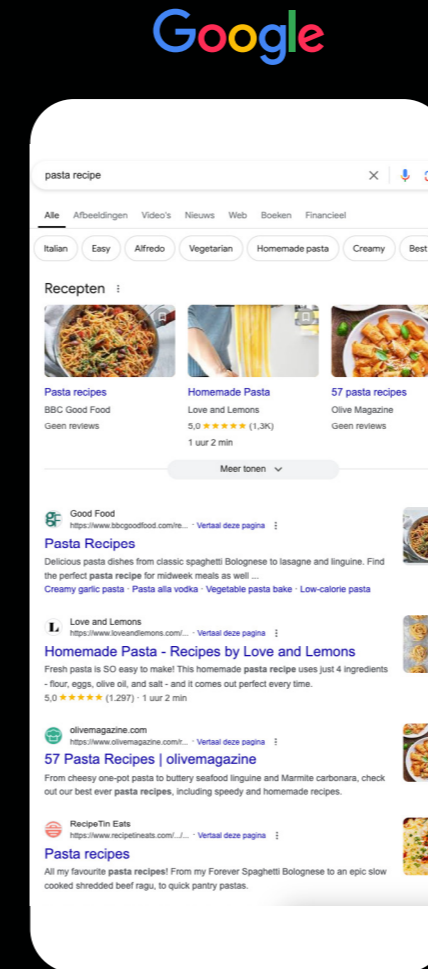
**We are team5pm**, A social agency that combines creativity and data to create effective content for brands across all digital platforms. Since 2018, we have leveraged platform-specific knowledge and consumer insights to drive qualitative attention for our clients looking to engage audiences on Google, YouTube, TikTok and beyond.

Over time we have built up a lot of knowledge through the most diverse projects, in the most diverse markets on multiple social media platforms. Social SEO, or video SEO, is now a subject in which we have over seven years of experience. This even led us to creating *topicree*, a social SEO tool that uses the power of search to predict what your audience wants to see. But how to execute social SEO and how does *topicree* help us make smart decisions to beat the competition? You will read all about it in this social SEO white paper.

We hope that after reading this document you will see the full potential of social SEO and feel even more excited to get started with social SEO, video SEO or social search!

# 02 social search is becoming increasingly popular

You want to cook a **quick and easy pasta recipe**, you can either A) watch a short 60 seconds video that will show you every single step of the cooking process visualized in a quick and snappy way, followed up with a personal taste test from the creator itself that you can relate to, B) search for a more detailed explaining video on YouTube or C) Go through a list of blue links to read a 5 min article that tells you the exact same information supported with few images only by a professional reviewer. It's likely you will go for option A or B, if not you are likely born before the Gen Z generation.



before



after

Then the question arises:

## what is social search?

At team5pm, we believe that social search is the principle whereby a user searches for a visual answer to their question via video first platforms. In principle, this can be the case on various platforms, as shown in the example outlined on the left: on TikTok, on YouTube and to some extent also on Google, but let's be honest, Google is not a video first platform...therefore we consider Google to be a more traditional search platform, where the desire for video content may of course be present with the user. If the latter is the case, he or she will probably click on videos in the search results.

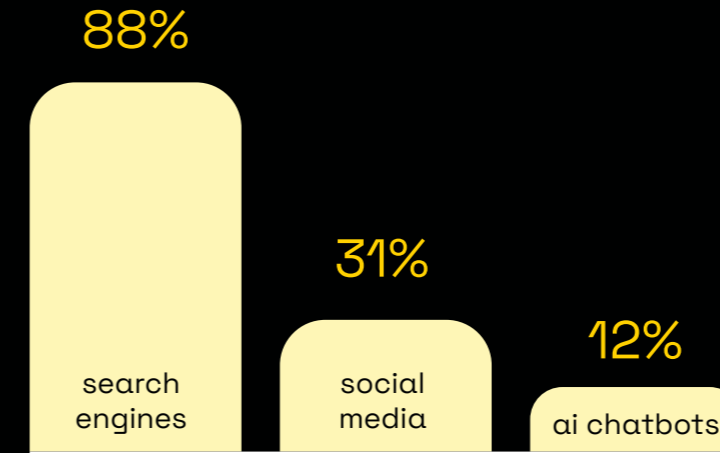
Recent study shows that

## 46% of Gen Z and 35% of Millennials prefer social media over Google to search for answers

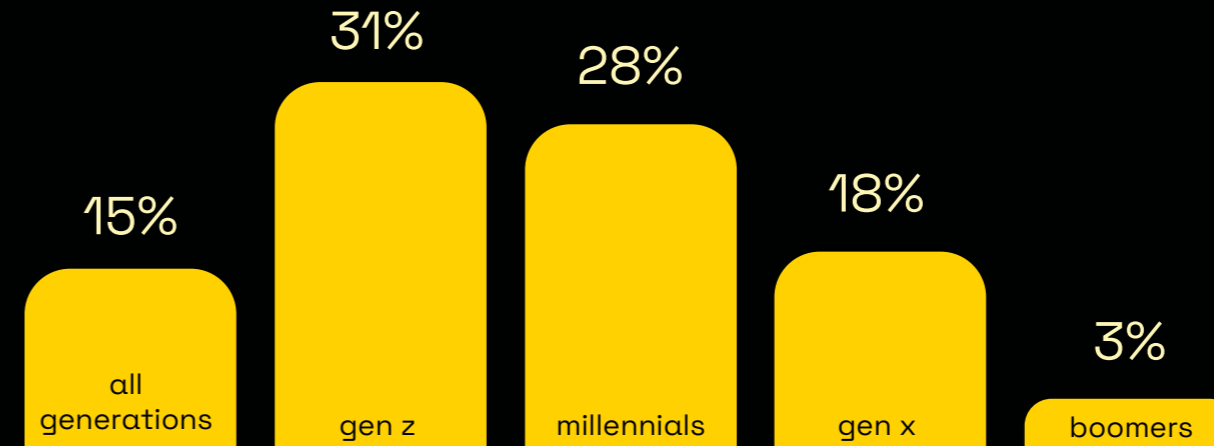
TikTok is mostly used by Gen Z to discover topics like recipes, D.I.Y, fashion and fitness before making smaller purchases among these categories. YouTube being the platform to consume a wider range of content: from educational videos to entertainment, gaming and more [\(source\)](#). Google is used to make more expensive purchases in categories like electronics as well as to discover local services, restaurants and bars.



how the consumer search for answers online



% of U.S. consumers who prefer social media search engines



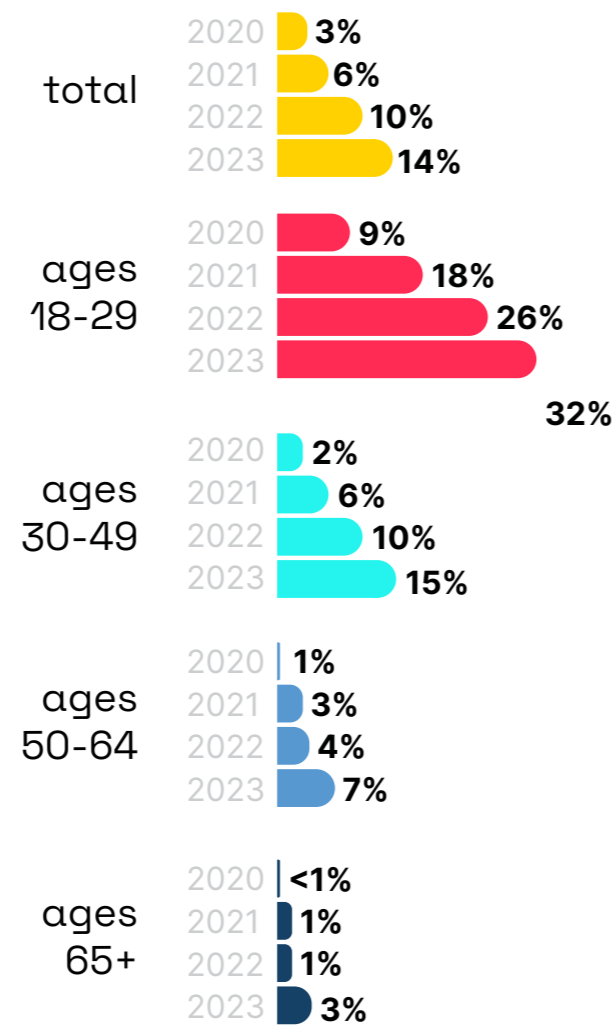
15% of these consumers even prefer social media over traditional search. With Gen Z being the leading generation of which 31% prefer social search, followed by millennials with 28%.

[Source](#)

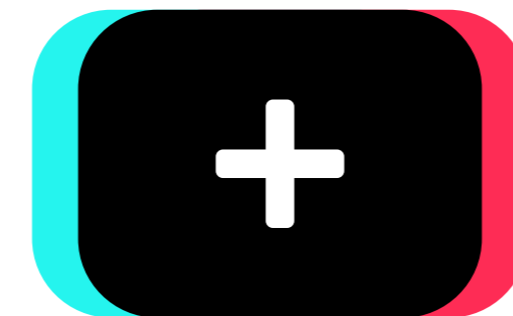
Gen Z and social media are redefining the search market. The younger generation and the first time internet users have a completely different understanding of organizing and finding information opposed to the millennial and older generation. Millennials and older generations were introduced to offline information and the organization of it in a paper file map for example. We translated this paper file map into the internet which made total sense; resulting in Google SERPS filled with blue links. Nowadays when Gen Z and the younger generation start a search they have zero reference to how information 'should' be organized, they start from scratch. This makes them search for information in a different way, and they are often searching in the places where they are the most active: on a mobile phone using video first platforms, like TikTok or YouTube.

And Gen Z is successfully finding their answers. Besides the cute dance videos and trending sounds, TikTok for example is an ever growing wikipedia-like database and at the same time slowly turning into a news outlet in the form of fast bite sized informal videos. In just three years, the share of U.S. adults (18-29) who say they regularly get news from TikTok has more than quadrupled, from 9% in 2020 to 32% in 2023.

% of U.S. adults who regularly get news from TikTok, by age group:



Source



And TikTok is serving their search results in an appealing way for the younger adult. Ranking videos based on views and engagement to offer their users the best and most relevant content they are searching for.

Google is keeping up with this shift in search by rolling out new AI features and including content from social media platforms to enrich the search experience they offer. Currently Google is still the king of search and will remain to be in the foreseeable future.

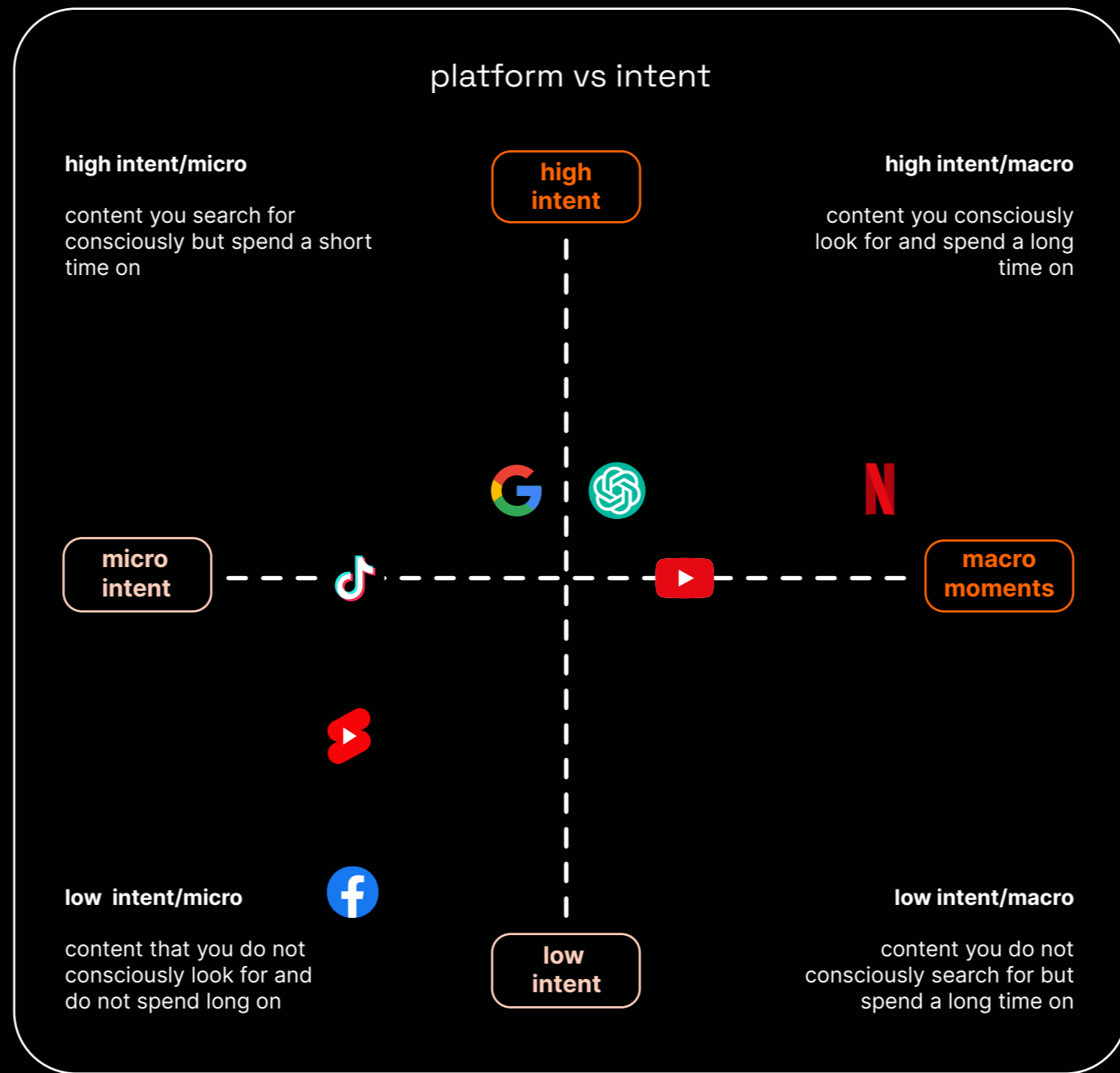
## 88% of consumers still use Google's search engine on a regular basis.

And besides that, Google (Alphabet Inc.) does offer a way to explore content and information valued by real people in an easy accessible manner: YouTube.

YouTube focuses both on the consumer that wants more in depth information about a certain topic with long form content and consumers that want more entertaining and shorter content via YouTube shorts. The video platform offers users more enhanced information and values the average time watched on their videos to rank their videos on their search results pages with longer content. YouTube shorts does this in a completely different manner: it aims to keep users glued to their screen with an unlimited amount of content to scroll through in a vertical way. So social search for YouTube is already there, and we see this developing more and more over time, with YouTube pushing short form content, even in the search results of YouTube and the homepage.

# 03 search intent

Now we know what social search is, and how it's being used on different platforms, it is really important to understand how social media platforms are used for search. The biggest question here is: is TikTok or YouTube shorts claiming more users, or do people use both, but simply at another time and moment? We distinguish the different video platforms between high and low search intent. TikTok and YouTube have a high search intent where users are actively searching for information. Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat have a low search intent and their users are passively scrolling through content the algorithm feeds them.



While TikTok users mainly consume short content fast, YouTube users are often looking for more in depth answers in longer videos. This does not mean that a TikTok user spends less time on the platform, they scroll an average of 58.4 minutes on a daily basis, YouTube users spend 48.7 minutes. However TikTok sees users leave its platform when they discover clipped content from longer videos to continue watching it on YouTube. That's why TikTok is now allowing creators to upload 60 minute videos.

**This is happening while YouTube has been working hard over the last 3 years on Shorts that have a maximum length of three minutes (new!), which collectively earned over 5 trillion views since it was launched in 2021.**

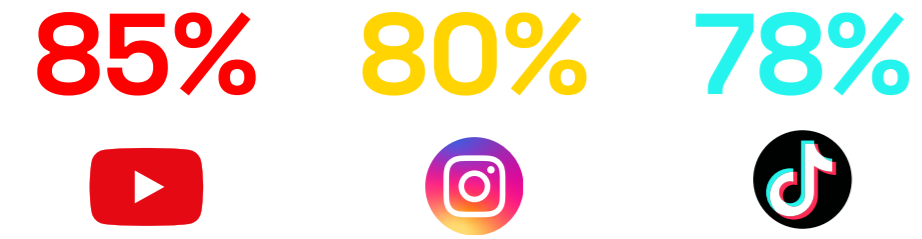
By adding these features the two platforms start to look more and more alike. And that's why we think YouTube and TikTok will move even closer to each other on the above search intent matrix. This is already happening for their demographics. We see that like YouTube, the TikTok users' demographics is maturing and more leveling out over all age groups. We also see that the share of the age group 16-24 went down with 6% in the last 3 years, and the older age groups gained in share: 25 -34 +2%, 35-44 +5% and 45+ went up 4%.

By adding these features the two platforms start to look more and more alike. And that's why we think YouTube and TikTok will move even closer to each other on the above search intent matrix that you see on the left. This is already happening for their demographics. We see that like YouTube, the TikTok users' demographics is maturing and more leveling out over all age groups. We also see that the share of the age group 16-24 went down with 6% in the last 3 years, and the older age groups gained in share: 25 -34 +2%, 35-44 +5% and 45+ went up 4%.

# Over 80% of US Gen Zers aged 15 to 26 use YouTube monthly, with nearly the same percentage using Instagram or TikTok

TikTok, YouTube and Google are all being used to search content, but there is a distinction to be made for the type of content its users are looking for on each platform. TikTok is more used to search for lifestyle & entertainment content in a lower cost segment, where Google is used to search for more informational content in a higher cost segment. YouTube is the bridge between the two, offering more in depth information on both entertainment and informational content.

monthly usage of social media platforms by US gen zers (aged 15-26) [Source](#)



It is important to know where your audience is searching in a specific category, but knowing on which exact keywords they search is of even greater importance. This information will tell you exactly on which specific topic you can create content to reach your audience. To get these insights we developed the social SEO tool [topictree](#). A tool that tracks and analyses view and search behavior among the biggest search engines. This data helps us to create content that we know your audience wants to see now, tomorrow and next month. More on topictree later in this white paper, where we will present a case using topictree in practice. But first we need to go back to the basics of SEO and social media.



04

## what is social SEO and how does it work?

Now that we know that social search is becoming more popular it is important to focus on social SEO and the exact meaning of it. You can make spot on content for your audience that has the potential to go viral, but if your content is not findable you can flush the money and time spent on it down the drain. Social SEO refers to the optimization of your social media posts to attract more audience and increase your brand

visibility for a longer period of time by being findable when your audience is searching for your products, knowledge or services. You can do this by incorporating keywords into your video, the captions or descriptions and many more...

Let's dive deep into the different video platforms to understand how social SEO is working.

why is the algorithm stalking me?



# 05 how does TikTok SEO work?

Knowing how TikTok SEO works helps you to rank higher in the search results. There are **3 ways** to get on peoples radar and TikTok to value your content:

## engagement

User engagement on your videos is the most important pointer for TikTok to determine if your content is interesting for a bigger audience. These engagements are likes, comments, shares, saves and how many users watch your video all the way to the end or even watch them multiple times. Be aware that this is really important to the platform and its algorithm, so yes, engagement and optimizing for that helps improving rankings on the long term.

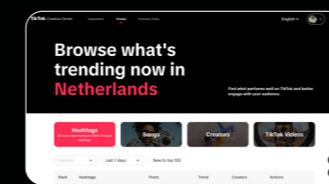
To optimize for engagement you will need to optimize your content. Utilize the following **3 content features** on TikTok to increase the discoverability of your content:



### tip 1

**Grab the attention and hold it**  
TikTok users consume its content at a fast pace. 1 to 3 seconds is all you have to grab their attention. Once you have their attention, you need to keep it short! TikTok users expect to consume a lot of content fast.

### tip 2



**Jump on trends**  
Make content that is hot. Follow the trends on TikTok because that

is also where the search volume goes. In order to get your fair share of the trending search volume you need to create **trending** content. This goes both for trending content and trending music!

### tip 3

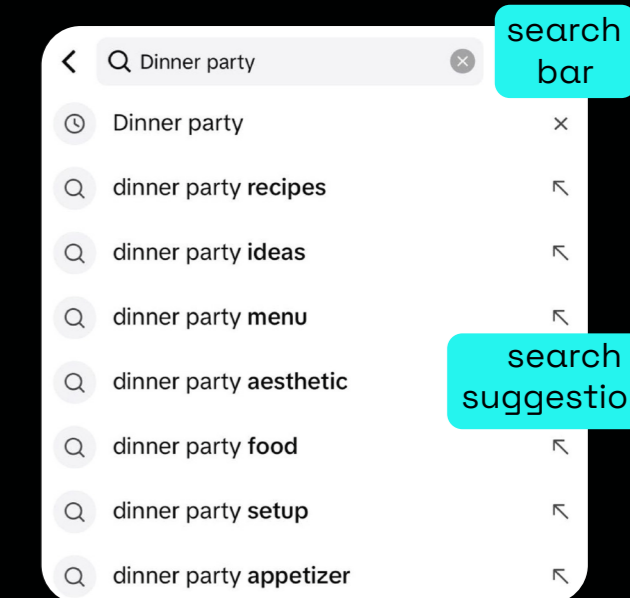
**Encourage interaction with your audience**  
TikTok values likes, comments, shares and saves to determine if a video is good enough to show up in search results of their users. So make sure your videos make your audience want to engage. Work on content your audience can relate to or include a call to action or incentive for your followers to engage with your content.

## meta information

TikTok also needs to know what the content is about in order for the TikTok algorithm to match your content with the search prompts of their users. All the information you add to your video is indexed by TikTok to determine what your video is about. These are captions, hashtags, overlay texts, sounds, subtitles and the playlists they are added to.

To get an understanding on what keywords your audience is searching on you can dive into **TikTok's search suggestions**, just fill out a keyword related to your content and TikTok will show you a list of keywords that are popular among TikTok users. Replicate these inquiries in your meta information to better match the questions from your audience you are providing an answer to.

## traditional features

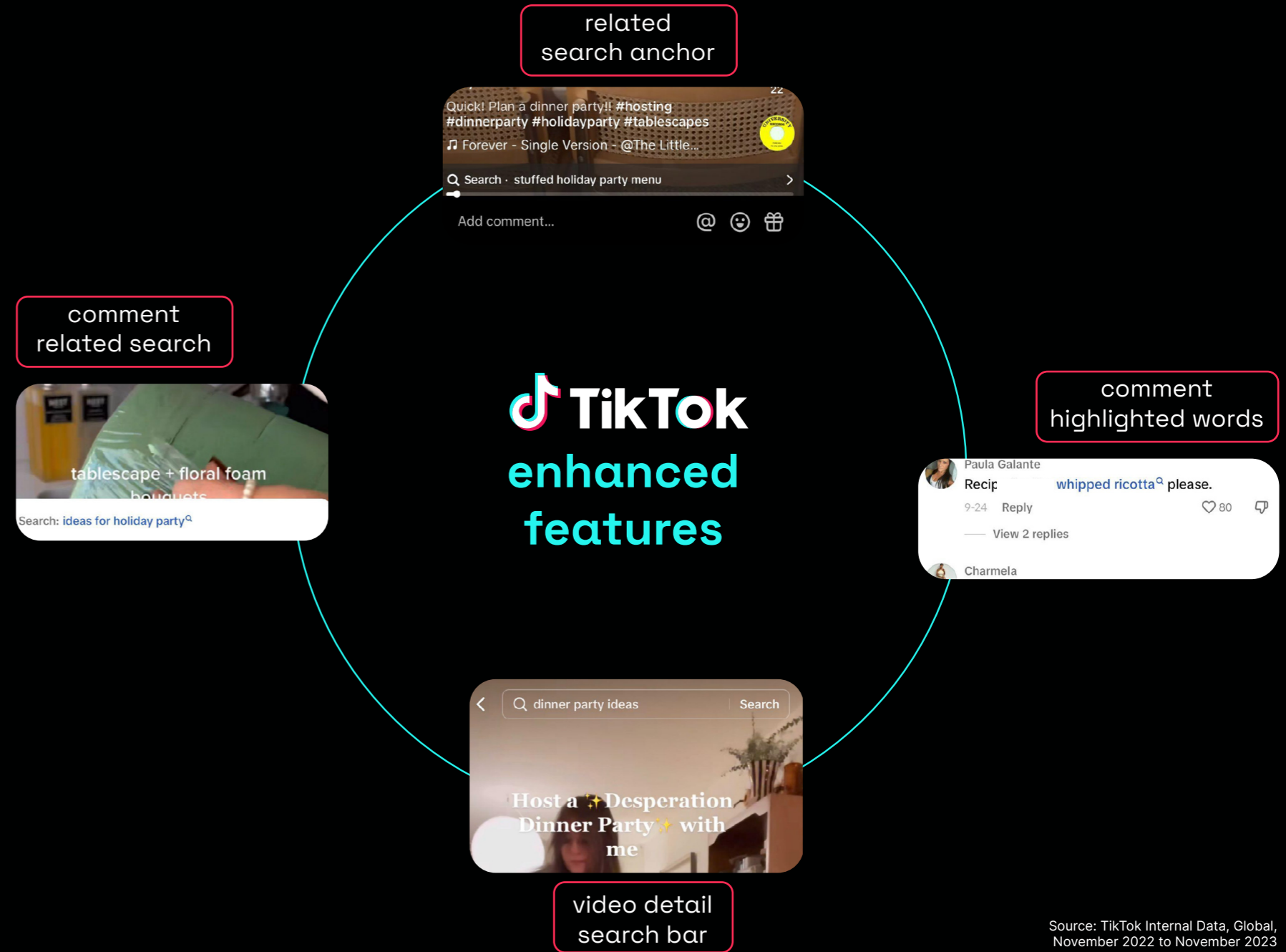


Source: TikTok Internal Data, Global, November 2022 to November 2023

# TikTok features

TikTok starts to know their audience and how they search better and better. It even serves their users with enhanced search features. Maybe you can relate to this example: you encounter a new trend and sometimes you fail to understand it right away (...boomer!). You then dive into the comments for more information. TikTok knows you are not the only one (luckily) who does this. So they offer you related links in a search bar on top of your video. These links

will guide you to a SERP about the trend or a related topic. This feature is called 'Video Detail Search Bar' and besides that TikTok offers several more similar features that will help you find more information about the video you're watching. For example important keywords among the comments will be highlighted (Comment Related Search & Comment Highlighted Words) and link to a relevant SERP and links to related videos.



Source: TikTok Internal Data, Global, November 2022 to November 2023

# 06 how does YouTube SEO work?



The biggest video platform in the world can be considered a social SEO platform due to its unique combination of social media features and search engine optimization capabilities. As the second largest search engine globally, YouTube allows users to discover content through keyword searches, making it essential for creators to optimize their videos with relevant titles, descriptions, and tags.

SEO and YouTube go a long way and the SEO algorithm has evolved multiple times since its existence. And the key metric to focus on these days is Quality Watch Time.

2005



click through rate



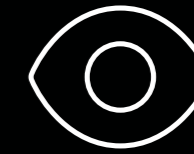
2011



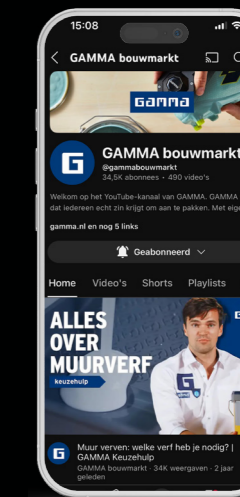
watch time



2018



quality watch time



2026

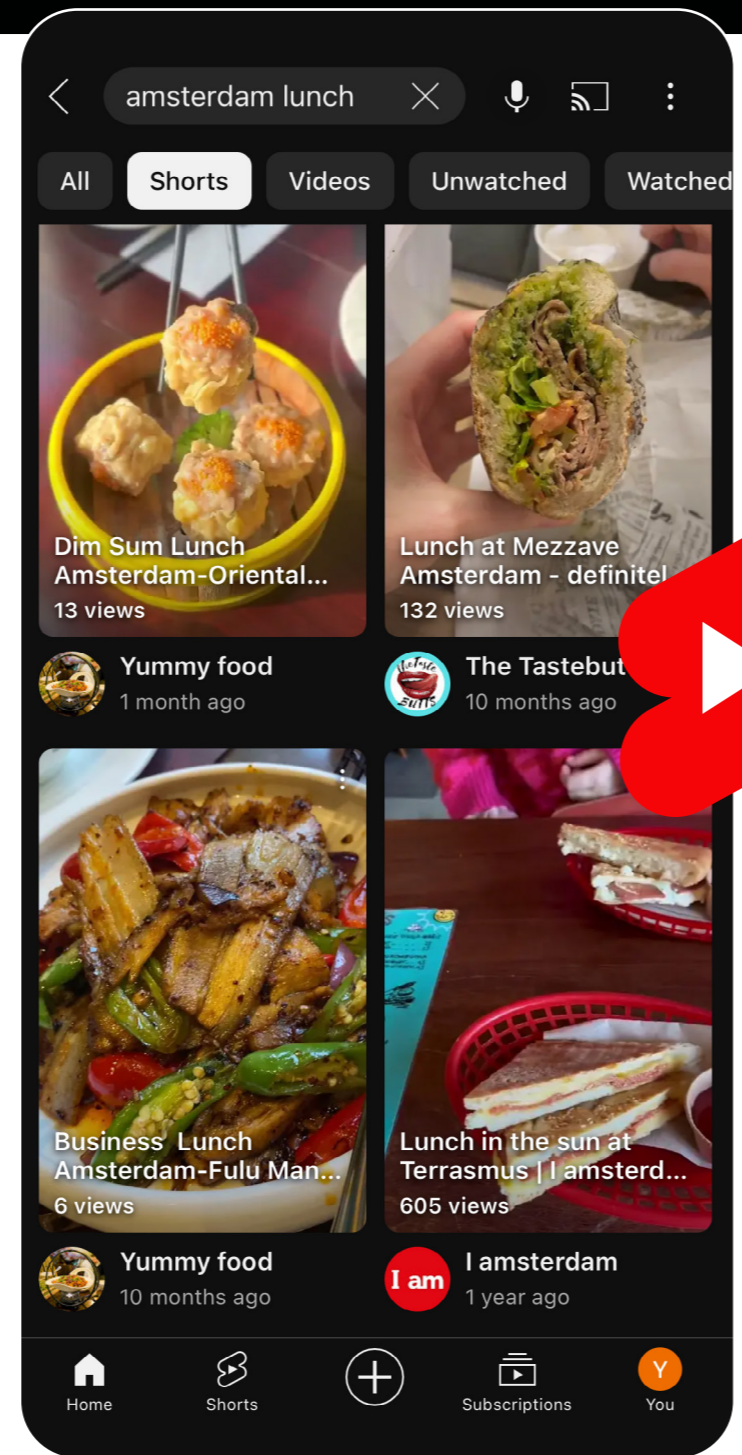
# 1. quality watch time

YouTube is all about generating quality watch time and will rank videos better with a higher amount of quality watch time. What does this mean? The more your audience watches your video, the more engagement (likes, comments, shares) your video collects, the better YouTube understands what your video 'does' with the audience. And ofcourse, the more of both, the better.



# 2. meta information

Of course YouTube needs to know what your content is about in order to serve it on their SERPS. So it's important to give your video a clear title and description. Make sure they are catchy and include the most important keywords. It works best to place these keywords at the beginning of your title and description. Use video tags if the topic of your video (or perhaps the name of the brand) is being misspelled often, and give the YouTube algorithm a small nudge with tags: help it to understand what your video is about! Other features that help YouTube to understand your video is to include closed captions, timestamps and adding your video to a related playlist.



# 3. Shorts to improve your reach and SEO ranking

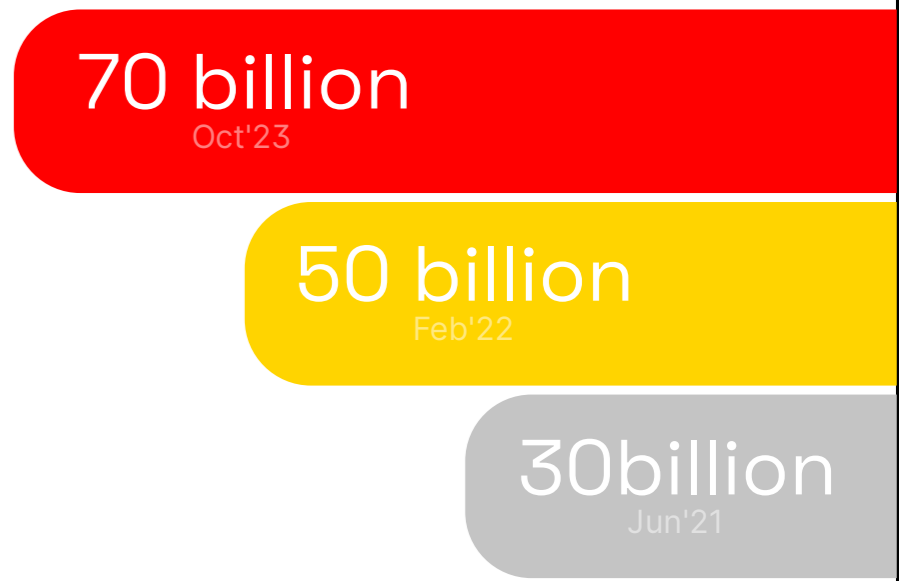
YouTube is ofcourse not only a longform platform, in 2021 they introduced Shorts. Vertical videos that have a maximum length of 60 seconds. These short videos are included in YouTube's regular feed. Shorts have grown massively, in just over 3 years after launching world wide, shorts gained over 70 billion of views daily.

Like longform video's you can SEO optimize Short in order to rank better on YouTube's SERPS. At the same time you can connect your Shorts

to your YouTube longform videos to drive more traffic and generate more quality watch time on your longform videos. This makes Shorts an important tool in SEO optimizing your content on YouTube. Especially since we know that around 89% of short form users are motivated to watch long form content of the things they discover on their short form timeline.

Source: data provided by Google

YouTube Shorts daily views worldwide as of October 2023 in billions



Source

# 07 TikTok + YouTube = bigger success (HEMA case)

Now that we know how to optimize for the video platforms with the highest search intent we recommend not to bet your money on one horse. Google knows that the answers people search for online don't sit on web pages only. Therefore they include content from other platforms in their SERPS like YouTube and TikTok as well. So if you rank high on these platforms, you're likely to pop on Google's SERPs as well. This is exactly what we did for HEMA.

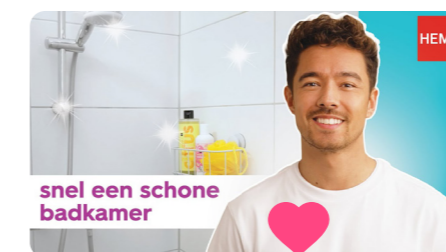
## goal

HEMA is a chain of warehouses selling a variety of consumables for every household. HEMA's goal was to skyrocket online visibility and increase organic traffic, impressions and SEO rankings on Google, YouTube and TikTok with long and short videos. Before we just started producing content, we did research to create content that gave us the best shot to reach HEMA's goals.

## research

To know exactly which video topics had the highest potential of reaching the right audience, we started with first things first: data research. Not only using Google and YouTube, but also TikTok as a brand-new data set. This data was collected with our automated SEO technology, called topic tree.

An important insight was that, in our focus categories, mainly creators were leading the field of 'bathroom' and 'window decoration' content on YouTube as well as TikTok. This offered huge opportunities for HEMA in claiming authority as a brand - the classic early mover advantage!



Within two months, a total of 8 long-form **YouTube** assets, 5 short-form **TikToks**, 8 **Instagram** short-form assets and 4 **Facebook** posts gathered over **2 million organic views** - 100% organic!

## strategy

Based on this data, we've developed a multi-channel strategy with a list of most potential video SEO topics and an organic distribution plan encompassing Google, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. Based on the data-backed video topics list, our in-house production studio created the 'HEMA Helps' series. Help content, focused on making life at home easier with nifty tips and tricks for the household. Both long-form how-to content, as well as short-form, vertical life hacks, step-by-steps and DIYs were produced - all tailored to the intent of the different video platforms.

## results

By combining advanced technology with data-driven content creation and a tailor-made organic distribution strategy, HEMA became front-runner in the 'bathroom' and 'window decoration' categories - on **Google, YouTube and TikTok. This new way of video SEO led to crazy results! 4 out of 5 videos on TikTok rank #1 on relevant keywords. Same counts for Google and YouTube, 7 out of 8 videos rank in the top 3.** We embedded relevant short-form content (TikTok and YouTube Shorts) on SEO-optimized landing pages, with which HEMA now even ranks in Google.



#1 rankings



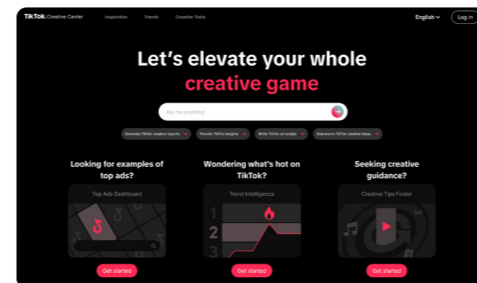
08

# 5 tools to start creating social SEO content



1

## TikTok creative center - find trends

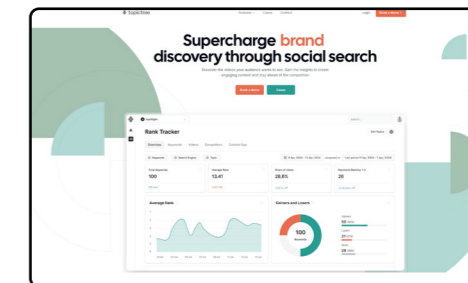


This tool helps you to find the latest trending topics on TikTok. It shows you top lists of trending videos, hashtags, songs and creators. You can filter these per country and industry. This will give you a good understanding of what kind of content the Tik

Tok user wants to see or is looking for and thus means there is a search volume you may want to tap into.

2

## topictree

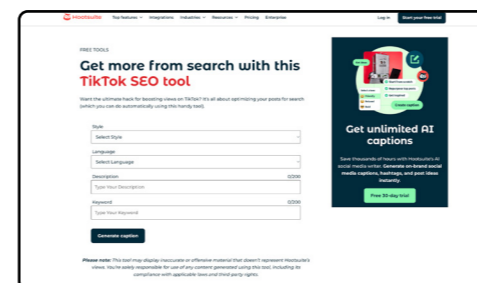


This tool is developed by team5pm and helps you discover relevant video topics based on YouTube, Google and TikTok search and viewing volumes. With insights into related keywords and trending themes, topictree supports

strategic topic decisions, allowing you to produce content that resonates with your audience and improves your search visibility. You can also explore content gaps and competitive positioning to further optimize your social SEO strategy.

3

## Hootsuite SEO description

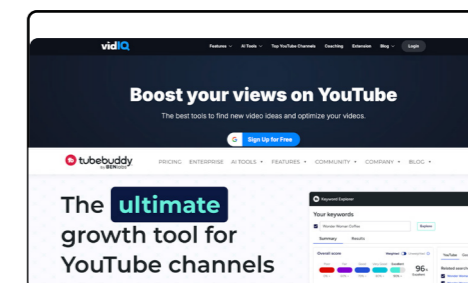


Writing titles and descriptions for your TikTok videos that are perfectly optimized for your audience. Provide the tool with a tone of voice, short description and the most important keywords and it helps you generate captivating

captions that are optimized with relevant keywords, making it easier for your content to be discovered by TikTok users.

4 & 5

## VidIQ and TubeBuddy



These are two of the most popular tools for YouTube channel management and optimization. They offer useful browser extensions that will show you insights needed to optimize your videos even further. And not only the insights of your own

videos, but also those of your competitors. To fully unlock the potential of these tools a paid subscription is needed ofcourse, but the features they offer for free are extremely useful to optimize your videos and channel.

# 09 the future of search is AI?



And while we are getting used to social search, we can already see a huge new trend looming over the field of search: AI. AI is hot and Google knows this. Tools like SearchGPT, Claude and GEMINI are increasingly becoming more popular. We think these AI's will recreate the search field completely, nevertheless we also think it's really important to once more have a look at the intents users show online. Is AI a replacement of the 'traditional' search platforms, or does it help you in a new way, and therefore will live besides or next to the other platforms?

It's obvious the classic search engine Google is actively trying to keep up with both social search and AI in order to stay the king of search. Will Google succeed? Time will tell. And what will happen when Social Media will start using AI to help find answers for their users?

# 10 social search advertising

Although this white paper focuses primarily on the organic opportunities of social SEO, we do see that advertising could play a significant role in achieving the best results in a similar way that SEA does on Google. Regardless of how well your content is optimized, there will always be a searching group that shows the right search behavior but does not click on your video.

It can be very interesting for you as a brand to reach this target audience with your content through paid campaigns with really specific custom audiences. Despite the fact that both YouTube and TikTok do not yet have a similar approach as Google for this type of advertising, both platforms are actively experimenting with this, and as team5pm, we have already been able to achieve great results for many of our clients on YouTube and TikTok.

## Thank you for reading our white paper!

We hope you liked it! We did our best to inspire you with everything social SEO has to offer, our view on it and guidance on how to start using this yourself. As a specialized social search agency we of course love to help you whenever you like. For the latest updates on both organic and paid opportunities we are happy to connect.

Please drop us a message via mail and/or connect with us on LinkedIn.



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