Twitter Thread by Tommy Clark ■

Tommy Clark ■
@tclarkmedia

TikTok is becoming a leading search engine

And it's going to impact your brand's content strategy

Here's exactly what you need to know & how it will affect your day-to-day as a social media manager:



This thread will break down:

· What's happening
· Why it's happening

· What your next steps should be as an SMM

Because there's a lot of conflicting info out there, and it's easy to get overwhelmed by it all

Let's get into it ■

TikTok is making a push to take Google's crown as the world's leading search engine

But this isn't "new"

It's been a trend brewing for months, if not years

(Exhibit A ■)



Why the hype NOW?

2 things:

1) Tech Crunch dropped an article covering the trend, so every marketing + tech bro is talking about it

2) TikTok has explicitly started encouraging search behavior in the app

It's the 'cool' thing to talk about now

But let's look at the numbers..

Google exec suggests Instagram and TikTok are eating into Google's core products, Search and Maps

Sarah Perez @sarahintampa / 4:57 PM CDT • July 12, 2022

Comment



The Stats ■

According to Prabhakar Raghavan, Google's SVP:

"In our studies, something like almost 40% of young people, when they're looking for a place for lunch, they don't go to Google Maps or Search… They go to TikTok or Instagram."

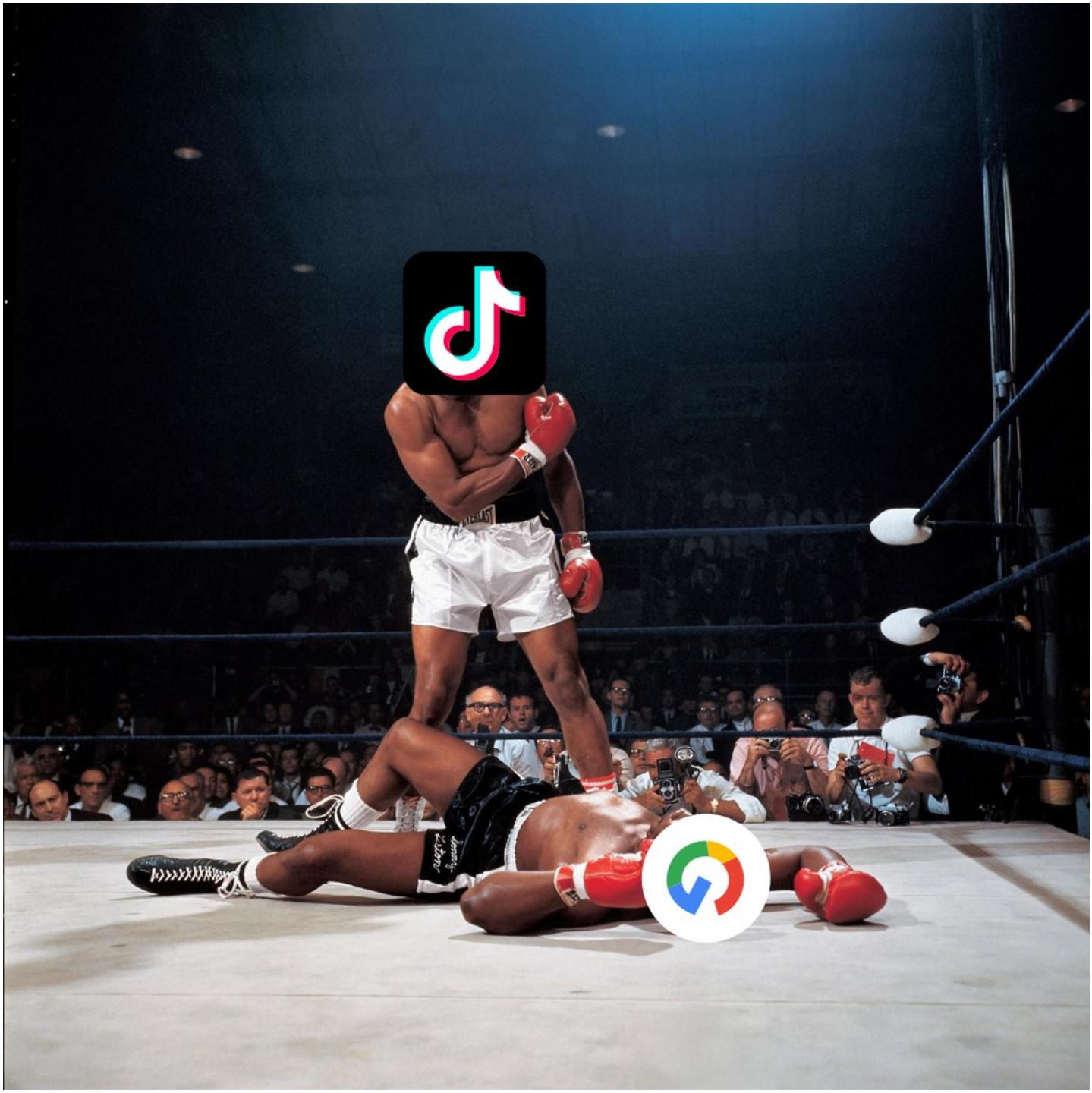


Holy sh*t

40 percent? Why??

In the article, Raghavan says younger internet users (this data looks at ages 18-24) look for new information in a more “visually rich” format — like TikTok videos

So, for Gen Z...



TikTok Is More Trustworthy

(if you ignore the data harvesting, but that's not the topic here LOL)

People who use TikTok as a search engine say they find the results more trustworthy

Compared to Google's SERP which is fill w/ ads and SEO optimized content

Here's a good take on the issue with Google SEO content by @gbaroth: https://t.co/wvNdrAxUEj

> Google did this to themselves.
>
> Just tell me what restaurant, show me the food, tell me the recipe and ingredients.

> Google made you tell a 3 page story about the history of the recipe and what year it was invented and by whom just for the SEO. Unnecessary https://t.co/vsXaRTQGCr
>
> — Greg Baroth (@gbaroth) July 13, 2022

@gbaroth Just look at this side by side of Google VS TikTok

Google's SERP:

· 2 ads above the fold
· Super text heavy

TikTok's SERP:

· Mostly visuals
· No ads (yet... that's coming)
· Multiple people visible

See the difference?



@gbaroth A Personal TikTok Search Story...

I'm part of Gen Z (22)

But man, I felt like a boomer when I first heard about TikTok being used as a search engine

That changed for me when I was planning my next trip abroad...

@gbaroth I needed to find a hostel in Madrid

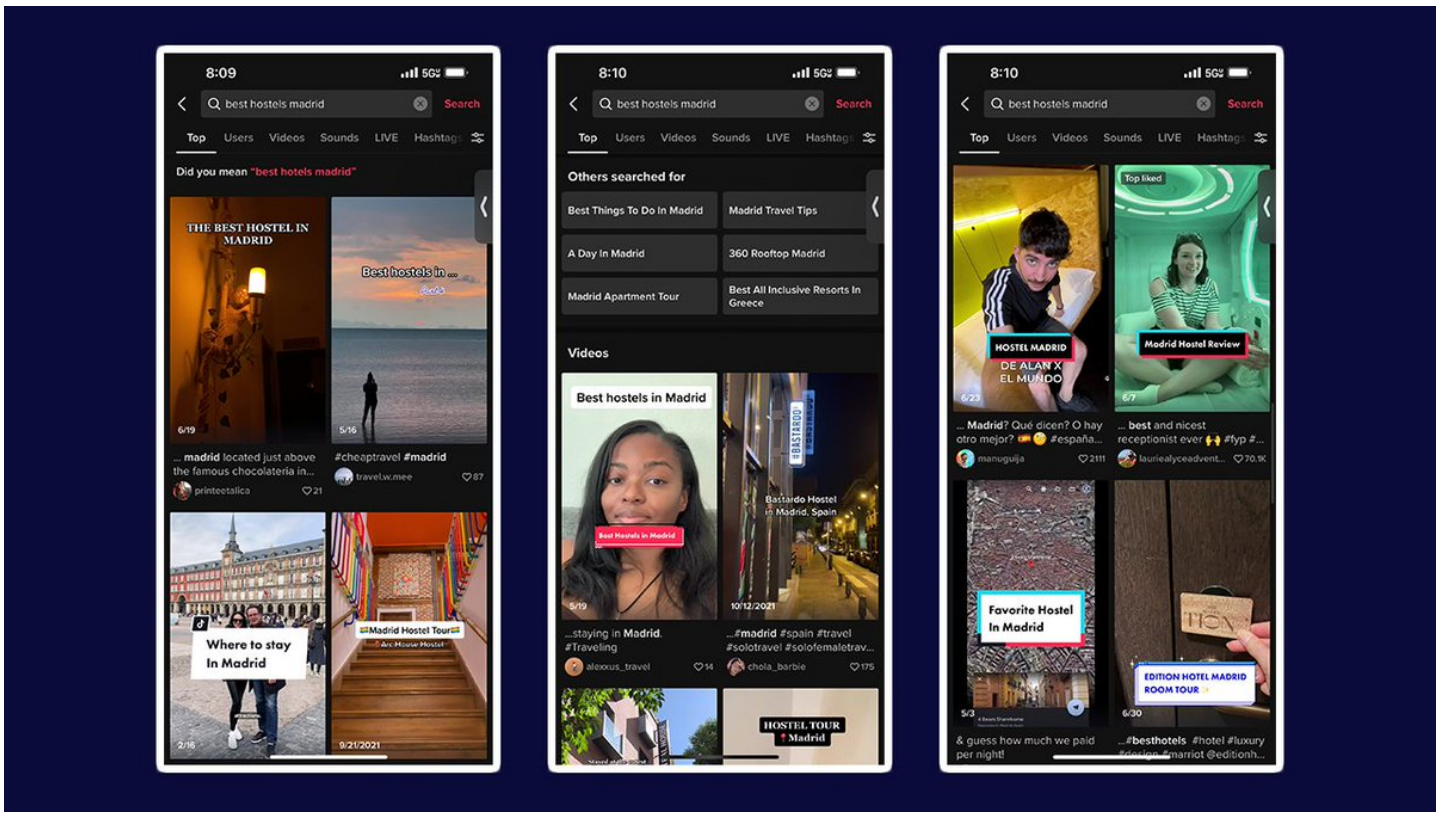
And I'd been on a travel influencer kick since my month abroad in Barcelona

So I'd already seen a few videos hit my FYP covering "best hostels in Europe," "best party hostels," etc…

@gbaroth Which got me thinking… what if I try searching “best hostels Madrid?”

I did. And I got this page full of results ■

(Also notice the “others searched for” bar encouraging the search behavior even more)



@gbaroth After sifting through those videos, I saw a common theme:

People kept recommending this place called Cats Hostel Madrid

Probably something to it...

So then I went over to my web browser and pulled up Hostel World (great site if you travel btw)

@gbaroth I typed in the name of the place to verify:

1) that it existed
2) that it was legit

And there it was. 9.1 rating. 9430 reviews. Legit.

So they got my money — and it all started with TikTok search.

Now...



@gbaroth The MOST important question:

How does this affect YOU as a social media manager?

Do you need to change your content strategy?

Does this impact your day-to-day right now?

Let's discuss...

@gbaroth 1/ SHORT TERM IMPLICATIONS

Deep breaths

We need to think about this rationally

There’s gonna be a lot of people (i.e. TiKTOk cOAcHEs) yelling about this trend

How you need to do this NOW or get left behind ■

It’s fear mongering

But...

@gbaroth 2/ LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS

Start Thinking About Searchable Content

Searchable content is going to be (and already kinda is) a great opportunity for brands to get in front of high-intent customers

If you can rank for a keyword(s) in your niche, you'll be in a great spot

So...

@gbaroth Think about a few keywords you can start to go after as a brand

Incorporate more of them into your videos and captions

Maybe hashtags, but I've heard mixed reviews on the importance of these

I also asked @kevingrahamedia (SMM for @manscaped) for his best advice here:

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped Here's his take on how to create killer searchable content..

• Solve the problem users are searching for with storytelling
• Use keywords in your caption and in the text on screen
• Address audience pain points and give solutions

Don't overcomplicate it!

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped You'll be able to create content that directly answers customer questions, overcomes objections, and addresses pain points...

And do it in a format that customers trust + want to consume

Smart brands will jump all over this, and some already have

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped Interestingly, Raghavan said this re: keywords ■

"These users don't tend to type in keywords but rather look to discover content in new, more immersive ways"

But for now, ranking for keywords seems to be how to get atop TikTok SERP

Now, we gotta clarify something...

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped I don't think 'trending' content meant to hit the FYP will disappear completely

At least not anytime soon

But, I do think it's reasonable to assume search will become a bigger and bigger focus over the coming months + years.

The two types of content will live in tandem

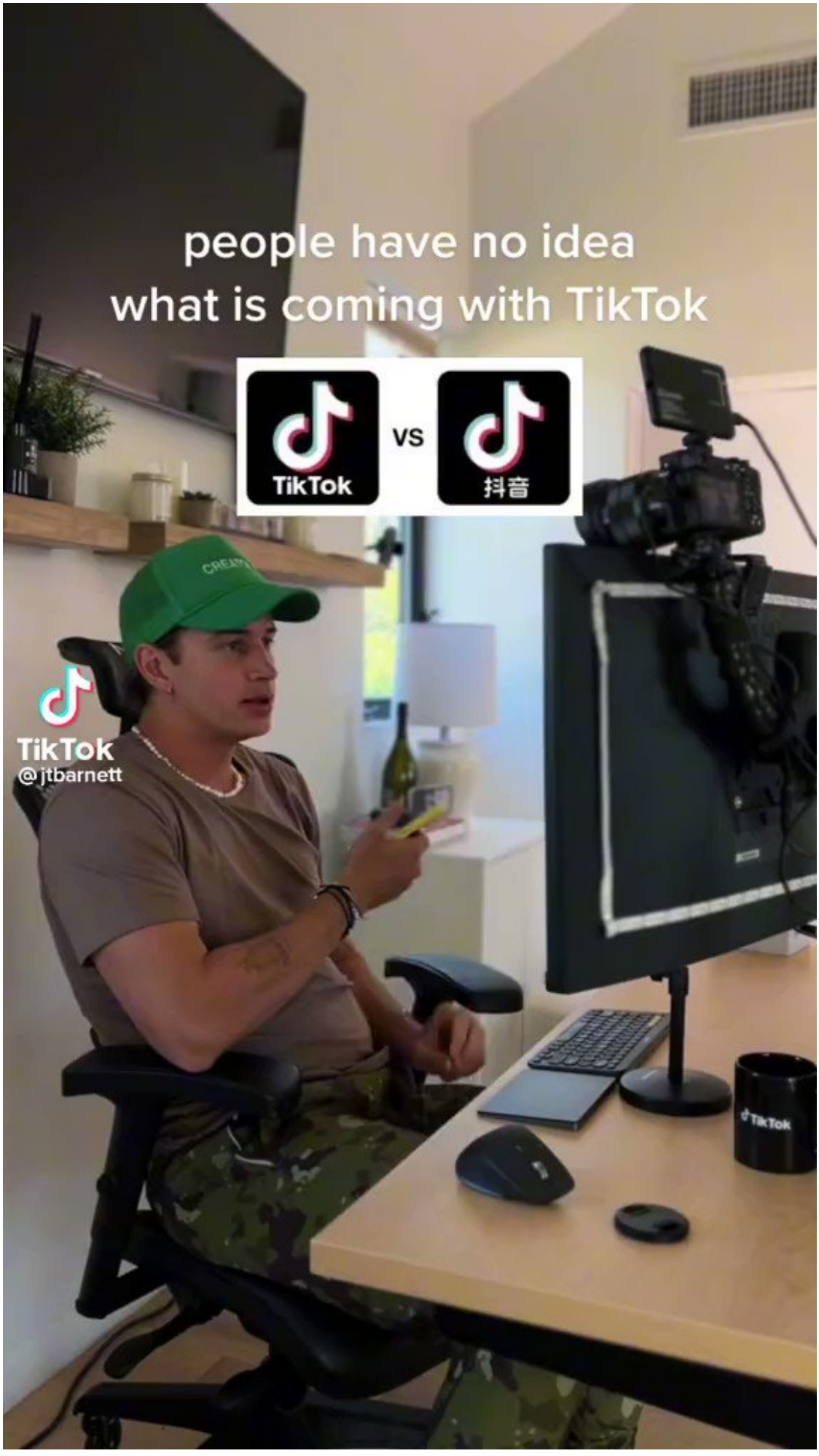
@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped My guess is that we'll see TikTok search evolve to become more similar to YouTube

And keyword research will become more and more important

I'd love to see some keyword research tools like TubBuddy/VidIQ get made or adapted for TikTok

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped And we already have a REAL example of where TikTok may be heading...

Here's another take from @jtbarnett on what the future of TikTok will look like... it's kinda crazy ■


people have no idea
what is coming with TikTok
TikTok
VS
抖音
TikTok
@jtbarnett

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped @jtbarnett Speaking of YT.. how about TikTok Thumbnails?

I'm gonna assume that as search becomes more prominent

The importance of thumbnails on TT will also increase

You'll need to compete with other videos for the click, and half-assed thumbnails won't cut it

Start thinking about this

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped @jtbarnett And last, but not least...

I believe this will also open opportunities for more types of brands to be successful on TikTok

Brands that don't want to (and shouldn't) lean into "trends" all the time

I know I'm considering this as our strategy at @triplewhale evolves

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped @jtbarnett @triplewhale Now excuse me, I need to keep researching for my Europe trip

(by research I mean spend hours scrolling TikTok)

And if you enjoyed that, I write threads on social media strategy 1-2x per week

Follow @tclarkmedia to read them

@gbaroth @kevingrahamedia @manscaped @jtbarnett @triplewhale I also write a twice weekly newsletter, Social Files, that helps you grow on social media with practical, proven strategies

The next edition goes out today

Sub here: https://t.co/FHn8Zhx4RR