

Exploring TikTok's Potential as a Platform for Valuable Journalism

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ABSTRACT

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News organizations have begun incorporating the social media app TikTok as one of the many platforms they post their content to. In Canada, since the passing of the Online News Act (Bill C-18) in summer 2023, Meta, the company that owns Facebook and Instagram, has blocked Canadian news outlets from posting content on their platforms, leading many to turn to TikTok to reach audiences on social media. The app's popularity and lack of transparency raise questions about whether valuable journalism could be possible on the app. This research-creation thesis uses Irene Costera Meijer's (2022) "valuable journalism" concept, which describes three experiences that may lead individuals to feel a sense of value towards a news story: (1) getting recognition, (2) increasing mutual understanding, and (3) learning something new. Guided by these concepts, this research analyzes three Canadian commercial mainstream news outlets' TikTok accounts—namely CTV News, Global News, and CityNews Toronto—to explore whether their content exhibits elements of these "valuable journalism" experience. The total number of TikTok videos analyzed in this research is 542 across all three news outlets' TikTok accounts between August 11 and November 11, 2023. The results show a progressive use of TikTok and overall evidence of valuable experiences according to Costera Meijer's concepts, but also suggests more can be done to creatively produce news on the app using its tailored tools, and to reach audiences in valuable ways. These findings helped inform the creation of three original TikTok videos that each seek to demonstrate the elements of Costera Meijer's three valuable news experiences, to bridge these theoretical aspects to practical elements of journalism production for social media.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my best friend, Kelly-Ann Catarina Hilario, and my aunt Maria Barile, who are no longer with us; however, their dedication, resilience, and wholeheartedness will forever inspire me.

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1. Introduction

The journalism world is consistently evolving, and the use of social media has become a noteworthy addition to many multimedia journalists' repertoires. Journalists are often required to adapt to technological changes in the field quickly. Over time, communication media, in general, have experienced a variety of technological advancements that have enabled humans to access information in various ways. Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the commercial printing press in 1454 led to the ability to spread information to a broad audience. Guglielmo Marconi's creation of the radio in the 1890s introduced real-time conversations that could be heard nationally. Philo Taylor Farnsworth's invention of the television, which rose in commercial popularity in the 1950s, led to the first communication technology to broadcast images (Jara-Figueroa & Yu, Hidalgo, 2019, p. 14). The birth of the internet and global networking in 1983 increased the scope of information access worldwide (Vasileiadis, 2019, p. 16). Journalists have utilized these different communication tools within their work, and since the start of the 21st century, online digital media has been a "popular and powerful" one (Vasileiadis, 2019, p. 15). A primary function of the internet, and online journalism by extension, has been to allow information to have fewer geographical limits by enabling people worldwide to access information more quickly than ever before (Kuyucu, 2020, p.74). The internet has allowed journalists to tell stories in real time without being tied to a broadcast or printing schedule. Online journalism has granted journalists the possibility to reach an extensive scope of people and added interactive elements for audiences to engage with. News organizations have also transitioned to new online journalism revenue opportunities through online advisements and membership subscriptions. While journalists began

learning how to transition their work to the web in the early- and mid-2000s, a new online platform became available: social media.

The use of social media has become increasingly prevalent; according to Statista, the number of social network users in Canada stood at 34.47 million in August 2023 and is forecast to grow yearly (Dixon, 2023). The accessibility of social media platforms is a key reason many Canadians choose social networking as their primary avenue for news consumption (Dixon, 2023). According to a study published by News Media Canada in 2021, the number of Canadians who rely on social media for their daily news is as high as 95% (Jolly, 2022).

The impact of social media on journalism could be linked to early coverage of news events on platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter). X provided news outlets and audiences a platform to "report occurrences quicker than in the past" (Harper, 2010). A notable event that illustrated the shift in coverage was the shooting in Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009, during which users got live updates on X and were able to discuss what was going on in real time (Harper, 2010). While, as Harper (2010) notes, the Fort Hood shooting X coverage contained evidence of factual errors due to the number of people on the platform twisting the truth in their comments, the rate of information shared was something no traditional medium could replicate (Harper, 2010). Another example of early social media coverage was the Iranian protests that arose after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president in the summer 2009 Iranian presidential election, which was the trending topic for a week straight (Harper, 2010). The X coverage of the Iranian protest sparked an article from The New York Times called "Iran: Downside to the 'Twitter Revolution'" (Harper, 2010). The New York Times article explained that there may not have been "as many eyewitnesses tweeting as expected" due to safety issues (Harper, 2010). The lack of eyewitnesses meant that those who were live-tweeting were most likely not at the protest, and therefore, the information

being gathered online was mainly opinion-based and not actual live reporting from the scene (Harper, 2010). Live up-to-date coverage and conversations about trending topics and events have become a norm on platforms such as X, and all over the social media landscape. Online, live, up-to-date discussions about trending topics have become more accessible through social media through hashtags, photos, and videos being shared globally while providing a space to discuss the information and topics in more detail.

As audiences rely more on digital platforms to obtain their news, journalists must preserve high-quality journalism as the vastness of cyberspace prompts the risk of misinformation. Social media has created new job opportunities for journalists, such as digital web reporters, multiplatform reporters, content creators, and digital editors. Many news outlets have launched different social media accounts to expand their audiences. Social media has become the "modern way of collecting, producing, distributing, and developing news and information" (Kuyucu, 2020, p. 72). A social media survey by ING News Netherlands (2015) revealed that more than 50% of journalists worldwide used social media as "the primary source of information and data gathering" because social media platforms help gauge "the public's opinion and perspectives on diverse topics" (Kuyucu, 2020, p. 74). Journalists have increasingly relied on social media to understand the public's opinion and to "guide future reporting, prioritize policy development, and help citizens conceptualize and feel part of their community" (Dubois, Gruzd & Jacobson, 2020, p. 30).

The use of social media has increased not only within the journalism world but also among online users in general; about 94% of online Canadians have at least one social media account (Dubois, Gruzd & Jacobson, 2020, p. 32). Online platforms allow journalists to pursue "stronger, more intimate connections with their audiences" (Miller & Nelson, 2022, p. 2). The "increasing

audience migration" to online news indicates that journalists should explore different and innovative ways to tell stories (Kulkarni, Thomas, Komorowski & Lewis, 2023, p. 2).

However, social media as a person's only source for news can have serious consequences, as the information shared on different social media sites can be inaccurate and is "often developed out of mass opinion, rather than truth and facts" (Kuyucu, 2020, p. 72). The social media landscape is saturated by influencers trying to raise user engagement on their pages, often relying on clickbait to entice audiences. Another issue on social media is the prevalence of false and misleading information. For example, when TikTok users search for top news stories on the app, nearly 20% of the videos that pop up contain misinformation (Tucker, 2022). Although TikTok was not designed to be a news source, its fast access to details on a given news story makes it an ideal place to search for information. Therefore, one advantage of having more news outlets on social media is having a more significant number of trustworthy sources available to users.

This research-creation project investigates whether digital news posted on social media, specifically TikTok, could benefit audiences that engage with TikTok content. "Valuable journalism," as defined by Irene Costera Meijer (2022), is a concept that evaluates a news item's value and meaningfulness (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). This project mobilizes Costera Meijer's "valuable journalism" framework to offer insight into how news organizations tell journalistic stories on TikTok. It explores how Canadian news outlets have begun using TikTok as an additional platform to distribute daily stories to reach a larger audience. To do this, I first produce an analysis of three Canadian news media outlets' TikTok accounts—namely CTV News, Global News, and City News Toronto—that describes and compares the content found on these accounts. This analysis aimed to identify trends and provide more insight into how these news organizations use the app to produce and disseminate news content. I then utilize the insights gained from this

analysis to create three original journalistic TikTok stories about how a particular organization in Quebec is helping youth deal with the current housing crisis and how their story embodies the concepts from Costera Meijer's "valuable journalism" theory.

This research-creation thesis does not endorse TikTok, nor does it mean to insinuate journalists must use TikTok in their work. However, as of 2022, according to Statista, TikTok is the leading mobile app worldwide, with about 672 million users and growing daily (Ceci, 2022). As TikTok's popularity does not seem to show signs of slowing down, the app could be one option for many journalists to reach broader audiences, especially in the current Canadian media context where Meta (Facebook and Instagram's parent company) has blocked Canadian news organizations from posting content on its platforms.

Nonetheless, as the digital landscape has repeatedly proven, social platforms have unknown expiration dates. Most social platforms lose popularity as they age, users grow out of using them, and new ones emerge (Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban & Roser, 2023). Myspace is a prime example of this. In 2006, just three years after its launch, the social networking site surpassed Google as the most-visited website on the internet, but after the introduction of Facebook, Myspace users declined drastically, which led to its eventual discontinuation in 2016 (Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban & Roser, 2023). Generational divides can also play a factor in a social media platform's popularity and decline. For example, Snapchat users tend to be under the age of 25 (73%), while people over 65 years old account for only 3% of the platform's user base (Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban & Roser, 2023). Surviving platforms in the last decade have adapted to the changing digital landscape by adding features that mimic those of popular newer platforms (Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban & Roser, 2023). For example, when X launched in 2006, the platform did not initially allow users to upload videos or images, but it eventually made way for visuals with its major 2010 update after new apps

like Instagram, a social media platform dedicated to visual elements, became popular (Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban & Roser, 2023). Now, "more than 50% of the content viewed on X includes images and videos" (Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban & Roser, 2023).

Even though TikTok will likely follow similar trends in its updates and popularity over time, researching how journalists can utilize it now should not be considered a waste. Even when a social media platform has a potential expiration date, studying what works and what does not can still benefit users of future platforms. By understanding digital innovation in journalism more generally, we can ensure the fundamentals of mainstream journalism are preserved in new digital advancements.

In this research-creation thesis, "digital innovation" is defined as journalism's embodiment of digital practices and technologies; this does not mean demolishing the integrity of journalism but rather adapting new strategies to meet modern-day demands. Embodying digital practices and technologies in journalism means integrating social media and the web into journalists' everyday work, such as posting online articles and stories to social media platforms. The implication of social media in journalism does not have to equate to the loss of quality journalism, but rather it has shown a need to "renegotiate news values, norms and established practices" within news organizations (Degen, Olgemöllera & Zabel, 2024, p.17). Traditionally, the values journalists have strived for are truth, accuracy, fairness, and objectivity. New social media platforms like TikTok might create challenges to upholding these values. For example, one challenge that TikTok intensifies is the potential of spreading misinformation and disinformation due to the lack of authenticating filters and professionals/experts on the app. At the end of 2020, one study examined the spread of information about the COVID-19 vaccine on TikTok. It found there was only a small number of healthcare professionals on the app producing educational content and only a few

TikTok posts that included legitimate medical information backed by medical sources or experts (Van Kampen, Laski, Herman & Chan, 2022, p. 2). Overall, the study's results showed that more TikToks discouraging COVID-19 vaccinations were made, but TikToks that encouraged the vaccines gained more traffic (Van Kampen, Laski, Herman & Chan, 2022, p. 2). Most TikToks about the COVID-19 vaccine "typically included humor or parody, with parodies of adverse reactions gaining higher views" (Van Kampen, Laski, Herman & Chan, 2022, p. 2). The study concluded that vaccine "hesitancy prevails" as a "common theme" on TikTok, and therefore, more studies must be conducted to understand the public's attitudes towards vaccinations on the app. Moreover, the study's authors concluded that more healthcare professional TikTok accounts would enforce accurate knowledge rather than opinion (Van Kampen, Laski, Herman & Chan, 2022, p. 2).

Following this line of thought, having more journalists post on the app could also provide more reliable data, as journalists have expertise in fact-checking and obtaining reliable sources. Additionally, journalists in a newsroom typically work among a team of journalists, which can help ensure quality stories. According to research published by the American Psychological Association, the number one cause of spreading fake news online is the individual need for conformity and social pressure to share information that everyone else is spreading, even without knowing whether it is true or not (Lawson, Anand & Kakkar, 2023, p. 3). Researchers found that most fake news online was spread not with malicious or ideological intentions, but due to prioritizing social conformity (Lawson, Anand & Kakkar, 2023, p. 3). Researchers explained that many people post about topics or events that their social circles online are posting about to fit in, and many share the same content as their social circles without assuring whether the content is fact-based (Lawson, Anand & Kakkar, 2023, p. 3).

A journalist's job is to ensure truthful storytelling regardless of personal biases; therefore, having more professional journalists on the app could help counter the spread of fake news. This research aims to understand whether journalists can use TikTok specifically to produce meaningful and "valuable journalism," as defined by Costera Meijer (2022). My research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What type of content do Canadian news organizations post on TikTok?
2. What are the differences and similarities between Canadian commercial news outlets' TikTok content? What elements of Costera Meijer's (2022) "valuable journalism" framework are present in this content?
3. How might journalists mobilize concepts from Costera Meijer's (2022) framework on TikTok to create "valuable journalism?"

By seeking answers to these questions, I aim to provide insight into TikTok's potential as a valuable tool for journalism. Despite the app's growing popularity, more research needs to be done on how TikTok and journalism intersect. Thus, I aim to comprehend how TikTok is used differently between professional news media outlets. Media outlets may have similar techniques and scripts to portray a story, but how stories are visually depicted might differ significantly.

My goal for this research is to benefit the journalistic community in several ways. Firstly, analyzing news organizations' different techniques on TikTok may lead to knowledge-sharing and more effective methods of navigating TikTok as a journalist. Secondly, this project examines whether news organizations create "valuable journalism" for online audiences. Overall, this research's main purpose is to guide individuals who are part of or interested in the field of journalism on how to maneuver TikTok in a newsroom or for personal storytelling goals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 TikTok

TikTok is one of the newest apps added to a roster of information-sharing platforms journalists use. Chinese tech company ByteDance released the video-hosting app in September 2016. It quickly started to gain traction in China, and ByteDance launched an international version of TikTok the following year. Zhang Yiming, the founder and CEO of ByteDance, incorporated artificial intelligence into TikTok's algorithm to identify users' interests and feed them more videos that matched their profiles (Taulli, 2020). The videos shared on the app range from 15 seconds to 10 minutes long. Various types of content can be found on the app, such as vlogs, cooking tutorials, celebrity gossip, dancing videos, etc. When TikTok was first released, the app mainly featured dance and lip-syncing videos; however, as the app evolves, so does the content. Many companies have begun using TikTok as a tool for marketing and storytelling. The app has experienced a steady success rate; TikTok generated an estimated \$205 million more than Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and X combined via in-app purchase (IAP) revenue in 2023 (Koetsier, 2023).

TikTok was chosen for this research for reasons beyond the app's popularity and novelty. Firstly, TikTok prioritizes short-form videos, allowing information to be conveyed succinctly and quickly. The convenience of quick videos becomes essential as studies have shown that human attention spans have diminished over the last two decades. A study led by Microsoft Canada found that since the year 2000, a person's average general attention span has dropped from 12 seconds to eight seconds (McSpadden, 2015). The Microsoft Canada research included studying the brain activity of 2,000 young Canadian adults through electroencephalograms (McSpadden, 2015). Although the study concludes that the leading causes for shortened attention spans have been

technological advancements and the increased use of mobile phones, this has become an unfortunate trend that has made traditional media like television, newspapers, and radio less attractive to many (McSpadden, 2015). Therefore, platforms such as TikTok could provide an alternative to capturing an individual's attention, as the videos are curated to be short and catchy.

Secondly, statistics show that "less than a third of youngsters trust what they see on TikTok – less than half the proportion that trust television news," meaning TikTok has the potential to attract younger audiences that may not be reading or tuning in to more traditional formats of news (Stokel-Walker, 2022).

Thirdly, TikTok is quite user-friendly and allows users to edit and upload videos easily, a key advantage for journalists. Journalists are increasingly expected to record and edit content themselves while adhering to strict deadlines. Therefore, posting on platforms like TikTok could make the process more time efficient.

The vast selection of social media platforms compete to be the most downloaded and socially relevant apps. TikTok has multiple facets that sets itself apart from the rest. The first notable aspect is the app's layout. When a user opens the app, they are automatically greeted with a video playing; this entices the user to keep watching. If they want to skip the video, they swipe up and are introduced to another video. The app is simple to use and requires only a few instructions to maneuver. One of the main differences TikTok incorporates is its "for you page." Powered by an algorithm, the app's "for you page" is dedicated to videos that are suggested to users according to their interests and other videos they have watched. Algorithms and user-tailored content are standard on social media apps, including Instagram and Facebook; however, TikTok is the only app that "unprecedentedly centers algorithmically driven feeds" and, in turn provides a uniquely catered experience to its users (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 2). TikTok creator Zhang

Yiming has kept silent on the specifics of the TikTok algorithm. Nevertheless, this personalization is achieved "through processes of aggregation, abstraction, and categorization" and then "rendered into consumer profiles" (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p.3). A user's actions on the app will determine their "algorithmic identity," an identity that has been curated through "mathematical algorithms to infer categories of identity on otherwise anonymous beings" (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 4). One's "algorithmic identity" is used to collect data, determine appropriate videos to present a user, and determine what advertisements to show according to their interests (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 4).

A 2022 study noted three main findings that showcase why TikTok is "unique in the eyes of users" (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 9). The first is that users admitted to being hyper-aware of the algorithm and found it exceptionally accurate (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 5). The study's second finding is that users described the content as high quality; this was linked to how well the algorithm showcased what a user was interested in (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 2). The study found that TikTok fell into a "variety of social media categories and none at all," meaning the app might have elements like other social media platforms, but still has a unique edge that hasn't been replicated yet (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 9). One example the study uses to explain the differences and similarities in the categorization of social media apps is the comparison with X (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p.8). Both X and TikTok can be placed under the "blogging" category within the social media realm; both apps "provide a stage for self-representation through the curation of content" that reflects a user's identity" (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 8). Both apps have "for you pages" which "offer a version" of self-identity curation by forming a self-identity for users through algorithmic content curation, which represents a form of their identity (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 9). The difference emerges when discussing the "lack of user control" users have over

their "for you" feeds (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 9). For example, while an X user's following will determine their home feed, TikTok's "for you" feed is run solely by its algorithm (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 9). Bhandari and Bimo (2022) coined the term "algorithmized self" to explain the TikTok model of "sociality" and how the "algorithmized self" offers users a "new understanding of oneself" as it heavily relies on one's "own persona" for engagement instead of one's social connections (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 9). Lastly, the study concludes that although TikTok does not provide radically different "features or affordances," it does introduce a new model that differs from the traditional "networked self" that is presented in other apps; instead, it relies on "self-representation and identity creation" (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022, p. 3).

TikTok is also famously known for data collection controversies, which cannot be ignored; with the app's ongoing success, it would be irresponsible not to address them. All social media apps contain a treasure trove of data that often leads to widespread concern over potential privacy issues when a user's data is collected. In the past, governments have banned apps to protect their country's citizen's data (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 78). For example, in June 2020, the government of India declared that particular social media apps, including TikTok, would be banned due to data privacy and national security concerns (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 78). In August of the same year, former U.S. President Donald Trump announced that TikTok threatened the United States and banned the app (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 78). However, the ban faced legal challenges and never fully came into force (Forrest, 2023). After Trump's presidential term ended, the Biden administration directed federal agencies to remove TikTok from all government-issued phones within 30 days (Forrest, 2023). Moreover, on March 13, 2024, The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill compelling ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok, to divest its operations in the United States or risk a

ban (Shepardson, 2024). This move comes after growing concerns over data security and potential foreign influence through popular social media platforms (Shepardson, 2024).

As mentioned, TikTok is not the only social media app that has dealt with government apprehensions towards data collected through social networking. Facebook dealt with a similar scandal in 2015, when allegations were made that Facebook had provided personal data to British political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 78). Facebook users were furious that their privacy was neglected. However, Facebook was let off "relatively lightly," having to pay a US\$640,000 fine (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 79). A study conducted in 2022 analyzed 200 popular applications from Apple's app store to find the apps that were collecting the most data. The study found that the two apps that retrieved the most data from their users were Google and TikTok (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 79). The difference between the two apps was the transparency on why the data was being collected; Google claims to "track your data" to "enhance" and "tailor" your online experience, while TikTok has yet to confirm its reasoning (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 79). Moreover, TikTok uses third-party trackers to collect data, the purpose of which is still unclear (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 79). Two hypotheses are: 1. TikTok uses third parties to track a user's whereabouts on the app for advertising optimization, or 2. TikTok takes the data from your profile to track your actions across your device (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 79). A study by Klais (2022) also suggests that the third-party trackers on TikTok could still be used even if a user opts out of being tracked in the app's settings (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 79). The lack of transparency on why TikTok tracks users has led to "speculation and inevitable conspiracy theories" (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 80). Staying vigilant and choosing apps that a user is comfortable with will become more crucial as AI, big data, and data optimization continue to be used regularly across all apps (Zulkifli, 2022, p. 80).

In the modern media environment, journalists are generally expected to have some working knowledge of the social media landscape; this has increasingly become a required skill in journalism job listings. However, not all journalists have the same views on whether social media platforms must be used in newsrooms. Mellado and Alfaro (2020) have theorized the different categories journalists might fall under when dealing with the modern-day journalist's role: the adapted, skeptical, and redefine (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266). All three approaches define a journalist's overall attitude toward social media in newsrooms and how they work with social media as a tool. The authors describe the adapted approach as when a journalist intends to "preserve the traditional roles and values" of being a journalist but will try to incorporate social media in their work (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266). The adapted approach could be understood as a television journalist who finishes their story wrap for a televised newscast who then posts the same story to social media, therefore maintaining the conventional elements of content produced for television but being open to adapting to a larger audience (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266). The skeptical approach can be described as a journalist who views social media as an "inappropriate" tool and "rejects" using social networks altogether (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266). Journalists who use the skeptical approach may refrain from using social media in their personal lives and at work; they will only work with traditional media such as radio and television (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266.) Lastly, Mellado and Alfaro (2020) describe the redefiner as a journalist who utilizes social media in their work and "innovates and redefines their professional identities and roles" within social media platforms (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266). When journalists take on the redefiner approach, they could either have a personal journalism social media account where they are building their following, creating innovative content for their news outlet, or even doing both. Redefiners create content specifically for social media platforms or post

behind-the-scenes footage of what it's like to work as a journalist, something that was rarely seen before social media (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266.) As the world evolves digitally, freelance journalists and news media outlets have hopped on the trend of looking for different platforms to reach larger audiences, leaving less room for journalists to take on the skeptical approach.

Using TikTok as a platform to communicate stories could alter many conventional practices in journalism, such as having increased interactive dialogue between journalists and audiences, potentially reduced objectivity in how journalists report stories, and relying on personal anecdotes to frame news stories. These practices associated with social media do not align with the long-established value of creating a professional barrier between the audience and the journalist's subjectivity. The relationship between journalists and audiences is understood in the same way, and it requires a balancing act that includes "constant adjustments and variations of boundary performances" (Revers, 2017, p. 167).

In the last decade, various studies have reported on the ongoing expansion of social media platforms and the creation of specially adapted content to cater to a digital audience (Peña-Fernández, Larrondo-Ureta & Morales-i-Gras, 2022, p. 2). A noteworthy study by Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García (2022) analyzed the journalistic adaption to TikTok. The researchers conducted an exploratory search of TikTok worldwide; they selected 234 accounts and conducted a content analysis of the 19 news media outlets and programs identified with a verified profile and general thematic scope (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022, p. 4). The findings showed a progressive incorporation of TikTok at news media outlets since 2019, with an increase in the purpose of informing and reinventing news media's brand by adapting to the logic of TikTok to attract younger audiences (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022, p. 1). The researchers found that news outlets were trying to transform their content from

"mass media logic," meaning the technological, economic, and organizational strategies of a traditional newsroom, to "social media logic," including strategies catering to social media platforms (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022, p. 1). A critical difference between the two strategies is the goal of virality; if a news story is posted online following "social media logic," the probability of it going viral is higher, which leads to a story reaching a larger audience faster than traditional mediums (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022, p. 4). However, the study emphasized balancing "abstract factual information and concrete, emotional and personalized storytelling," as understood in conventional media (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022, p. 4). The findings within the exploratory study concluded that TikTok created new possibilities for journalists by providing additional styles of reporting and the ability to reinvent a news organization's brand (Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022, p. 4). The study provides evidence that mainstream news media are modifying their content to keep up with the increasing popularity of TikTok but also indicates the importance of researching and improving social media strategies to ensure quality journalism on TikTok.

Although the public might enjoy the increased accessibility to information thanks to social media, an aspect that some might find inappropriate is journalists solely using the information found on social media apps as a source rather than investigating deeper into a story and finding additional sources, according to a study conducted in 2018 (Dubois, Gruzd & Jacobson, 2018, p.35). A survey of 1,500 online Canadians found that journalists quoting social media posts are perceived as "less appropriate" compared to reporting "aggregate data," such as "trending topics or sentiment" (Dubois, Gruzd & Jacobson, 2018, p. 35). The findings suggest that journalists should avoid "simply quoting an individual's social media posts" but provide a detailed description of where they found their data and their analysis procedures (Dubois, Gruzd & Jacobson, 2018, p.

35). The study's survey indicates that with social media as a platform for journalism, new protocols must be made to ensure the public feels they can trust the information online. Online news content is often produced by non-journalist rather than professional journalists and those affiliated with news outlets; therefore, clear distinctions between news outlet accounts and non-journalistic accounts are necessary. The clear distinction between a citizen journalist and a professional journalist may help indicate to audiences that the content they are viewing online has gone through rigorous journalistic processes. These conventional standards include vigorous research, trustworthy sources, and attention to detail. Although the media types employed in journalism may change, the trust audiences have in journalists remains top priority.

Moreover, news stories presented on social platforms offer other forms of social interaction with the addition of comment sections and sharing, an aspect that has only become available with online journalism in general. Traditional news media often need help knowing how audiences feel about the representation of a story. However, as social platforms encourage responses to media content, allowing many users a voice often leads to criticism about how the story is represented and reported on. A 2022 qualitative content analysis of TikTok videos and their related comments demonstrated TikTok audiences' feelings towards the representation of a news story and provided access to more information to help expand a story's narrative (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 1). The qualitative analysis focused on content collected via TikTok in the spring of 2021 about news representation of the Black Lives Matter movement and the January 6, 2021, Capitol Riot. The study concluded with three key findings: first, TikTok enables users to "dissect, critique, and expand news representations of protests" (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 1). Secondly, the research showed that "TikTok has also been used extensively for political expression," specifically by young users who take to TikTok to express

themselves on political matters creatively (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 1). Thirdly, social media has changed the production and consumption of news by challenging mainstream media's exclusivity to information (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 1). According to the authors, social media invites individuals to provide their unique perspectives and personal accounts of news events (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 2). Therefore, social media platforms like TikTok have become a significant source for news consumption (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 2). The study explains this further by adding that the increased use of TikTok as a means of expression on news events is due to "the platform's versatility" (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 4). TikTok offers a dynamic structure that allows users to be creative while voicing their opinions in various ways (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 4). The study showed that the audience's outlook on news coverage has changed due to TikTok's ability to give "ordinary citizens—or "everyday amateur experts" unprecedented opportunities to voice their opinions and experiences around journalism, media, and culture more broadly (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 23). Although there are advantages to having feedback on story coverage, such as potentially providing further information, correcting errors, and increasing engagement and visibility of a newsroom, media criticism could also negatively affect news outlets' credibility. The same study concludes that, as TikTok continues to gain the power to influence, future research on TikTok and how the "seemingly playful language of the platform can be used to palliate messages" will be vital (Literat, Boxman-Shabtai & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2022, p. 23). The increased need for further research will help assess the potential risk of misinformation and disinformation and how social platforms and journalists can overcome it, and finally, more global research is needed to supply additional perspectives.

2.2 Canadian News, Social Media, and Research

As a Canadian journalist, it felt appropriate to focus my research on Canadian news outlets. Furthermore, in my preliminary research, I found a significant gap in Canadian research discussing social media and journalism, as well as the use of TikTok in Canadian newsrooms. As TikTok is largely considered a "new" platform in news industries, limited selection of published research is understandable. However, within the available research, there needs to be more Canadian perspectives, which is what I intend to contribute with this project. In general, more perspectives in research are always beneficial, ensuring stronger, diverse, and balanced findings. Having more Canadian perspectives in research about journalism provides an additional layer of knowledge and ideas to a complex subject. Moreover, as Meta has blocked Canadian news outlets from posting content on Instagram and Facebook, it will be vital to understand how the lack of access to two large social platforms will have on the overall sharing of information globally. In a world that has begun transitioning many facets of everyday life online, understanding the lack of access to Canadian news for Canadians will be essential (the Online News Act/Bill C-18 discussed further on pp. 21 - 24).

Furthermore, existing research on TikTok in journalism has mainly been based in the United States and the United Kingdom. The lack of Canadian research on social media in general does not reflect the actual popularity of social networking in Canada. A study conducted by the University of British Columbia researchers in 2011 found that "nearly 60 percent of Canadians—the equivalent of more than 15 million people" use social media sites regularly (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). The study was conducted through a survey that included 1,700 Canadian adults (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). Most participants noted that social media exposes them to a broader range of news than traditional media (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, &

Korell, 2011). The study also found that 71% of Canadians who visit social networking platforms use them to gather their news (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). Interestingly, the study stated that although global news organizations increasingly use social media as a platform for news, Canadian social media users tend to rely on "their personal networks to filter their news" (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). The study found that the number of Canadian social media users who use links and recommendations from their friends online is double that of those who obtain their news directly from news organizations or journalists (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). Although the number of social media users in Canada is rising, the study concluded that, in 2011, Canadians still found traditional news media more trustworthy; 25% of individuals surveyed said social media is reliable, while 90% said their trust is still in conventional media (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). Moreover, age plays a significant trust factor as younger audiences are likelier to trust news online than older Canadians (Hermida, Logan, Fletcher, & Korell, 2011). Although the study was conducted before TikTok was created, the study is still relevant as social media apps have become more popular than in 2011, specifically TikTok, the app is experiencing the fastest rate of growth among Canadians, with TikTok tripling its reach to Canadians since 2019 (Deschamps, 2023).

Both Canadian and American news outlets have transitioned to posting their news content to social media, further prompting citizens from both countries to use social media as a news source. Studies show that social media is a top news source for 52% of Canadians and 48% of Americans (Canadian Journalism Foundation, 2019). Although there is no "single recipe for success" on the TikTok app, some news outlets have taken different approaches; some have relied on "strategies based on young creators" and the utilization of "its unique language" (Newman,

2022). On the other hand, some newsrooms have preferred to maintain "minimal changes to existing tone or content" when creating online stories (Newman, 2022).

The Washington Post is an excellent example of redefining what news can look like online. The news company posts a variety of TikTok's, some that include "serious" news where a journalist is speaking directly to the camera, while others are light-hearted skits that communicate a news story in a comedic way. These increasingly keep up with TikTok trends and sounds by incorporating them within the news story. As of 2024, The Washington Post's TikTok account has garnered high engagement rates, with over 1 million followers and 84.4 million views.

2.3 Bill C-18 and its impacts on Canadian news providers

Bill C-18 requires big tech companies to compensate media organizations for contributing for contributing Canadian news on their platforms (Aiello & Jones, 2023). In Canada, the Online News Act, or Bill C-18, received royal ascent on June 22, 2023 (Aiello & Jones, 2023). Meta the company who owns Facebook and Instagram decided to block Canadian news because of the Bill becoming law rather than compensating Canadian news outlets (Aiello & Jones, 2023). Since then, Canadian news media outlets have struggled to figure out how to adapt to the new online limitations of posting on Instagram and Facebook. Bill C-18 was first read in the House of Commons on April 5, 2022 (Aiello & Jones, 2023). The federal government passed the Online News Act to help sustain the Canadian news industry, which has struggled to see consistent ad revenue and subscriptions online (Aiello & Jones, 2023). The controversial law, often misunderstood by some as the "censorship bill," seeks to enhance fairness between the Canadian news industry and online platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Google, and others (Aiello & Jones,

2023). The federal government has framed the Online News Act as a bargaining tool that requires big tech companies to compensate media organizations if they want to continue posting Canadian news on their platforms (Aiello & Jones, 2023). According to the Government of Canada, the law does not automatically require companies like Meta to compensate news organizations for using their news content; instead, it gives parties the "flexibility to bargain over compensation based on the nature of the content" (Government of Canada, 2022). The Online News Act attempts to create a broad approach to monetizing news online (Government of Canada, 2022). The reason Bill C-18 took form, according to the Government of Canada, was to allow news outlets to continue to post their information online as they did before the law was passed, but to allow for "market-driven negotiations" (Government of Canada, 2022).

In response to the Online News Act, Meta, the company that owns Instagram and Facebook, has wholly blocked news from Canadian sources on their platforms. Starting in summer 2023, people looking at a Canadian news organization's Facebook or Instagram accounts were greeted with a message that read, "People in Canada can't see this content; in response to Canadian government legislation, news content can't be viewed in Canada." Many Canadian news outlets began asking their audiences through their social media account stories and televised newscasts to download their news app to continue to see their stories online. Each news organization posted a statement about the Online News Act, summarizing that Meta has begun removing their posts from its platforms and that the public can no longer view their content. Many news organizations have since transitioned their content to other online platforms to remain afloat and maintain their presence in the online world. The Meta block has begun to affect newsrooms across Canada by limiting access to an online audience. As newsrooms scramble to find other solutions to post stories online, social media platforms such as TikTok have become a main focus.

Although some newsrooms have begun incorporating TikTok, research by the Reuters Institute indicates news on TikTok is still less likely to be produced by professional journalists and is mainly generated by social media influencers, activists, and ordinary people (Newman, 2022, p. 3). However, about 49% of top news organizations worldwide have begun using TikTok to publish their content in the last few years (Newman, 2022, p. 3). Many news publishers are "attracted to the fast-growing audience and younger demographic" while still wanting to ensure they can provide reliable news (Newman, 2022, p. 4). But, ongoing widespread misinformation on the app has deterred some news outlets from using it (Newman, 2022, p. 11). Some news outlets are also hesitant to use the app due to its Chinese ownership and "the potential implications for free speech" (Newman, 2022, p. 4). Moreover, others say that the 'TikTok-ification of news' risks trivializing important stories as well as undermining business models that depend on referral traffic from social networks" (Newman, 2022, p. 4). However, Newman explains that there isn't "a single recipe for success on TikTok" as a newsroom can choose many different avenues to incorporate their stories on the platform (Newman, 2022, p. 4). Some newsrooms choose to "TikTok-ify" their stories using strategies "based on young creators who are native to the platform and its unique language" and trends; while others prefer having minimal changes towards the content they post on TikTok, rather keep their videos similar to their broadcast news content (Newman, 2022, p. 4).

A top concern for news organizations is whether TikTok can allow for valuable, meaningful, and trustworthy news, an issue that will be addressed in the following section. As Canadian newsrooms have limited options regarding what social media platforms they can post their content on due to the current policy environment, exploring and evaluating other social platforms' functionality and benefits for journalists will be vital in ensuring Canadian newsrooms' success within their digital sector. The success accompanied by posting on a popular social

platform should not be solely driven by how many views a news outlet's journalistic content gets but by other considerations, such as whether the story is still informative and useful or whether the story's quality suffers while adhering to social platforms standards.

3. Theoretical Approach

Irene Costera Meijer's (2022) "What is Valuable Journalism? Three Key Experiences and Their Challenges for Journalism Scholars and Practitioners" highlights the importance of quality and standards in journalistic work. Costera Meijer tackles the subjective question of "what makes good journalism" and conceptualizes what makes a story valuable for audiences. Costera Meijer states that for a news item to be considered "valuable," it must evoke one of three key experiences: to have the audience "learn something new, get recognition, or increase mutual understanding" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). According to Costera Meijer, one news item does not have to activate all three experiences at once; however, a news story having one or more of these characteristics results in what Costera Meijer considers "valuable journalism" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). She defines valuable journalism as the combination of "news enjoyment and civic empowerment;" a story must be able to provide individuals with a sense of belonging while still maintaining inspiration and meaningfulness (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 234). Additionally, Costera Meijer's definition of "valuable journalism" maintains the traditional value that a journalist must strive for truthfulness and accuracy when reporting a story. Each experience in Costera Meijer's valuable journalism theory entices audiences to stay updated with the news. Firstly, "getting recognition" allows individuals to feel acknowledged and "touches upon a fundamental need to be seen, heard, and listened to" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 234). Proper representation is essential in storytelling to conquer stereotypes and to avoid minority groups feeling overlooked, ridiculed, and

discriminated against (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 234). Secondly, "learning something new" touches upon the pleasurable side of news: it allows people to feel inspired and accomplished by opening their horizons to new information and opinions (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). Lastly, the third key experience is "increased mutual understanding," which offers personal awareness of one's "social relatedness" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). This experience contributes to overall "public knowledge," meaning "what is recognized or accepted" in society (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). This key experience allows individuals to have more informed conversations by providing insight into someone else's point of view (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). If incorporated properly, Costera Meijer insists that these three experiences present opportunities for a journalist to make a difference in society by creating valuable information that people can include in their everyday lives. In her study, Costera Meijer included participants from a "spectrum in terms of age, gender, education, and cultural backgrounds" (Costera Meijer's, 2022, p. 234), and studied her topic in several ways, such as "through in-depth interviews, focus groups, street intercept interviews and (open-ended) surveys" (Costera Meijer's, 2022, p. 231).

Costera Meijer does not explicitly mention any social media platforms in her article but does indicate the free access to information that social media provides has contributed to many "societal problems such as fragmentation and polarization" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 231). TikTok, unlike other traditional journalism media such as print, television, and radio, has no concrete storytelling values, conventions, or clear-cut guidelines. This, in turn, may contribute to the ongoing issues of the spread of misinformation online and division in society. Using Costera Meijer's key news experiences, I evaluated each TikTok account included in my research through the "valuable journalism" lens to determine whether their content can be considered "valuable" (the approach and methodological considerations for this research are explained in detail in the

next section). The analysis was done to help answer the question of whether news organizations are curating journalism on TikTok that, from a theoretical perspective, adds value for their audiences. Not all content on TikTok needs to elicit Costera Meijer's news experiences; however, if an account's purpose is to be journalistic, then Costera Meijer's concept of "valuable journalism" could help gain insight into the values and practices that aid in creating impactful journalistic work.

4. TikTok analysis: method

This research focuses on three Canadian commercial mainstream news outlets with a TikTok presence: CTV News, Global News, and CityNews Toronto. I selected these three outlets for the following reasons:

1. CTV News is affiliated with Bell Media, Canada's largest media company. Therefore, CTV News has a considerable amount of power and resources.
2. I chose CityNews Toronto, as the style of some of its broadcast content is similar to the TikTok content it posts. CityNews' local channels often produce stories filmed on smartphones and include fast-paced storytelling resembling many TikTok videos. Rogers Sports and Media—one of Bell Media's main competitors—owns CityNews. Unlike CTV News and Global News, CityNews has no general national account; they solely have provincial or city-specific TikTok accounts. Nevertheless, CityNews' Toronto account has the most activity out of all their local TikTok accounts. It also does not solely post Toronto-centred content but also national and international stories, which is why CityNews' Toronto account was chosen for this analysis.

3. Global News's focus is primarily national news and has a highly active TikTok page. Global News is owned by Corus Entertainment, which oversees the network's national news programming and local news on its 21 owned-and-operated stations.

I analyzed videos posted on each account between August 11 and November 11, 2023. The total number of TikTok videos analyzed in this research is 542 across all three news outlets' TikTok accounts. This analysis sought to qualitatively describe and compare each TikTok video reviewed in this study to determine whether they embody one or more of Costera Meijer's (2022) valuable news experiences, as described in the previous section. While not a formal thematic analysis, the present study mobilizes concepts from Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke's (2006) approach to help guide my review and description of the TikTok videos. Notably, Braun and Clarke (2006) outline a "reflexive approach" to analyzing patterns found in the data. The "reflexive approach" was used as it embraces "researcher subjectivity as a resource for research, rejecting positivist notions of researcher bias" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 2). This approach also allows researchers to use "an inherently interpretative practice" while still finding meaning without being tied solely to formulas and numerical data to find patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 2). I focused my analysis on specific aspects of each TikTok video, such as format, tone, multimedia elements, story topics, geographical location of where the stories took place, and number of views (explained further in the following subsections).

As Costera Meijer (2022) explains, a journalistic story should evoke certain feelings to help expose individuals to one or more valuable experiences in her framework (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). Costera Meijer lists specific feelings associated with each valuable experience; these feelings were a guiding factor in this research. The list of feelings guided my analysis and helped me understand which aspects needed to be present in a given TikTok video to evoke the feelings

associated with each of Costera Meijer's three valuable experiences. As seen in Figure 1 (p. 29), I analyzed how each TikTok video was constructed. I then used my interpretations of each TikTok to observe how the videos might align with one or more of Costera Meijer's "valuable journalism" experiences. My interpretations and responses to the TikTok videos allowed me to become a stand-in figure for the audience. Using a 'researcher-as-proxy' for the audience approach allowed me to extend Costera Meijer's work on what people find valuable in traditional journalism media to a contemporary, visually-driven social media platform. Subjectivity is often looked down on in journalism and research, as it is understood to be biased and un-generalizable; however, subjectivity in this present research was an essential aspect, as Costera Meijer's theoretical framework is rooted in subjective interpretations. Costera Meijer's (2022) "valuable journalism" framework is constructed from "a range of appreciated subjective perceptions" that were gathered through her mixed-method research approach (Costera Meijer, 2022, pp. 233) (as noted in this essay's Theoretical Approach section on pp. 25-27). Thus, during my analysis of the TikTok videos included in this research, I asked myself various questions about the relationship between the content, multimedia elements of each TikTok, Costera Meijer's feelings, and their relation to creating value. This reflexive process and the questions I asked are illustrated in Figure 2 (p. 30).

It is crucial to reiterate that Costera Meijer's valuable journalism framework was shaped by research involving audience members to incorporate their perspectives. The present study did not survey or interview audience members; rather, it solely employed Costera Meijer's valuable journalism framework to analyze news organizations' TikTok content. This study concentrated on employing my own subjective and reflexive interpretations of the videos, guided by Costera Meijer's framework, to offer preliminary insights into its applicability to TikTok content created

by news organizations. Readers should thus interpret the research findings with awareness of these limitations.

FIGURE 1: Costera Meijer's (2022) key experiences of valuable journalism (p. 236)

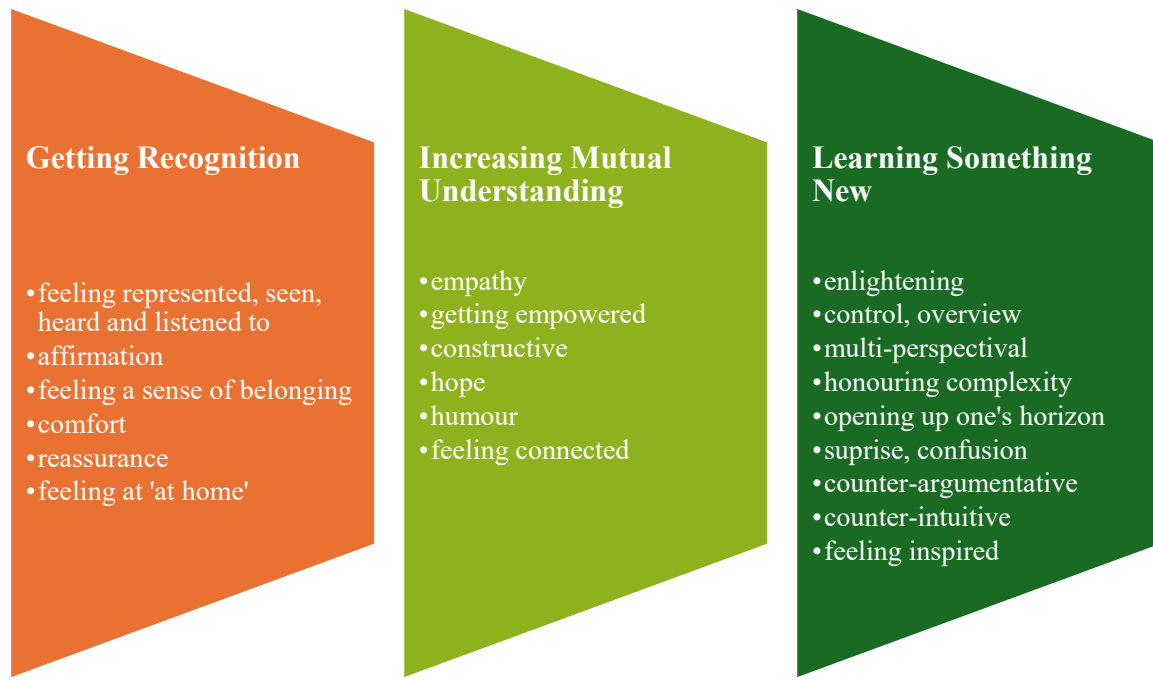


FIGURE 2: Analysis process and questions

Increased Mutual Understanding:

Multimedia elements:

Are there elements that help viewers go beyond their understandings of the world?

Are there voiceovers to ensure all sides are clearly articulated?

Are there visuals to help guide viewers' understandings of the story?

Story topics:

Does the topic allow an individual to become aware of one's social relatedness?

Tone:

Does the tone allow the audience to feel "hope," "humour," or "empathy?"

Does the tone encourage mutual understanding without biases?

Geographical location:

Does the location of the story allow people to feel "connected?"

Format:

Does the format create the opportunity for a common understanding of the story?

Learning something new:

Multimedia elements:

Does the video include graphics that help audiences retain information easier (e.g. charts, graphs).

Story topics:

Does the topic include information that may not be common knowledge to the audience?

Tone:

Does the tone match the complexity of the story?

Does the tone help audiences focus on the information being given and potentially retain the information?

Geographical location:

Does the story help the audience learn more about its location?

Format:

Does the structure of the story allow people to easily retain information?

Getting recognition:

Multimedia elements:

Does the video include interviews with underrepresented individuals?

Does the video include closed captions or subtitles to ensure all audiences can understand the story?

Does the video include graphics and/or banners to ensure individuals involved are properly identified?

Story topics:

Does the topic of the story help illustrate a proper representation of an individual, event or subject?

Tone:

Does the tone of the video match the story's topic to ensure proper representation?

Geographical location:

Does the story help the audience learn more about its location?

Format:

Is the story structured in a way that contributes to proper representation?

In the following subsections, I elaborate on the individual elements of the TikTok videos I focused on to conduct my analysis and determine how the videos fit the criteria for each of the three valuable news experiences.

4.1 Multimedia elements

Multimedia elements aid in grabbing the viewers' attention, especially in an overloaded media landscape like a social media platform. Moreover, multimedia elements enhance coverage by allowing a content producer to creatively highlight specific aspects of a story to ensure it resonates with its viewers. A journalist can use an array of multimedia elements depending on the medium or platform they are using to tell a story. For example, television requires b-roll footage, soundbites, voiceovers, photos, graphics, and more to entice viewers to keep watching and engage with the information being communicated. Content on social media platforms requires similar elements to stand out; for example, videos posted on social media platforms often include text, images, animation, sound, and video (Liu, 2021, p. 2). In a visual story, "good information organization," "multiple integrations," and "logical gradual progress" are key (Liu, 2021, p. 2). Multimedia elements must be used strategically within a story by meeting "people's practical needs and paying attention to the unity and integrity of the situation and content" (Liu, 2021, p.9). Visual communication that uses multimedia elements must intertwine "technology and art harmoniously," meaning the multimedia elements must focus on the purpose of "information transmission" while reflecting an "aesthetic function" (Liu, 2021, p. 9). There is a psychological aspect to using numerous multimedia elements, as they structure the information and content, eliciting different experiences from viewers (Liu, 2021, p. 9). Therefore, in the context of this research, noting the various multimedia elements within a TikTok can allow a clearer understanding of what feelings and reactions a given story can evoke. Suppose a story includes a multimedia element like a visual

board depicting statistics; this element ensures an individual can more easily retain the information than through audio alone. The emphasis on visually depicting statistics can aid the audience in experiencing Costera Meijer's experience of "learning something new" because the story provides a more accessible experience for grasping the information.

4.1.1 Story Topic

Story topics are one of the most critical aspects of storytelling; a topic guides a journalist on how to put together a story. Ensuring a topic is relevant to society is vital in providing value. One American study ranked what news topics were most important to Americans in their daily lives; they found that 70% of Americans said the weather was the most important topic for their daily life (Pew Research Center, 2019). Crime, traffic, and changing prices were ranked in second place, with "roughly four in ten" or more "saying each is vital information for daily life" (Pew Research Center, 2019). Other topics ranged from sports, arts, culture, and jobs, which were still essential for respondents' daily lives (Pew Research Center, 2019). Beyond the immediate importance to their daily lives, most of the study's respondents found each topic listed interesting enough to follow (Pew Research Center's, 2019). This study provides evidence that topics are relevant to discuss when analyzing the value of certain stories. In my analysis, I asked questions such as, "Does the story's topic help illustrate a proper representation of an individual, event, or subject?" or "Does the story include enough information to allow the audience to learn something new about the topic? These questions were asked to help decipher whether a given topic has the potential to evoke one or more feelings on Costera Meijer's list (Fig. 1), which could lead to experiencing one or more of her valuable news experiences.

4.1.2 Tone

Aligning tone and content is critical to creating a seamless story with a clear message. The tone of a story refers to the relationship between the general emotion and style applied to the content of a story. Research shows that the tone of a story has immense power and "plays a role in how the public views an issue" (Caulfield & Rachul, 2015, p. 2). A 2015 content analysis of Canadian newspaper coverage of health policy decisions examined 530 articles about "access to health therapies and technologies from 15 major Canadian newspapers over a 10-year period" (Caulfield & Rachul, 2015, p. 1). Although explicitly focused on newspaper coverage of health policy and not general interest social media content, this study still indicates a story's tone is vital to analyze as it informs audiences of the journalist's intent and more precise understanding of the message behind each story. As Costera Meijer's concept is rooted in the need to "deepen our perception, analysis, and understanding of "how people use journalism in their everyday lives, and their "sensory experience" with news content, an analysis of tone became essential to this research as well (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 231).

4.1.3 Format

The format of stories in journalism varies depending on the medium used and the story's purpose. Video formats have changed over time, and the use of video within the news in general has become more popular (Newman, 2015). In 2015, a global study found that short news clips posted by news outlets online were most viewed regularly at 66%, particularly when the stories were breaking news (Newman, 2015). A short news clip was defined in this study as a video that included a "reporter analysis or an interview with an expert," often accompanied by an article (Newman, 2015). Casual users are likelier to watch short news clips as they are more likely to

show up on social media platforms (Newman, 2015). Social media invites a whole new set of formats journalists can use to tell a particular story. Therefore, my research kept track of the TikTok video formats to understand how distinct formats could affect what potentially valuable experience an individual might feel while watching the videos.

4.1.4 Story location

The geographical location of a given news story tells the audience whether the story is local, national, or international. Ensuring visuals of a location or a reporter live at the scene of a story has always been vital in traditional news media to create a visual understanding of a story through a journalistic lens (Schmitz Weiss, 2018, p.1). The story's location is significant, as journalism has the power to shape a community (Schmitz Weiss, 2018, p. 48). In Costera Meijer's concept of "increasing mutual understanding," for example, she states the experience is rooted in "feeling connected;" value comes from deepening "people's comprehension of the world, their country, region, city or neighborhood" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). Therefore, observing the location of each TikTok video and how the location is portrayed becomes critical to potentially experiencing "increased mutual understanding" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239).

Through highlighting representative examples from each of the three news outlets' TikTok accounts, the following sections provide an overview of this analysis' main findings and the connections to Costera Meijer's three valuable journalism experiences I identified.

5. TikTok analysis: findings

5.1 CTV News

CTV News has an immensely active TikTok account with a daily posting average of two to six videos. In a three-month span analyzed here, CTV News posted 433 TikTok videos. The content of these posts aligns with the stories within that day's news cycle; CTV News' TikTok posts are usually about the day's biggest stories.

The analysis indicates that CTV News posts a large selection of TikToks and various formats. For example, on September 22, 2023, ¹Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived in Canada to meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. CTV News posted six TikToks, each reporting on one of six parts of Zelenskyy's trip. Each TikTok posted on the day of Zelenskyy's visit to Canada provided a short-form video diary of the day. The six TikToks encapsulating Zelenskyy's visit do not include an anchor, reporter, or voiceover but instead feature edited clips of the day. The only speakers in all six videos are Trudeau and Zelenskyy, each providing speeches about Canada's involvement in the war in Ukraine. The tone in all six videos is conveyed as happy and hopeful, especially in the fifth TikTok of the day, which showcases Zelenskyy giving a thank-you speech to Canada for their help in Ukraine. Moreover, the third TikTok of Zelenskyy's visit shows him arriving at the House of Commons, where he's welcomed with a standing ovation. The six TikToks each featured two multimedia elements, namely video footage and subtitles, when either leader spoke to ensure their words were understood. Furthermore, it was evident that the stories took place in Ottawa, Canada, providing viewers with local/national coverage of an international

¹ the first video titled "[Zelenskyy arrives in Ottawa,](#)" the second video "[Zelenskyy meets with Trudeau on Parliament Hill,](#)" third: "[Zelenskyy welcomed in the house of commons,](#)" fourth: "[Ukraine to receive \\$650 m in military support,](#)" " fifth: "[Zelenskyy thanks Canada for support](#)" and "and lastly: "[Canada and Ukraine "fight for life": Zelenskyy.](#)"

story. Overall, this set of six TikToks received a lot of engagement; the first TikTok of the Zelenskyy visit obtained 2.5 million views alone. Lastly, a noteworthy observation is the day's coverage overall; although the videos were not edited as a traditional newscast—for example, they did not include reporter stand-ups, an anchor, nor any b-roll—all six TikToks together provided the audience with a sufficient summary of Zelenskyy's visit. Rather than one long video of the entire day, CTV News cut up the day and organized the TikTok videos to highlight specific moments.

According to Costera Meijer's valuable journalism framework, CTV News has provided audiences with enough information to provoke various emotions while watching these six TikToks, which could lead to a valuable experience. Furthermore, as Costera Meijer states, people "value stories which evoke their understanding of complex social situations" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 241). CTV News has supplied viewers with short-form videos illustrating a layer of complex relationships between two countries (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 241). Firstly, CTV News' TikToks about Zelenskyy's visit to Canada had an uplifting tone. Costera Meijer (2022) argues that if a story provokes feelings of hope and feeling connected, audiences can experience an "increased mutual understanding" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). Canadian audiences might feel "connected" by understanding what their government is doing in an international conflict. As CTV's TikTok showcased both Trudeau and Zelenskyy solidifying their alliance, this could evoke some feelings of "hope" about the overall situation. Another experience that viewers might have been inclined to feel, according to Costera Meijer's concept, is "learning something new." This can happen when a news item shines a light on a "multi-perspectival" subject (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 238). The six TikToks on Zelenskyy's visit informed the public about Canada's reaction to the war in Ukraine and allowed viewers to learn about Canada's approach, providing them with information to create

their own opinions on whether they agree with Canada's stance. In their TikTok videos, CTV News embodied this multi-perspective approach by highlighting the two leaders' speeches, which outlined Canada's support for Ukraine. CTV News' coverage through these TikTok videos allows viewers to learn what Canada is doing concerning the war in Ukraine. CTV News' TikTok coverage of Zelenskyy's visit captured that day's emotions, from potentially feeling hopeful for a resolution to feeling connected by understanding how the Canadian government's solidarity with Ukraine connects Canadians to the war in Ukraine.

Many of the other stories on CTV News' TikTok account also include clips of politicians explaining political issues, such as the ongoing housing crisis in Canada and the war in the Middle East. CTV News employs a common approach to its TikTok videos: many of these stories are divided into two separate TikToks to capture two sides of the political spectrum, such as the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party's views on the given issue. For example, two TikToks were made to portray [Justin Trudeau](#) and [Pierre Poilievre's responses](#) to the housing crisis. In one video posted on September 17, 2023, Poilievre discusses his opinion that Trudeau has done nothing to help with the rising cost of living and adds that the Conservatives could do more to help. In another TikTok posted on October 24, 2024, Trudeau is seen speaking about how Poilievre uses false information to scare Canadians and discusses his actions to help the housing crisis. The format of both TikToks does not resemble a traditional newscast but rather short snippets of a longer speech. The topic is serious, and the tone in the videos matches. There are also no additional multimedia elements included in either TikTok; the videos are simply clips of both politicians' speeches in which they discuss the issue at hand. Interestingly, Trudeau's video received more views than the one focused on Poilievre, with 78,100 views versus 41,700. Although there is no specific way of knowing why one party got more views than the other, posting one TikTok

addressing an issue and posting a response is a strategic way of ensuring both sides of the story are told. This example illustrates Costera Meijer's "increased mutual understanding" experience, which she refers to as "the ability to follow an argument," comprehend different perspectives, expand one's understanding, and "debate the alternative purposes that might be pursued" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). The trend of posting opposing political sides through individual TikTok videos helps communicate more aspects of the argument in question and additional perspectives.

One notable example of a video that embodies the "learning something new" experience on the CTV News' account was the TikTok posted on the 20th anniversary of the August 13, 2003, [North American blackout](#). Posted on August 14, 2023, this TikTok provides archival news footage from CTV's report in 2003 that includes an overall explanation of the event through a reporter's voiceover; the TikTok also has old footage and photos of that day. This video falls under the "learning something new" experience for two reasons: firstly, if someone is too young to have lived through the blackout or was not aware that a blackout happened, it allows the individual to feel "enlightened" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). Secondly, the North American blackout TikTok is a repost from an old tv news package; therefore, it offers an audience an "overview" of the situation; the format provides an outline of the story from start to finish, including the date, a reporter, details about how the blackout came about, and "multiple-perspectives" of the day through interviews. Costera Meijer indicates that when a story is presented in such a way, it allows an individual to experience "learning something new" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). The subject of the story being a blackout is not a light topic; however, the video is put together in such a way to highlight the positive side of the incident by including visuals, such as people receiving free transportation that day and an interview with a man who was providing free rides for people with

his car. Interestingly, the video garnered 102,600 views and is one of the few TikToks posted on CTV News' account with a traditional news format that includes a reporter telling the story.

One of the CTV News TikToks that demonstrated evidence of "getting recognition" was titled ["Trudeau's message to millennials."](#) It focused on Justin Trudeau's August 23, 2023 speech that, despite the video's title, was targeted to "young Canadians" generally. The video shows Trudeau exhibiting empathy for today's young people, explaining that they lost two years during the pandemic that held them back from starting their early adulthood and careers, and they are now left with an economy that is riddled with challenges. The "Trudeau's message to millennials" TikTok ends with some solutions Trudeau has put forward to aid young Canadians in transitioning to adulthood. The format of the TikTok is a short clip from Trudeau's speech, and although the topic is quite serious, the tone of the video conveys "comfort" and "hope" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). These two feelings are both present in Costera Meijer's description of two valuable experiences: "comfort" is described as embodying the "getting recognition" experience (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). At the same time, "hope" is included in "increasing mutual understanding" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). The TikTok got almost 500,000 views, indicating many were interested in what the prime minister said about the young Canadian generations. The solutions stated in the TikTok included removing interest on student loans and increasing career opportunities, therefore providing more evidence of Costera Meijer's valuable journalism concept; this story could be seen as eliciting a "getting recognition" experience, as it aims to inform and reassure young Canadians (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). In this TikTok, the story topic is the main factor that could help individuals potentially experience value; the editorial choice to include this specific speech clip as a standalone TikTok may allow young Canadians to feel "seen" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). This type of representation provides young Canadian viewers with

information to help them think critically when handling their concerns. Affirmation and reassurance are two essential feelings that produce the experience of "getting recognition," according to Costera Meijer, which are evident in this TikTok video through its affirmation that young people did experience a delay in a normal adulthood and reassurances that the Canadian government is addressing these concerns (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). However, as Costera Meijer states, stories can overlap with experiences, and this could lead to the story providing more value; in this case, one could argue that feelings of "constructive" and "empowered" could be sensed while watching this TikTok. One could watch this TikTok and feel "empowered" after knowing the government is addressing an issue faced by a specific age group or "constructive" when deciding whether they agree with the actions being taken, this could lead to experiencing "increasing mutual understanding" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239).

Overall, regarding Costera Meijer's "valuable journalism" theory, CTV News has provided a variety of stories that help audiences potentially experience all three news experiences. Some supplementary multimedia elements could also add more creative ways to tell a story, from different editing formats, animations, information system maps, music, graphics, and live videos. On their website, TikTok states, "You want your viewers to stay with you until your video ends, so really think about innovative ways to tell your stories "when explaining how to create a successful TikTok (TikTok, 2021). Moreover, Costera Meijer states that journalists must analyze how specific "designs" of stories can function to potentially "honor complexity" in stories (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 246). Multimedia elements are used in televised newscasts, but further using them on social platforms could help provide journalists with additional creative tools to honor more complex stories, which aligns with creating more opportunities to feel and experience value.

Moreover, CTV News provides a variety of formats within their account. Still, the traditional news story/package format gets more views. This could be linked to what TikTok suggests is the winning formula for a successful TikTok video. TikTok states on its website that, "Some best practices include structuring your videos like a story with a beginning, a middle, and an ending" (TikTok, 2021).

Furthermore, CTV News carries its standards of providing a mix of international, local, and national stories without compromising on truth and rigorous research. The stories delivered on CTV News' TikTok page are relevant to a global audience but focus on Canadian content, which is vital in a policy environment where other platforms currently block Canadian news content. There is a focus on news catered to Toronto locals, which could deter some non-Torontonians from continuing to watch if they feel underrepresented. The geographical location where stories occur is vital to storytelling; Costera Meijer argues that when a story properly represents a group of people, including neighbors from the exact location, it induces people to "feel at home" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 237). Furthermore, the representation allows audiences to experience "getting recognition," which can provide audiences with the sense of "relief of being able to recognize other people's experiences as similar to one's own" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 237).

5.2 CityNews Toronto

CityNews Toronto has the least active TikTok page of the three news organizations included in this research, with only 11 videos posted between August 11 and November 11, 2023. CityNews often formats its stories on TikTok to provide online audiences with the same clips as its television audiences.

One TikTok post on September 11, 2023, discusses how the federal government has set a timeline to bring [cell phone services to all of Toronto's subway stations](#), meaning individuals will have wireless access to use their cell phones in the subway. This TikTok is a TV news package reposted from TV to TikTok, which includes a reporter voiceover and b-roll that depicts different shots of Toronto's subway stations. The TikTok provides all the necessary information needed to understand the timeline of when Torontonians will have wireless connection in their subway system, including the exact date individual subway station will have the connection. This TikTok also includes closed captions in the center of the video that are timed to what the reporter is saying. This video garnered 701,500 views, clearly reaching a significant number of individuals. The story's tone is quite happy and hopeful, with the reporter saying lines such as, "So that's really only a few weeks from now where they expect people to be able to have some services on the network." As the tone of this TikTok provides the audience with positive news and hope for a better public transportation experience, this story could illustrate an "increasing mutual understanding" experience (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 241). Another layer of the "increasing mutual understanding" experience in this TikTok is the story being catered toward the local and shared experience of traveling through the city of Toronto through public transportation. Costera Meijer argues that this experience is rooted in a "we" perspective, meaning a story that is oriented in a "common frame of reference" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 241). A story about what is going on in a particular city allows those living there to "feel connected" as they increase their mutual understanding of how their city is changing and how it will affect locals.

Like CTV News, many of the videos on CityNews Toronto's TikTok account take a political focus. Like CTV News, many of the TikTok's were of politicians addressing certain issues. For example, CityNews posted a TikTok on August 31, 2023, that showed [Ontario Premier Doug Ford](#)

[addressing a reporter](#) who criticized his actions on the housing crisis. The TikTok begins with the reporter questioning at what point Ford takes personal responsibility for the housing crisis in Ontario and how people are supposed to trust in his leadership. Ford then is seen firing back, stating that the reporter cannot speak about the housing crisis as the reporter has a home. After Ford finishes his response, another reporter joins the discussion and adds that many people will not appreciate Ford attacking reporters for where they live. Ford concludes the debate by apologizing to the first reporter but stating that respect goes both ways. This TikTok is quite fascinating due to the multiple topics being discussed in a short time. The multimedia elements are limited—the only aspect is a caption throughout the TikTok in the middle of the screen, which reads, "You don't attack me, I don't attack him: Ford gets heated with reporters, defends Greenbelt plan." The Greenbelt Plan, Ford explains, is a project set up to protect the environment and secure greenspace in Ontario communities. The topics discussed are the housing crisis and its connection to Ontario's Greenbelt project, which limits urban growth to protect natural heritage and the relationship between Ford and reporters. As this clip covers more than one topic, it increases the potential for audiences to feel more than one experience. One could argue that this TikTok could potentially provide audiences with all three experiences. For example, audiences may experience "learning something new" because, as Costera Meijer explains, this experience is rooted in a user experience that provides counterarguments and could "offer them perspectives they were unaware of" and broaden their horizon on the topic at hand (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 238). As mentioned, this TikTok provides two sides to one issue: the Ford government and how they feel they have addressed the housing crisis, and reporters questioning the validity of the Ford government's actions during the housing crisis. Therefore, the TikTok provides the audience with two sides to one story. Secondly, the TikTok exhibits the connection and potential risk of the Greenbelt project

in Ontario by including a clip of a reporter addressing the public's concern. Costera Meijer states that when people comprehend what is going on in their region or neighborhood, this can help create valuable journalism, which is linked to the experience of "learning something new" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). Lastly, this TikTok addresses concerns over what is being done for those struggling with the housing crisis, a criterion for the "getting recognition" experience (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). The experience of being acknowledged allows people to feel "seen, heard, listened to, and qualify as a subject or even as a human being" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 237).

As mentioned previously, CityNews Toronto mainly focuses on stories based in Toronto. However, there are some examples of national and international stories. For instance, one TikTok posted on August 8, 2023, shows [Justin Trudeau discussing the Meta block](#). The TikTok is a short clip of Trudeau's reaction to Meta blocking Canadian news on its platforms. The tone of Trudeau's TikTok is serious, as it portrays Trudeau sternly disagreeing with Meta's actions and condemning them for not supporting Canadian journalism. This TikTok includes no additional multimedia elements except for a caption that reads, "Trudeau lashes out at Facebook and Instagram." Overall, this video only garnered around 75,000 views, which is on a lower scale compared to CityNews' other posts. The video centers on information about the situation and provides the reaction of Canada's prime minister; therefore, it conveys a specific "overview" and "honors complexity," as it gives perspective on a complex issue; thus, based on Costera Meijer's framework, TikTok example can be argued to fall under the experience of "learning something new" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239).

Although CityNews Toronto had few TikTok videos in the three-month timeframe analyzed here compared to the other two accounts, the ones posted and analyzed in this study provide evidence of Costera Meijer's news experiences part of the valuable journalism framework.

Interestingly, CityNews Toronto posted more TikToks with a traditional broadcast story package format than CTV News, meaning more of their TikToks were taken directly from their televised newscasts. The multimedia elements were limited, but many of their TikToks did provide closed captions, which is beneficial in terms of accessibility and also generally engages audiences who would rather not hear audio but still want to watch a story.

5.3 Global News

Global News posted 98 TikToks between August 11 and November 11, 2023, a moderate amount compared to the two other news outlets in this study. Global News publishes an average of one to two TikToks per day. Like CTV News, Global News posts daily TikToks about that day's top news stories. Global News' TikTok videos provide audiences with a more international set of stories than the other news outlets in this study. Although international stories can be found on both CTV News and CityNews Toronto's TikTok accounts, Global News posts international content more frequently.

In one TikTok posted on Global News' account on September 19, 2023, a news story package portrays a b-roll of sex workers and [sex workers protesting for decriminalization](#) and a reporter's voiceover giving information about the Ontario Superior Court dismissing a Charter challenge launched by an advocate group for sex workers. This TikTok describes the sex worker advocates' intention to have sex work be decriminalized. After detailing their intent, the reporter begins discussing Ontario's Superior Court decision and why the court believes the laws in place balance safety and avoid exploitation. The TikTok includes closed captions to help viewers read what is being said during the TikTok and provides a Global News stamp at the top of the video to indicate that the story belongs to Global News. The video has 68,200 views, and its tone remains

serious in nature. There are two potential experiences that could be linked to this TikTok. Firstly, as this TikTok explains what many sex workers and sex work advocates are working towards, this video could be classified under the "getting recognition" news experience, as it allows these particular individuals and their advocates to feel "represented, heard, and seen" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). Costera Meijer argues that the "getting recognition" experience involves news media providing a voice for people (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). In this TikTok, the reporter clearly outlines what the sex workers and advocates are fighting for and how they plan on achieving it, therefore ensuring they are properly being represented and heard. Moreover, as TikTok includes both perspectives on this issue, following Costera Meijer's concept, this TikTok could be classified under the "learning something new" experience for giving viewers an overview of the issue, providing multiple perspectives, and honoring the complexity of the situation (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236).

Like both CTV News and CityNews Toronto, Global News has TikToks that show short clips of political figures or leaders giving speeches. A TikTok story posted by Global News on October 10, 2023 covers [Pope Francis's reaction](#) to and speech about the war in the Middle East. The TikTok shows Pope Francis speaking from the Vatican in Italian with English subtitles. In this clip, the Pope asks for humanitarian help for Gaza and appeals for the release of hostages held by Hamas. The tone of the TikTok is heavy, as the Pope begins by declaring he feels immense pain due to what is going on and spotlights the suffering that many older adults and children have gone through due to the ongoing war. The TikTok showcasing the Pope's empathy has 19,200 views. Analyzed under Costera Meijer's framework, this TikTok has the potential to fall under more than one experience. Firstly, as mentioned, TikTok portrays the Pope demonstrating empathy toward those suffering during this war and, therefore, could allow others to feel connected and empathic

in return, potentially inviting audiences to experience "increased mutual understanding" as empathy and feeling connected are two of the feelings that evoke this experience (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). As many Catholics worldwide might see immense value in understanding the Pope's response, this video could provide many with feelings of "connectedness" by watching their spiritual leader provide his perspective on an international conflict (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). Secondly, the experience of 'getting recognition' could also be experienced as the video highlights the Pope, a man understood by many as a holy figure, acknowledging the war in the Middle East and speaking about his desire to have peace among both countries; therefore, one could argue that a TikTok highlighting elements of this speech could provide viewers with a sense of comfort, as a spiritual leader to some is speaking upon this conflict.

5.4 Summary of findings

After analyzing the content posted on the three news TikTok accounts between August 11 and November 11, 2023, it is evident that all three outlets have begun incorporating TikTok as one of their platforms so their audiences can continue to engage with their content online. A news outlets' presence on the application is a strength in today's digital era, and specifically for Canadian news outlets. While Meta has blocked Canadian news outlets from posting on Instagram and Facebook, experimenting on other platforms they still have access to, like TikTok, allows them to continue providing their Canadian audiences with content despite existing obstacles on other platforms. Although each news outlet has different levels of posting and content on their TikTok accounts, the initial integration is present in all three accounts.

Another apparent strength of each news outlet's TikTok page was the variety of topics and valuable experiences in the content. As mentioned above, each TikTok account provided various

valuable experiences found through applying Costera Meijer's "valuable journalism" framework and my subjective interpretations. The experience of "learning something new" was the most present out of all three "valuable experiences," as many of the stories posted throughout all three news outlets were reposts of traditional newscast packages, which are formed to encompass a story from start to finish. This can be argued to lead people to experience an "overview" of a story, a key element of Costera Meijer's "learning something new" experience (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236).

Another key factor in all three accounts' content that Costera Meijer states is an element of valuable journalism were the "professional standards of trustworthiness, accuracy and a firm commitment to finding truth" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 242). Each news outlet's TikTok account reviewed in this project maintained professional standards by reposting television packages to provide their online audiences with the same high standards as they would for their television audiences. The standards of "trustworthiness, accuracy and a firm commitment to finding truth" were also present through various interviews with experts, politicians and other key sources involved in the story at hand, therefore reassuring online audiences that the sources are trustworthy.

An aspect that could be improved upon would be posting content that is more tailored to the specific social media app, meaning the content would experiment with different styles and formats usually seen on TikTok. As mentioned, reposting television news packages has benefits. However, posting a variety of content that is catered to social media platforms provides audiences with diversity and the type of content style they could be looking for while using social media apps. This idea seems to have already taken root in some news organizations; in fact, some have begun investing in resources to produce "news content types specifically created within and for the confined spaces of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which each have their own set of distinct logics, affordances and (tacit) rules" (Hendrickx & Vázquez-Herrero,

2024 p.2). News organizations could include TikTok styles and formatting to varying degrees, such as adding trending audio/music to a story or turning a news story into a skit. An example is The Washington Post's TikTok account, as mentioned previously. The Washington Post account provides TikTok-style curated news story. A recent example was posted on March 8, 2024, which discusses the [Alabama governor Kay Ivey signing a bill](#) to protect providers of invitro fertilization and their patients. On February 16, 2024, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that frozen embryos are people, and the new bill would protect individuals from legal liability if the embryos were harmed during in-vitro fertilization. The Washington Post TikTok portrays a journalist who duplicated herself, so three versions of herself are dressed as judges, and she did the same to portray a lawyer. Throughout the TikTok she explains the background of the law, while providing new information about the bill. The story itself is newsworthy but how it is portrayed caters to a TikTok audience. News organizations can choose to what degree they would like their content to be curated to a social media platform; however, having small elements, even if it includes captions or unique editing tools, could help their content stand out and be welcomed by a wider online audience and its app-specific expectations.

As discussed in the following sections, while creating my TikToks for this research-creation project, I considered both the strengths and weaknesses present in the three news organizations' TikTok's accounts. Firstly, I chose to represent the three different types of valuable experiences, as Costera Meijer states that having balance between the three experiences is the "the primary dynamic of actual appreciation and use" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 241). Having a variety of stories was an important aspect as I observed how each news organization catered to a large demographic by having different topics. Moreover, ensuring my content had styles and formatting similar to general TikTok content was essential to portray how a news story can still remain

professional while including social media elements, such as experimenting with music and a green screen.

My analysis also indicated different trends in the format, tone, multimedia elements, story topics, and geographical locations of the TikTok videos analyzed and provided me with a clearer understanding of which elements to include in my own videos to ensure they each represented one of the three valuable news experiences.

6. TikTok production: method and approach

Informed by the findings of my TikTok analysis summarized above and guided by Costera Meijer's framework, the second phase of this research involved producing TikTok videos to test how journalists might create valuable journalism content on the platform.

I focused my three TikToks on telling three unique stories linked to the same organization: Batshaw Youth and Family Centres. Batshaw Youth and Family Centres is a Quebec government-funded organization located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, that helps children and families with several services, such as psychosocial services, housing, family mediation, rehabilitation and social integration, child fostering, adoption, and more. Batshaw Youth and Family Centres' primary goal is to break the cycle of neglect, abuse, and failure experienced by many children aged 0-18 years and their families while aiding youth on their journey into adulthood.

Each TikTok I produced for this research showcases a different story linked to how Batshaw Youth and Family Centres is helping young people navigate the ongoing housing crisis and embodies one or more of Costera Meijer's valuable journalism experiences. I decided to focus on Batshaw Youth and Family Centres and the housing crisis to showcase Costera Meijer's claim

that one story topic could be understood to be more valuable if it evokes more than one feeling. Moreover, providing different angles of one-story can elicit a sense of balance, which Costera Meijer adds "appears to be the primary dynamic of actual appreciation and use" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 241).

6.1 TikTok video #1: learning something new

This TikTok video discusses Batshaw Youth and Family Centres' upcoming housing project. This project is a partnership between the Batshaw Foundation and different real estate agents working together to buy and build apartment buildings to house youth aging out of care within their system. This TikTok was created to potentially evoke the valuable experience of "learning something new," which is defined as increasing our "understanding of the world" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 240). This TikTok analyzes the current housing crisis and introduces one potential solution to the overall issue, allowing audiences to understand the reality of the housing crisis and teaching them what some are doing to help. The potential feelings that could be evoked through viewing this TikTok are "enlightenment," "overview," "honoring complexity," "opening one's horizon," "feeling inspired," and "multi-perspectival" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). To begin, this TikTok provides background information about Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, how and why the housing project was created, and the future of the project, therefore providing audiences with an "overview" of the story. Many people may not know about the housing project as it is still in its initial stages; therefore, evoking feelings of "enlightening" and "opening one's horizon" could be facilitated. Moreover, as the housing crisis is a complex issue, reporting on stories part of this issue creates different "multi-perspectives" and honors its "complexity" by addressing the issue and detailing how some are finding solutions to the greater issue. To ensure the "learning something new" experience was well represented, I wanted to make sure the

information was easily accessible and understood to allow viewers to comprehend and retain it. A common pattern I noticed throughout my analysis was the need for more multimedia elements in the TikToks. I would argue that out of all three experiences, using multimedia elements in this experience is the most important, as they give journalists an array of creative storytelling tools to ensure audiences retain the information given, and potentially allow them to learn. I wanted to provide elements that allowed viewers to easily take in information visually; as mentioned above, multimedia elements help grab viewers' attention and showcase the information in a unique and straightforward way. Firstly, the TikTok I produced to embody the "learning something new" experience includes two separate graphics that showcase an array of important information pertaining to the story. In the first graph, I include some general information about the housing crisis; in the second, I include information about how Batshaw's housing project would run. The reason I used graphics is that this information contains statistics, which can sometimes be hard to retain; therefore, including them in a graphic so audiences can visually see the numbers is a simple way to help them better absorb what they are watching. Graphics could help lead audiences to learn something new. Moreover, the format of this TikTok was also purposely designed to ensure an easier path to learning something new; the "floating head" format on TikTok is a popular one on the social platform; it allows audiences to follow the story while visually seeing the storyteller. The topic of this TikTok was also deliberately chosen; Costera Meijer defines the "learning something new" experience as an "enlightening eye-opener experience" that allows individuals to understand a complex situation or topic (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 238). The housing crisis is a complex situation many know of, but most still may need help understanding the severity of the problem and the initiatives being taken. Therefore, this TikTok was put together to outline both and hopefully teach the audience something new.

6.2 TikTok video #2: increasing mutual understanding

The second TikTok video was meant to embody the experience of "increasing mutual understanding," the story focuses on the Batshaw Youth and Family Centres' transitional home program, Aspire, that houses women aged 18-25. The Aspire program houses young women for two years, helps build practical life skills, and offers low rent to ensure they can save money and live comfortably. The "increasing mutual understanding" experience "involves becoming personally aware of one's social relatedness," meaning this experience allows individuals to draw on a common source while still comprehending new information to create "public knowledge" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 239). To help enhance the "increasing mutual understanding" experience in this TikTok video, I sought to provide the audiences with two separate perspectives. I interviewed a resident of Aspire and a clinical activities specialist who helps run the Aspire home. Moreover, as the topic is serious, I ensured the tone of the video appropriately matched its content throughout. Lastly, the b-roll featured in the TikTok visually depicts Aspire by including shots of the kitchen, the house chore list, and a cookbook to add insight into some of what Aspire provides. Capturing Aspire resident Georgia in her everyday activities, such as cleaning, making her bed, and walking around the home was also done to show audiences what a regular day in the life of an Aspire resident looks like. Additionally, the intimate interview with Georgia helps the audience potentially put themselves in Aspire residents' shoes and relate more to their circumstances.

6.3 TikTok video #3: getting recognition

The final TikTok produced for this research-creation project is meant to represent the experience of "getting recognition." This TikTok focuses on the story of student and Aspire resident Faith Omosukpon. The video discusses her struggles with finding affordable housing as a

student. I chose to center the story on Faith's experiences to recognize those having difficulty finding housing and the obstacles that come with being a student in the current housing crisis. To allow viewers to experience feeling "represented, seen, heard and listened to," I included some general statistics about how the current housing crisis affects students; this was done using a graphic to grab the audience's attention (Costera Meijer, 2022, p.236). Moreover, a priority when crafting a video that embodies this experience was providing closed captions to ensure the video is accessible to all, including those who are hard of hearing or prefer to watch videos without sound. Costera Meijer (2022) explains that to create this experience, one must not only provide a voice, but ensure "that one's voice is heard" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 237). To do this, I included several clips of Omosukpon's interview that have her speaking directly about her experience, rather than having me or someone else speak for her (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 237). This topic was also chosen, as the TikTok app is mainly used by a younger audience, many of whom are students themselves and, therefore, could feel represented or recognized when watching this video.

6.4 TikTok production: findings and discussion

Following Mellado and Alfaro's (2020) categorization of the redefiner, skeptical, and adapted approaches journalists may take towards social media (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266) (discussed on pp. 19-20 of this essay), it can be argued I used the "adapted" approach for TikTok 2: increasing mutual understanding and TikTok 3: getting recognition. The adapted approach encourages maintaining traditional practices of news while adjusting slightly to social media etiquette (Mellado & Alfaro, 2020, p. 1266.) In TikTok 2: increasing mutual understanding, the adapted approach was taken by keeping a more traditional newscast formula, including b-roll, interviews and having a story flow with a beginning, middle, and ending—but with a TikTok twist. One of these TikTok elements was a music track, which is not traditionally used in broadcast news

packages; this was done because using music is an important component of TikTok. The music was also added to potentially evoke emotions such as "hope" and "empathy," as the music is uplifting and sets the tone of the story (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236). Another TikTok element added in TikTok 2 was tailored graphics and transitions that are uniquely found on TikTok.

I also took an adapted approach with TikTok 3: getting recognition. This TikTok video resembles a traditional broadcast news package; the difference is once again the tailored graphics and transitions, with the addition of captions to ensure accessibility.

Regarding TikTok 1: learning something new, I applied the "redefiner" approach (Mellado & Alfaro) by using a TikTok template, which is a green screen that allows my head to pop up on screen and speak directly to the camera, while visuals relevant to the story are played in the back. This format is not seen on broadcast news and is unique to social media content. I used this template to emulate the redefiner approach by utilizing a specific visual element only found on social media. Moreover, having someone on-screen speaking directly to audiences may help some have an easier time understanding the "overview" of the story, which could lead some to experience "learning something new" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 236).

In the future, I believe journalists and news organizations will need to follow the redefiner approach (Mellado & Alfaro) and experiment more with social media elements to better understand what works best for news on social media platforms and its audiences. Utilizing the redefiner approach means creating news content on social media that employs and follows popular trends and templates on the app. An example of this could be introducing skits or going live to entice social media audiences to engage in news content.

As news organizations post news content more frequently on social media platforms and rely on audience engagement, understanding what kinds of journalism audiences value is becoming more essential (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 230). Theoretical frameworks like Costera Meijer's that are backed up with research that uncovers what people value provides journalists with guidance in ensuring they create content that "news users really appreciate (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 230). Journalists can apply frameworks such as Costera Meijer's to their everyday work by asking questions about how their content may be perceived and what benefits the audience might receive from engaging with their news content. Audiences benefit from theoretical frameworks such as Costera Meijer's as it focuses not only on what is considered quality journalism, but also "deepen(s) our perception, analysis and understanding of how and when people actually (use) and (articulate) journalism" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p.231). News helps inform society and, therefore, ensuring audiences are being informed on valuable information benefits both audiences and journalists alike.

7. Conclusion

Overall, this research's primary purpose was to gain knowledge on how journalistic content creators can usefully maneuver TikTok in a newsroom or for personal storytelling goals. After I analyzed three media outlets' TikTok accounts—CTV News, CityNews Toronto, and Global News—and created three TikTok videos of my own, I noted important aspects of storytelling on TikTok that could lead to "valuable journalism" (Costera Meijer, 2022).

Firstly, the format one uses for a TikTok video is essential, as the app focuses only on video content. TikTok allows for various formats and gives users creative freedom to experiment. My research indicates news content on TikTok that employs formats similar to traditional broadcast

news packages may receive more views and engagement. However, more research needs to be conducted to examine this further, including more focus on data analytics such as views, comments, and shares. Secondly, another aspect noted in this research is the importance of including multiple visual elements in each TikTok; this includes subtitles or closed captions to ensure accessibility, attention-grabbing and aesthetically pleasing b-roll, graphics to showcase statistics and other numbers, catchy titles, and the face of storytellers in the videos to help visually tell a story. As noted previously, news outlets (e.g., The Washington Post) have begun using the app as such and have seen success. As social media apps start to be used more in newsrooms, more research should be done to understand further details about how journalists and others can use apps like TikTok for their storytelling goals.

Concepts such as Costera Meijer's valuable journalism are essential to study in a social media context, as much is still unknown about future technological advancements in newsrooms. Although Costera Meijer's valuable journalism theory does not explicitly address news on social media, it dissects the roots of journalism's value in society. Costera Meijer addresses the digitalization of journalism and reinforces the need for more concepts in a digital era as it "captures what audiences really value" and "increases our understanding of the public's experiences" (Costera Meijer's, 2022, p. 231). She goes beyond the "normative concept of "quality journalism" in which Costera Meijer defines as "reducible to people's views or opinions about quality"; but rather bases the importance of a story on how it makes audiences feel and how journalistic work can enrich people's lives (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 231). A journalist can analyze how popular a story is through audience engagement metrics, but this would be a surface-level analysis with no real sense of "what the user appreciated the most" (Costera Meijer's, 2022, p. 231). Furthermore, even though an individual spends prolonged time viewing, reading, or listening to a story, this does

not automatically mean they have had a fulfilling news experience (Costera Meijer, 2022, p. 231). Therefore, future work that builds upon Costera Meijer's valuable journalism model may help conceptualize not only what types of stories audiences want to learn more about, but also the usefulness and beneficial attributes that could potentially be linked to sharing particular stories.

Although Costera Meijer's valuable journalism encapsulates significant attributes that should be considered when producing news, the concept does have some limitations. The concept mainly focuses on positive feelings and experiences, a vital aspect of news telling. However, the reality of the world is that not all stories provoke feelings of positivity, such as "feeling empowered, comfort, and inspiration" (Costera Meijer, 2022, p.236). Some could trigger feelings of "worry, fear, and anxiety," but those stories may be equally as important to tell. Therefore, adding more experiences and feeling variations in the concept could add a deeper understanding of the definition of "valuable journalism."

As noted in the method's section dedicated to this research's TikTok analysis, while Costera Meijer's valuable journalism was rooted in audience research, this thesis exclusively analyzed TikTok content without directly engaging with audience members through interviews or surveys to delve into their interactions with news content on social media. This deliberate choice aimed to provide initial insights into integrating news organizations' traditional content onto social media platforms, specifically on TikTok. This approach does impose limitations on how the research findings should be understood and used. Future work on this topic stands to gain from further audience reception research focused on social media news content and audience members' reactions to test content like the three original TikTok videos produced for this research-creation thesis.

Costera Meijer's concepts offer insight into what society deems as valuable in journalism. Still, as the topic is quite broad, further research should be conducted to continue to understand what people value and how journalists can incorporate these aspects into their work, which is vital in ensuring journalism remains essential in society. Future research should also continue to analyze digital news in general, not just social media platforms. As journalism adjusts to ongoing changes in the digital world, it is through trial and error that journalists often learn how to adapt. Research that can pinpoint what attracts audiences to specific stories and how a story can be told through a digital lens or on different social media platforms will help newsrooms adapt. Moreover, more Canadian-specific research is also needed; through this research, I tried to keep my sources Canadian but felt there was a lack of Canadian voices to choose from. The current Canadian policy environment, specifically regarding the Online News Act and Meta's continued block of Canadian news content from its platforms, is an additional reason for future research to explore the Canadian context more closely.

Although CityNews Toronto, CTV News, and Global News all share different content on social media, one thing is certain after examining their TikTok accounts – the experimentation of various social media platforms and innovative ways to tell stories is only beginning. Many would have laughed if someone had mentioned news stations posting stories on TikTok when the platform was first created in 2016, when the app mainly featured lip-synch and dancing videos. However, as the app's content evolves and, as discussed throughout this thesis, the use of social media platforms in news outlets increases, it is not surprising that news outlets are hopping on trending social platforms to ensure maximum audience reach and, hopefully, engagement.

The future of journalism will continuously shift as our means of communication continue to evolve. The fear of change and loss of some traditions is inevitable, but if journalists adjust and

adhere to the fundamental roots of journalism, such as truth, fairness, fact-based communication, respect, and public accountability, while adapting these fundamentals to each new social platform or medium, journalism will always have value. Lastly, one of the most important aspects of creating news content on TikTok that I learned through this research was trying to find an appropriate balance of traditional storytelling while still adhering to TikTok elements. By traditional storytelling, I mean telling a story from start to finish, including compelling information, interviews, and reliable data, but also by getting creative with the tools the app offers. One can provide valuable journalism on social media by ensuring an appropriate balance between traditional journalism and adhering to the style and format of social media content.

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