- [Laura Garcia](#), **training and support manager, First Draft**

Mallary Tenore Hi, everyone, and welcome to the third day of ISOJ online. I'm so glad that you're here for this workshop, which should be very exciting. But before we get started, I just wanted to share a few reminders with you. I did want to remind you that we are going to be interpreting this workshop into Spanish, so if you'd like to join and watch in Spanish, just click that interpretation globe in the meeting options below and select the Spanish-language channel.

I should also mention that we are live streaming this workshop to YouTube, both in English and in Spanish, and we'll have the links to those YouTube channels in the Zoom chat. So if at any point you have any technical issues here on Zoom, you can always tune in to the YouTube channels.

And I should mention as well that we are going to be encouraging you to share questions, so go ahead and share those in the chat feature within Zoom. We'll be monitoring those and sharing those with Laura who will be leading today's workshop.

So I would like to introduce you all to Laura Garcia, training and support manager at First Draft, and she's going to be discussing best practices on how to use TikTok, both to find stories and also to monitor disinformation. So TikTok has been on the minds of many. Many young journalists and others are using it. But we're really excited for Laura to delve deeper into it, and help us to understand it, and its application to journalism. And we're especially excited that Laura is leading this workshop because Laura is a University of Texas at Austin graduate and happened to also be one of Rosental's students. So it's been really nice to see how many of Rosental's students have gone on to shine. So with that being said, I would now like to turn it over to Laura.

Laura Garcia Hi, everybody. Thank you so much for that lovely introduction, Mallary. I am so excited to be here to talk to you guys about this strange app that seems to be on everyone's phone, called TikTok. I'm going to try and speak a little bit slowly so the interpreters can catch up, and I am sorry if I start to get super excited and speed up.

But what we're going to be doing in this session is basically three things. Get to grips with some of the basics of the app, understand the language of how it works and how we can use it as journalists to tell and monitor stories, and some basic investigative tools on how to do some basic OSINT and monitor disinformation. So let me see if I can make technology work with me and share some slides with you guys. So, like I said, some basics. The kinds of content and the storytelling styles, like with all social media networks, understanding the language and the culture of an app is a super important part to be able to pick up on what different communities are sharing on it. And then the last one is to learn basic investigation tools and techniques to monitor TikTok.

And I'll put this slide up again at the end, but I would love to connect with anybody who wants to chat TikTok disinfo, monitoring, training. And I can tell you a little bit more about what we do at First Draft in a second. If anyone is on TikTok already, the second handle

on the right hand side, TikTok_Journo, is my TikTok handle. So I would love to connect with people there.

And I was thinking back to the very first ISOJ that I was involved in back when I was one of Rosental's students in 2009, and these were the questions that we were pondering back then. So multimedia, multiplatform content, is it working? Visual and multimedia storytelling on the web and beyond, have we already created new narrative styles through the use of photos and videos? And it feels like those questions are five universes away from the kind of storytelling that you and I are going to be going through this afternoon, but I thought it was an interesting little kind of flashback to the first time that I was involved in ISOJ. And it was amazing. Rosental was the best teacher because he'd bring pão de queijo to class, which is like this amazing Brazilian bread.

So a little bit about First Draft and what we do. We are nonprofit, and we work to empower people with the knowledge, understanding and tools that they need to build resilience against harmful, false and misleading information in crucial moments that matter. Elections, world-wide health pandemics, and all of those different crisis points where we find ourselves and the communities around us, the audiences that we serve, at risk of being misled or being preyed upon by this kind of false information. And what we're going to do today is figure out how to do that, but on TikTok. And I would strongly encourage that if you haven't downloaded the app yet, you can do it now. The first bit that I'm going to talk you through is a little bit just of theory, so you don't need to do it on the app. So that gives you time to download it on your phone so that then you can play along with me when we get to the interactive part.

So for those of you worried about security concerns, you actually don't need to make an account on TikTok to interact with the content and to follow along with some of the features that I'm going to show you. And if you didn't know, your phone can read QR codes. Just switch your phone to camera mode, point it at the screen where the QR code is that I've put on my slides, and it'll take you directly to where you can download the app. So if you've never tried it, maybe this afternoon is the time when you do, so come along with me on this wild ride. And just as a reminder, you don't need an account to follow along and to interact with TikTok in this way. You can 100% make an account afterward if you decide to.

So let's go through some basics while hopefully a lot of people are downloading the apps on their phones. So the way I got into TikTok, to tell my story a little bit, was through this specific video, and I'm sure maybe some of you guys will have seen it.

And I suddenly just realized, I don't think that I did the thing to share the sound on my screen. Hold on a second, let me see if I can fix that. Share sound. There we go. I'm going to try that again.

So I'm a big fan of cats, if you've noticed from my social media channels, and I saw this actually not on TikTok but on Twitter and on Instagram. And it was being shared across a bunch of the different platforms that I operate on, and I notice that little logo on the lower right hand side that said TikTok. I'd heard about TikTok, but it never come across my daily life. And it was this video, and it's ironic that it's a cat video, but it was this video that sent me down a little TikTok rabbit hole to try and investigate it. And I'm sure you guys will have seen content that started in TikTok that has migrated to other platforms, and that's why we're all kind of vaguely aware of it. And that is one of the most important characteristics of TikTok. The app itself makes it so easy to share content within the app and outside the

app, so it travels. Understanding how it's created in the first place is hugely important because whether you see it on the app or you see it on Facebook, stuff is still coming from the same place.

So the real basics of how the app works is that TikTok is basically two companies, the Chinese part, which is called Douyin, and I'm sure I am mispronouncing that, and the part that operates in the rest of the world, which is TikTok. And it's got headquarters in the U.S. They were thinking about having some headquarters in London, and then the rest of the headquarters are in China for the Chinese part of the app. It was launched in 2016, as the Chinese part Douyin, and it merged with another app in the U.S., called Musically in 2018. Last year it was the second most downloaded app in the world. It's available in over 150 countries and 39 languages. It has more than 800-million users globally. Fifty-seven percent of them in China, using Douyin. And in the U.S., 60% of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24, so those precious new audiences that we are all trying to reach and figure out how to get them to consume the news that we're producing.

Around the world, you can see this little heat map. This is from earlier in the year, but it's hard to get current stats and also the state of TikTok in different countries has changed in the last couple of months, which we will talk about in a second. In the States, it's got 300-million active users. Now, this figure is from about the beginning of lockdown, so I would say this has actually increased because now the world is at home and we have nothing to do. What do we do? We go on TikTok.

And it's become a place for communities, for culture, creativity, and like any space that stores information, disinformation. Right. And that's why it's important for us to understand its language and its culture so we can tell its stories as journalists. This is just a sample of some of the hashtags that came up around the time of the bigger George Floyd protests a month and a bit ago. And you'll notice really quick that the hashtags on TikTok can include emojis, which is a difference to other social networks, and we'll talk about that in a second. But it's just like any other space, any other online space, where communities start to have those conversations. TikTok has become the next frontier of that.

And I'm sorry if I look down every once in a while. I'm keeping an eye on my phone to see if the organizers of ISOJ are telling me that I'm going too quickly. And another important reason why TikTok is something that we should keep an eye on is because not only the content itself, the videos travel quickly, but the associated content with them travel really quickly on our money, revenue generating streams and building communities outside. So, for example, there is a Spotify playlist called TikTok Songs of 2020 that is updated with the most played songs on TikTok. There are endless YouTube compilations of the funniest TikTok moments by country, by language, by topic. You can see them all on Facebook, on Twitter, and TikTok didn't come out of anywhere. It builds on the visual storytelling style from Vine, which were small looped GIFs, Instagram stories, vertical frame-by-frame storytelling that you can advance when you tap and Snapchat, using what is essentially AR filters to modify people's faces, add tags, add effects. And all of these three together, if you merge them, it's kind of how we've arrived at the storytelling style that we find on TikTok that is always evolving as wel. It is not stagnant like all social networks. Right.

And just to kind of further prove the point, Facebook is developing their own version of TikTok. It's called reels. They launched it in India probably like two or three days after India banned TikTok, so they're kind of trying to capitalize on that market. And just if anybody thought, "oh, they might ban TikTok in the States. I don't need to learn it anymore." Well, the style is the storytelling, and what we can monitor is very, very similar in other apps, like

reels and other ones that I'm going to show you in a second. So there's more to come. This is the frontier. And for those of us who work in journalism and telling stories, it's an important part of future proofing our storytelling skills.

I remember Rosental would say this in our classes all the time, that you kind of have to think to the next frontier and how you reinvent the language and not just try and reproduce on TikTok what we did on Instagram stories. Right? It's about understanding the new language, adapting to it, evolving with it and rolling with the punches, essentially.

So who is on TikTok? And we're getting to the end of this theoretical bit, so if you haven't downloaded the app yet, please do so if you want to follow along. So your normal kind of celebs are on TikTok. Your Elton John's, your Jane Fonda's of the world, Snoop Dogg, big names, singers, rappers, all that kind of stuff. Government officials. But the biggest TikTok influencers are people that maybe you haven't heard off before. The most famous TikTokker in the world is a woman called Charli D'amelio, and I think I'm pronouncing her name wrong. But she's got millions of fans from all over. She must be about 16 or 17, and dances. She does dance videos and little dance tutorials and has a group of friends and has really capitalized on understanding the app early on and building on it and consistently posting over and over and over. And you'll see her if you log on to TikTok now, she is part of a couple of ad campaigns on TikTok. She's been hired by different brands to kind of represent them on the app.

Talking more about this business that has developed around TikTok, like it develops around all social networks, whenever you have influencers and brands that want to capitalize on that influence. The particular kind of TikTok influencer gets together in something called Hype Houses. So Hype Houses are creative collectives where influential TikTokkers decide to live together to help each other create more content quicker, be in each other's videos, collaborate and all that kind of stuff. And here you have examples of two Hype Houses. The one on the left is called the Hype House, and they're a group of American kids who decided to move in together. They live in California somewhere, and they each have their individual TikTok accounts where they produce videos and they have millions of followers. But they also have this collective account where they all work together to build up the hype of the brand and their individual brands. Their British counterparts are called Byte Squad HQ. Very similar idea. So kind of young content creators that decide to live together to capitalize on their collective creativity.

And this isn't new. We've seen it before with YouTubers who decide to move in together and become each other's production crews, or when people decide to get together to publish an online magazine. Right. It's that same similar style of capitalizing on a business model and working collectively to get there.

But other people are also on TikTok. Lawyers, doctors, gynecologists that have figured out that if this is where people are spending their time and consuming information from wherever source, why not make it a place also that you can teach and provide verified factual information? Right. And particularly around the time when the pandemic started moving toward the west, so I'm going to say late February, early March, a lot of these different accounts started popping up with people trying to address questions and correct factual mistakes that people were sharing on TikTok by using the same language of that platform and speaking in that language.

But you also have other types of communities, Amish teens, people celebrating Ramadan. One of my favorite one of these ones is Gustavo Godinez LC. They are a group of priests

who do these lovely TikToks of them in their parishes and talking to people. And I'm starting to speed up, so I'm going to slow down. And even journalists.

So one of the very first publications that jumped on the TikTok train was the Washington Post. They hired a guy called Dave Jorgenson, who's a video producer. He's in his late 20s and just said, "Hey, Dave, figure out this TikTok thing because we don't get it. But I'm sure you can crack it if you do it consistently." And they have developed their own kind of language and understanding how the app works to tell little stories. This is one of my favorite TikToks by the Washington Post account. And you can see down here that that is how you can figure out which user created the video that we're watching. So add Washington Post.

Hold on a second. I didn't do that right.

In this case, they're using TikTok's frame by frame, almost storyboard storytelling, to tell a story that is really particular to the history, and the pride, and the backdrop of the Washington Post's work, and using that to reach new audiences, always linking back to their website, always linking back to their work to try and drive that traffic and also be part of a community. Right.

So we're getting close to how the app works. I'm giving you your five minute warning before we actually get to play on the app. Before we move forward, does anybody have any questions at this point? Let me have a look at the little document that I've been given by the organizers, and I don't think we've got any. So there's a lot of questions about security. OK, so we will talk about security after we go through how the app works, so I will 100% answer those questions in a second, I promise.

And then there's a really interesting question about how we can use it for human rights journalism. Actually, some of the accounts that first got on the TikTok train as well at the beginning of the pandemic were international media organizations like the World Health Organization, the Red Cross, different departments of the UN, because they realized that if that's where their communities were spending time or the communities that they wanted to reach, that's where they had to be. Right. Or at least to make it really easy to share that information within. And there's millions of ways that you can use it for human rights journalism, depending on what are the stories that you're trying to tell.

One of the techniques that I saw early on used by someone in India, for example, it was a woman reporter, whose name escapes me right now. But she wanted to interview rape survivors and tell their stories in their own voice. But obviously, these women didn't want to reveal their identities. So what she did is that she had conversations with them face to face, verified who they said there were, verified their stories, and then use Snapchat filters that changed your face and changed your voice, and used those videos as part of her reporting. So she was using these women's faces and their words, but you couldn't tell who they were. Right. And that verification piece was still there. But she was using the Snapchat filter function really creatively. And I guess you could do something similar on TikTok and different stuff.

But let me show you some more about how the app works. And I am loving all the questions. Keep please sending them in. And there's another question about "do you know some journalists that use this app?" I will give you a whole list of journalists on TikTok at the end of this webinar, so stay tuned.

So how does the app work? There are four things that make TikTok different to all other social networks. So if you're trying to think, oh, it's kind of like Instagram, but with video. Yeah, kind of with these four differences. So the landing page, which is called the For You page, works very differently than your normal social media feed, and I'll explain to you why. It's built to be shared a lot easier than any of the other social networks that we're normally on. It has extra added layers of creativity that you can do that kind of combines the powers of Instagram stories, Snapchats and other bits, and hashtags can have emojis, which is super important, particularly if you start to think about doing some more complicated computational journalism and hashtag monitoring, you need to account for emojis as well. So those four things. What we know about social networks, and how communities build, and how they relate to each other, plus, these four differences.

Now, the landing page or the For You page is the first thing that you see when you open the app. And I'll hook up my phone to Zoom in a second, and we'll go through it together. But let me just kind of set some basics. The For You page, people use these hashtags to talk about it as well, "FYP" "For You," and "For You Page." And when you use those hashtags, people think that the algorithm reads them and is more likely to highlight them in the For You page. The For You page shows you anything that TikTok's algorithm thinks that you are going to be interested in. And you can see the difference here at the top. It has a little thing that says "following" on the left, so it's the content from the accounts that you follow. And then "for you" on the right, which is the content that the algorithm thinks that you are going to be interested in based on how you interact with the app. More on that in a second.

When you see a video, here, you can see how many times it's been liked, the comments, how many times it has been shared. But the particularity of how the For You page works means that accounts like, for example, Professor Orben's account that has only 3,908 followers, if one of her videos strikes a chord with what people want, according to the algorithm, then it can get shared way beyond her follower numbers. Do you see what I'm getting at? So on Twitter, if I have 2,000 followers and I tweet, my 2,000 followers see my tweet, plus anybody who searches for my handle. Here, her followers will see that in the following part of TikTok, but also anybody who the algorithm thinks is going to like her content. She is an academic, and she does some really funny TikToks about the life of post doc, and research, and academia. So if you start to like grad school videos or things that talk about research or academia, chances are she might pop up on your feed.

And that is a huge difference of the For You page, and how the algorithm actually works, like many things about TikTok, is a little bit obscure. This is the latest that we have directly from them in a press release. So it says "the system recommends content by ranking videos based on a combination of factors, starting from interest you express as a new user and adjusting for things you indicate you're not interested to." So, for example, your user interactions, the videos you like or share, the accounts you follow, what you comment on, and the content you create, which is crucial as well. Video information of those things, so captions, sounds, hashtags. Device and account settings, so what language is your device set to. If your location services are on, where do you live, what type of phone you have? And all of these things get factored into the algorithm to give you what the app thinks you are going to like. And that is super different to logging on to Twitter, right? Well, on my feed I see only the content from the people that I follow unless I go and search for specific things or look at trending. So that is a super, super, super important part, particularly when it comes to disinformation.

Now, here's the anatomy of a TikTok video. When you actually click on one, and we're getting to actually see it in a second, you have all of this information. This is the user, so that icon for the account. How many likes this video has got. How many comments this video has got. How many times it's been shared. The sound it is using, which is super important. It's that extra layer of creativity that I was talking about. The strap with facts about COVID. If anything within your description and your hashtags allude to coronavirus, according to TikTok, so words like "COVID," "coronavirus," for a while "lockdown," "corona," stuff like that. Their list changes every once in a while. Immediately if you're using any of those words, that strap appears under it.

Here's where you can interact with it, so you can add a comment, you can reply with an emoji, you can at someone the same way that you would on Twitter or on Instagram. On the left hand side, you've got the username. So this and this match. That's the icon, and that's the username. The caption that can include hashtags, and you will see that the hashtags are in bold because if you then click on it, it takes you to that hashtag. Right. And then the name of the sound that you're using. So these two correspond to each other. Each sound has like a little icon, but it also has a name. And you could also click on the sound and go and see other videos created with that sound, which is hugely different to other kind of layers of creativity on the other apps that we're used to being on.

And it travels really quickly. So, for example, if I hit the share button on that video, it's giving me all these options to copy links, send by message, by WhatsApp, put it on my status, send it to Instagram, and to Insta stories. If you scroll that way, it keeps showing you options. You can save the video, add to favorites, share as a GIF. All that kind of stuff, which means that it's reducing that friction between what you see on one app and what you end up seeing elsewhere and how that information, whether it's accurate and verified or not, travels.

And just to talk a little bit about the creative side of it, just to show you all the things that you can do, if you're on "let's create a TikTok" mode. You have your camera, you can change the speed of recording, filters, beauty mode, timers, flash to light. Here's where you can select your sounds, the speed at which you record, the different effects you're using, templates, whether you want a 15 second video or a 60 second video, and your uploads to see if you want to use any of those. And all of these together create an amazing creative narrative space for content creators, but also it means that there's way more layers that we need to be paying attention to. We have to be looking at what people write at descriptions, what hashtags they're using, what sound trends are evolving. So specific sounds become trends, and I'll show you some in a second. What filters are people using, so the visual effects can also become sound trends.

And like always, people are very clever. So, for example, the moment when TikTok started showing that immediate strap that said "learn the facts about COVID here" at the beginning of the pandemic earlier in the year, a lot of people started using different words that didn't include "corona," or "COVID," or "rona," or "corona" or anything like that in their description. They were creating content about the pandemic, but with the distinct purpose of kind of skirting the lines around the strap. Right. So if you don't use the words that trigger the strap, then the strap doesn't come up, but your content is still related.

Oh, that was a lot of talking. Let's have a look. Let me see. I'm going to fill some time while I get technology to work. I'm going to look really quickly at the questions to see if there's anything I can answer. No, small. Oh, lots of questions, and there are some in Spanish as well. So I'll address those in a second. While I make this work, there was a question on the

sheet that said TikTok is funny, but does journalism need it? Journalism is about people, right, and it means that we need to understand the communities that we write about and that we want to get our journalism to, regardless of where they live, whether that is Facebook groups or whether that is local vets. Well, not nobody can get together in real life, but it doesn't matter if you're talking about a religious group that meets once a week or if you're talking about a community that trades information on TikTok. Wherever the communities that we need to monitor and tell their stories of are. That was a terribly constructed sentence. Let me start again. Wherever our communities that we need to monitor are, because we want to tell the stories, their stories, we need to understand those places that they inhabit and find those stories there. Right. I hope that made sense. That was a better sentence than the one before. Right.

Let's try this. I am going to share my phone via air play. Screen mirroring. Amazing, and I think you can all see my phone now. So let's walk through it, and let's go through some examples. So here is. One moment.

This is the For You page, so we're on the landing page. And if you've downloaded the app, I really strongly encourage that you follow along with me and just play along. Now, also, a little bit of a disclaimer. We are on a live app, so if I sort through stuff and something a little bit inappropriate comes on, I will try my hardest to flick past it really quick. But just saying that can happen. TikTok is a wild place. So we're on the For You page, and the way to interact with more videos is by flicking up or down depending which way you want to go. If I flick up, I get a new video. If I flick down, I go back to the previous one. If I click on the app on the screen once, it stops it. See how that little play button came up in the middle of it. So if I click it again, it restarts the video.

So you can see here that we've got her count. How many times this video is liked. That was a terrible frame for her face. Let me try a better one. That's a little bit better. It's been likee 420,000 times, commented almost 7,000 times, and shared loads. You can see her profile, the hashtag she's using, the sound she's using, and her profile. So let me show you how to do some basic bits.

So if I wanted to see what other videos people have used with a specific sound, with this specific sound, all I have to do is click on the little disc on the lower right hand side, and it'll show me videos with that same sound that people have been doing. Yeah. And if I hit that button in the middle, it says add to favorites. Then when I go to my profile, see how that little thing bookmark icon is next to the profile, so edit profile and then the bookmark icon, it'll be saved in the things that I've decided are my favorite. This is your most powerful tool as a journalist to monitor trends, sounds, hashtags. So, for example, some of the hashtags I've got saved are problematic stuff because it's kind of my job to look at them. For example, in Mexico we're using, the Mexican government is using a superhero called Susana Distancia to talk about how you need to be a healthy distance away from everybody to refer to social distancing. So if I click, because I've saved it, on the hashtag "Sana Distancia," all of these videos have been using that hashtag. And again, I apologize for certain levels of nudity. It is a live wild app. It is what happens sometimes.

But for example, we can then know that these are all part of this trend. Right. And like with all hashtags, it can be used ironically. So people might be using the hashtag Sana Distancia to either agree with public policy, or to disagree with public policy, or to make fun of public policy. Right. But that's the way to keep track of that hashtag.

Same with the sounds. So these are, for example, all the sounds that I have saved because I know they have some relevance to the work that I'm doing. Early on in the pandemic. What was that. Hold on a second. Let me see if I can find it. I think this is the music. The first song that people started using to create content about coronavirus. And let me turn down the sound a little bit.

Have you heard this one before? And it says like "it's Corona time," and everyone started using it to do their videos on coronavirus. So some people started using the music instead of using the hashtags, but because it was part of the trend to talk about coronavirus, you can monitor it thi way. So then, for example, if I click on that song, it shows me all the videos that have been done using that particular song trend. So, for example, this looks like a cake in the shape of a coronavirus. Right, and it's using the song. You can see the strap on the bottom that shows up because they're using that song that TikTok has identified that can be linked to problematic content.

If I click on that strap, just let's do it to try it out, what it does is take me to official sources. So things like the World Health Organization, the UN, giving me myth busters. They do partnerships, for example, with influencer doctors to get them to create some content. If you notice here on the top right hand side, there's a share button, so you can even share the searches. You can share your saved hashtags. Again, this is built to be shared.

Let's go back to the beginning, shall we? So to show you a little bit of the creative power of TikTok, if you go down, let me walk you through the buttons at the bottom. Home is your landing page, which is by default in the For You section, not in following. If I go to following, these are all the accounts that I follow. That's my sister, for example. Follow her. She's perfect. She's a gymnast. But the For You page, like we talked about, it's just whatever the algorithm thinks is something that I'm going to be interested in. Discover is a little bit like trends on Twitter, and it's showing me the different trends, whether it's by music. So see the first one, says "Tap In," which is popular music, trends by hashtag, by music, and these are tailored to where I am, my language settings. It's the same like the For You page. It's whatever the algorithm thinks I'm going to be interested in because of how I've behaved on the app before and the settings that I've got on my phone.

We're going to skip the middle one in a second. If you go to inbox, it also has a live kind of two-way messaging system, a closed messaging app function, kind of like Facebook Messenger or Instagram DM's, Twitter DM's, that kind of stuff. And I see that a bunch of you guys have started following me. Thank you for bringing my follower number up. And you can chat to people that way and share content within the app. Right.

And then the last one is me, which has my profile. And then you can edit it. You can highlight what you want. You can have videos that you upload but in private, if you want to test something out before you use it, and all that kind of stuff. If you go to the create button, which is the one in the middle, and this is where it gets interesting. Right? So you have the same controls that I was showing you before. So the camera, the speed, effects, filters, timers. For example, if you come to the effects, which is in the lower left-hand side, all of these you can download really quickly and do different things to your face. For example, I think this one is going to give me a beard. Let's see. Yeah, see, and it's using AR. It's the basic of AR, and this is how people do some of those videos where it's the same person talking to each other. And if you script it the right way, it almost looks like it's two people having that conversation. Right. Or if anybody saw my video promoting the seminar, I use the green screen function, which is this one here and which lets you use any photo that you have or any video that you have in your camera roll to talk over. So, for

example, I have really boring photos here. This is just my phone background. And then you can point at it.

For anybody who is asking how we can use this for storytelling, you can point at stuff. There is a lady called, let me find her profile, Marianna Spring. I think I've misspelled her name. Oh, there we go. She is the BBC's misinformation reporter and does a great job on TikToK of trying to explain stories, and she uses this green screen function to, for example, explain the steps of how she did some reporting.

I see we're running out of time, and I want to leave ample time for questions. Like with all platforms, it's about playing with it and getting to know the format and understanding the trends that come up, and how that can then be misused.

So, for example, I'll show you one quick example of the theme tune for X Files, and it's used on videos that are meant to be funny, of like questioning things. But the people who spread conspiracy theories are also using it. So they're not using it in the description, nothing that triggers any warnings, but they're using the music as a way to communicate. So let me show you, I think this is the right one. And the same for people who have any sorts of different theories about things.

But you also have, for example, this girl who lives in an Amish village telling her stories from Pennsylvania.

And I have these three other apps on my phone to show you how TikTok is not the only app building on this kind of language. Likee, is exactly the same thing, it just has different audiences. Likee is huge in Africa, for example. Dubsmash specifically started coming out of dancer communities, so a lot of the dances that are on TikTok started on Dubsmah. And this one on the far left Quibi, which is really interesting. This is kind of trying to be the Netflix, but a vertical storytelling, where all episodes are max ten minutes long. You pay a subscription monthly like for Netflix, and you can watch it either vertical or horizontal. So for those of us that are visual storytellers, that is a hell of a mind puzzle to break. How do we tell stories that look nice, vertical and horizontal, however, which way we're looking at stuff.

I'm going to walk you through just two more things really quickly, and then I'll leave the rest of the time for questions because I can see time slipping away from me. And let me have a look real quick at the questions. Also, by the way, I can do a little wrap up answering a bunch of these questions afterwards if we don't have time to go through all of them.

So why we need to monitor TikToK. So like any space where there's information, there can be disinfo. TikTok has taken some steps different, or quicker, or earlier than other social networks. For example, they banned political ads altogether, but the content that is political was still there. Last year, I don't know if you guys heard about this, but a girl was doing a TikTok makeup tutorial, curling her eyelashes and started talking about the Uighurs in China. And her account and her videos got blocked and deleted for a while, and then they came back. So it's not safe from controversy. And recently, for example, this is the latest one, they've deleted twenty-nine thousand rule-breaking videos regarding coronavirus, and just like politics lives everywhere else, it also lives on TikTok. Just like we were talking of Hype Houses before for creating content that's just like funny ofr dances, you also have politics on TikTok. So the Republican Hype House, the communist Hype House, the leftist Hype House, and how that can also be a breeding space for both communities, information and disinformation, and why we need to be aware of it.

Or even for like mistaken identities. Right. This TikToc account is called POC Republicans, People of Color for Trump. And it's a couple of teenagers who run a satirical account. But people have been taking them seriously and thinking that they are actually a group of POC kids who support President Donald Trump. So just like satire is possible disinformation elsewhere, the same can happen on TikTok. And we need to be super aware of this amplification. This is a theory that Claire Wardell, who is on another panel at ISOJ, developed where it speaks of this effect of how people can on purpose plant stories, information, ideas in the darker spaces of the internet and using that organic funnel of how we share things to get them from the anonymous web to closed networks, to conspiracy communities, then closed messaging system apps, then social media that we know as journalists so that we can report on it and give them a platform. So we also have to take that into account and be very careful.

And to address some of the security questions that I've seen on the document. Definitely on both sides of the Atlantic, both in the U.K. and in the U.S. and in other countries, people are thinking about the security risks of TikTok. For example, this is an ad by the Trump campaign that was just on on on their Facebook Trump campaign a couple of days ago. And I'm going to use a tweet by Alex Stamos from the Stanford Internet Observatory to kind of sum up all of the things that I think about this debate. So TikTok and other apps that have influence from the Chinese government pose a serious risk to the United States. The U.S. needs a federal data protection framework that is both more effective and less disruptive than GDPR. It is also racist to conflate the actions of the Chinese government with Chinese people, students, immigrants, Chinese Americans. The president's obvious anger at First Amendment protected speech on TikTok makes the situation more complicated, and banning the app unilaterally as an executive action also has its problems. And you can be at the intersection of all of those. And I'll show you another video actually, where the Washington Post explains kind of like a similar thing of whether we should be worried about TikTok.

And actually the data that TikTok collects from you is is actually way less than what Facebook collects of your activity online. Right. We already give a lot of apps control over, or supervision over, what we do, what we like, because that's how they work. TikTok isn't reinventing the wheel. The only difference is that instead of being an American-owned company, they are domiciled in China, at least part of the company. And that can be problematic, right? If you want to know their official position, they have a safety center on their website that you can go and look at their kind of resources and their explanations of the algorithm and all sorts of stuff, but that's kind of like their PR section.

Real quick, some basic OSINT, so this is open source investigation for TikTok that we can use to monitor stuff. What you can monitor are four things. An account, so if you follow it like we saw on the app and bookmark it. Hashtag searches, remember that they can have emojis. Trends, so visual effects that people are using, those filters. And the music and the sound.

So one distinct difference to finding someone's TikTok URL is that you have to include the @ in the URL. So if you wanted mine, for example, this one's with the Rock because I like the Rock. TikTok.com/@therock, which is different to Twitter, and Instagram, and Facebook and all the other ones where if you put the @, it doesn't work. You need to include the @.

Now, if you want to find content on TikTok using Google search operators, you can do site: TikTok.com, which means search just within TikTok, and then you can use boolean search queries to search for specific phrases, or names, or words. Right. So instead of saying the Rock, you could do coronavirus, or politics, or primaries or whatever you're looking at.

If you want to find TikTok videos that have been shared in other spaces of the internet, you do your same search queries and the phrase TikTok.com, so it's looking for that finishing couple of words of a URL, "-site:TikTok.com". So you're telling Google search for anything that ends in TikTok.com that uses these words, but that is outside of TikTok the web page. Right. And someone pointed this out to me in a different webinar that, "Does Google then see the whole of TikTok?" No, it indexes a part of TikTok, but it gives you a place to start to monitor and to ask questions.

So this is the video that I was talking about of The Washington Post. Let me play it real quick.

"Hello, Dave. Jeff, what are you doing on my phone? The real question is, what's going on inside your TikTok app? When you open TikTok, it grabs your location, your age, your contacts, every video you watch and even the ones you just look at for a second. But that's still less data than Facebook grabs about you. Wait, is China spying on me too? Your data isn't stored in China, and TikTok says it has not and will not give your data to the Chinese government. But you have to decide for yourself whether you believe them. Also, Dave, your dance moves are not good enough to steal. OK, how do I turn you off? I'm sorry, Dave, I can't do that."

That's Dave Jorgenson and Geoffrey Fowler, who's the tech columnist at the Washington Post explaining a bit of this.

Last trick, and then I'm all yours for questions. So if you want to download the video, which is really important if you're trying to verify it. You want to download the highest possible resolution. Right. So you can see it as big as possible, inspect what's in the video, see if you can find out where it came from, all that kind of stuff. A couple of easy steps. One, you need to open that video's specific page, and you do that on a desktop by opening up the TikTok, coming to this little icon on the right that looks like a link, and then opening that in a new browser tab. If you don't do that, you're looking at the code for the entire account rather than that specific video. So that's step one. Copy that. Open it in a different tab. Once you open it in a different tab, it's going to open up again, and what you need to do is use the inspect panel. And I'm aware that I'm rushing through this really quickly. So I'm happy to answer questions afterwards or to then share a little tutorial. You use the inspect panel to inspect the code behind the website, and what you're looking for is the URL that ends in this. When you find it, that's the URL for the video, and then it'll let you download the best possible resolution video that TikTok has stored that then you can use to do some investigations.

That was a whirwind tour of how to do a little bit of OSINT on TikTok. We have a longer webinar at First Draft. And the last one I'm going to leave you with is that there's different types of links, depending on how people share, that you can use to also monitor how things spread. Spread is an important part of how we monitor disinformation. So TikTok.com is a generic URL. Vm.TikTok.com means that a user shared a video from within the TikTok app with all of those buttons. M.TikTok.com means that the people decided to copy the link and then share outside. And I know it's a small difference, but

when it comes to trying to piece the puzzle together of how these things get elsewhere, this can be a really important clue.

So, oh, that was a lot of talking, wasn't it? We've got ten minutes for questions. I whizzed through the resources for reporters in a second. Let me just go through some of these real quick, and I promise I will do a little write up like grouping them together and answer most of your questions. One sec. And if anyone from the organizers are looking at the questions, if you can group them for me real quick as I'm going through. There's questions about security and data harvesting. I hope that TikTok from the Washington Post has addressed those. That TikTok, like many other apps, collects your data. But Facebook collects more, and we're somehow fine with that.

Obviously, that decision is individual for everybody else. I actually have two phones. The last time I got offered to upgrade my phone, I just kept my old one. And I use this one to have my journalist account on TikTok, so to look at terrible disinformation and all that kind of stuff because it's unlinked to my normal phone, where I do all of my life. So if you can, that's maybe a good thing to think about, but you would have to think about those precautions anyway. If you're doing more investigative and delicate research. Burner phones are always a good protection. And there's also a lot of controls within TikToc security part of your account that you can control. There by default on, like with many apps, and you just have to go in and take them off. So that's another layer of extra protection.

You can also interact with the app on the desktop. But it doesn't have the same kind of functionality, and it doesn't let you search that easily. So I would recommend doing a mix and match of both. Plus like with all social networks, understanding the feel and the experience of the app is an important part.

And ISOJ organizers, if you're listening, if you need to shut me up at any point, just jump in and do it because I can talk about TikTok for ages. The Washington Post account is @Washington Post. I see one of those questions there. "Is there a way to tell how many times a TikTok post has been shared?" I think we've already gone through it. "How can we use it to teach technology journalism?" from someone who I'm guessing is a professor. The same way as we use Insta stories. It's about challenging our students, and I used to teach at a uni the last five years. That was my job. I was teaching journalism at a university, challenging our students to think about storytelling beyond just print. How do we tell stories across screens? How do we do transmedia storytelling where your TikTok complements your print story or your TV news bulletin. How these languages all actually complement each other. I think of TikToks as little comic books, like comic book strips, where each video is a little block that drives the narrative forward. And you can tell all sorts of types of stories on there.

The Washington Post does some really good TikToks. There's a BBC journalist called Sophia Galer Smith, who's amazing. CNN reporter called Max Foster, who's doing some really interesting stuff on TikTok. There have been many, many really creative Black content creators telling the stories of the protests in the last couple of months in beautiful, and narrative, and poignant ways, using this kind of new language of storytelling, mixing the layers of understanding of music or what music means or that kind of stuff.

Verificado created a TikTok, which is exactly what I want to hear. Yeah, we can talk, Verificado people, if you want to talk TikTok, I'm your girl. Let's do it. Let's talk about that kind of stuff.

"So if someone writes something, for instance, about pandemic and mentions COVID." Yeah, it will. So if anybody uses any of the words that TikTok has identified to be related to COVID, then they will show up in the strap.

How to start to on TikTok? Just get on it and experiment. Whoever was asking me how do we start. Just get on it and play with it. If I'm honest, I have two TikTok accounts. One for my cat, which I used to experiment with, and one for me as a journalist that I used to do some more polished work. The very first TikTok video that I made took me probably an hour and a half just to figure out how the app works, how to tell stories. And if you ask the 13 year old to do it, they'd have done it in 20 minutes. It's really embarrassing. But now the one I made for this webinar took me three minutes. It's a practice thing, like everything. Well, even Twitter, right? Learning how to write in concise 280 characters is a skill, and it gets easier the more that you do it.

"Can journalists use this to link back to her articles, kind of like Twitter?" You can kind of do it. I do it with bitlys on my screen. You can't do anything clickable, though. If you get a certain number of followers, you can also broadcast live on TikTok. I think it's 10,000 followers minimum, which can be useful. For example, Sky News in the U.K. uses it to broadcast the Prime Minister's conferences on coronavirus whenever he does one to reach more audiences. And you can obviously have a link in your profile. You can use Linktree like on Instagram. You display one link that takes people to kind of like a linktree of many other links if you wanted to use it to show more stuff.

"How do you change location on the app?" Oh, that's a really hard one. I struggle with that, too, because I want to see what's happening on Mexican TikTok. It keeps reading it from my phone and from where I am. So you have to start to trigger the algorithm by constantly searching for stuff from other countries and following accounts from those countries.

Copyright issues are an interesting one. So you can only use the music that TikTok has already licensed on the app. So you don't have every song on TikTok. All the Beatles songs, for example, not on TikTok. All of the more famous ones, not on TikTok. So if you want to use music, you have to use only the license bits that TikTok has natively on the app. If you want to just use your own music, so if you are an artist or if you want to record a voiceover, fine. That is 100% fine. Yeah.

So some of these questions are a little bit similar, so I think what I'm going to do is I'm going to kind of summarize them all and wrap them up. I want to show you from I want to show you some of the resources that I've got for you guys. Really quick, because I know I've got five minutes. I can squeeze it in in five minutes. Sorry, translation people, because I'm going really quickly.

So resources. Here we go. Two people that I highly recommend following on Twitter that have their pulse on these kind of stories. Taylor Lorenz is a reporter for The New York Times, and she has been following online technology memes, influencers, online culture for a while and has her pulse right on this kind of stuff. Most of the things that I know about TikTok come from her. Jane Lytvynenko is a disinfo reporter. She works for BuzzFeed in Canada and is amazing. And she does the other side, the monitoring in the disinfo part. And all of the stories that Jane covers on Twitter, I bet you they exist on TikTok. And we need to start to put those two and two together. Right.

Number two. People are asking for other journalists on TikTok. Here is the present from Francesco Zaffarano. I know he is the senior social media editor at the Daily Telegraph. That's his Twitter handle. And he has made a live Google sheet that tracks media outlets and journalists on TikTok, so you can look for inspiration. And NGOs even. So, if you go to that Bitly, it'll take you to his list, which you can then bookmark and use those as examples. If anybody was looking for inspiration, there you go. Tons of them. I've got one minute I can do it.

At First Draft, we have a toolkit of tools that you can use to verify and gather information. All of our guides. That is the link for it. And again, I can send it in a wrap up kind of email. We have a daily and a weekly briefing that tracks this information across the world. If you look up that Bitly or if you scan that QR code with your phone right now, you can subscribe to it. We keep an eye on the trends that are happening from all over the world, how these things spread across languages and across platforms. It's in English for now, but we do look at different parts of the world. I do a Latin monitoring, for example. I'm doing another one of these sessions next Tuesday on how to verify things on your phone. So if you want more of First Draft and of my ramblings, please register and join us. And that is the Bitly, where all of our webinar information is stored.

And almost last but not least, second to last. So, give me 30 seconds. We have a course online that's free, dedicated to give reporters from all over the world the tools that they need to verify and report on coronavirus. And it's available in six languages, including English, and Spanish, and Portuguese. So if you want more of this, you can go there. And this is our latest baby, which I'm really proud of. We are testing text message education. So if you scan that QR code with your phone right now, or if you go to that Bitly, you will get for two weeks a daily text message from us teaching you how to get prepared for possible misinformation around the U.S. election. So I'm going to leave my contact details up on screen, and I'm done. So I did it, so if you guys want to jump back in, I am all yours.

Mallary Tenore Great, thank you so much, Laura. That was amazing. I certainly learned a whole lot about TikTok from you, and I think that was about as engaging and hands-on as a workshop can be in a virtual setting. So hopefully all those in attendance learned a lot and now have a little bit more confidence going into TikTok and understanding how it's used in a journalistic sense. So thank you so much for that, Laura.

Laura Garcia Welcome, guys. Stay in touch. All my details are on screen, and I'll do a little wrap up of any leftover questions.

Mallary Tenore Perfect. Great. And for those in attendance, I do want to remind you that we will be having two other panels this afternoon. So we have one coming up at 1 p.m. central that we'll be looking at how different governments are weaponizing social media. And that will be a real, truly international group of journalists talking with us. So you won't want to miss that one. And then we'll have a panel at 4 p.m. central that I'll be moderating about solutions journalism and how solutions journalism is shifting and shaping media coverage.

So you can visit ISOJ.org for more details about each of these panels and our other upcoming panels for the rest of the week. And we look forward to seeing you back here soon as ISOJ 2020 continues.