

TikTok algorithm directs users to fake news about Ukraine war, study says | The Guardian

By Alex Hern

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A new TikTok account can be shown falsehoods about the Ukraine war within minutes of signing up to the app, according to an investigation by anti-misinformation outlet NewsGuard.

The company, which monitors the trustworthiness of news outlets across the web, ran a pair of tests to assess how the video-sharing app treated information about the conflict. It found that a new account that did nothing but scroll the app's algorithmically curated For You Page watching videos about the war would be funnelled towards false or misleading content within 40 minutes.

"Toward the end of the 45-minute experiment, analysts' feeds were almost exclusively populated with both accurate and false content related to the war in Ukraine - with no distinction made between disinformation and reliable sources," the research team wrote.

"At a time when false narratives about the Russia-Ukraine conflict are proliferating online, none of the videos fed to our analysts by TikTok's algorithm contained any information about the trustworthiness of the source, warnings, fact-checks, or additional information that could empower users with reliable information."

[...]

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