Background

All four companies (Google, Meta, TikTok, and Twitter) engaged in the Tech Policy Design Labs in 2021 are working on product innovations and prototypes related to OGBV and in line with their commitments. The following changes have been made since TPDL in 2021. The progress updates listed here are based on public announcements made by TikTok.

Executive Summary

TikTok has not publicly announced any specific changes to reporting, but several changes to curation: testing a “safety reminder” on curation options when users appear to be receiving a high proportion of negative comments, and introducing a “dislike button” to encourage community feedback on comments they believe to be irrelevant or inappropriate. Beyond the commitments, but related to OGBV, we should note the update of TikTok’s community guidelines - banning misogyny, deadnaming, and misgendering - and awareness raising initiatives including a temporary in-app information hub as part of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign. Tiktok also set up its first Trust and Safety advisory council for the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey (MENAT) region.

Curation

Tiktok has been testing a “safety reminder” on curation options for when users appear to be receiving a high proportion of negative comments.

They have also introduced a “dislike” button, enabling users to dislike any comments they deem irrelevant or inappropriate (not visible to the author of the comment). The aim is “to help inform how it ranks comments and give creators a way to control which ones are most visible” and eventually help users “feel more in control over comments." It is unclear if the dislike button will enable to reduce the amount of abuse that women can see. Although the “dislike” would not be visible to the author of the comment, it could also create further
tension. Indeed, YouTube, which had public dislikes for years, has now made dislike counts private saying that the feature was contributing to targeted harassment on the platform.

![Dislike button](image)

**Reporting**

TikTok have not publicly announced any changes to reporting processes or timelines. The development of clearer guidance on how to report different forms of content shows however progress in supporting users to navigate existing processes.

**Other**

Beyond their specific commitments, the following initiatives by TikTok since 2021 are positive steps towards a better response to OGBV:

- **TikTok updated its community guidelines** to ban misogyny, deadnaming (act of referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name they used prior to transitioning, such as their birth name), misgendering, and content that supports or promotes conversion therapy programs;

- **TikTok also recently set up its first Trust and Safety advisory council** for the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey (MENAT) region in February 2022. Previously TikTok set up similar councils in the US (March 2020), Asia-Pacific (September 2020) and Europe (March 2021). There is yet to be any form of TikTok advisory council across Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

- **They launched an awareness raising initiative** on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), as part of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence – through the launch of an in-app information hub in partnership with UN Women and NGOs.

- **As title sponsor of the Women’s Six Nations** and the UEFA Women's European Football Champions in 2022, TikTok created a new series of videos encouraging to #SwipeOutHate and keep the negativity off the pitch, and added a temporary public service announcement (PSA) to football-related hashtags reminding people to report harmful content.
**Case study: Tiktok Deadnaming Policy**

**Problem addressed:**
Transgender or non-binary people face hateful ideologies, and explicitly dismissive targeting content “through misgendering or deadnaming,” according to TikTok guidelines. Deadnaming refers to the act of calling a transgender person by a name that they no longer use.

Such content had already been prohibited, as allegedly mentioned by TikTok. However, criticism surged from creators and civil society organizations for TikTok to bring further clarity to their Community Guidelines.

**Approach:**
A broader update designed to promote safety and security on the platform as well as to support the well-being of the TikTok community particularly users identifying as transgender and non-binary. In this regard, a feature was added to allow users to choose and highlight their preferred pronouns on their profiles. Additionally, and for transparency purposes, TikTok published its most recent quarterly Community Guidelines Enforcement Report. More than 91 million videos — about 1% of all uploaded videos — were removed during the third quarter of 2021 because they violated the guidelines.

**Stakeholders involved:**
The policy update follows pressure from GLAAD, an LGBTQ media advocacy nonprofit, and UltraViolet, a US national gender justice advocacy group. According to GLAAD, the new policy incorporates recommendations that they made to TikTok for how they could better protect women, people of color and the LGBTQ community through an open letter signed by more than 75 stakeholders.

**Impact:**
TikTok’s move to expressly prohibit this harmful content in its Community Guidelines raises the standard for LGBTQ safety online and sends a message that other platforms which claim to prioritize LGBTQ safety should follow suit with substantive actions like these.