TikTok as a Knowledge Source for Programming Learners: A New Form of Nanolearning?

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Abstract:

Recent studies have acknowledged social media as a valuable pedagogical tool for connecting the formal and informal learning gap. However, as a new platform, the literature is sparse on the potential of TikTok as a knowledge source. In this study, we explored programming TikTok videos on the *#LearnProgramming* webpage in terms of content (programming languages and topics) and characteristics (video styles and types). Although TikTok is principally an entertainment destination, our results show that the platform likewise has informative videos. The 349 videos that we examined received a total of 10,046,000 views, 10,523 comments, 932,871 likes, and 35,095 shares, implying extremely high levels of user engagement. Tiktokers showing tips and tricks are the most recurring content type. From a macro perspective, we noticed that TikTokers do not follow the ethos of the platform (e.g., dancing) when producing educational content. This deviation demonstrates the intent of TikTokers to educate than to entertain. Although it is too early to conclude that TikTok can operate as a nanolearning platform, we discovered a substantial amount of content for and engagement from programming learners. Our results lay a potent foundation for devising actionable scholastic implications, policies, and recommendations concerning TikTok consumption. Future works and research prospects were also discussed to propel the social media and nanolearning literature forward.

Keywords:

TikTok, Social Media, Programming, Nanolearning

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