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The Uses and Gratifications of TikTok During COVID-19

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Social media use may have positively impacted mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first wave of government enforced lockdowns, the number of TikTok downloads skyrocketed past the 2 billion mark, making the platform a worldwide phenomenon. People gravitated towards the app because of its entertaining features: unique video effects, sounds, humorous content, and online community. For some, the platform may have benefitted their mental health during a period of intense social isolation. This research project looked at TikTok videos posted during lockdowns for a more comprehensive understanding of how TikTok fostered social connectivity, creativity, and escape from mental health issues during COVID-19. The videos consisted of people creating artwork, engaging in dance challenges and household competitions. The videos were analyzed through the application of a theoretical framework that theorizes why people gravitate towards certain mediums and how they fulfill specific needs.