

The Hype House



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1 Letters from the Chair and Crisis Director

Welcome to BearMUN 2021!

I am very excited to be your chair for TikTok: The Hype House! I am a sophomore from Dallas, TX, and I am studying Political Economy and Public Policy. Outside of UCBMUN, I am a member UC Berkeley's professional international relations fraternity Delta Phi Epsilon, a peer advisor for the Political Economy department, and stay up way later than I should watching random TikTok videos. I have previously staffed BearMUN 2020 as an ACD on the Versailles committee, as well as an ACD at UCBMUN XXV on the Mission to Mars committee.

In the last few years, TikTok has exploded in popularity, influence, and outreach across the entire world. TikTok has truly become one of the most influential social media platforms of the decade, providing platforms for young activists and creators to shine—yet this influence has also stirred controversy and potential hatred. You will be stepping into the world of Tik Tok's power, complexity, and impact on social media, and the world as a whole.

The influencers on Tik Tok are able to paint a clear, picture-perfect image of themselves for the rest of world—one that all of us have grown to recognize, and possibly identify with. However, this committee will open the possibilities to explore the depths of these influencers, where you will truly get to embrace every part of the character, not just the face we see on our screens. As important it is to explore the realms of your own character, I encourage you all to take a deep dive into the other influencers around you. Learn about your own interests and how they may or may not be the same as your fellow influencers. Please note to be mindful of conversations on sensitive topics, and if you have any questions you can reach out to me at the email below.

With season one of our show coming to an end, it is now on all of you to keep your spots on the next season. I look forward to seeing the next take in this story!

Best,
Danielle Kappler
Chair, TikTok: The Hype House
danielle_kappler@berkeley.edu

Welcome to UCBMUN XXVI!

I am so excited to welcome you as your crisis director for Tik Tok: The Hype House! I am a junior at Cal studying Immunology & Pathogenesis and Public Policy on the pre-med track. Outside of UCBMUN, you can find me dancing with Cal's bhangra team, cramming homework in the library, or meal prepping (admittedly needs to be worked on). Since I am originally from Tennessee, I am also always looking for opportunities to explore San Francisco and Berkeley. This is my third year in UCBMUN and my second year on TikTok, so I am thrilled to merge them and bring it to life with you all!

In recent years, TikTok has taken the headlines as an international sensation, quickly rising to become the most downloaded app of 2020. Its unique algorithm and interface integrate its one billion users by giving every user the tools and space to create, share, and interact with creative content. TikTok's extensive reach renders it an incredibly powerful and influential tool—it fosters quick shifts in trends and public opinion within the bubble of users, contributing to the development of the TikTok subculture.

As you prepare for this committee, I encourage you all to prioritize collaboration with your peers. Incorporate each character's personal flair into every action you take. Delegate with intention. Be mindful of conversations around sensitive topics, and utilize your resources to bring innovative and engaging arcs to the table.

In developing this committee, we have really enjoyed investigating the multi-dimensional fashion of TikTok. Regardless of your background knowledge of TikTok and current pop culture, I hope you all enjoy this committee as much as we do! I am very excited to see what you all will bring to committee, and I hope to foster an enriching and creative experience for you all just as this platform has done for its users!

Best of luck,
Kaavya Thanigaivelan
Crisis Director, TikTok: The Hype House
kaav.velan@berkeley.edu

2 Format of Committee

Welcome to the TikTokers Collective meeting, where you will all work towards season two of *The TikTok House* show! Members of this committee include influencers from content houses, such as the Hype House and Sway House, as well as independent TikTokers who have cultivated their platform and fame without a content house.

In this committee, you will be evaluated by the Dais—the show’s director—who is determining the cast for season two. This evaluation will be based on your ability to help quell poor public feedback of season one, collaborate with your peers, and contribute to the delicate balance of drama, while also achieving more of your own brand deals and furthering personal career agendas. Your individual backgrounds contribute to differences in personal objectives, which could vary from acquiring a certain number of followers to collaborating with idols to being invited to the Met Gala.

This committee will run as a full crisis committee (both crisis and backroom), with directives and crisis notes through the two-notepad system. We expect to deliver several timed crises in order to best simulate the quickly changing tides of public opinion. As outlined by UCBMUN Rules of Procedure, this crisis will be using a double-notepad system. Only one notepad may be submitted to the backroom at a given time. Please take time to draft crisis notes on your second notepad while waiting for a response on your initial notepad. Both notepads cannot be out of the committee room simultaneously, unless this is being done by the Crisis Director’s discretion.

3 Historical Context

3.1 History of TikTok

The birth of TikTok begins with the story of its predecessor, Vine. Vine was a popular social media app on which users could film and view short clips of trending challenges, comedy content, and more. After Vine was bought by Twitter for \$30 million in October 2012, the app's popularity skyrocketed, with users taking the short 6-second clip limit as a creative challenge. Millions of users were drawn to the app, with many young users gaining large fan bases and becoming internet influencers overnight. However, Twitter discontinued the Vine mobile app in October 2016 due to rapidly decreasing popularity. At the time, Twitter was failing to introduce new updates that could keep up with social media's ever-changing landscape. Instagram, another popular social media platform, effectively made Vine obsolete by introducing their own update allowing users to share 15-second videos to their accounts. Additionally, advertisers found Vine's platform to be unsuitable for marketing and outreach, whereas platforms like Instagram were ideal for promoting their products. Lastly, Vine also failed to offer a shared revenue plan to its content creators, departing from platforms like YouTube that offered monetary incentives to users with large followings.

A mere two years after the creation of Vine, Musical.ly was founded. The app, developed by Alex Zhu and Luyu Yang in August 2014, was a Chinese social media platform that also allowed users to create and share short, trendy videos. Musical.ly produced a number of stars who capitalized on the music-oriented nature of the app. Even professional musicians were taking advantage of the platform: for example, Jason Derulo debuted his music videos on Musical.ly instead of YouTube.

Musical.ly's success was hinged upon the short length of its videos. Co-founders Zhu and Yang had once additionally planned to launch an app, Cicada, hosting three to five-minute-long educational videos that could teach users any subject. However, after Cicada launched, the creators realized that audiences had short attention spans and succinct content held their interests much better.

Musical.ly underwent a complete transformation when it was acquired by Chinese company ByteDance in November 2017. Since then, the app—now reincarnated and transformed into TikTok—has been downloaded over two billion times worldwide. Simultaneously, TikTok remains a standalone app in China, under the name Douyin, with over 300 million monthly active users.

TikTok serves as a platform where users can film content between two seconds and three minutes per video. There is an enormous range of audios to choose from, from user-generated content or snippets of popular interviews and TV shows to viral songs released by music artists. Alternatively, users can also record videos with their own original audio. Users can also pick from a large selection of filters, such as the beauty filter to smooth out their skin, voice-changing filters, or filters that facilitate transitions. Whether it is dancers, makeup artists, or pet-lovers, all different kinds of communities have come together on the app. Many users, especially young

adults or teenagers, have emerged with large fanbases. For example, seventeen-year-old Charli D’Amelio is the most followed user on TikTok, with over 120 million followers on the app alone. In comparison, Instagram’s most-followed account is soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo with 315 million followers while Twitter’s most-followed account is former President Barack Obama with 129 million followers. D’Amelio is most widely known for her dance videos and since then has had a boom of sponsorships and collaborations with businesses and influencers who have all propelled her rise to fame.



Figure 1: Charli D’Amelio on Jimmy Fallon

Other users that have gained fame from TikTok have broken into the music or fashion industries, coming out with clothing lines or collaborating with record labels and luxury fashion brands. Many teenage influencers have taken mainstream media by storm, appearing on talk shows, befriending household names, partying with A-list celebrities, and capturing the world’s attention. Many businesses have expanded their marketing systems to utilize these influencers as their brands’ ambassadors—to get advertisements made by influencers on their TikTok platforms can cost them anywhere from \$20,000 to \$200,000.¹ TikTok influencers with 2.5+ million followers can also charge around \$600-\$1000 per post.

These influencers’ meteoric rise can be attributed to the addictive nature of TikTok itself. The app’s algorithm curates users’ “For You” pages to feed videos that the app predicts they would enjoy based on their activity on the app. Alternatively, instead of using the “For You”

¹ “TikTok Statistics—Updated June 2021” Wallaroo, Wallaroo Media, 14 June 2021, <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>.

page for content, users can search for videos using specific audios or hashtags, which are often used for challenges or trends. Songs such as Selena Gomez’s “Love You Like A Love Song” have made drastic comebacks years after they were released, or new releases by artists such as Doja Cat can spawn completely new trends, proving that TikTok can be a powerful catalyst in the music industry.² Videos also continuously reflect larger trends in the real world: summer saw the rise of “hot girl summer,” encouraging people to live their “best lives” without caring about what others thought, and August saw a wave of back to school content (notably, the University of Alabama’s intense sorority rush week).

3.2 TikTok and Government

Despite TikTok’s frequent association with entertainment, the app has been considered a risk to US national security.³ In July 2020, users were met with horror as the American government briefly considered banning the app amidst concerns that China—from which the app originated—was using TikTok to mine data and spy on users. On August 6, 2020, former President Trump signed executive orders that targeted TikTok and the Chinese messaging app WeChat. The orders demanded that the apps be blocked from processing transactions for American citizens and from being downloaded in American app stores starting September 20. On August 14, Trump stated in a separate executive order that TikTok would face a complete ban if the app was not sold to an American company within three months, citing specific concerns with ByteDance. On September 27, a judge blocked the executive order. TikTok has since pledged to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the government. President Trump’s move against the Chinese-owned app took place against the backdrop of the ongoing U.S.-China trade war, threatening broader implications for other American companies doing business in China. Companies could face an impossible decision between doing business in China or the US as regulations against geopolitical lines make it increasingly expensive for companies to enter both markets.⁴

Even following the end of the Trump administration, there are still concerns about Chinese national intelligence laws dictating that any private business within Chinese borders must turn over data to the government upon request. However, unlike its counterpart, Douyin, TikTok does not contain the code sharing user data with Chinese servers (although Chinese national intelligence laws do apply to ByteDance). The Biden administration has since put a hold on the ban,⁵ substituting Trump’s executive order with a new one pushing for a broad review of apps controlled by foreign adversaries to determine whether they pose a security threat to the

² Seren Morris, “25 Songs That Totally Blew Up on Tiktok, Newsweek, Newsweek Digital LLC., 11 April 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/25-songs-that-totally-blew-tiktok-1582392>.

³ Kari Paul, “Trump’s bid to ban TikTok and WeChat: where are we now?” The Guardian, Guardian News & Media Limited, 29 September 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/sep/29/trump-tiktok-wechat-china-us-explainer>.

⁴ Aaron Holmes and Lisa Eadicicco, “Experts say Trump’s war on TikTok could have a lasting impact on trade and might force tech companies to choose between doing business in the US or China,” Business Insider, Insider Inc., 8 September 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-tiktok-us-china-tech-trade-2020-9>.

⁵ John D. McKinnon and Alex Leary, “Trump’s TikTok, WeChat Actions Targeting China Revoked by Biden,” The Wall Street Journal, Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 9 June 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-revokes-trump-actions-targeting-tiktok-wechat-11623247225>.

United States. While this does not target TikTok specifically, it allows for an even greater crackdown on Chinese-owned apps. The Department of Commerce was authorized to begin said review immediately.⁶

On the American side, researchers have found that TikTok collects the same amount of data as tech giants like Facebook and Google, even sharing data with them.⁷ TikTok is also using canvas fingerprinting to track users, something that will soon be restricted on Apple devices as part of the new iOS 14 privacy package. Canvas fingerprinting exploits the HTML5 canvas element: the app “draws” a hidden line of text or 3D graphic that then rendered into a single digital token, to track users without any actual identifier persistence on the machine.⁸

As of June 2021, there are an estimated 1.1 billion monthly active TikTok users, of which over 130 million are in the US.⁹ The app has been downloaded over 2.6 billion times worldwide, making it the most downloaded app of all time. Users aged 10-19 makeup 32.5% of the users, and those aged 20-29 represent 29.5%. Users spend an average of 52 minutes per day on the platform, while younger people aged four to fifteen spend an average of 80 minutes per day on the app. The average user opens the app 8 times per day, and over 83% of TikTok users have posted a video. In the US, an estimated 60% of TikTok users are female while 40% are male. TikTok is available in 154 countries and 75 different languages worldwide.

3.3 History of content houses

The definition of “content houses” lies in the word itself—houses where content creators live and create content together, often collaborating. Playing off each other’s audiences helps content creators gain more followers and popularity, and the house is a perk in itself. Content houses are often huge mansions located in Los Angeles, typically equipped with amenities like swimming pools, luxurious rooms, and plenty of outdoor space with good lighting for filming content.

One of the very first content houses was the YouTube house “O2L Mansion,” which was started in 2014 when a group of best friends who created YouTube videos on the collaboration channel “Our 2nd Life” moved in to make videos with each other. The channel quickly shot to 2.8 million subscribers, as each member of the house filmed and uploaded a video on their assigned day of the week. Each week had a theme— for example, there was a challenge week where each person would attempt a new challenge such as the “exploding watermelon challenge” or the “whisper challenge.” The group went on to win a 2014 Teen Choice Award for Webstar Comedy, just two years after their content house kicked off. As the then-teenagers grew older,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kevin Poulsen and Robert McMillan, “TikTok Tracked User Data Using Tactic Banned by Google,” The Wall Street Journal, Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 11 August 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/tiktok-tracked-user-data-using-tactic-banned-by-google-11597176738>.

⁸ Andrea Fortuna, “What is Canvas Fingerprinting and how the companies use it to track you online,” Andrea Fortuna, 6 November 2017, <https://www.andreafortuna.org/2017/11/06/what-is-canvas-fingerprinting-and-how-the-companies-use-it-to-track-you-online/>.

⁹ “TikTok Statistics—Updated June 2021” Wallaroo, Wallaroo Media, 14 June 2021, <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>.

they naturally moved out of the content house after a few years, ending their collaboration channel.

The next peak of content houses occurred in 2015, when the app Vine exploded with multiple users becoming internet famous overnight. Social media celebrities Logan and Jake Paul, Amanda Cerny, Juanpa Zurita, Lele Pons, and Andrew Bachelor lived in a 550-unit apartment complex in Hollywood, 1600 Vine Street. Actor Ray Diaz, who moved into the building with only 5,000 followers, collaborated on a video that received more than 12 million views upon meeting Lele Pons. He reached more than one million Instagram followers just a few months after the video was posted.

In 2017, YouTube content creator Jake Paul, who had already amassed a large following and was involved with another content house, bought a mansion in Hollywood that he coined the “Team 10 House.” Team 10, co-founded by Paul, was termed a social media incubator and management company. According to the Team 10 website, the house served as an “incubator for aspiring social media influencers.” The Team 10 House was not just an entertainment house where creators filmed viral videos together, it was a business that taught young creators how to generate revenue from their followings. The Team 10 House gained national media attention when a KTLA 5 video went viral after Paul’s neighbors complained about the house’s consistent disturbance in their neighborhood.¹⁰ The FBI later executed a federal search warrant on Paul’s Calabasas home, the second home that served as the successor base for Team 10. While an affidavit prevented any official confirmation, Team 10 members soon began leaving the house, citing the content house’s abusive and stressful environment. The Martinez twins explained that they were consistent targets of other members’ racist comments and that Team 10 even held finances hostage. Alissa Violet also claimed that she was abruptly kicked out and left homeless after discovering that all of her belongings had been packed up. Paul later stated that she had been unfaithful in their relationship as an explanation for the incident (though Violet refuted that they had never been in a relationship). Since Team 10’s launch, all the original members have left.

Fast-forward to today, and the new generation of content houses are emerging from TikTok. The first and most notable house, the Hype House, was founded by 17-year-old Chase Hudson (“Lil Huddy”) and 21-year-old Thomas Petrou who moved into the enormous Spanish-style mansion atop the Los Angeles hills.¹¹ Since then, former Hype House member Daisy Keech has posted a now-deleted video on YouTube slamming Hudson and Petrou for giving her no credit in her co-founding role, stating that she spent more than \$10,000 to secure the house. The house is situated in one of Los Angeles’ wealthiest gated communities, with a large backyard, pool, and kitchen. Meanwhile, Petrou—the oldest member—manages everything in the house from organizing schedules to the house upkeep to resolving conflicts between

¹⁰ Brie Hiramine, “Break It Down: What is Team 10: Here’s the Deal with Jake Paul’s Empire of Social Media Stars,” J-14, A360 Media LLC., 27 September 2018, <https://www.j-14.com/posts/what-is-team-10-137260/>.

¹¹ Mehera Bonner, “Help, I’m Old: What is the TikTok Hype House and Who’s Even in It?” Cosmopolitan, Hearst Magazine Media, Inc., 23 April 2021, <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/celebs/a31086986/tiktok-hype-house/>.

members. Unlike Team 10, the Hype House does not take a cut of members' income, instead expecting them to produce new content daily.

Hudson serves as the house's unofficial talent scout, permanently on the lookout for potential influencers on the rise. He has stated that he is looking for those who are "a little weird," "a funny mix," or simply just "extremely good looking."¹² Members are typically featured on the house's



Figure 2: The Hype House mansion

collective Instagram account, boasting 5.9 million followers as of August 2021. Members are also often seen appearing in each other's YouTube and TikTok videos and are typically photographed by paparazzi channels like *Hollywood Fix* all around Los Angeles. Many of the house's original members, such as Charli D'Amelio, Dixie D'Amelio, and Addison Rae have since left the house and moved on to pursue their individual interests. Most of the current Hype House members, including new members who moved in to replace the old ones, are not as well-known as the original group.

Alongside the Hype House, the Sway House has also made its mark. This all-male TikTok content house is a 7,800-square-foot mansion in Bel-Air hosting several teenage boys

¹² Taylor Lorenz, "Hype House and the Los Angeles TikTok Mansion Gold Rush," *The New York Times*, The New York Times Company, 21 May 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/03/style/hype-house-los-angeles-tik-tok.html>.

with influence and popularity.¹³ The Sway House rivals the Hype House in popularity and media attention, as the members gained much attention from viewers for being conventionally attractive. Founded in January 2020 by TalentX Entertainment, each of the members creates their own TikTok videos, typically doing dance numbers or posting novel videos of absurd challenges. According to TalentX Entertainment, the house’s mission is to “support, build, and grow their social imprint across platforms, traditional and new media, and into new verticals.”¹⁴ Members of the house often accomplish this by goal frequently getting into trouble with the law.



Figure 3: The Sway House mansion

For example, Sway House members Bryce Hall and Jaden Hossler were arrested on drug-related charges in May 2020. While they had the financial resources to ensure their release, this incident contributed to their reputation in the realm of content creators. Sway House members have also repeatedly ignored social distancing guidelines throughout the coronavirus

¹³ Joseph Akel. “Sway House Demands Your Attention, for Better or Worse.” Interview Magazine, September 9, 2020. <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/welcome-to-sway-house-tik-tok-content-gen-z>.

¹⁴ Mehera Bonner, “Hello, Fellow Olds: What Is (Was?!) the TikTok Sway House and Whomst Is Even in It?” Cosmopolitan, Heart Magazine Media, Inc., 10 August 2021, <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/celebs/a34655703/tiktok-sway-house/>.

pandemic, openly hosting and attending extravagant parties. Like the Team 10 House, the Sway House’s neighbors have also had their share of complaints, with strangers showing up at their houses repeatedly mistaking it for the Sway House, extremely loud music late at night, and trash littering the sidewalk of the manicured neighborhood.¹⁵ In August 2020, even LA mayor Eric Garcetti authorized the City to disconnect utility services at the house, citing a “flagrant violation of our public health orders.”¹⁶ A little after a year of its founding, People Magazine confirmed that the Sway House had disbanded with members citing their need to grow and that it was “time to move on”.¹⁷ In June 2020, Josh Richards had even admitted a Medium article explaining that he had let “the LA partying lifestyle consume



Figure 4: Side view of the Sway House mansion

[him]” and that he found it best for him to take time away from the house.¹⁸ However, many of the members still work together and are often seen spending time together.

Other notable content houses include the Not a Content House, a teenage girl-only content house that was formed in August 2020. However, accusations of manipulation and abuse

¹⁵ Taylor Lorenz, “How the Sway House Made Enemies of Their Neighbors,” The New York Times, The New York Times Company, 11 July 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/08/style/sway-house-neighbors-tiktok.html>.

¹⁶ Mehera Bonner, Tik Tok Star Bryce Hall’s Power Was Shut Off Thanks to His Giant House Party,” Cosmopolitan, Heart Magazine Media, Inc., 20 August 2020, <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/celebs/a33655440/bryce-hall-power-shut-off-party-response/>.

¹⁷ Jodi Guglielmi, “TikTok’s Sway House Is Officially Over—but Its Message ‘Will Never Die,’” People, Meredith Corporation, 8 February 2021, <https://people.com/tv/tiktok-sway-house-is-officially-over/>.

¹⁸ Josh Richards, “I’ve Learned. I’m Learning. I Want to Use My Platform to Work Hard for Good.” *Medium*, Medium, 9 June 2020, https://medium.com/@josh_76229/ive-learned-i-m-learning-i-want-to-use-my-platform-to-work-hard-for-good-440f9da2afdf

towards the young girls have mired the house in controversy.¹⁹ While the members of the house have vaguely hinted at such cases on their various social media platforms, there has been no official confirmation of what happened. The house has since disbanded, with many of the members moving on to pursue their individual careers. Some other TikTok content houses include Alpha House, Clubhouse Beverly and Wave House,²⁰ all of which have had varying degrees of success and fame.

4 Influence of TikTok

4.1 Cultural Impact/Influence

TikTok has completely redefined the meaning of being an influencer—some may say it used to take more talent or effort to gain such attention, whereas others argue that it has evened out the playing field by making fame and virality more accessible to the common public. An incredible number of TikTokers around the world go viral for their short videos, catering to an audience primarily of young and impressionable teenagers. As of February 2021, an estimated 32.5% of users are between the ages 10 and 19, while 29.5% of users are between the ages 20 and 29.²¹ Given that these two age breakdowns include all of Generation Z, we can undoubtedly say that TikTok has unambiguously changed Generation Z culture.

By the end of 2020, TikTok had become the most downloaded app of the year.²² Interestingly, according to the Harvard Political Review, the hype behind TikTok can be credited to its facilitation of authenticity.²³ As an “evolved and improved platform,” the app is said to “fill a void in the online world that has been growing over the past decade for an authentic, communal and adaptive social media.”²⁴ Because of how quickly users can produce, edit, and post videos, TikTok content tends to be more raw and less manicured than content on other social media such as Instagram.

Naturally, as people around the world with vastly different interests enter one realm of content sharing, TikTok becomes a global melting pot for culture, activism, music, comedy, fashion, beauty, and much more.²⁵ Whatever the user’s interest, the algorithm has a feed for you—precisely why the app grew to be the way it is.

One of the most notable impacts TikTok has had can be seen in modern fashion and beauty trends. “Fashion-tok” has transformed the standards of beauty and inspired a new wave of

¹⁹ Shannon Raphael, “Past Members and Other TikTokers Are Calling out the Not a Content House Management Team,” Distractify, 10 February 2021, <https://www.distractify.com/p/not-a-content-house-management>.

²⁰ Grace Windheim, “The Ultimate TikTok Houses List,” Kapwing Resources, Kapwing, 19 April 2021, <https://www.kapwing.com/resources/tiktok-houses-list/>.

²¹ “TikTok Statistics—Updated June 2021” Wallaroo, Wallaroo Media, 14 June 2021, <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>.

²² Sophia Smith Galer, How TikTok changed the world in 2020, BBC Culture, British Broadcasting Corporation, 16 December 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201216-how-tiktok-changed-the-world-in-2020>.

²³ Maria Keseklj, “The Future is TikTok,” Harvard Political Review, 7 October 2020, <https://harvardpolitics.com/the-future-is-tiktok/>

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

creativity in how people express themselves.²⁶ Conventional beauty standards, however deep-rooted in the minds of the consumers, have been eroded in the emphasis of authenticity; normalizing imperfections and all body types on this platform has become the forefront of the body positivity movement. There are numerous influencers, verified and unverified alike, who dedicate their platforms to emphasizing that the media does not truly reflect beauty standards that real people can live up to. For example, popular challenge named the “#DontJudgeMeChallenge” called on users to highlight their facial imperfections, such as acne or scars. Other popular trends include unflattering camera angles, removing beauty filters, showing before and after photoshop edits to encourage young viewers to discern between what is real versus edited.

Additionally, TikTok’s digital visibility has been a positive force in changing our modern ideas of sexuality, gender, and masculinity versus femininity. For example, a challenge titled “#TheBoyChallenge” featured female users who changed their appearances to look masculine. Many others use this virtual space to express their queer identities, and the effects of this are seen in the normalization of “gay” or homoerotic content. Although queerbaiting has become more prevalent, some say that this is a “form of adolescent rebellion and non-conformity... a way to broadcast how this generation is different from their parents, or even millennials before them.”²⁷ These challenges call on us to re-evaluate our perceptions of gender and gender roles.

Another remarkable and historic impact TikTok has had in the real world is regarding activism. BBC states that “history will probably come to remember TikTok as having a prominent role in Black Lives Matter” after witnessing how the hashtag became so promoted on its Discover page, receiving over 23 billion views.²⁸ These activism efforts did not just stop at increasing worldwide awareness for the movement—TikTok “also became a prominent arena for anti-Trump protests... TikTokers have been credited for having at least some role in the poor turnout at President Trump's Tulsa re-election rally in June and they also forced his campaign to reset the Trump app's rating after TikTokers trolled it with bad reviews.”²⁹

Despite these beneficial facets of TikTok, there remain a number of problems that may have detrimental effects on younger and developing minds, as discussed in the following section.

4.2 Impact on Younger Generation

TikTok is the most popular social media platform among tweens, far surpassing other platforms—statistically, young users make up the majority of TikTok users.³⁰ Especially since tweens “generally enjoy less autonomy than teenagers” they tend to recognize TikTok as an opportunity to “connect and experiment with youth culture early on” through the many diverse

²⁶ Christian Allaire, “How TikTok Changed Fashion This Year,” *Vogue*, Condé Nast, 28 December 2020, <https://www.vogue.com/article/how-tiktok-changed-fashion-this-year>.

²⁷ Alex Hawgood, “Everyone Is Gay on TikTok,” *The New York Times*, The New York Times Company, 24 October 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/24/style/tiktok-gay-homiesexuals.html>.

²⁸ Sophia Smith Galer, “How TikTok changed the world in 2020,” *BBC Culture*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 16 December 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201216-how-tiktok-changed-the-world-in-2020>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ “TikTok Statistics—Updated June 2021” *Walloo*, Wallaroo Media, 14 June 2021, <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>.

communities on the app.³¹ However, a downside to otherwise healthy connections with their peers is that Tiktok leaves tween users exceptionally vulnerable to the risk of being victimized. Young teens often do not understand how they can protect their own online privacy, and are thus at risk of online predators. The content on TikTok can be heavily sexual or have implications that should be rated higher than a “PG-13”. Aided by the movement toward sexual liberation, many users post “thirst traps” and other mature content under the guise of self-expression. Hence, while there is some censorship by the app to prevent R-rated content, tweens are easily exposed to dangerous and mature ideas and concepts, perhaps much earlier than they are able to understand properly and safely. Many young users attempt to recreate the content they watch, and recreating hyper-sexual videos without proper understanding puts their personal safety at risk.

However, there are a number of positive impacts by TikTok on the youth, such as emphasizing body positivity, raising awareness and holding discussion about mental illnesses and eating disorders, providing relevant and informational content about current news and movements, teaching users about DIY arts and crafts, fitness, etc. However, each of these positive aspects comes with some negative consequences. Amid body positivity efforts, there are also many trends that focus on proving someone’s conventional attractiveness, such as facial symmetry, rating people’s attractiveness using TikTok filters, and promoting being “skinny.” These can still instill harmful and skewed perceptions in young users during their developmental years.

In the realm of politics and activism, misinformation is difficult to distinguish because of the plethora of information circulating through the millions of For You Pages. Without proper guidance, this can lead to young users consuming content from incorrect or biased sources. Influencers also use misinformation tactics for personal marketing strategies as well, influencing young and unaware viewers’ purchasing decisions and habits. Many TikTokers have been accused of deceiving young viewers through “sponsored videos that often have the look and feel of organic content”.³² Even while scrolling through their For You Page, users consume an advertisement every few swipes. Especially since children are the most vulnerable to such promotions, they are often targeted in such advertisements.

This extends beyond just TikTok— YouTube is also heavily saturated with marketing and advertising agendas. Most YouTube videos begin with advertisements, and a study showed that 81% of US parents allow their children under 11 to actively watch YouTube even though YouTube’s guidelines don’t not recommend its content for individuals under 13.³³

³¹ Tom De Leyn, Ralf De Wolf, Mariëk Vanden Abeele, and Lieven De Marez, “In-between child’s play and teenage pop culture: tweens, Tiktok & privacy,” *Journal of Youth Studies* (2021).

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2021.1939286?journalCode=cjys20>.

³² Marijke De Veirman, Liselot Hudders, and Michelle R. Nelson, “What Is Influencer Marketing and How Does It Target Children? A Review and Direction for Future Research,” *Frontiers in Psychology* (2019),

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02685/full>.

³³ Aaron Smith, Skye Toor, and Patrick Van Kessel, “Many Turn to YouTube for Children’s Content, News, How-To Lessons,” Pew Research Center, 7 November 2018,

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/11/07/many-turn-to-youtube-for-childrens-content-news-how-to-lessons/>.

This is also reflected in the increase in social media and/or technology addiction in the younger generation. On average, TikTok users between the ages of 4 to 15 spend around 54% more time on the app than the average user.³⁴ The amount of content being produced and viewed is endless, thereby contributing to the infinite scroll of the For You Page.

While the nature of TikTok allows users to voice their opinions and promote raw and direct discussion, it has unfortunately also fostered cyber bullying. Every user of social media around the world has either witnessed or received “hate” and bullying, and this can lead users to quickly turn against others within comment sections. TikTok influencers such as Nessa Barrett and Charli D’Amelio have vocalized the effect that hate comments have had on their mental health. This can be dangerous exposure to younger viewers who internalize these concepts during their developmental years.

4.3 Cancel Culture and Inclusivity

Alongside the cyber bullying that occurs on this platform, cancel culture has become widely influential in Hollywood. Cancel culture is the idea that a person can be cancelled or culturally blocked from having a prominent public platform or career.³⁵ This typically occurs when a celebrity or public figure does or says something offensive, primarily toward minority groups. This form of counterspeech calls for accountability and boycotting as a form of social justice.³⁶

However, opponents of cancel culture argue that it deters people from voicing personal opinion by suppressing their speech, and it makes it harder for people to participate in the free speech environment.³⁷ Conservative politicians and pundits have embraced the argument that cancel culture, rather than speaking truth to power, has become a senseless form of social media mob rule.³⁸

The format of TikTok allows for ease of discussions of all matters, which can sometimes allow group polarization to occur. This is the tendency for members of a group discussing an issue to move toward a more extreme version of the positions they held before the discussion began.³⁹ Especially in the realm of cancel culture, group polarization is a heavily contributing factor to general public opinion. And because of the extensive influence of TikTok, this means that TikTokers who become targets of cancel culture will quickly lose popularity and depending on the severity of their actions, could lead to detrimental impacts on their career.

³⁴ “TikTok Statistics—Updated June 2021” Wallaroo, Wallaroo Media, 14 June 2021, <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>.

³⁵ Sophia Smith Galer, How TikTok changed the world in 2020, BBC Culture, British Broadcasting Corporation, 16 December 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201216-how-tiktok-changed-the-world-in-2020>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Morgan English, “Cancel Culture: An Examination of Cancel Culture Acts as a Form of Counterspeech to Regulate Hate Speech Online,” Carolina Digital Repository, University of North Carolina University Libraries, 21 June 2021, <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/7p88cq97w?locale=en>.

³⁸ Sophia Smith Galer, How TikTok changed the world in 2020, BBC Culture, British Broadcasting Corporation, 16 December 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201216-how-tiktok-changed-the-world-in-2020>.

³⁹ “group polarization,” American Psychological Association, <https://dictionary.apa.org/group-polarization>.

5 The Hype House



Figure 5: Founding members of Hype House

5.1 The Rise of the Hype House

The physical location of the Hype House has never been permanent, moving between the former Clout House and their current Mediterranean-style mansion, but there are some faces that remain familiar even till today. Thomas Petrou, the cofounder of the content house, remains at the house and has claimed to have secured the Netflix television show for the house.⁴⁰ Chase “Lil Huddy” Hudson also remains an active member, although he is more focused on his music career. Other currently active members include but are not limited to Ryland Storms, Alex Warren, Kouvr Annon, Connor Yates, and Patrick Huston.

According to Forbes, the rise of the Hype House has changed the face of TikTok.⁴¹ With a collective of twenty of the biggest TikTok stars in the world producing content together in the same location, the house has quite the formula for fame and success. Each member has stated

⁴⁰ Anna Quintana, “The Hype House Members Are Getting Their Own Netflix Show,” Distractify, 23 April 2021, <https://www.distractify.com/p/who-lives-in-hype-house>.

⁴¹ Tom Ward, “The Hype House is Changing the Face of TikTok,” Forbes, Integrated Whale Media Investments, 24 February 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomward/2020/02/24/the-hype-house-is-changing-the-face-of-tiktok/?sh=1eddcbe67c1b>.

that their following grew exponentially since joining the house, with Petrou pushing for them to also develop their platforms outside of TikTok. Hype House videos soon emerged, with members collaborating with each other as well as huge brands. Before long, the Hype House became a household term for TikTok audiences. Attracting fans, critics, imitations, and satires, the Hype House was all anyone could talk about.



Figure 6: Hype House Members

While many of the Hype House’s earlier and more prominent members have since left the house to focus on their own careers, the content collective still represents what many see when they think of a TikTok star: glitzy Instagram photos, polished video content, and sponsorships by some of the world’s biggest brands.

5.2 Summary of the show + Public perception

Season one of the Hype House’s reality television show has been met with backlash and discord among the TikTok community despite the fact it has yet to be released. The show was announced on April 22, 2021, with Netflix stating that the unscripted show would reveal a side of the stars that fans “rarely see” and follow each creator’s overnight rise to fame.⁴² Behind-the-scenes footage with the camera production crew suggested that the show was in the midst of being filmed at the time of the announcement.⁴³

⁴² Moises Mendez II, “Here are the members of the Hype House, the TikTok collective that is getting its own Netflix reality show,” Business Insider, Insider Inc., 27 April 2021, <https://www.insider.com/hype-house-members-netflix-reality-show-2021-4>.

⁴³ Grace Wehniainen, “Everything You Need to Know About the Hype House Netflix Series,” Bustle, Bustle Digital Group, 23 April 2021, <https://www.bustle.com/entertainment/hype-house-netflix-reality-show-cast-release-date-trailer-everything-to-know>.

Following the announcement of this new reality show based on the sometimes controversial Hype House, many disgruntled Netflix viewers took to social media platforms such as Twitter and TikTok to voice their opposition to the show's development. Firstly, the timing was unfortunate—the announcement was made at the same time many other popular Netflix shows such as *Sense 8*, *The Society*, *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* and *Anne with an E* were being discontinued. Many of these television shows had already built a loyal fanbase, and their cancellation coupled with the announcement of a Hype House show angered viewers. Secondly, many were quick to point out that the previous Netflix shows all represented actors and actresses of color, while the Hype House has struggled with diversity, originally boasting an all-white membership. In contrast, other content houses that prioritize diversity have emerged. Keith Dorsey, a marketer based in Atlanta, Georgia, has been a strong advocate for all-black content houses, advocating that if young people saw role models who looked like them, they would have the confidence to know that they, too, could be trailblazers.⁴⁴

Many also opposed the show due to the featured TikTokers themselves. Many have argued that Hype House members are poor role models for younger children, with many of the stars being involved in controversial scandals such as making racist remarks, being irresponsible during the COVID-19 pandemic, or assault claims. A majority of the content of TikTokers film surrounds their daily, glamorized lives in LA, their love lives, or their music and modeling careers—often without much consideration about anything else.

An online change.org petition claiming that Netflix is giving an unnecessary platform to “talentless, boring, privileged” people has garnered over 22,000 signatures as of August 2021.⁴⁵ “No one wants this,” states the petition.

6 The Current Situation and Committee Objectives

It has been six months since the release of the first season of *The Tiktok House* Netflix show. Many of the relationships between the original cast members have changed drastically, while some still predictably maintained. Each of the TikTokers' management teams has been following media feedback even closer than before to ensure the expansion and longevity of their respective TikToker's platform and fame. With trends and focal topics of conversation changing within days, influencers must consider their actions and productions to remain relevant and avoid being canceled. Longevity of career is not only dependent on TikTokers' involvement within the app—it also extends to external endeavors they secure, such as brand deal sponsorships and networking. However, this has been a difficult job since the show's release due to both surprising and unsurprising feedback from the show's viewers.

⁴⁴ Kalhan Rosenblatt, “Keith Dorsey is reshaping the world of influencing and entertainment,” NBC News, National Broadcasting Company, 8 February 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/keith-dorsey-reshaping-world-influencing-entertainment-n1256780>.

⁴⁵ “Netflix to Cancel the Upcoming ‘Hype House’ Show,” change.org, Change.org, PBC, <https://www.change.org/p/netflix-netflix-to-cancel-the-upcoming-hype-house-show?redirect=false>.

Season one was met with intense pushback from audiences from both the TikTok sphere as well as Netflix's general subscribers. Aside from people's disagreements and critiques of the premise and inclusion of certain personalities, the show has been criticized for being poorly planned, redundant, and unengaging.

Season one starred both former and current Hype House members as well as fellow TikTokers from the Sway House. The cast consisted of Charli and Dixie D'Amelio, Chase Hudson, Griffin Johnson, Noah Beck, Nikita Dragun, Larray, Avani Gregg, Josh Richards, and Nessa Barrett.

Some of the star couples were Charli D'Amelio and Chase Hudson, Dixie D'Amelio and Griffin Johnson, and Nessa Barrett and Josh Richards. By the end of the first season, each of these highly anticipated relationships had publicly ridden their ups and downs to the point of breakup. However, from many of the interactions and captured scenes in those following episodes, viewers were hinted that some of these individuals may forge other alliances and connections in the future.

Since their mid-season breakup, the former spotlight couple, Charli and Chase, have been spotted spending time together as friends, alluding to their amicable relations despite Chase's confirmed infidelity with Nessa Barrett. Shortly after the news of their breakup, Chase exposed many of the other cast members' similar infidelity and drama, which sparked an uproar among fans and non-fans alike. Nessa's relationship with Josh also came under major scrutiny from the public, although their eventual breakup didn't seem too permanent. Between Griffin and Dixie, however, the end of their era may be leading to the "Doah" chapter as sparks fly between Noah Beck and Dixie. It's safe to say that these shifting connections have created more tensions within the Sway House members.

However, any publicity is good publicity, and that was the case with a surge in popularity of the TikTok app and influx of revenue for ByteDance. Shocking mainstream investors and institutions, ByteDance went public shortly after the season release with an IPO of 320 USD per share, and many are eager to invest in this company. Now, everyone from major corporations to cultural events like the Met Gala are keeping a close eye on TikTok and TikTokers, and season two will be a focal point of their attention.

The TikTokers in the season one casting continue to compete with each other as well as other TikTokers to secure brand deals and endorsements. These opportunities increase their visibility and hence their chances at future opportunities for career growth and diversification. Public opinion is critical in obtaining these brand deals, as there have been incidents in the past of overwhelming support for or scandalous evidence against TikTokers have gained or lost them major sponsorships. Major sponsors of various TikTokers both within and outside of the show like Bang and The Coldest Water are looking to the show's success to determine if they want to continue their TikTok sponsorship programs. Additionally, producers and stars from other reality shows are closely keeping track of individual TikTokers as well as the show as a whole to determine potential future partnerships both on and beyond the platform.

Recently, there have been a number of incidents that are putting all influencers under pressure to consider their actions and influence more closely. One major point has been the lack of concern for the COVID-19 pandemic, as many influencers such as Bryce Hall and Nikita Dragun have shown little regard for safety regulations. Seeing the blatant lack of consideration for the global pandemic angered many viewers, especially when the social events these influencers had attended were posted and the lifestyle romanticized to young and impressionable viewers.

6.1 Committee Objectives

Despite the negative feedback and dissenting media coverage of the Hype House show, Netflix just privately announced that plans for a second season are underway. However, the casting is neither limited to Hype House members nor is the original cast's re-selection automatically guaranteed. The Director has outlined that their criteria for choosing this special cast will not just be based on the TikToker's general "hype" among TikTok users, but also their association with brand names, involvement in activism, engagement with fans, ability to collaborate with other prominent TikTokers, etc. The Director has quietly called together this shortlisted group of TikTokers to manage public relations and ease the public tensions regarding the Hype House show since the first season's release. However, the actions of these TikTokers will be closely watched, as it will be used to evaluate whether they will be selected for the season two casting. This is incredibly important to all TikTokers as it is a prominent venue to secure the longevity of their career, but securing external career developments independent of this team is also important.

7 Guiding Questions

1. What are some major PR events or actions that will sway public opinion? What are some events/activities that will be important for the casting of season 2?
2. How can members of this committee balance personal development and visibility with collaboration?
3. How can members of this committee use their platform to contribute to activism?
4. How can members of this committee promote the television show and increase overall ratings for the upcoming season?
5. What other venues and/or endeavors could members of this committee consider to better promote themselves?
6. Should members of this committee prioritize increasing engagement with fans and other viewers? If so, how?

8 Character List

Charli D'Amelio

Charli D'Amelio is a seventeen-year-old social media personality and dancer. She is currently the #1 most followed TikTok user, having amassed over 120 million fans on TikTok alone. She first went viral dancing with her friend in her school bathroom, then again when she recreated the popular "Renegade" dance. Her fame and following continued to quickly expand, eventually earning her and her sister Dixie D'Amelio positions in the then-brand-new Hype House.

However, in May of 2020, news broke that the D'Amelio sisters had both left the Hype House, after which they continued to produce content individually. By then, Charli had already begun delving into professional opportunities. In 2020, she danced onstage with Bebe Rexha at a Jonas Brothers' concert, appeared on "The Tonight Show," and voiced a character on the animated show *StarDog and TurboCat*. Her biggest and earliest sponsorship was with Dunkin' Donuts, who eventually released a new drink named "The Charli." She and Dixie together launched a makeup line with Morphe as well as a clothing line with Hollister called "Social Tourist." Charli starred in fellow TikTok star and ex-boyfriend Chase Hudson's music video. Her family also has an upcoming family reality show on Hulu--an eight-part series set to follow the social media family as they "navigate their sudden rise to fame." Charli, who has a net worth of over eight million, appeared on both the Forbes 30 Under 30 list as well as Fortune's 40 Under 40 list in 2020, making her the younger person to appear on Fortune's list.

Charli currently resides in her new mansion in Los Angeles, California with Dixie as well as both of her parents, Heidi and Marc D'Amelio.

Dixie D'Amelio

Dixie D'Amelio is a twenty-year-old social media personality and singer. She first rose to fame when she appeared in her sister Charli's TikTok videos, where fans were quick to notice their very close resemblance. Her initial plans to attend college were averted as her fame grew.

In 2020, Dixie starred in the YouTube web series *Attaway General*. Although known for her lacking dancing abilities, Dixie has delved into the Hollywood music industry. Her debut song "Be Happy" was released in July 2020, shortly before she was signed by HitCo Entertainment. Following this release came "Naughty List" featuring Liam Payne and "One Whole Day" featuring Wiz Khalifa. She was nominated for Social Star of 2020 for People's Choice Awards in 2020 and then nominated for the Social Star Award at the iHeartRadio Music Awards in 2021. She currently has a talk show where she interviews other influencers and celebrities.

Dixie currently has over 54 million followers. She is currently dating Noah Beck while residing in Los Angeles, California.

Addison Rae

Addison Rae is a twenty-year-old social media personality, singer, and dancer. She holds the ranking of being the third most-followed individual on TikTok at over 81 million followers.

She first rose to fame when her dancing videos went viral in 2019, and she joined the Hype House in late 2019. Shortly after, she dropped out of college to focus on expanding her fame.

Since the summer of 2020, Addison has partnered with American Eagle on the brand's back-to-school campaign and jeans collections. She also released a Spotify playlist with her mother called "Mama Knows Best" in July 2020. She is the Chief Innovation Officer of Item Beauty, the cosmetics line she co-founded with Madeby Collective. She has gone on to work with companies such as Reebok and L'Oreal as well. Additionally, she has been seen to be extremely close with the Kardashian-Jenner family, especially Kourtney Kardashian. Recently, she starred as the lead character of the remake comedy *He's All That*. Forbes revealed in August 2020 that Addison earned \$5 million in the last year through various endorsement deals and merchandise, making her the highest-earning TikTok star. Addison currently lives in Los Angeles.

Avani Gregg

Avani Gregg is an eighteen-year-old social media personality and makeup artist. She first rose to fame on TikTok when her makeup transformation videos went viral. From her childhood, Avani was a competitive gymnast until she suffered a stress fracture in her back. Her older sister, Shanti Gregg, is also a social media influencer.

In December of 2019, she joined The Hype House to collaborate with the various other members. Avani plays the character Gemma in the series *Chicken Girls*. Not only has she published a memoir with Gallery Books, she also began hosting a Facebook Watch talk show called *Here For It* in late 2020. She received the Short Award for TikToker of the Year in 2019 and was on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list.

Avani currently has over 33 million followers on TikTok and is dating TikTok star Anthony Reeves. She recently graduated from high school and is residing in Los Angeles, California.

Chase Hudson

Chase Hudson, also known as Lil Huddy, is an eighteen-year-old social media influencer who is most known for being one of the co-founders of the Hype House, a TikTok content house. He is also known for popularising the e-boy fashion style and subculture. He has been listed by Billboard as one of the top 10 music influencers on TikTok and has been cited by Paper as an important figure in the 2020s pop-punk revival.⁴⁶ He has since released his own music, with songs such as "America's Sweetheart" and "The Eulogy of You And Me." He has also starred in Machine Gun Kelly's musical film titled "Downfalls High," which has been viewed by more than 16 million people.

As of August 2021, he has 31.8 million followers on TikTok and 11.7 million followers on Instagram. He has an estimated net worth of \$3 million and is currently focusing on his music career, with his debut album "Teenage Heartbreak" to be released 9/17.

⁴⁶ "Lil Huddy," Wikipedia, Wikimedia, 17 September 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lil_Huddy.

Noah Beck

Noah Beck is a twenty-year-old social media personality and model. Noah originally went viral on TikTok for his content, which included dances and skits. Prior to his rise to fame, he was studying at the University of Portland and played soccer for the men's team. In June 2020, he joined the Sway House.

Noah stars in AwesomenessTV short-form series titled *Noah Beck Tries Things*. He was featured on the digital cover of VMan, the New York City-based indie fashion magazine, in March. In January 2021, he reviewed Louis Vuitton's Autumn-Winter menswear show for Vogue. He also attended Paris Fashion Week in 2021 when he was tapped by the brand AMI to model in their showcase of the label's newest collection.

Noah currently has around 30 million followers on TikTok and resides in Los Angeles, California.

Vinnie Hacker

Vinnie Hacker is a nineteen-year-old social media influencer and model. He is known for posting short comedy and lip-sync videos, rising to fame when his edited music videos and short films caught attention. He was a member of the Sway House and is represented by SMG Model Management. He has modeled for clothing brands like Shadow Hill. He often broadcasts on YouTube, where he plays video games and interacts with his followers. In the "Battle of the Platforms" boxing match, he defeated Deji Olatunji, without having ever fought before.

Vinnie currently has 4.6 million followers on Instagram and over 5 million TikTok followers. He is still modeling and continuing his frequent broadcasts on YouTube.

Bryce Hall

Bryce Hall is an internet personality. He originally gained a following on social media platforms Vine and Musical.ly and eventually started his YouTube channel in 2015.

In 2019, Bryce was featured in the documentary *Jawline*, which detailed his career beginnings and legal scandals with his former manager. In January 2020, Bryce joined The Sway House, and over the course of the year, he dated Addison Rae on and off until they officially broke it off in mid-2021. In 2021, he was involved in the YouTubers vs TikTokers boxing match when he lost the fight to Internet personality and athlete Austin McBroom.

Bryce has been known for some of the controversies and legal issues he has been involved in. For example, in 2019, he was arrested in Texas with fellow Sway member Jaden Hossler on drug charges. He has also been sued by a restaurant owner in Los Angeles for battery, assault, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and engaging in acts of violence motivated by race, national origin, citizenship, immigration status, and primary language.

Bryce currently has around 21 million followers on TikTok and around 3.6 million subscribers on YouTube.

Josh Richards

Josh Richards is a nineteen-year-old Canadian social star and actor who joined the Sway House in 2019 alongside Jaden Hossler and Anthony Reeves. He has acted in films “Under the Stadium Lights” and “Summertime Dropouts.” He is known to be the fifth highest-paid TikToker in the world, launched a production company with Mark Wahlberg (CrossCheck Studios), formed a \$15 million venture capital fund (Animal Capital), became an N.H.L. advisor, formed a marketing agency, and developed a new podcast (BFF’s podcast on Barstool Sports) that became extremely popular among fans. Additionally, he, together with Bryce Hall, has created an energy drink under the Ani brand and has gained 73,000 followers on Instagram already. He has made Variety’s 2021 Power of Young Hollywood Impact List.

Josh Richards currently has 7.3 million followers on Instagram and 25.5 million followers on TikTok. He often posts his music on Triller, streams live on Twitch and continues to post content to his YouTube channel.

Jaden Hossler

Jaden Hossler, also known as Jxdn, is a twenty-year-old social media influencer and musician. He joined the Sway House with Bryce Hall in late 2019 and signed to Travis Barker’s music label DTA Records in 2020. He has since released his debut album “Tell Me About Tomorrow.” His single, “Better Off Dead” was co-written by Lauv and Blackbear, with co-production from Travis Barker. In January 2021, Hossler appeared in Machine Gun Kelly’s film *Downfalls High* and was featured on Nessa Barrett’s single “La Di Die,” going on to perform on Jimmy Kimmel Live! and The Ellen DeGeneres Show in April 2021. He was also nominated for the Social Star Award at the 2021 iHeartRadio Music Awards. He was involved with Bryce Hall in Texas for drug-related charges but was later released on bail.

Jaden currently has 4.5 million followers on Instagram and 9.2 million followers on TikTok. He is currently nominated for Push Performance at the 2021 MTV Video Music Awards and continues to pursue his music career.

Griffin Johnson

Griffin is a twenty-two-year-old social media star that rose to fame while studying nursing at college. He signed with Talent X Entertainment and soon joined the Sway House, but left in late 2020. He runs the podcast “Sway Way,” and was cast as Will on the Brat web series “Attaway General.” In 2020, he also released his debut single titled “Convenient,” which was a diss track about his ended relationship with Dixie D’Amelio.

Griffin currently has 10.8 million followers on TikTok and 3.3 million followers on Instagram. He broadcasts on Twitch and posts frequently on Triller. He has revealed that he is working on a new TV show that is set to air in 2021, calling it a “reaction-based” show.

Kio Cyr

Kio Cyr is a twenty-year-old Canadian TikTok star who posts lip-syncs, transitions, and challenge videos on TikTok. He cited to HollyWire that he rose to fame based on “the look,” his signature head-turning glance. He is represented by TalentX Entertainment and joined the SwayHouse alongside Griffin Johnson and Bryce Hall in 2019. He has appeared in the TV Mini-Series “Rooney’s Last Roll” as the character Jamie. He has previously dated Olivia Ponton but has since broken up.

Kio currently has 9.1 million followers on TikTok and has 2.5 million followers on Instagram. He films videos that he uploads to YouTube, and frequently plays “Versus Game” online with his fans, where fans can choose between two options to answer a question.

Larray

Larray is a twenty-three-year-old social media personality and comedian. He once made Vine videos before moving on YouTube when Vine shut down. He usually posts comedic videos on YouTube, especially gaming videos with Roblox. He is signed to the talent agency A3 Artists Agency and announced in 2020 that he would be starring in a movie to be released based on time travel. He has released three music videos so far, and a clothing merchandise line called “Girlies XO,” featuring various hoodies, sweatpants and t-shirts.

Larray currently has 8.39 million subscribers on YouTube, 6.7 million followers on Instagram and 24.4 million followers on TikTok. He frequently goes on Discord and continues posting videos on his YouTube channel.

Nikita Dragun

Nikita Dragun is a twenty-five-year-old makeup artist and beauty guru first known for her beauty channel on YouTube, where she created makeup tutorials, vlogs, and challenges. She has become a strong advocate for transgender persons and has vocally shared her own personal experiences, even speaking out against Victoria Secret’s marketing officer Ed Razek, who claimed that trans women should not be included in the annual fashion show. She has starred in the Snapchat web series *Nikita Unfiltered* and was on an episode of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. She has also launched a vegan and cruelty-free makeup line, Dragun Beauty, targeted towards the transgender community. However, she has been involved in numerous scandals, such as blackfishing in a Jeffree Star Cosmetics campaign, putting a black man on a dog leash at the MTV Video Music Awards, and cultural appropriation. She was also called out for attending Hype House parties during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Moises Mendez II, “A complete timeline of every controversy Nikita Dragun has been in since her rise to YouTube fame in 2014,” Business Insider, Insider Inc., 3 June 2021, <https://www.insider.com/nikita-dragun-hype-house-race-controversies-blackfishing-youtube-2021-5#july-2020-dragun-was-accused-of-attending-a-hype-house-party-during-the-pandemic-8>.

Nikita Dragun currently has 9.2 million followers on Instagram, 14.2 million followers on TikTok and 3.65 million subscribers on YouTube. She has an estimated net worth of \$3 million.

Jack Wright

Jack Wright is an eighteen-year-old dancer and entertainer on TikTok, rising to stardom by dancing to trending songs. He also posts lip-sync videos and snippets of his life such as prom and pole vaulting. He is the youngest member of the Hype House, joining when he was just sixteen years old, frequently posting with other members such as Chase Hudson and Charli D'Amelio. He has previously dated Sienna Mae Gomez, though serious allegations against her have since arisen following their breakup.

He currently has 8.6 million followers on TikTok, 1.3 million followers on Instagram and posts lifestyle content to his vlogs on YouTube.

Nessa Barrett

Nessa Barrett is a nineteen year old TikTok star who primarily lip syncs to rap and pop songs. She began posting to TikTok at the beginning of 2019, ran away from home to pursue her dreams in LA and has since plunged into the pop-punk scene, working with Blink 182's Travis Barker to produce "La Di Die," her first single. She has since released more music, performing with Jaden Hossler, her now-boyfriend, performing on Jimmy Kimmel Live! and The Ellen DeGeneres show. She advocates strongly for mental health on her platforms, having been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She has been involved in numerous scandals, often being "cancelled" and receiving a lot of hate. Some incidents involve her kissing Chase Hudson, who was then dating Charli D'Amelio, and has been exposed making fun of people who are overweight or disabled on a second, private Instagram account.⁴⁸

Nessa currently has 10.3 million followers on TikTok, 5.7 million followers on Instagram and is pursuing her music career, with her EP "Pretty Poison" due to come out in October 2021.

Olivia Ponton

Olivia Ponton is a social media personality and model. She is signed with the world-leading agency Wilhelmina Models and is a member of the Hype House since June 2020. She often creates TikTok videos featuring her dancing, and previously dated Kio Cyr, attracting a lot of attention from TikTok fans. They have since broken up, with Olivia coming out as bisexual and beginning a relationship with Kaila Novak. She has been involved in several "scandals," with fans speculating that she uses other people in order to climb the social ladder and that she supports problematic figures such as 6ix9ine.

⁴⁸ "A Definitive Timeline of the 'Nessa Barrett is Cancelled' Saga," Centennial, Centennial Beauty, 11 April 2020, <https://centennialbeauty.com/nessa-barrett-cancelled-drama-quran-tiktok/>.

She currently has 3.4 million followers on Instagram and 7.1 million fans on TikTok. At the moment, she is pursuing her modeling career, having been featured in shows during Miami Swim Week 2021.

Loren Gray

Loren Gray is a social media personality, model, and singer. She is the ninth most-followed individual on TikTok and held the rank of #1 most followed from 2019 to 2020. She originally joined Musical.ly in 2015 where she gained a large following. She now has around 54 million followers on TikTok and around 4 million subscribers on YouTube.

In 2018, Loren signed a record deal with Virgin Records before releasing her debut song. Since then, she's released a number of songs and eventually left her music label in early 2020 to become an independent artist. According to Billboard, she is one of the top 10 music influencers on TikTok. Additionally, in late 2020, Loren launched her own jewelry brand called &always. Forbes reported that Loren earned \$2.4 million in 2019 from her numerous sponsorship deals and merchandise, placing her at the fourth highest-earning TikTok star.

Loren's net worth is around \$5 million. Although originally from Pennsylvania, she currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

Daisy Keech

Daisy Keech is a twenty-one-year-old social media influencer and fitness model. She first gained popularity through her YouTube channel and Instagram, and she is known for her contribution to co-founding The Hype House. In early 2020, however, Daisy left the Hype House due to unfair treatment and internal conflicts.

Shortly after leaving The Hype House, Daisy co-founded another content house called The Clubhouse. She also has a fitness program called Keech Peach Fit. She currently has around 6 million followers on TikTok.

Daisy's net worth is around \$1.5 million, and she currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

Amelie Zilber

Amelie Zilber is a nineteen-year-old social media influencer, model, and activist. She is widely appreciated for being one of the relatively few prominent TikTokers who use their platform to raise awareness about international issues and advocate for change.

Amelie has completed multiple modeling assignments for LA Models, a popular modeling agency. She is a lead model for the well-known cosmetics brand Jouer Cosmetics, founded by her mother. Amelie is also known for being the young brand ambassador for UNICEF and the founder of the Two Minute Times news platform. She also has a YouTube channel with over 450,000 subscribers.

Amelie is currently dating Blake Gray, a member of the Sway House. She currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

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