On The Occasion Of The 60 Years Of The Department Of Management And Production In Theatre, Radio, And Culture

Creativity and Innovations in Theatre, Media and Cultural Production: Visions and Values for the Future

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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The Ethnography Of Social Media: Mapping Tik Tok Culture In Serbia

In 2020, when the whole world found itself locked under the threat of a pandemic caused by the emergence of a new coronavirus, and when almost everything stagnated, TikTok became one of the growing phenomena. This controversial application by the Chinese company ByteDance, based on creating and sharing short videos that can be both witty and sarcastic, can depict routines, everyday life, or present trend dances, has become the most downloaded application and the global quarantine entertainment, and so far, its popularity has not declined. However, despite the global popularity, one mentions TikTok in the public discourse in a negative context, as an application associated with a non-transparent algorithm, endangered privacy, or with risks and a destructive impact on the behavior and mental health of young people. At the same time, while it is widely spread among the young, for the older generations that have not had the opportunity to encounter TikTok, so they are still unsure about what it represents and what is happening on it, the application is a sort of a black box. Having all of that in mind, and by relying on the theoretical interpretation, this paper aims at providing a close look at the application and its analysis, as well as the potentials and limits that are associated with it. More precisely, based on a month-long observation and ethnographic research, the paper is an attempt at giving answers to the questions about the nature of TikTok, its place in the new media universe, users, topics, movements, and questions that are presented in this social media, and finally, what this content can say to us about the world we are living in and its reach. In addition, the paper shall engage in the deliberation of the methodological challenges of the ethnographic research of social media and the Internet.

Keywords: social media, new media, youth, ethnography

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