Modeling the TikTok 'For You Page' Algorithm Using Graph Theory and Algorithm Complexity

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Abstract—TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms in the world. TikTok itself has a variety of very interesting features so that over time more and more internet users are interested in this social media. TikTok has a variety of interactions that are very user-friendly. They prioritize the comfort of their users so that they are designed in such a way in their application to make users immersed in using their application. TikTok itself has a very interesting feature, namely For Your Page. FYP itself can adjust users from interactions like, comment, share, save, and watch time users on a topic. This FYP system can be created with a graph theory approach and time complexity calculations so that it can be found how this FYP system works.

Keywords—TikTok, FYP, Graph, Time Complexity

I. INTRODUCTION

TikTok has become a social media application that is very often used by internet users. If TikTok is seen from the development process, TikTok is an application made by a company called Bytedance from China. Bytedance itself initially created an application called Douyin in 2016 which could only be used for internet users in China. The use of content on Douyin is basically the same as TikTok, which contains a collection of short videos. Then, in 2017, Bytedance made changes to this application so that this application became TikTok which could be used outside China. Then, in the same year, Bytedance bought an application called Musical.ly which contained the same content and was viral at that time. Then, Bytedance merged the two applications and developed them from 2018 until they became the TikTok application that we know today.

TikTok is increasingly increasing its features. Initially, TikTok was only used as a means of entertainment in the form of short videos that were relevant to its users. However, over time, TikTok can be used as a means of live streaming to an online shop called TikTok Shop. Not a few people have made a profit by becoming a TikTok creator.

The interesting thing to talk about from Tiktok is related to the algorithm in the For Your Page section. For Your Page is designed by Tiktok in such a way that it finds a point where users see videos that are relevant to watch. In addition to adjusting user interactions, Tiktok also looks at the achievement of a video's interaction such as views, likes, comments, shares, and saves. Regarding how Tiktok processes data and interactions from its videos, it is still a mystery for Tiktok.

However, the For Your Page Tiktok system can be designed simply using various theories, one of which is graph theory and assisted by calculations of algorithm complexity. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used the approach of both materials, namely graph theory and algorithm complexity, so that it is possible to create a simple system from For Your Page on Tiktok.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

A. TikTok

TikTok is an application used as a medium of entertainment for internet users. TikTok offers various things, especially in the form of short entertainment videos. TikTok has a fairly interesting algorithm so that what is displayed is based on user interaction with the types of content that are usually watched or items that are usually purchased by users.

In its use, TikTok has several main features to provide the best experience to its users, including:

1. For Your Page

For Your Page on TikTok provides users with the best experience. This is because the For Your Page page uses the results of user interaction analysis as its main axis. Not only that, viral videos are also a determining factor for the existence of this For Your Page. So, on the For Your Page page, short videos that pass through the user's device have direct relevance from the analysis of what users often see to what users like.

2. User Interaction

There are various interactions that users can do when viewing or watching a video, including like, comment, share, and save. This is one of the determinants in measuring the For Your Page algorithm. When a user performs these interactions, the possibility of the video appearing again on For Your Page becomes higher. So, the For Your Page algorithm really adjusts what is interesting to the user.

3. Duet and Stitch

Duet and stitch are two features that users can do as special interactions to a video. Duet is a feature that allows users to respond directly through a video in a side-by-side format with the duet video. As for stitch, the user's response video will be displayed after the original video is partially displayed.

4. Live

Users can do or watch live streaming on TikTok. This feature allows users to create or watch an activity in real time. Currently, the live feature is most often used for selling, casual chatting, and others. This feature also allows live creators to interact directly with users who watch their live.

5. TikTok Shop

TikTok shop is one of the newest features on TikTok. The TikTok shop system is the same as other online shops that allow users to shop directly on TikTok. Usually this feature can be directly connected to the creator who is live or videos from the creator.

B. Graph

A graph is a mathematical theory that broadly explains the relationship between two or more objects. A graph has two main components, namely nodes (points) connected by edges (lines). Graphs are commonly used in problems related to determining problems between entities and have been used in various fields, such as computer science, biology, and others.

Graphs have several forms and types based on the edge, namely as follows:

1. Simple Graph

A simple graph is a graph that does not have ring edges or edges connected from a vertex to itself. This graph also does not have more than one edge connected to the same vertex or is called a multiple edge.

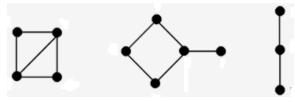


Fig 2.1 Simple graph (Source : Graph (Part 1) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

2. Unsimple Graph

A simple graph is a graph that has ring edges or edges connected from a vertex to itself. This graph also has more than one edge connected to the same vertex or is called a multiple edge.

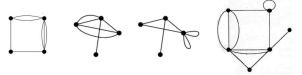


Fig 2.2 Unsimple graph (Source : Graph (Part 1) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

Unsimple graphs are divided into several types, as follows:

a. Multi Graph, a graph that contains multiple edges or has more than one edge connected

from one vertex to another.

b. Pseudo-Graph, a graph that contains ring edges or contains vertices that have an edge connected to the vertex itself

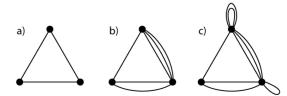


Fig 2.3 a) Simple graph, b) Multi graph, c) Pseudo-graph (Source : Graph (Part 1) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

Graphs can also be classified from the direction of their sides, as follows:

1. Undirected Graph

Undirected Graph means that the graph does not have directional arrows between each other node on its side.



Fig 2.4 Undirected Graph (Source : Graph (Part 1) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

2. Directed Graph (Digraph)

A directed graph is a graph that has a direction orientation on the edges between its vertices.

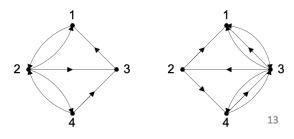


Fig 2.5 Directed graph (Source : Graph (Part 1) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

Graphs also have types where the graph has numbers that describe the weight on an edge. This value can represent distance, cost, or other parameters. This graph is called a weighted graph.

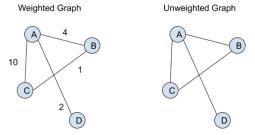


Fig 2.6 Weighted graph (Source : Graph (Part 1) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

There is also a graph called a bipartite graph. This graph has vertices that are separated into two parts and the edges that exist connect the vertices from the two different parts.

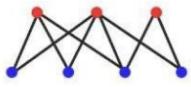
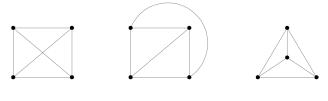


Fig 2.7 Bipartite graph (Source : Graph (Part 3) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

Graphs can be classified based on the intersection of their edges. If a graph does not have at least one intersection of two edges, then the graph is called a planar graph, if there is an intersection, the graph is called a non-planar graph. A planar graph that is described in another way that does not have an intersection is called a plane graph.



(a) (b) (c) Fig 2.8 Planar graph, b) and c) also called as plane graph (Source : Graph (Part 2) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

Graphs can be represented in various ways, including:

- 1. Adjacency Matrix
 - The graph in the adjacency matrix representation can be written as $A = [a_{ij}]$ with i being the self node and j being the target node. The matrix is written with the number 1 if i and j are adjacent, 0 if they are not adjacent, and 2 if it is a double edge.

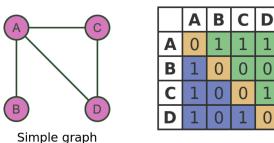


Fig 2.9 Example of adjacency matrix (Source : Graph (Part 2) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

- 2. Incidency Matrix
 - The graph in the adjacency matrix representation can be written as $A = [a_{ij}]$ with i being the self vertex and j being the target vertex. The matrix is written with the number 1 if i and j are adjacent and the direction is from i to j, 0 if they are not adjacent, and -1 if i and j are adjacent and the direction is i from j.

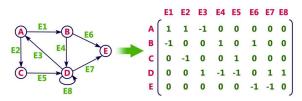


Fig 2.10 Example of incidency matrix (Source : Graph (Part 2) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

3. Adjacency List

This representation directly describes which nodes are neighbors of other nodes in the form of a list.

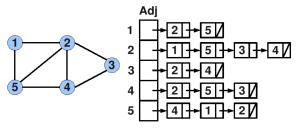


Fig 2.11 Example of adjacency list (Source : Graph (Part 2) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

C. Time Complexity

In algorithm complexity, there are two parameters to calculate the efficiency of a program, namely from space and from time. In this study, only one parameter will be used, namely time complexity. The main work of this time complexity is to calculate the stages of the algorithm. The number of stages of this algorithm is calculated from the number of operations performed as the input size (n).

Usually, time complexity is defined as T(n) which describes the maximum amount of time for a computation of size n. There is also a notation called Big-O which is written as O(f(n)), this notation is an asymptotic time complexity notation where f(n) is an upper bound of T(n) for larger n. There are groupings of algorithms from Big-O notation from good to bad, namely constant (O(1)), logarithmic (O(log n)), linear (O(n)), logarithmic linear (O(n log n)), quadratic (O(n²)), cubic (O(n³)), exponential (O(2ⁿ)), and factorial (O(n!)).

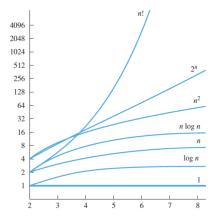


Fig 2.12 Time Complexity Graph (Source : Algorithm Complexity (Part 2) Slide by Dr. Rinaldi Munir)

In this simple algorithm, there are several calculations in calculating the time complexity of this program.

- 1. PageRank
 - The time complexity of PageRank is O(k . (|V| + |E|))where k is the number of iterations, V is the number of nodes (videos and users), and E is the number of edges (interactions) (Brin & Page, 1998).
- 2. Sorting and Interaction

The time complexity of the sorting system is $O(n \log n)$ where n is the number of videos available (Cormen et al., 2009). Then, it will increase linearly from the preference with a value of O(n). The increase is also obtained from the existing interactions with a value of O(1).

III. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This section will explain how the For Your Page algorithm program is simulated in python with some information. This study uses some data as follows:

1. Video Data

A video has its own data like on TikTok, namely video id, video title, video genre, viewers, likes, comments, shares, and saves.

2. User Interaction

A video that passes For Your Page can be given interactions that will be counted in its score, the things that are assessed are whether the user likes, comments, shares, or saves and whether the user watches the video in full or in part or skips the existing video.

In the simple algorithm created, video interaction with users is symbolized by a directed graph (digraph) as well as a weighted graph. The directed graph here displays the direction between the user and the video in the dataset. For the weights on each side, the value of the FYP probability calculation score is depicted. In python, we can use the networkx library for using directed graphs and pandas for reading csv dataset.

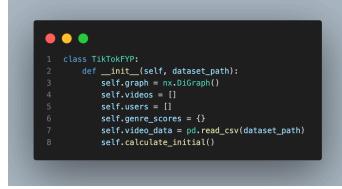


Fig 3.1 Class and graph initialization

A. Data Processing

This study uses 30 videos stored as a dataset in a csv file using 5 types of genres to facilitate this research.



Fig 3.2 Video dataset on csv

After the dataset is read, the dataset will be processed through a function called calculate_initial which will assess viewers, likes, comments, shares, and saves of a video. These components will be processed with their respective multipliers according to the assumed logical weight. For viewers, a multiplier of 0.125 will be used, likes with 0.5, comments with 0.25, shares with 0.5, and saves with 0.25. Then, if it has been initialized, a node is created in the graph implementation.

• •	
	f calculate_initial(self):
	for _, row in self.video_data.iterrows():
	video_id = row['id']
	genre = row['genre']
	if video_id not in self.graph:
	video_attributes = row.to_dict()
	video_attributes.pop('genre', None)
	initial_score = (
	row['viewers'] * 0.125 +
	row['likes'] * 0.5 +
	row['comments'] * 0.25 +
	row['shares'] * 0.5 +
	row['saves'] * 0.25
	self.graph.add_node(video_id, type="video", genre=genre, initial_score=initial_score, **video_attributes)
	self.videos.append(video_id)
	if genre not in self.genre_scores:
	self.genre_scores[genre] = 0
	self.genre_scores[genre] += initial_score

Fig 3.3 Data calculation

B. User Interaction Calculation

A function needs to be created to calculate the score resulting from the interaction between the user and the video they are watching. The components in this interaction can be seen from likes, comments, shares, saves, and watch time. There is a multiplier for each component that adjusts to the overall weight when combined with data initialization processing. The weight for likes will be multiplied by 1.5, comments multiplied by 1, shares multiplied by 1.25, saves multiplied by 1.5, and watch time multiplied by 1. Keep in mind that this weighting greatly affects the user's FYP compared to the weighting according to the dataset. Weighting in dataset processing will only display videos based on the level of virality of the existing video.

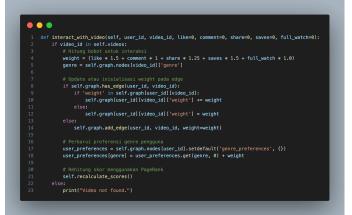


Fig 3.4 Interaction calculation

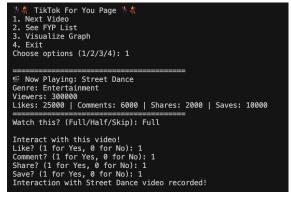


Fig 3.5 Interface for interaction

C. Scoring and PageRank

After the components for the score are complete, namely from the dataset and user interaction, a score needs to be created for each existing video based on the interaction. This score measurement feature uses the help of a function called PageRank. PageRank is a function to determine the level of importance in a graph. PageRank in this study uses two calculation components, as follows:

1. Edge weights

This weight is obtained from the interaction between the user and the video they are watching based on the calculations mentioned earlier.

2. Personalization

This is the initial distribution of the videos in the dataset based on the components mentioned earlier.



Fig 3.6 PageRank implementation on scoring

Then, a function is created that will combine PageRank with user preferences that will calculate the ranking of a video's possible FYP. This function also affects the interaction between users and the video genre. So, if a user interacts with a video, other videos with the same genre will also be affected by their score. For each existing FYP recommendation, the PageRank score will also be adjusted according to the user's preference factor in that genre. Then, the resulting FYP list will be taken as many as top_k. This score is also a factor that influences the randomization of videos through FYP, the greater the score, the more likely it is that a genre or video will appear in the user's FYP.

ief for_your_page(self, user_id, top_k=5):
if user id not in self-orable
return ()
Recalculate scores to ensure they are up-to-date
self.recalculate scores()
user_preferences = self.graph.nodes[user_id].get('genre_preferences', {})
recommendations = sorted(
<pre>(node, self.graph.nodes[node].get('current_score', 0) * (1 + user_preferences.get(self.graph.nodes[node].get('genre'), 0) / 10))</pre>
for node in self.videos
key=lambda x: x[1],
for video, score in recommendations:
if not self.graph.has_edge(user_id, video):
<pre>self.graph.add_edge(user_id, video, recommendation_score=score)</pre>
return recommendations[:top_k]

Fig 3.7 Function for FYP from PageRank and user preference

D. Display FYP and Graph Visualization

The score obtained from the previous function can be displayed by the user to see the video sequence with the highest possible FYP.

f display_score(video_data):
print("\n" + "="+40)
print(f"% Now Playing: {video_data["title"])")
print(f"Genre: {video_data['genre']}")
print(f"Viewers: {video_data['viewers'])")
print(f"Likes: {video_data['likes']} Comments: {video_data['comments']} Shares: {video_data['shares']} Saves: {video_data['saves']}")
print("="#40)

Fig 3.8 Display FYP Implementation

<pre>% TikTok For You Page % 1. Next Video 2. See FYP List 3. Visualize Graph 4. Exit Choose options (1/2/3/4): 2</pre>
🗄 For Your Page Video Ranking 🗟
Now Playing: Funny Cat Video Genre: Animal Visewers: 1000000 Likes: 150000 Comments: 10000 Shares: 5000 Saves: 2000
Score: 0.1207
<pre>** Now Playing: Esports Championship Genre: Game Viewers: 900000 Likes: 75000 Comments: 10000 Shares: 5000 Saves: 20000</pre>
Score: 0.0920
Now Playing: Valorant Clip Genre: Game Viewers: 800000 Likes: 80000 [Comments: 5000 Shares: 3000 Saves: 10000
Score: 0.0835
" Now Playing: New Trend TikTok Dances Genre: Entertainment Viewers: 700000 Comments: 8000 Shares: 2000 Saves: 15000
Score: 0.0685
≪ Now Playing: Jedag Jedug Genre: Music Viewers: 650000 Comments: 7000 Shares: 2500 Saves: 12000
Viewers: 650000

Fig 3.9 Display FYP Interface

Then, the existing graph can be displayed with the help of the matplotlib library to produce a graph depiction with nodes in the form of user IDs and video IDs in the dataset.



Fig 3.10 Graph visualization Implementation

IV. IMPLEMENTATION TESTING AND RESULT DISCUSSION

A. Initial View of the Graph

If the user has just run the FYP program, the score for each video will be based on the calculation results from the dataset.

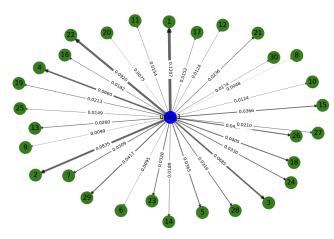


Fig 4.1 Graph visualization of initial data from visualize_graph function

B. User Interaction with Video

<pre>% TikTok For You Page % 1. Next Video 2. See FYP List 3. Visualize Graph 4. Exit Choose options (1/2/3/4): 1</pre>				
Watch this? (Full/Half/Skip): Full Interact with this video! Like? (1 for Yes, 0 for No): 1 Comment? (1 for Yes, 0 for No): 1 Share? (1 for Yes, 0 for No): 1 Save? (1 for Yes, 0 for No): 1 Interaction with Esports Championship video recorded!				

Fig 4.2 User interaction with video

Users who have interacted with a video will increase the score of the video. In this case, the user interacts with a video titled "Esport Championship" with the genre "Game" and the score of the video will increase. Not only the score on the video, the score on videos with the same genre will also increase.

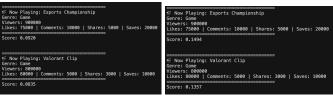


Fig 4.3 Score update, left is before the interaction and right is after the interaction

Users who do not interact with a video, by directly skipping the video they are watching, will not affect the score of the video or genre.

\% TikTok For You Page \% 1. Next Video 2. See FYP List 3. Visualize Graph
4. Exit Choose options (1/2/3/4): 1
choose options (1/2/3/4). 1
≪ Now Playing: Valorant Clip Genre: Game Viewers: 800000 Likes: 80000 Comments: 5000 Shares: 3000 Saves: 10000
Watch this? (Full/Half/Skip): Skip Interaction with Valorant Clip video recorded!

Fig 4.4 User do not interact with the video

" Now Playing: Valorant Clip	€ Now Playing: Valorant Clip
Gene: Game	Genre: Game
Viewers: B00000	Viewers: 800000
Likes: 00000 [Comments: 5000 Shares: 3000 Saves: 10000	Likes: 80000 [Comments: 5000 Shares: 3000 Saves: 10000
Score: 0.0835	Score: 0.0835

Fig 4.5 Score update if user do not interact with the video

C. For Your Page by Score

In this test, the researcher has interacted with 5 videos (like, comment, share, save, and full watch) with the genre "Animal" and produced the following graph display. Rank 1, 2, and 4 has the genre "Animal".

<pre>with the second s</pre>
Now Playing: Pet Show Genre: Animal Viewers: 400000 Likes: 35000 Comments: 8000 Shares: 2500 Saves: 12000
Score: 0.1748
Now Playing: Jedag Jedug Genre: Music Viewers: 650000 Likes: 55000 Comments: 7000 Shares: 2500 Saves: 12000 ==================================
Score: 0.1072
Now Playing: Animal Rescue Genre: Animal Viewers: 220000 Likes: 20000 Comments: 4000 Shares: 1500 Saves: 7000
Score: 0.0972
Now Playing: Esports Championship Genre: Game Viewers: 900000 Likes: 75000 Comments: 10000 Shares: 5000 Saves: 20000
Score: 0.0920

Fig 4.6 Top 5 with 3 "Animal" genre

This time a test will be carried out to see whether the FYP page in the 10 searches comes up with the most videos of the "Animal" genre. If yes, then the program is running in accordance with the objectives of the FYP itself.

Video	Genre
Pet Show	Animal
Flashmob Dance	Entertainment
Rock Concert	Music
Pet Show	Animal
Pet Show	Animal
Valorant Clip	Game
About Stocks	Education
Funny Animal Prank	Animal
Funny Animal Prank	Animal
Animal Rescue	Animal

Fig 4.7 10 FYP video

Here it can be seen, from 10 videos that passed through FYP, 6 videos were obtained that had the genre "Animal". It can be concluded that this algorithm is in accordance with the needs in the FYP algorithm simulation on TikTok.

In accordance with the calculation formula mentioned earlier, here is the time complexity calculation of the PageRank section.

$$O(k \cdot (|V| + |E|) = O(20 \cdot (31 + 4) = O(700))$$

This result will be added to the complexity calculation of the number of interactions with the existing video, which is 4.

$$O(700) + O(m) = O(700) + O(4) = O(704)$$

Then there are calculations in the sorting algorithm in this program.

$$O(n \log n) = O(30 \log_2 30) = O(147.3)$$

V. CONCLUSION

Modeling the For Your Page system on TikTok is very possible if using an algorithm using graph theory. In the graph, it will describe the interaction between users and the videos in the dataset. Thus, a video recommendation system is obtained that passes through FYP by referring to the interactions in the graph that has been created.

However, in time complexity, the program created actually has an expensive weight because there is PageRank used on a large graph. In the designed program it feels fast in execution time, but it is different if the existing dataset has a very large number because its time complexity will increase significantly on a large scale.

VI. APPENDIX

The complete sudoku solver program and other functions used can be found below.

https://github.com/fithrarzk/Makalah-Matdis

Below is a video demonstration and explanation of this project.

https://youtu.be/gD1TJAEu2tI

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Bandung, 4 Januari 2024

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