

NO YOU DID NOT??

Responses to Rage Bait on Social Media

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The phenomenon of “rage bait,” a type of digital content deliberately crafted to provoke anger and outrage in viewers, is becoming increasingly present on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter). As a specific form of trolling, rage bait or “rage farming” evokes a wide range of emotional and behavioral responses from audiences. Despite its prevalence, this phenomenon so far has received little academic attention.

The aim of this research is to analyze viewer responses to rage bait posts, categorizing them into distinct reaction types and exploring commonalities within the comment sections of such posts. The study is based on a dataset of comments, collected from various rage bait videos on TikTok, many of which garnered tens of thousands of comments. We therefore restricted our analysis to a maximum of 1000 comments and reactions per video. In total, we work with approx. 14.000 responses to 25 different videos. First results indicate that reactions can be grouped into four main categories. These range from sincere responses, often criticizing the poster for perceived stupidity or unnecessary behavior, to meta-commentary, where users identify and expose the post as rage bait.