

TikTok on the Clock: Time Running Out for the Most Popular Social Media App?

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For many, TikTok is a way to wind down after a hard day's work and scroll through a variety of forms of entertainment. The app has also become a platform where people can express themselves, share a laugh, and obtain current news. Through this short form content, a strong, long-term community has been built.

However, on January 19th, 2025, this community was broken apart when TikTok was banned. After years of battle, the war on whether or not to ban TikTok seemed to come to a conclusion after the U.S. government initiated a nation-wide ban. This was due to the government's concern of TikTok collecting and storing user data. U.S. officials stated that Chinese national security laws require social media organizations, like TikTok, to gather intelligence for cooperation purposes. Additionally, it's been discovered that the Chinese government could compromise Americans' devices through the software. U.S. officials argue that TikTok could be used by the Chinese government to spy on Americans and also covertly influence them.

Despite the U.S. Supreme Court ruling to uphold the federal ban for national security reasons on January 12th, TikTok was once again available for Americans 12 hours later. President Donald Trump, who was in place to take office on the 20th,

mandated an executive order that allowed the law to not be enforced for now. However, this does not mean that it is overturned as the ban will return on April 5th. The reason behind this decision to delay the ban 75 days is to give time to find a resolution that saves a platform used by 170 million Americans while also ensuring national security.

Since the overturning of the ban, many people have noticed that the app was not initially available again in the App Store. This is due to the fact that, under federal law, it is still technically illegal for companies, like the App Store, to distribute and update it, despite Trump saying it's alright to ignore the law.

The owner of TikTok, Bytedance, has long insisted that it is not for sale; however, with the institution of a new president, this could potentially change. Trump has said that when he signed the executive order, many rich people signaled their interest in purchasing TikTok. Some potential buyers could be wealthiest man in the world Elon Musk, YouTuber MrBeast, and Shark Tank investor Kevin O'Leary. Trump could also look to another solution in joint-ownership. Half U.S. ownership could sway the government to permit TikTok to operate in the U.S.



Graphic by Beckett Beller

Bringing the Beats: How TikTok Transformed the Music Industry

@JOHN KELLY

"I probably watch TikTok an hour and a half every single day." Connor Smith '25 and many other millions of teenagers around the world spend vast swathes of time scrolling through thousands of videos every single day. This not only introduces them to the unique community on the short form content platform, but also the bizarre aspects that come with it, including the entirely unique musical trends.

TikTok, although recently under some hot water due to the temporary ban from the app store and the subsequent unbanning, is still one of the most popular social media apps in the world. In fact, according to CNN, the app recently surpassed one billion active-monthly users, about one-hundred million of which are American users.

This massive community has fostered the growth of diverse movements, social development, and especially emerging artists.

The music industry did not just develop a new way to transfer music following the development of the app but was fundamentally altered during the growth of this platform, as it entirely changed the way music is consumed. TikTok, due to being an app that uses songs as background to compliment the subject of the video, puts an emphasis on shorter beats.

TikTok has uncovered many unpopular songs, allowing many small artists to attain a large sum of fame very, very quickly. The best examples of these being people like Olivia Rodrigo and recently Chappell Roan and Doechii, both of whom went from musicians looking for their next gig, to national superstars in a very short span of time. Rodrigo, for example, had an extremely small following on social media until she start-

ed promoting her song "Driver's License" in early 2021. This song was used in over one million videos within the year, pulling Rodrigo into the world of celebrity artists immediately. Later in 2024 artists such as Chappell Roan and Doechii saw similar success through the algorithm when their songs were promoted and took storm.

This unique algorithm provides a new medium for advertising music and building a fanbase. TikTok's unique community provides the environment to grow a loyal fan base extremely quickly.

According to NPR, forty percent of TikTok users use a monthly music subscription, compared to only twenty-five percent of the general population. Not only do TikTokers consume more music in general, but they also are seemingly more attached to it, as seventeen percent of users buy artist merchandise monthly, nearly doubling the usual nine percent.

TikTok also changed how songs are developed, as many artists report spending the majority of their time developing the first parts of their song, so as to sound appealing on TikTok.

The music industry was already greatly shifted by the behemoth impact of the internet and social media, like YouTube, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Instagram; TikTok has simply pushed all of these changes to the max, bringing a foreign, unique aspect to the table.

TikTok will likely continue to mold the musical intake of the world for years to come, leaving many to wonder, how will the world adapt?

Jared McCain is a rookie guard for the Philadelphia 76ers who also has a large amount of fame off the court. Some could argue that his fame off the court during high school and college put my eyes on his game which led to his impressive college career and getting selected 16th overall in the 2024 NBA Draft.

McCain's ascendance to the league began at Centennial High School in Corona, California. When he was a junior, he led the team to a 33-1 season and won the state championship averaging 23 points, 6 rebounds, and 3 assists per game. That year he won the California Gatorade Player of the Year award. He then went on his senior year to play in the 2023 McDonald's All-American Boys game and was a two-time Gatorade Player of the Year. This outstanding high school career led him to Duke University for the 2023-2024 season. He started in all 36 games and tied a Duke first-year record with 35 points in a single game. He earned the ACC All-Rookie honors due to his first-year college performance. After his impressive freshman year in college, he entered the 2024 NBA Draft. The Philadelphia 76ers used their 16th overall draft pick to pick Jared McCain. In his NBA debut, McCain quickly became a standout rookie. His dynamic play style and confidence on the court were evident by a series of games where he was averaging over twenty points a game and shooting 45.6% from three.

Jared McCain's rise on TikTok also began during his high school years. He showed off his unique personality when he was not on the court. Some of his content includes dancing, singing, locker room glimpses, and more. Today McCain has 4.6 million followers on TikTok. This shows that he is not just a skilled individual on the court but also a skilled influencer, using his following to improve his basketball career. While his basketball talent was always a major part of his life, his TikTok journey was crucial in making him a well-known figure before he fully established his game to go to the NBA.

Jared McCain's Claim to Fame on TikTok

@GARRETT FOGLE
#JaredMcCain #TikTok #MountMichael #Journalism



Misinformation Runs Rampant, Misleads Young Adults on **TikTok**

@ISAAC WEEDER

With the ban of TikTok in the U.S. lingering, it is important to reflect on the influence the app has had on the country's social and political landscape. The social media platform boasts billions of users and encourages creativity, entertainment, and activism. While the platform acts as a "safe space" for all users, its algorithm-driven curation of content can have harmful effects on its users.

This algorithm is also responsible for the ease at which misinformation and harmful narratives and trends can spread. From the far-right political ideology and conspiracies of Alex Jones to far-left extremism and promotion of dangerous behaviors, TikTok's algorithm will spread it all to the point where each gets truly out of control and leads to real world consequences.

One of the most notorious figures commonly associated with the spread of misinformation is Alex Jones, a conspiracy theorist known for his extreme rhetoric and fearmongering. Jones has been banned on almost all major social media platforms, including TikTok, but that has not stopped the rapid spread of his problematic ideology and theories such as the Sandy Hook massacre which Jones denied the validity of, saying the shooting was an "inside job" by the government.

Clips from Jones' shows, interviews, and broadcasts are shared on TikTok by fan accounts and continue to circulate, spreading his harmful and extreme narratives.

Another issue includes the misinformation being spread concerning mental health. Tik-

Tok has provided its users a way to freely talk about mental health struggles. However, it has also fostered an environment where self-diagnosis and unhealthy coping mechanisms are promoted. Certain communities on TikTok glorify struggles like eating disorders, mental disabilities, and self-harm under the pretense of relatability and belonging to a community.

Beyond wellness and political misinformation, the app has become infamous for its viral trends that put its users at risk.

Some trends are extremely dangerous, leading to serious injuries and even death in some cases. These trends go beyond political ideology, which shows how misinformation not only affect politics but also social aspects of its users' lives. One such trend, the "NyQuil Chicken" trend, had followers of the trend cooking chicken in NyQuil cough syrup. This trend has had serious effects on TikTok's users causing severe injury and harm. TikTok's problem with misinformation spans across many aspects of its users' lives, going beyond just politics.

The platform's algorithm and structure create an echo chamber on both the far left and right while providing a free space for the encouragement of dangerous trends.

The rate at which harmful content can spread on the app is truly alarming and can only be addressed when people on both sides of the political spectrum work together to realize their own errors and work together to make a solution before more real-world consequences transpire.

Bringing the Boom: The Rise of the Costco Guys

@DEREK BREWER

The Befumos were your traditional Floridian family. Just two parents raising their two kids, Eric and Ashley, until one day they brought the boom to TikTok in late 2023 and began the infamous "Costco Guys" legend. Since then, they have amassed 2.6 million followers and over 79 million likes.

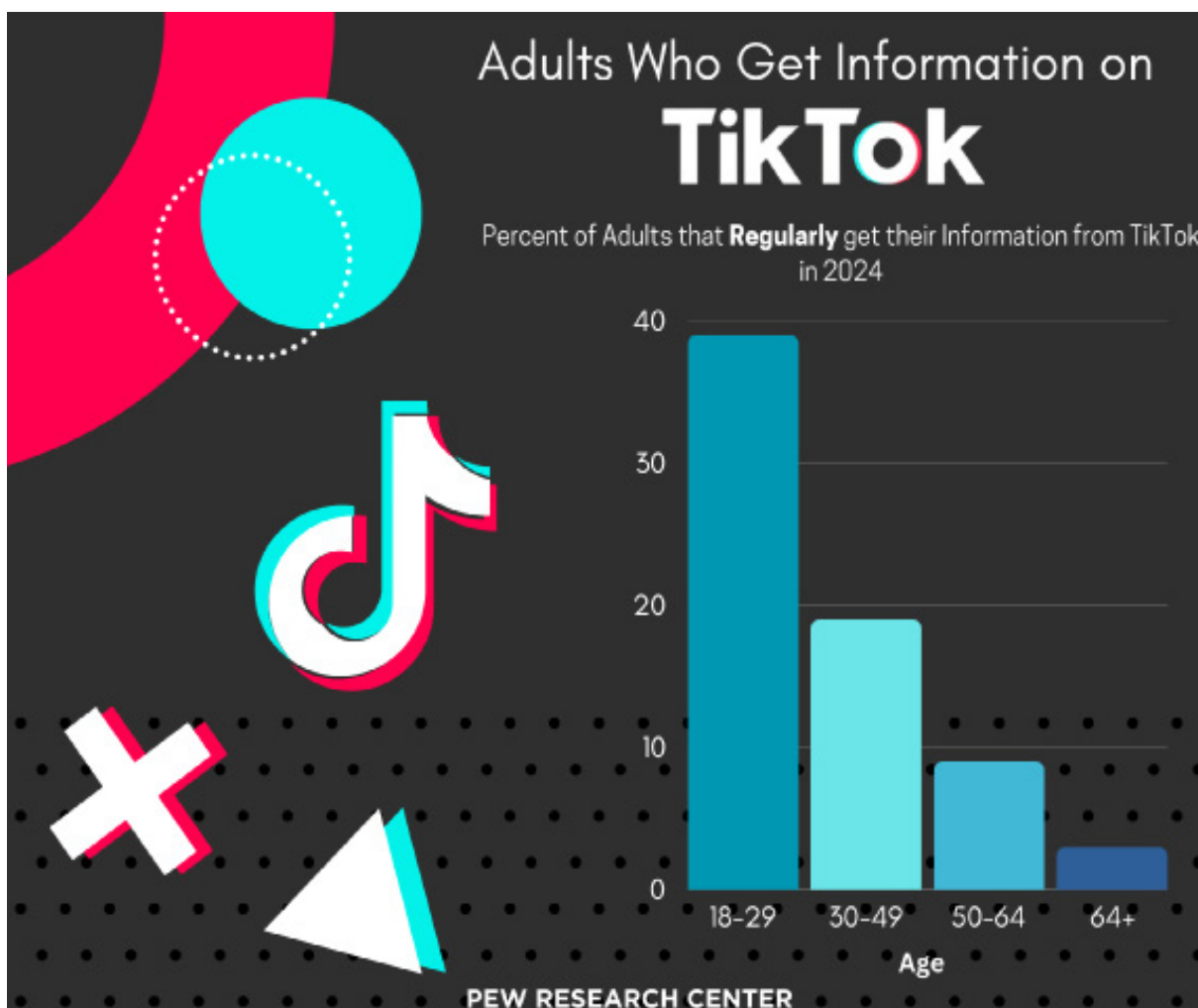
Eric, also known as Big Justice, and his father AJ became popular for their comedic TikToks. Usually filming inside of their local Costco, they showed off the great deals, sampled foods, and most importantly, rated the Costco food court foods such as the chicken bake and the double chunk chocolate cookie, giving each item a Boom (good) or Doom (bad). Big AJ and Big Justice's natural chemistry, combined with their funny commentary, make their videos entertaining and their content relatable.

The Befumos' constant grinding of food reviews and day to day activities allowed them to reach a couple thousand followers on TikTok, but it wasn't until March 1st, 2024, when they declared themselves as the "Costco Guys." This video alone gained over 4 million likes and was the start of their popularity. Since then, they have stuck with that Costco mantra and have kept their loyalty to the place that made them popular in the first place.

They have also collaborated with many other popular creators on TikTok. Such creators include the "Rizzler," a kid who is known for the infamous "rizz face"; Jersey Joe, a popular dancer on the app; and a man named Cousin Angelo, who appears to be their cousin, although it is unknown whether he is biologically related to Big Justice and AJ. To build their brand, they have kept their popular catchphrases to develop a recognizable persona and running gags that their followers can keep up with.

Big Justice and Big AJ have also taken their talents outside of the Costco store. They have created 3 songs, most notably their "We Bring the Boom" song. Additionally, they partnered with Barstool Sports to create some merchandise that goes along with their slogans. Big AJ has even taken his talents to the wrestling ring and partakes in pro wrestling.

This family's story shows that you are never too old or too young to chase your dreams and as long as you stay dedicated you can achieve anything. It also shows how much of an impact the TikTok platform can have on a person and or people. TikTok can change one's life in a day, all it takes is one post!



Graphic by Easton Crouse



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