

# TikTok better positions itself as a Facebook rival

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Watch out, Facebook. The social video app TikTok just hit a major milestone as it sets its sights on global teen domination.

TikTok has just crossed the 1 billion mark for worldwide installs on the App Store and Google Play, according to data from Sensor Tower, an analyst group that focuses on the mobile market.

"Approximately 663 million of these installs occurred in 2018," Sensor Tower's founder Oliver Yeh said in a statement. "To put this into perspective, the Facebook app was installed an estimated 711 million times last year and Instagram saw about 444 million new downloads."

The 1 billion download figure is also only part of the story, as it does not include the number of downloads the app has received on Android in China, according to Sensor Tower, which also reported that TikTok was the No. 1 non-game app in the U.S. in January.

Still, Facebook and Instagram are considerably larger than TikTok, with billions of monthly active users between the two apps. TikTok's massive growth, though, is more than enough to get Facebook's attention, as it is known for eliminating would-be competition by copying features and acquiring rivals.

Lasso, Facebook's copycat version of TikTok, was quietly launched in November.

So, what the heck is TikTok?

If you're old enough to remember Kesha's "Tik Tok" and you're from the Facebook, Instagram or even SnapChat era, the rise of the social networking site may have slipped right by you.

The mobile application is perhaps best described as a social networking site that's used to make amateur music videos.

You can show appreciation through "hearts," which are essentially the

same as "likes."

TikTok, known as Douyin in China, was developed by the Chinese company ByteDance in 2016. The Beijing-based media and tech company bought the teen-focused social app Musical.ly the following year, and the company merged the two apps in 2018.

Why do kids love it so much?

TikTok is fun to use, and it integrates music in a way that other social networking sites don't.

You can choose a popular song from the TikTok library and then make a clip of yourself dancing, lipsyncing or otherwise acting out a response while the tune plays. There are also several effects to help produce an entertaining video, including interactive filters and background effects.

Some teens use the app to watch comedic videos posted by celebrities and popular YouTubers.

In late 2018, "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon joined the app, encouraging viewers to take the Tumbleweed Challenge with him, in which participants roll on the ground to music associated with western genre films. Fallon featured the best submissions on his show.

Other celebrities, like pro skateboarder Tony Hawk and YouTube creators Jake Paul and Liza Koshy, also use the app.

Is TikTok safe?

On Wednesday, TikTok settled a lawsuit for over its use of children's info.

The FTC alleged that Musical.ly illegally collected personal information from children using the app, violating the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which requires that websites and online services directed to children obtain parental consent before collecting [personal information](#).

The app launched a series of videos to educate users on Wednesday and "implemented changes to accommodate younger US users in a limited, separate app experience that introduces additional safety and privacy protections designed specifically for this audience."

Find out more about the lawsuit [here](#).

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