



What is Tik Tok?



With more than **100 million** users, Tik Tok is one of the fastest growing social media platforms in the world. TikTok is a free app that lets you watch, create, and share videos -- often to a soundtrack of pop chart hits. It was originally available as **musical.ly** but was rebranded when the two apps merged in August 2018. TikTok account holders must be 13 and older, and those under 18 need parental permission.

TikTok is a video sharing site where **15 seconds** is the magic number. That's the upper limit for recording within the app, but users can string those clips together to make stories of up to 60 seconds long. Users also have the option of uploading longer videos that were recorded outside the app.

How does it work?

After you download TikTok and open it on your phone, a video will start playing without you even selecting one. The videos that play automatically are featured videos, labeled "**for you**," which the app has chosen to highlight—users can switch to "**following**" to see videos from the people they follow.



Is TikTok safe?

While TikTok videos are mostly harmless, creative fun, there are real concerns about children using the app. As with any social network, you have to use privacy settings to limit how much information you and your children are sharing. You can post without reviewing or editing it first. In February, TikTok announced a variety of safety measures that allow parents to control what their children see on the platform. The **family safety mode** links childrens' accounts to their parents', meaning controls on screen time and the type of content that appears on their feed can be enforced. Under the new safety features, direct messaging has been turned off, by default, for under 16s.

Why is Tik tok “trending” right now?

Sensitive content

Video-sharing site TikTok is struggling to take down a post that has gone viral containing a graphic clip of a suicide. The footage, which has been circulating on the platform for several days, originated on Facebook and has also been shared on Twitter and Instagram.



Many young people have reported coming across the video and being traumatised by the content. It is reported that some users are sharing the video, disguised behind images of kittens or other content. Others have put together their own videos warning about the content and urging people to delete it. The app said it would ban accounts repeatedly uploading clips.

Can under 13s use TikTok?

If a younger child or “tween” wants to use the app, there's a section of the app for under 13s that includes additional safety and privacy features. Children can only see curated, clean videos, and aren't allowed to comment, search, or post their own videos. However, the lack of these features makes it unappealing for most kids, and bypassing that section only requires entering a false birthdate.



When you sign up for TikTok, your account is public by default, meaning anyone can see your videos, send you direct messages, and use your location information. Parents should make sure to turn on all privacy settings for accounts children are using, so only people you know can interact with your videos or message you on the app. That means either opting for a **private account** or changing the settings for comments, duets, reactions, and messages to "**Friends**" instead of "**Everyone**." You can also turn those features off completely.

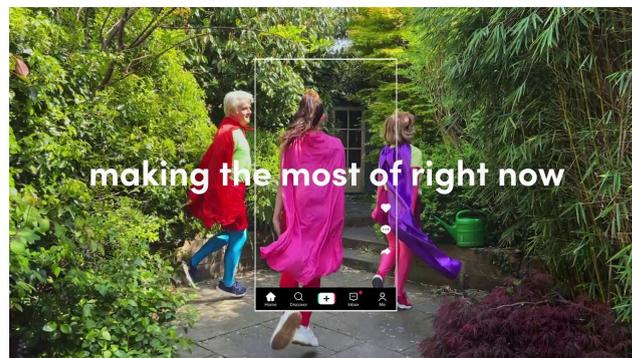


Tik Tok “merch” is aimed at children. Baby and toddler clothes are available!



Lockdown boredom

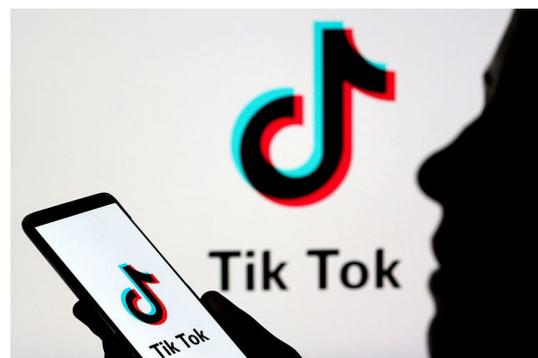
No social media platform has managed to engage, uplift and win over the masses quite like TikTok. Before the coronavirus pandemic, it was predominantly favoured by teenagers but now it is appealing to a whole new audience. Thanks in part to TikTok launching their first UK TV advert.



TikTok is designed to be addictive: you can scroll its dashboard for hours without ever running out of content. Its algorithm uses artificial intelligence to observe your interests and deliver videos that fit.

Mental Health

Reports have suggested that TikTok can be really positive for mental health as we all search for things to do during the coronavirus pandemic, as creating and posting content can have a positive effect on mental wellbeing, especially if it's lighthearted and fun. The routine element can also be good for us too. Having something to work on, like the viral TikTok dances and the fitness challenges, has been a very positive and fun way to stay engaged with people on social media



Celebrity Tik Tok

Tik Tok has proven to be the perfect place for celebrities to express their creativity too and many have earned thousands - or even millions - of followers. Will Smith was one of the most watched celebrities on TikTok, during the coronavirus lockdown. Will boasts 21.5 million followers and has more than 108.6 million likes.



Dame Judi Dench has joined her grandson Sam Williams on Tik Tok, taking part in dance videos and skits that have hundreds of thousands of views.



Trump bans Tik Tok

Donald Trump has already threatened to ban TikTok in the US, citing national security concerns. Tik Tok is a Chinese owned company. It is now in talks to sell its American business to Microsoft. They have until 15 September to reach a deal - a deadline set by Mr Trump.



Here's a summary of the TikTok facts you need to know in 2020:

TikTok BY NUMBERS

- **Over 1.5billion** downloads worldwide.
- **5million** estimated to be active users in the UK
- **41%** users are aged between 16 and 24
- **6%** of 11 to 17-year-olds on TikTok had sent, received or been asked to send sexual content, says NSPCC
- **\$5.7m (£4.3m)** - the fineTikTok was slapped with for illegally collecting personal information of kids under 13
- **One in five** children being groomed in the UK are under 12
- **200,000** children aged 11-17 are estimated to have been groomed on social media

Useful Weblinks

[Commonsense Media](#)

[National Online Safety](#)

[Netaware - some excellent visuals](#)

[Family Safety Mode instructions](#)

[Internet Matters - Tik Tok](#)

[Parent zone - all you need to know about Tik Tok](#)