

Why the US Should Ban TikTok



Commentary

Since the turn of the century, rates of [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#) have skyrocketed. [One in ten](#) American kids currently suffer from the condition.

A chronic, debilitating illness, ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects people's behavior. It [negatively affects](#) a child's academic achievements and is a considerable barrier to successful socialization.

Since 2019, ADHD [has exploded](#) on social media platforms. Millions of [American kids](#) are affected by ADHD. Many of them turn to the internet for answers. Some turn to TikTok, one of the [most problematic apps](#) on

the planet.

ADHD, according to some [supposed experts](#), is a blessing. They're wrong. Contrary to the nonsensical musings spouted by members of the neurodiversity movement, [there's no concrete evidence](#) that ADHD fuels creativity.

However, there's [plenty of research](#) outlining the dangers of ADHD. Children suffering from the disorder are at an increased risk of developing mental, behavioral, and emotional issues. Moreover, children diagnosed with ADHD are at greater risk of engaging in antisocial activities compared to those without the illness. In short, ADHD is a [multifactorial psychiatric disorder](#); it's something to be tackled, not [celebrated](#).

To treat ADHD, one must be first diagnosed with the chronic illness. This diagnosis should come from a doctor, not a social media app like TikTok.

According to a study recently published in [The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry](#), 52 percent of ADHD-related video footage on the platform is "misleading." This is especially concerning when one realizes that many of these videos rack up millions of views in the United States and beyond.

In [an interview](#) with PsyPost, one of the authors behind the study, Dr. Anthony Yeung, said that the misleading videos are contributing to a climate of fear, confusion, and erroneous beliefs.

"In the past two years (in particular since the start of the pandemic),"

he said, "many doctors are noticing an increase in patients showing up to their offices wondering if they have ADHD."

They see a video on TikTok, digest the misinformation, and run to their doctors for support.

As Yeung explained, the vast majority "of these misleading videos oversimplified ADHD, recommended incorrect treatments or wrongly attributed symptoms of other psychiatric disorders as being a symptom of ADHD."

TikTok, arguably the [most popular](#) Chinese app of all time, is [banned in China](#). To those who say that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has nothing to do with TikTok, let me remind you that the CCP now [controls a board seat](#) in ByteDance, TikTok's parent company.



People walk past the headquarters of ByteDance, the parent company of video-sharing app TikTok, in Beijing, [China](#), on Sept. 16, 2020. (Greg Baker/AFP via Getty Images)

A Propaganda Machine of Epic Proportions

Jacob Helberg, a bestselling author and senior adviser at the Stanford University Center on Geopolitics and Technology, [has argued](#), rather convincingly, that the most powerful nations are the ones with control of “the information networks and communications technologies” that shape “the daily lives of billions of people.”

Enter TikTok, an app that has over [1 billion users](#) worldwide. More than [one-third of the American population](#) is on TikTok. Americans between the ages of [12 and 17](#) use the app regularly.

Rather worryingly, a [study](#) carried out by Techcrunch showed the Chinese platform grew as a news source last year; in fact, it was the *only* social media platform to grow as a news source. This means that millions of impressionable young minds are being fed dangerous garbage. The dissemination of misinformation and disinformation is not a glitch in the machine—TikTok is designed to spread lies.

A recent piece published by the [New York Post](#) warned that the CCP uses the “global social media ecosystem to expand its already formidable influence.” Through apps like TikTok, the CCP has “quietly built a network of social media personalities who parrot the government’s perspective.”

The posts, which are masterfully manufactured, operate “in virtual lockstep as they promote China’s virtues, deflect international criticism of its human rights abuses and advance Beijing’s talking points,” according to the article.

The influencer network is the perfect Trojan horse for disseminating deliberately misleading messages. Hundreds of influencers “with connections to the Chinese government or its state media,” we’re told, now operate in dozens of different languages. The CCP has weaponized TikTok.

Clint Watts, a former FBI agent who now works with [Miburo](#), a company specializing in detecting and countering misinformation and disinformation campaigns, told the New York Post that the CCP is desperately “trying to infiltrate” countries around the world, including the United States.

With an addictive app like TikTok, the CCP knows that if you “bombard an audience for long enough with the same narratives, people will tend to believe them over time.” Of course, Watts is correct.

TikTok is arguably the most harmful social media app in existence. Worryingly, it’s growing in popularity. TikTok will have more than 1.5 billion users worldwide by the end of the year. With [an increasing number](#) of Americans downloading and using the app, there has never been a better time to [ban](#) TikTok.