

## Myth

**TikTok's parent company, ByteDance Ltd., is Chinese owned.**

## Fact

TikTok's parent company ByteDance Ltd. was founded by Chinese entrepreneurs, but today, roughly sixty percent of the company is beneficially owned by global institutional investors such as Carlyle Group, General Atlantic, and Susquehanna International Group. An additional twenty percent of the company is owned by ByteDance employees around the world, including nearly seven thousand Americans. The remaining twenty percent is owned by the company's founder, who is a private individual and is not part of any state or government entity.

## Myth

**TikTok and ByteDance are headquartered in China.**

## Fact

TikTok, which is not available in mainland China, has established Los Angeles and Singapore as headquarters locations to meet its business needs. That is in keeping with ByteDance's approach to aligning business needs to the markets where its services operate. ByteDance does not have a single global headquarters.

## Myth

**There is a member of the Chinese government on ByteDance's board of directors.**

## Fact

This is not accurate. ByteDance's board of directors is comprised of five individuals, none of whom is a part of any government or state entity. 3 of the 5 are American. The board includes:

- Rubo Liang, ByteDance Chairman and CEO (Singapore-based)
- Arthur Dantchik, Susquehanna International Group (U.S.-based)
- Bill Ford, General Atlantic (U.S.-based)
- Philippe Laffont, Coatue Management (U.S.-based)
- Neil Shen, Sequoia (Hong Kong-based)

Four out of five of the board's directors represent ByteDance's investors on the board, and Rubo Liang, ByteDance CEO, represents the company and its employees.

## Myth

**The Chinese government has a "golden share" interest in ByteDance Ltd.**

## Fact

As is required under Chinese law, in order to operate certain news and information products that are offered exclusively in China, media licenses are required for those services. As such, an entity affiliated with the Chinese government owns 1% of a ByteDance subsidiary, Douyin Information Service Co., Ltd. This is a common arrangement for companies operating news and information platforms in China. This arrangement is specific to services in the Chinese market, and has no bearing on ByteDance's global operations outside of China, including TikTok, which does not operate in mainland China.

**Myth**

**Employees of a ByteDance subsidiary in which the Chinese government owns a small stake can access Americans' user data.**

**Fact**

As described above, Douyin Information Service Co., Ltd. operates only in mainland China, where TikTok is not available. Employees of that entity are restricted from access to U.S. user databases, with no exceptions. These databases are scanned daily and monitored for access to every data field.

**Myth**

**Decisions about TikTok are made in Beijing.**

**Fact**

This is not true. TikTok's CEO Shou Chew is a third-generation Singaporean who is based in Singapore; Mr. Chew oversees all key day-to-day and strategic decision making when it comes to TikTok. TikTok's senior leadership team is based in Singapore, the United States, and Ireland.

As would be expected with any subsidiary of a holding company, high level decisions around financial matters and corporate governance are made in concert with the ByteDance board and CEO. None of those individuals reside in mainland China. Three out of five members of that board are Americans, and four out of five of them represent the interests of ByteDance's global investors. The fifth member of the board is the ByteDance CEO, who resides in Singapore.

**Myth**

**TikTok manipulates content in a way that benefits the Chinese government or harms American interests.**

**Fact**

TikTok is an entertainment app. The content on TikTok is generated by our community. TikTok does not permit any government to influence or change its recommendation model.

**Myth**

**ByteDance censors TikTok content on behalf of the CCP or Chinese government.**

**Fact**

There are no TikTok content moderators in China. Content moderation on TikTok is overseen by our U.S. and Ireland-led Trust and Safety team. All content is moderated based only on our publicly available Community Guidelines, which are also developed by our Trust and Safety team. Regardless of how content is flagged to TikTok—via formal or informal government request, by our automated systems at time of upload, or from community reports—no content is removed without going through our established moderation processes. TikTok does not remove content on behalf of any government except in compliance with legal process for content that violates local law. TikTok does not operate in mainland China.

**Myth**

**Under its 2017 National Intelligence law, the Chinese government can compel ByteDance to share American TikTok user data.**

**Fact**

TikTok Inc., which offers the TikTok app in the United States, is incorporated in California and Delaware, and is subject to U.S. laws and regulations governing privacy and data security. Under Project Texas, all protected U.S. data will be stored exclusively in the U.S. and under the control of the U.S.-led security team. This eliminates the concern that some have shared that TikTok U.S. user data could be subject to Chinese law.

**Myth**

**TikTok stores U.S. user data in China, where multiple Chinese nationals, including possible members of the CCP, have access to it.**

**Fact**

As of June 2022, 100% of U.S. traffic is routed to Oracle and USDS infrastructure in the United States, and today all access to that environment is managed exclusively by TikTok U.S. Data Security, a team led by Americans, in America. We have begun the process of deleting historic protected user data in non-Oracle servers; once that process is complete, it will effectively end all access to protected U.S. user data outside of TikTok USDS except under limited circumstances.

**Myth**

**TikTok gathers as much data as possible, and the company takes a lax approach to the security of that data.**

**Fact**

TikTok has been adopting a privacy and security-by-design approach when it comes to product roll-outs and the security of user data. When it comes to user data, we limit the types of data we collect, and we believe that we collect less data than our competitors. We disclose the data that we do collect, how we use it and with whom, and our privacy policies are regularly updated.

Today, in the United States, access to new protected U.S. user data is managed exclusively by TikTok U.S. Data Security, a team led by Americans, in America. Since October of 2022, all new protected U.S. user data has been stored in the secure Oracle infrastructure, not on TikTok or ByteDance servers. Access to that data is controlled by TikTok USDS. We have begun the process of setting up controlled gateways for all data coming into the environment and all data going out. These gateways are currently controlled by USDS, and they will soon be controlled by Oracle.

**Myth**

**TikTok collects a significant amount of sensitive data on its users.**

**Fact**

TikTok's privacy policy fully describes the data the company collects. There have been many inaccurate claims about our policies and practices that have gone unaddressed by the media. To be clear, the current versions of the TikTok app do NOT:

- Monitor keystrokes or content of what people type when they use our in-app browser on third party websites;
- Collect precise or approximate GPS location in the U.S.;
- Use face or voice prints to identify individuals.

In line with industry practices and as explained in our privacy policy, we collect information to help the app function, operate securely, and improve the user experience. We constantly update our app and encourage users to download the most current version of TikTok.

**Myth**

**Douyin offers educational content, limits screen time, and creates a positive experience for teens, while TikTok does not.**

**Fact**

Douyin and TikTok are separate apps that are run by separate teams and serve separate markets. Some reports have compared the Douyin experience for users under age 14 to the over 18 experience on TikTok. This is not a reasonable comparison; when compared to the TikTok experience for people under 13, TikTok has higher levels of moderation and curation to ensure a safe and appropriate experience. We've partnered with Common Sense, a third-party expert in assessing age-appropriate content, to moderate and curate content for that experience. TikTok users 17 and younger now have a default screen time limit of 60 minutes. TikTok also provides Family Pairing, a suite of tools families can use to help limit content and screen time in a way that makes sense for them.

**Myth**

**TikTok takes a lax approach to minor safety & privacy in order to addict teens to its platform.**

**Fact**

TikTok has taken numerous steps to help ensure that teens under 18 have a safe and enjoyable experience on the app, and many of these measures impose restrictions that don't exist on comparable platforms. Accounts registered to teens under 16 are set to private by default and are prevented from sending direct messages; content made by our users under 16 is ineligible for recommendation into the For You feed to further protect privacy and help ensure safety. We also prevent teens from receiving late-night push notifications and give parents and guardians the ability to create further restrictions on these notifications through Family Pairing.

**Myth**

**TikTok is a go-to platform to buy illegal drugs.**

**Fact**

TikTok has a zero tolerance policy for the sale, trade, promotion, use and the depiction of drugs, including controlled substances, for both organic and paid content. Apart from obvious satire, our policies governing content that depicts drugs do not have exceptions because of the harm and normalization that can follow.

On many platforms, direct messaging is the mechanism that is often used to sell drugs, and recruit for or promote criminal activities. However, unlike on other platforms, accounts on TikTok for users under age 16 do not have access to our direct messaging service.

**Myth**

**ByteDance used TikTok data to surveil journalists and their precise locations.**

**Fact**

A small group of ByteDance employees misused their access to TikTok user data in an effort to identify employees who leaked confidential company information to journalists. The aim of those employees, all within the internal audit department, was to investigate whether other employees leaked confidential company information to reporters, and if so, to identify those employees. As part of that investigation, they engaged in a misguided effort to determine whether suspected employees had previously been in the same approximate location as the reporters believed to have received the leaked information. TikTok and ByteDance condemned this effort in the strongest possible terms. As a result, three employees have been terminated, and one employee has resigned. However, to characterize it as an effort to spy on or surveil journalists is inaccurate.