

College TikTok bans get pushback from students, educators

Article

The news: More than a dozen higher education institutions have blocked TikTok, and reprisal from 52,000 students is imminent, per [Bloomberg](#).

The ban follows a tightening [government clampdown on TikTok](#), for fear that the Chinese-owned app harvests user data.

Students and educators object: Auburn University, the University of Georgia, the University of Texas, Austin (UT), Oklahoma State University, and others removed the app from school devices or blocked access from school servers.

- Some students, [who can still access TikTok](#) using their smartphones' data plan, **are against the ban and say it's an encroachment of personal freedoms.**
- University staff also objected to the bans. "I use TikTok as an educational tool to make science fun and accessible," said **Kate Biberdorf**, a UT associate professor of chemistry with over 194,400 followers.

Why it's worth watching: We estimated that [61.3% of Gen Z in the US use TikTok](#) at least once a month. Additionally, 58% of American teenagers ages 13 to 17 visit TikTok at least once a day, and **16% access TikTok "almost constantly,"** according to Pew Research Center.

Intensifying pushback: At least **25 US state governments**, the **US military**, the **State Department**, the **Department of Homeland Security**, and the **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)** have banned the app.

- TikTok and the US government have been negotiating a deal to allow the app to serve US users, but [concerns that the app is leaking user data](#) to the Chinese government persist.
- TikTok uses an American company, **Oracle**, to manage user data and traffic in the country **but maintains various backups overseas, including in China.**

TikTok's response: While it's still embroiled in negotiations with the US government, TikTok announced it's looking at a **\$1.5 billion plan to reorganize the company's US operations**, per [SiliconAngle](#).

"We've made substantial progress on implementing that solution over the past year and look forward to completing that work to put these concerns to rest," a TikTok spokesperson informed [The Wall Street Journal](#).

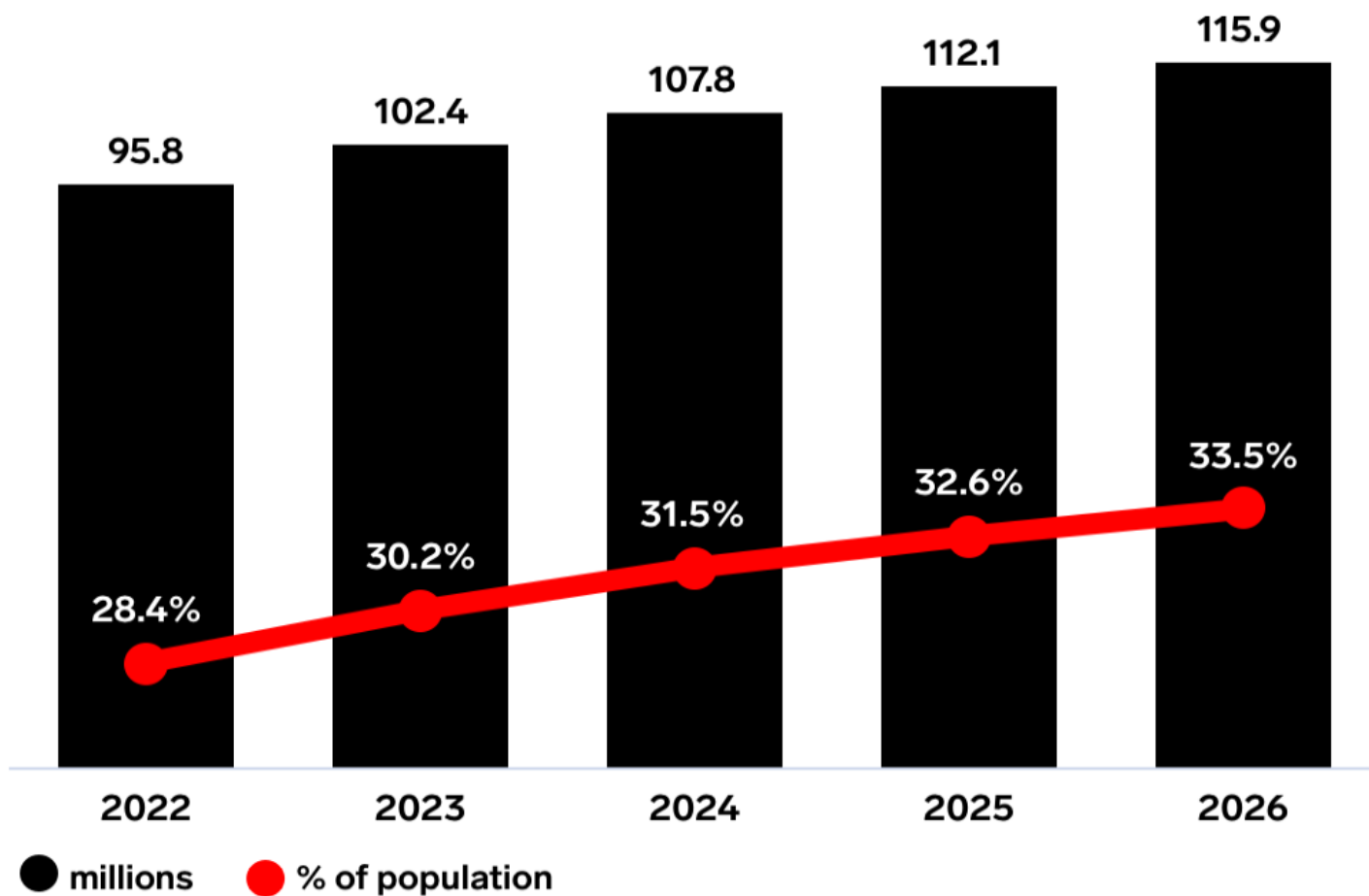
Our take: Weaning students off of TikTok, either by forced bans or by educating them on the potential dangers of data breaches, will be a long and painful process that could quickly escalate into a groundswell of support for the app.

- Governments, security agencies, and colleges are increasingly under pressure to reveal the definitive dangers of using the social video app.

- Meanwhile, for TikTok, the only way forward in the US may be as an IPO, but that's a path that's proven difficult in the past.

TikTok Users

US, 2022-2026



Note: internet users who access their TikTok account via any device at least once per month

Source: eMarketer, December 2022

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