

President Biden calls for outright ban of targeting ads to minors

Article

The news: In a [Wall Street Journal op-ed](#), President Biden urged legislators to work on bipartisan reforms to “hold Big Tech accountable” for its data privacy policies, impact on teenagers, and for anticompetitive practices.

The reforms: In the article, President Biden called for regulation to address three major issues:

- The need for “serious” federal protections for Americans’ privacy, including **an outright ban on targeted advertising for teens**,
- Reforms to **Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act** that would hold tech platforms legally accountable for content posted by users,
- And greater competition in the tech sector, saying that “the next generation of great American companies should not be smothered by the dominant incumbents before they have a chance to get off the ground.”

Parsing it out: Biden’s ideas already have steam behind them. Last month, legislators introduced a bill that would ban targeted advertising to minors, following similar changes and policies in the EU.

- EU and US regulators have been pressuring Big Tech’s privacy policies and monopoly power more and more over the last year. Such changes are popular with the two major political parties—Democrats are critical of social media for its role in spreading misinformation, and Republicans for alleged censorship of conservative speech. Both parties have expressed concern over social media’s impact on teens.
- Encouraging greater competition in tech is a not-so-subtle jab at the ad duopoly of **Google** and **Meta**, as well as **Apple’s** grip on the iOS app marketplace. The ad duopoly has already made some concessions to try and appease regulators from further action, and Apple is reportedly preparing to allow third-party App Stores on iOS in 2024 in accordance with changing EU regulations.
- Section 230 is another major point of contention. The law is currently facing legal challenges in the US Supreme Court, and while it would hold tech platforms accountable for user-made content, critics have warned it could limit freedom of speech.

Our take: Big Tech reforms are coming, and companies are already feeling the impact. Google, Meta, and others have made historic concessions loosening their grip on their markets. But even if these changes kick off the decline of current tech and ad leaders, the process will take years and be full of long, protracted legal battles.

US Teen Social Media Users, by Platform, 2020-2026

% of internet users

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
YouTube*	88.2%	88.9%	89.4%	89.9%	90.0%	90.1%	90.4%
Snapchat	67.5%	67.2%	66.4%	65.9%	65.7%	65.5%	65.4%
TikTok	53.0%	63.2%	67.5%	70.3%	71.7%	72.7%	73.1%
Instagram	58.0%	58.1%	58.1%	58.1%	58.2%	58.2%	58.2%
Facebook	38.7%	35.1%	32.6%	30.3%	29.3%	28.1%	27.3%
Pinterest	28.3%	28.2%	27.4%	27.1%	26.8%	26.6%	26.4%
Twitter	21.9%	22.4%	22.2%	22.2%	22.1%	22.0%	21.8%
Reddit	9.3%	9.4%	9.4%	9.5%	9.5%	9.7%	9.9%

Note: ages 12-17; internet users who access their account via any device at least once per month; *individuals who watch YouTube via app or website at least once per month

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