

How TikTok has changed the social media landscape

Article

Last week, an article from [The Economist](#) said that TikTok has broken social media with its addictive short-form videos.

While “broken” may be a bit strong, our analyst Debra Aho Williamson agrees that TikTok has irrevocably changed the way we engage with social media.

“TikTok inaugurated a new way of watching videos, engaging with videos, and following creators,” she said on a recent episode of “[Behind the Numbers: The Daily](#).” “No matter what happens in the future, whether it's banned or not, TikTok has turned social media upside down in many ways.”

Time suck: Adult TikTok users in the US will spend 55.8 minutes per day on the app this year, a 7.3% increase over last year, per our forecast.

- As expected, Gen Z “way overindexes” on TikTok compared to other social platforms, said Williamson. But millennials and Gen Xers are also spending a great deal of time on the platform, according to our “[Time Spent on TikTok](#)” report.
- US TikTok users ages 25 to 54 will spend over 45 minutes a day on the platform this year, well above the time that age group spends on other platforms.
- This year, US users ages 25 to 34 will spend 25 minutes a day on Facebook, 32 minutes on Instagram, and 30 minutes on Snapchat, while users ages 35 to 44 will spend 28 minutes a day on Facebook, 25 minutes on Instagram, and 24 minutes on Snapchat.

“Millennials and Gen X[ers] are really a sweet spot for advertisers,” said Williamson. “We focus a lot of attention on Gen Z, but these other two generations have far more spending power compared to Gen Z.”

Speed bump: In an attempt to help children and teens limit their screen time, [TikTok has imposed a 60-minute daily screen time limit](#) for users 18 and younger. If they want to keep using the app, they will have to enter a passcode, forcing them to “make an active decision” to extend their time on the platform.

But realistically, Williamson doesn’t believe it will have any effect on teens’ use of TikTok.

“I think TikTok felt like it had to do [this] just to show it was paying attention,” said Williamson. “In reality, I think younger users will consider it a suggestion, not a requirement.”

Off to the races: TikTok’s hold on consumer attention is coming at the expense of other platforms.

TikTok has already overtaken YouTube in average time spent per day with US adult users—and Netflix may be next.

“The addictive nature of TikTok is strong enough that it’s causing people to actually turn off streaming for a little while. And maybe [they] come back to it, or maybe not,” said Williamson.

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