

# TikTok launches image search in a swing at Google

Article

**The news:** TikTok is rolling out an image search feature for **TikTok Shop**, per TechCrunch, in a play to capture more of **Google's** search market share.

- TikTok users in the US and Southeast Asia can take photos of items and upload them to be shown similar products on TikTok Shop. Alternatively, users can input saved photos on their

devices into the search function to receive similar results.

- Image search features are relatively commonplace; both Google and **Amazon** offer such functions, allowing users to submit queries without text.

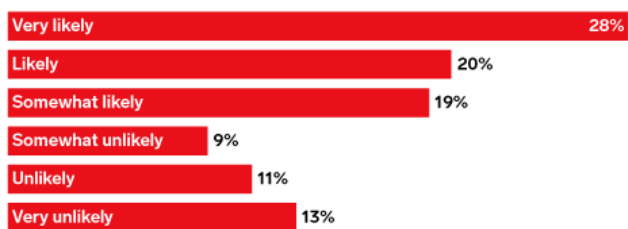
**TikTok's swing:** TikTok has been coming for a piece of Google's search share for a while. In 2022, Google executives said that a rising number of young internet users were increasingly using TikTok to start their search journeys. Since then, social search's power has only grown.

- **67% of respondents** in an April IZEA survey said they were "somewhat likely," "likely," or "very likely" to search for products on social platforms before making a purchase. Even as Google debuts search features like [AI overviews](#), traditional search engine use is declining: [Gen Z is 25% less likely to use Google](#) than Gen X, per Forbes.

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**Likelihood of US Social Media Users to Search on Social Platforms to Research a Product Before Making a Purchase, March 2024**

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+  
Source: IZEA, "Influencers & Amazon 2024," April 18, 2024

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**What if TikTok gets banned?** Though TikTok's days in the US could be numbered based on what could be [a lengthy legal battle](#), **its impact on search marketing is here to stay.**

- Talk of the ban isn't doing much to hamper TikTok investment. Brands like **Rare Beauty** and **e.l.f. Beauty** are [deepening their ties to TikTok Shop](#), and TikTok remains one of the top three [social media platforms by ad spending](#).
- The benefits of TikTok as a search platform—its opportunities for organic product discovery and influencer marketing—can be replicated to an extent by other social platforms. Its biggest competitors, **Instagram** and **YouTube**, are also branching out into search to capitalize on evolving consumer behavior.

**Our take:** Brands should explore the benefits of social search, which is likely to stick around even if TikTok bites the dust.

- Our [Social Search Trends 2024](#) report recommends advertisers **use a mix of social and traditional search marketing strategies** to more effectively reach consumers.
- Small businesses in particular are seeing strong results from advertising on TikTok. Nearly one-quarter (22%) of small business owners said that TikTok content (particularly video tutorials) outperformed traditional search results.