

# TikTok Had a Banner Year in 2019, but Growth in 2020 Isn't a Sure Bet

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**T**he Chinese-owned short-form video app TikTok exploded onto the social media landscape worldwide in 2019, but roadblocks could keep it from rapidly expanding its user base in 2020.

## Competition

This year, we expect a raft of competitors—from startups like Firework to legacy players like Instagram and Facebook—will attempt to take on the short-form video app, which is owned by Chinese internet giant Bytedance. Instagram is a particularly large threat; it recently **added** new tools to its Boomerang looping-effect feature that mimic similar features on TikTok. It's also testing a TikTok clone called Reels in Brazil.

Facebook's Lasso, another competitor, hasn't gained much traction, but no one should write it out of the picture yet. Earlier this month, an Indian publication **reported** that Facebook was planning to launch Lasso in India by midyear. It's currently **available** in the US, Mexico and Colombia. India is TikTok's largest market worldwide; it had **120 million monthly active users** there as of June 2019, according to information provided by TikTok to the Indian publication **The Economic Times**.

Competition could also come from rivals in China, where TikTok's sister app Douyin is the market leader. For example, Tencent, which operates the massive WeChat messaging app, has provided financial backing for an app called Kuaishou, the leading competitor to Douyin. Kuaishou has its own sister app Kwai, which has started to take off in Brazil.

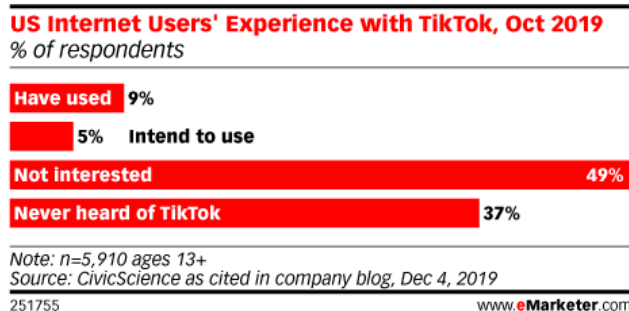
## Privacy and Security Issues

TikTok's growth may also be affected by the ongoing US investigation of its Chinese ownership and how TikTok users' data is handled. Although there have been no new developments since news of the investigation emerged last November, the investigation itself could be enough to make current users more cautious about how they use the app and potential users wary of joining.

In addition, security researcher Check Point said earlier this month that it had found **security flaws** that could have enabled hackers to infiltrate the app. TikTok repaired the flaws after Check Point alerted it.

## Impact on Usage

Although TikTok has significant name recognition, the number of users in the US is still quite small. CivicScience found in an October 2019 study that only 37% of internet users ages 13 and older had never heard of it. However, just 9% said they used TikTok, while 49% said they were not interested.



Among teens, usage is more strong; Common Sense Media found in an October 2019 survey that 45% of US teens ages 13 to 17 had used

the app in the past month, ahead of Facebook (39%) but trailing Snapchat (67%), Instagram (74%) and YouTube (90%)

We will publish our inaugural forecast for the number of TikTok users in the US later this year. According to internal company documents, the app had at least 30 million users in 2019.

For more analysis on TikTok, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our report:

**Report** by Debra Aho Williamson Oct 30, 2019

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**Report** by Debra Aho Williamson Jan 15, 2020

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