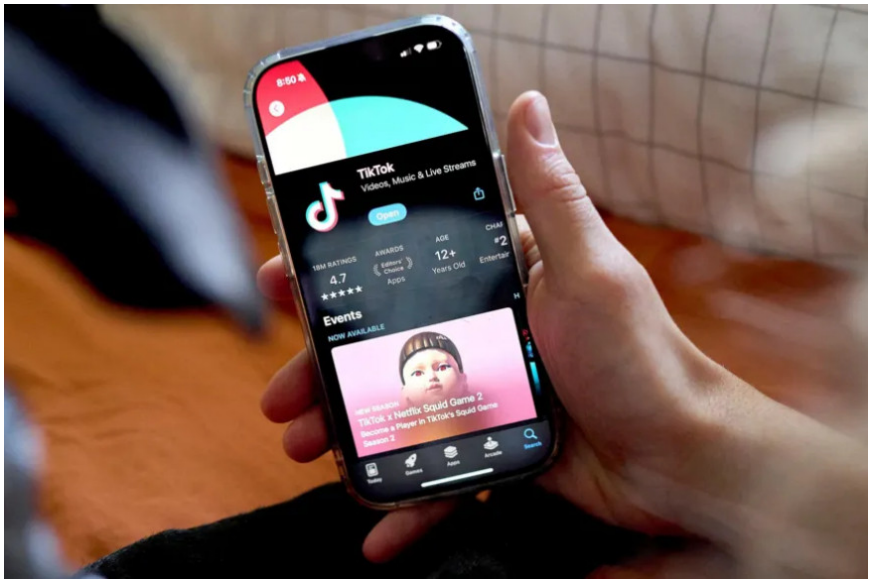
# Unofficial TikTok downloads surge in the US




Tiktok file pic

TikTok's uncertain future in the US has caused a surge in people putting the app on their phones through unofficial means,. Lensasia

An executive order from President Donald Trump means the social media platform can be used in the US despite the Supreme Court upholding a law which will see it sold or banned.Even so, Apple and Google are preventing new downloads of the app meaning people are increasingly turning to a technique called "sideloading" if they want to get it for the first time or reload it to a new device.

It involves users turning to third-party sites, which are sometimes referred to as black markets, rather than official retailers to get hold of software.One such company, Signulous, says 120,000 people have used its services to get TikTok onto iPhones.

Neil Pomperleau, from the firm, shared screenshots from his dashboard that showed more than 2,000 downloads per hour at times."One of the most popular apps in the world can only be sideloaded in the US so it's been a good thing for us with record traffic to our site and a spike in customers", People in the US are also turning to virtual private networks (VPNs), which allow users to pretend they are in a different country - so TikTok fans can make it appear they are in Canada, for example, where the ban does not apply.

Currently it is not illegal to download TikTok and although US lawmakers ruled that distributing it is against the law, both President Trump and his predecessor, Joe Biden, indicated they would not not enforce it.Unofficial app shops like Mr Pomperleau's operate in a legal grey area by signing up customers to software developer accounts.

The firms often charge a fee to take customers through the technical process of sideloading - something which comes with an increased risk of downloading faulty or malicious software due to the stores being less well-resourced than official app stores.

Mr Pomerleau - whose firm charges people a $20 annual fee - admits he is operating in risky territory."The law on the books is that TikTok is not allowed to be distributed in the US but we're sort of operating on this pinky swear from two different US presidents that they won't enforce this law."