



How does the US Tiktok ban work?



Tiktok file pic

TikTok has gone dark in the US for both users who have already downloaded it on their phones and in mobile app stores. TikTok is no longer available in the US. In both mobile app stores and on users' phones, the app has gone dark.

When opening the app, users who had already downloaded TikTok before 19 January were met with a pop-up message that prompted them to learn more about the ban or close the app.

“A law banning TikTok has been enacted in the US. Unfortunately, that means you can't use TikTok for now. We are fortunate that President Trump has indicated that he will work with us on a solution to reinstate TikTok once he takes office. Please stay tuned,” the message read.

More than 170 million Americans used TikTok. Lawyers for the company contend that banning the app violates the first amendment rights of those tens of millions of users; the argument did not sway a federal appeals court, which upheld the ban-or-sale bill in December. Congress passed the legislation with a bipartisan majority in April. US legislators fear that China will collect sensitive data on American users and spread propaganda through the app, though they have produced no documentation of such manipulation. That said, the supreme court wrote in its opinion that even if China had not yet attempted to exert its influence over the platform, that there was “substantial evidence” to suggest it could one day do so.

TikTok's future is still uncertain. Donald Trump, who will be inaugurated Monday, says he wants to give TikTok a 90-day reprieve from the ban.

Here's how the ban is playing out:

What becomes of the app?

Existing users can open TikTok, and the app icon still appears on their phones, but they are not able to scroll through videos.

New users will not be able to download TikTok from app stores and existing users will not be able to update it, because the law prohibits any entity from facilitating the download or maintenance of the TikTok application. In a 13 December letter, US lawmakers told Apple and Alphabet's Google, which operate the two main mobile app stores, that they must be ready to remove TikTok from their stores on 19 January.