

For immediate release

September 23, 2025

Joint investigation into TikTok highlights privacy concerns related to the collection and use of children’s personal information

VICTORIA – A joint investigation into TikTok by BC Privacy Commissioner Michael Harvey, the federal privacy commissioner, and provincial counterparts in Quebec, and Alberta has found that the measures in place to keep children off the popular video-sharing platform and to prevent the collection and use of their sensitive personal information for profiling and targeting purposes were inadequate.

Even though the company has stated that its platform is not intended for people under the age of 13, the investigation found that hundreds of thousands of Canadian children access TikTok’s platform each year – and that TikTok has been collecting and using their personal information.

Online marketing practices and content targeting can have significant impacts on children’s well-being.

Although the joint investigation was focused on children, it also found that TikTok did not adequately explain its data practices to teen and adult users, nor did it obtain meaningful consent for the collection and use of vast amounts of user data, including sensitive data of younger users, as required under Canadian privacy laws.

In response to the Offices’ findings and recommendations, TikTok has agreed to strengthen privacy communications to ensure that users, and in particular younger users, understand how their data could be used, including for targeted advertising and content personalization.

In addition, TikTok has also agreed to:

- enhance age-assurance methods to keep underage users off TikTok; and
- provide more privacy information in French.

TikTok made some improvements to its privacy practices during the investigation. This included changes to effectively stop allowing advertisers to target users under the age of 18, except based on broad categories such as language and approximate location.

As well, TikTok expanded the privacy information available to Canadian users, in English and French, including setting out the rights of users to access or update the information about them that TikTok holds. The ultimate goal of the joint investigation was to create a safer, more transparent online environment for children, where they feel empowered to exercise their privacy rights and where they can safely explore, learn, and grow without compromising their privacy or security.

All organizations subject to Canadian privacy laws must respect children’s privacy rights and design services and products with strong protections for the personal information of children.

Prioritizing privacy throughout the lifecycle of a technology, program, or service can help ensure that organizations innovate responsibly, with appropriate data protection that can support users, increase confidence in the service, and ensure compliance with applicable laws.

Quote

“Every minute of every day, on average, a child in Canada is banned from TikTok for being underage. That is half a million accounts belonging to children who should never have been on the platform in the first place, whose personal information was collected and used in ways they could not meaningfully understand or consent to. Those children’s views about the world are shaped by social media. These developing worldviews have been shaped in ways that they – and the adults that care about them – cannot hope to understand, let alone control. We must break the cycle of scrambling for solutions to privacy violations after the fact. Instead of putting the burden on children and families to navigate these platforms safely, we need to address the source – companies must build age-appropriate privacy safeguards into technology targeting children from the earliest stages of design.”- **Michael Harvey, Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia**

Related links

- Video overview of the report: <https://youtu.be/OlfqCFbgcfE>
- Joint investigation of TikTok Pte Ltd. by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, the Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec, the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia, and the Information Privacy Commissioner of Alberta: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/reports/investigation-and-audit-reports/>
- Overview: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/resources/infographics/>
- Infographic: Talking to kids about online privacy: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/resources/infographics/>

Media Contact

Michelle Mitchell | Director of Communications | 250-217 7872 | mmitchell@oipc.bc.ca
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC

BlueSky: oipcbc.bsky.social

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/office-of-the-information-and-privacy-commissioner-for-british-columbia/mycompany/>