

TikTok's parent company sued for collecting data on kids

TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, is being sued after allegedly violating child privacy laws and collecting the data of young users through the video app, which was formerly called Musical.ly.

ByteDance acquired Musical.ly in 2017, which it later rebranded as the enormously popular social video app TikTok. According to the December 3rd complaint, ByteDance has collected data from Musical.ly users under the age of 13 without their parents' explicit consent "since at least 2014" and sold the data to third-party advertisers.

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA, forbids social media companies from collecting the data of children without explicit parental consent. Failing to obtain that consent would be in violation of the law and open the company up to potential lawsuits from regulators like the Federal Trade Commission.

"We disagree with much of what is alleged in the complaint."
"TikTok was made aware of the allegations in the complaint some time ago, and although we disagree with much of what is alleged in the complaint, we have been working with the parties involved to reach a resolution of the issues," a TikTok spokesperson told *The Verge*. "That resolution should be announced soon."

It's the latest in a flurry of accusations against the Chinese company and its apps that lawmakers fear feed American user data to the Chinese government and censor content critical of Beijing. ByteDance has already faced legal trouble for

violating COPPA. Earlier this year, the FTC reached a \$5.7 million settlement over COPPA violations from Musical.ly. YouTube also reached a settlement with the FTC over similar allegations back in September, resulting in a \$170 million fine.

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/12/4/20995974/bytedance-tiktok-musically-coppa-childrens-privacy-lawsuit-youtube>