TikTok’s security chief steps down as company moves US data to Oracle servers

TikTok’s global chief security officer (CSO), Roland Cloutier, is stepping down as the company transitions to using Oracle’s US-based servers to store Americans’ data (via *The Wall Street Journal*). The company shared an internal memo about the shift in a post on its newsroom, which states Cloutier will assume an advisory role, with TikTok’s head of security risk, vendor, and client assurance, Kim Albarella, taking over temporarily.

“With our recent announcement about data management changes in the US, it’s time for me to transition from my role as Global Chief Security Officer into a strategic advisory role focusing on the business impact of security and trust programs, working directly with Shou, Dingkun and other senior leaders,” Cloutier writes in the memo. Cloutier, who has been with TikTok since 2020, will officially step down from his position on September 2nd.

In June, TikTok announced that it had started routing US users’ data to Oracle servers in an attempt to quell fears that China — where TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, is based — has unbridled access to this information. TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew and ByteDance vice president of technology Dingkun Hong say the change comes as a way to “minimize concerns about the security of user data in the US,” but also “changes the scope of the Global Chief Security Officer (CSO) role.”

Cloutier wasn’t involved in managing TikTok’s department dedicated to handling US user data

A TikTok spokeswoman told the *WSJ* that Cloutier wasn't involved in managing TikTok's new department dedicated to the handling of US user data. She also explained that this organizational shift has been in the works months before US politicians turned up the heat on TikTok.

For years, TikTok has been scrutinized over its ties to the China-based ByteDance, with some US officials accusing the app of siphoning Americans' data to the Chinese government. Last month, *BuzzFeed News* released a report that claims TikTok employees in China "repeatedly" accessed US users' data from at least September 2021 to January 2022.

In response to the report, a group of Republican senators wrote a letter to TikTok that questioned the validity of the company's testimony on data privacy during a hearing that took place last October. TikTok responded to these concerns earlier this month, once again reiterating its plans to work with Oracle to "fully safeguard user data."

https://www.theverge.com/2022/7/16/23228983/tiktok-security-chief-steps-down-oracle-servers-us-user-data-roland-cloutier