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TikTok alternatives surge in popularity as app ban looms

TikTok might be prohibited from app stores in the United States



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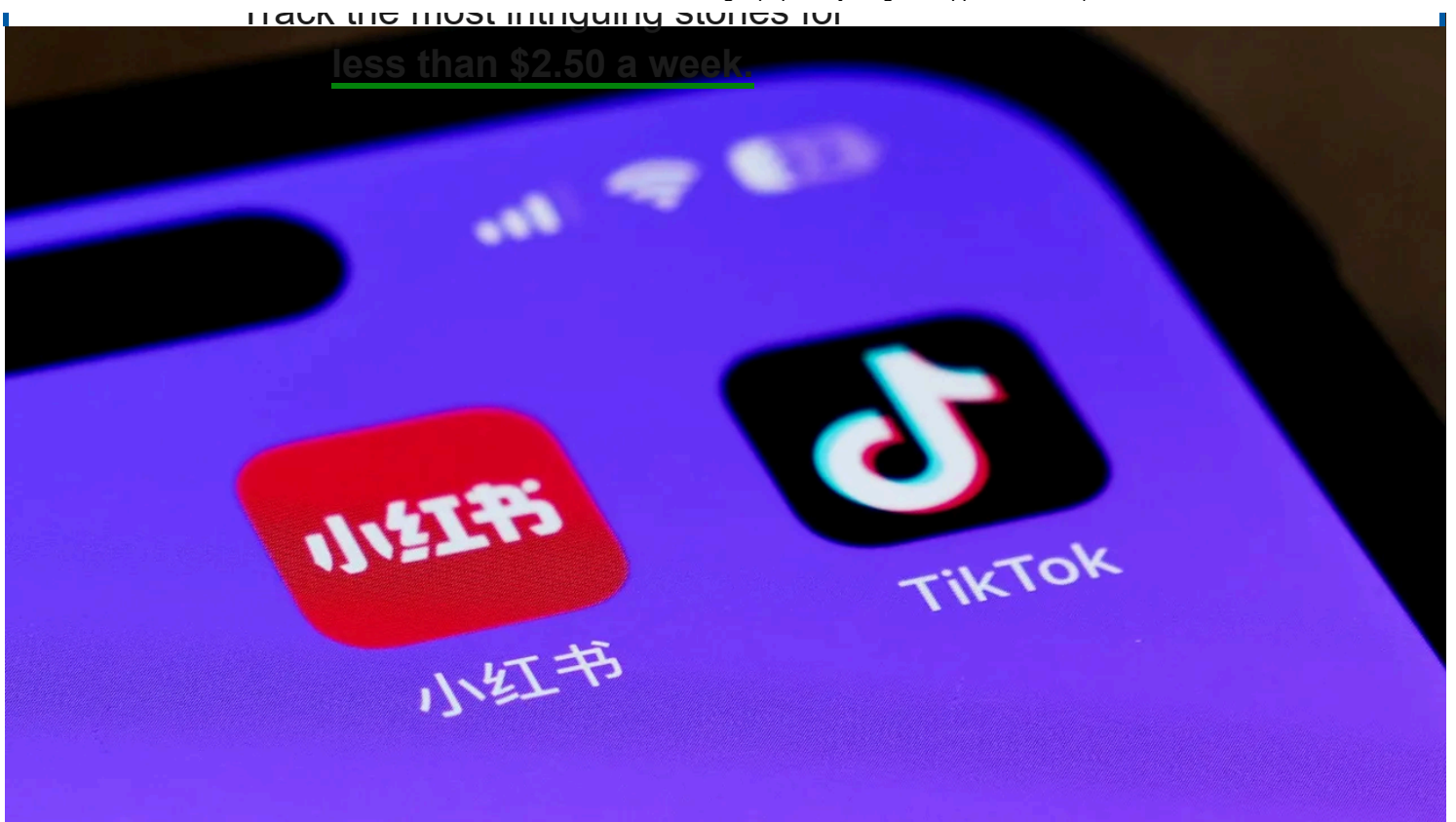
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Icons for the apps Xiaohongshu (RedNote) and TikTok on a smartphone

(Image credit: AP Photo / Andy Wong)



BY JUSTIN KLAWANS, THE
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PUBLISHED 23
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The ticktock of the clock will soon stop for TikTok. The app could soon be prohibited in the United States if the Supreme Court upholds a federal law banning it. If it does, TikTok will no longer be available in American app stores starting Jan. 19. As a result, many TikTok users across the U.S. are beginning to look for alternatives.

The biggest controversy surrounding TikTok — and the impetus for the Supreme Court case — is its ownership by a Chinese company, ByteDance. The app's possible ban comes as the result of national security concerns over China potentially acquiring data from American

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Of the TikTok alternatives on the market, the Chinese app Xiaohongshu, or RedNote in English, appears to be by far the most popular. The app launched in 2013 and has since "become one of China's fastest-growing social platforms, with a value of over \$17 billion," said [USA Today](#). The app is "often described as a Chinese version of Instagram" and allows users to upload photos and videos.

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The app has largely become popular because it "hits a lot of the right notes for creators looking for a TikTok alternative" and "boasts a number of social shopping features," said [TechCrunch](#). The app has recently picked up more than 700,000 new users, according to [Reuters](#). However, the platform, as is typical in China, is highly censored, and some new users were "unable to post about topics known to be sensitive in China such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown." The "irony that Americans are leaving TikTok for another Chinese-run app has not been lost on many," said [NPR](#).

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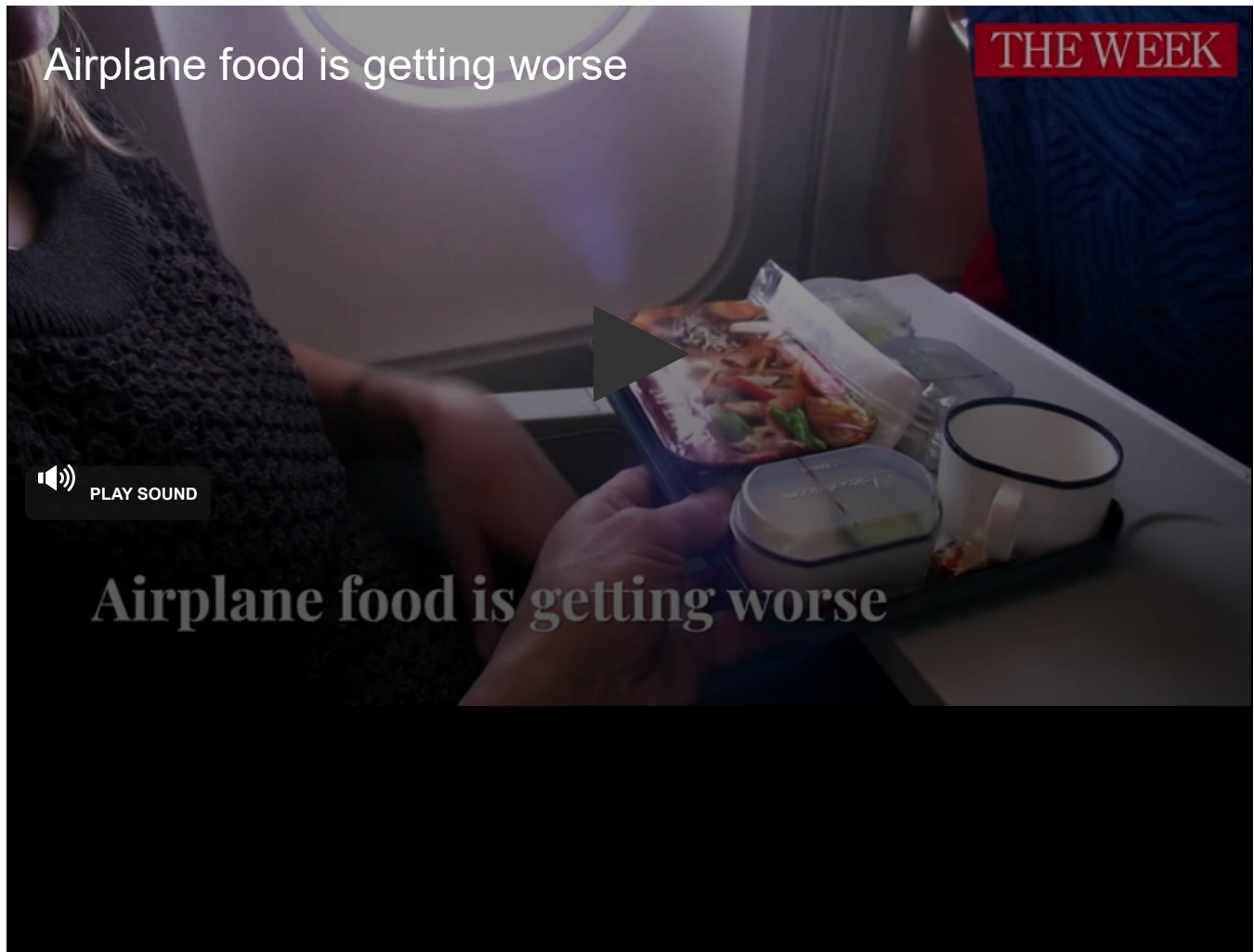


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Lemon8

While RedNote more closely resembles Instagram, Lemon8 is "like a mashup of TikTok and Pinterest, with separate feeds for different categories such as 'tech' or 'outfits,'" said [The Washington Post](#). Unlike TikTok, though, it seems to have much smaller engagement, with "videos from popular creators generally getting a few hundred likes."

However, like RedNote, there are concerns over Lemon8, which is owned by ByteDance — the same company that controls TikTok. There are also similar questions about [China's](#)

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Unlike the other apps, Clapper is American-based, with headquarters in Dallas. It is an app that "appeals to adults, especially among Generations X and Y. Users can post short-form videos and live streams," said the [Cincinnati Enquirer](#). The app has been growing in popularity, and even before talk of TikTok's ban was heating up, Clapper was "averaging about 200,000 new weekly downloads," said [Deadline](#).

Clapper seems to be using the fact that it's an American company to its advantage. The app is "clearly making a play for TikTok's user base," and "Clapper boasts that it doesn't have any" advertisements, said [Ad Age](#), another differentiator from its competitors.

However, none of these apps may ever have the reach that TikTok did. It is "like the dating app world," said Alex Nisenzon, CEO of e-commerce data company Charm.io, to Ad Age. Americans have the "main apps and then you have really niche ones, for people who love dogs or people who are into books, but they don't gain mainstream attention."

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Justin Klawans, The Week US



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Track the most intriguing stories for Newsweek as a breaking news reporter, where he wrote about less than \$2.50 a week. politics, national and global affairs, business, crime, sports, film, television and other news. Justin has also freelanced for outlets including Collider and United Press International.

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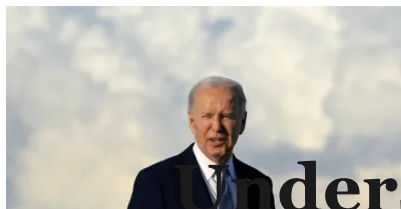
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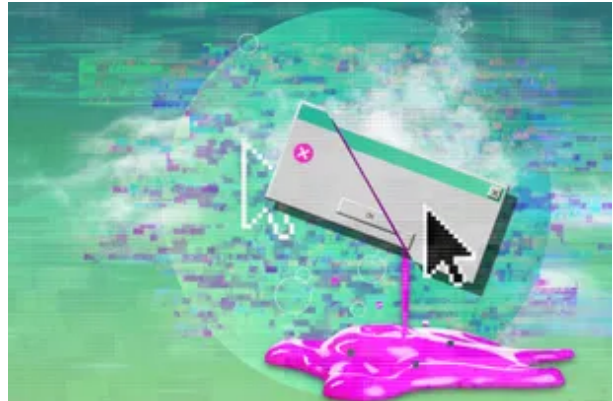


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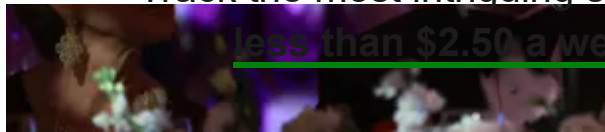
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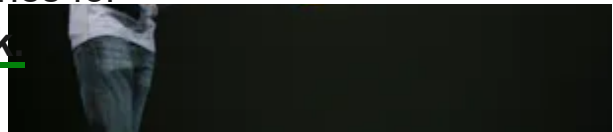


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