

App bans won't make US security risks disappear | MIT Technology Review

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Will the US government ban TikTok and WeChat, or won't it—and why? With the Trump administration issuing vaguely phrased executive orders and policies about the apps, even as legal challenges against potential bans move through the courts and the president gives his “blessing” to a deal to keep TikTok in US app stores, it's hard to make out a coherent story.

The Trump administration's actions against the two Chinese-owned social-media platforms are driven more by politics and an effort to seem tough on China than by actual privacy, safety, or national security concerns. However, that doesn't mean there aren't tough challenges ahead in regulating digital platforms based in China, the United States, or anywhere else.

As the TikTok and WeChat stories unfold—and no one should expect a permanent resolution anytime soon—policymakers, technologists, and citizens should look beyond this chaotic start to the deeper, unresolved questions. Now is the time to develop comprehensive policy tools that protect privacy and national security from threats foreign and domestic.

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