

Instagram adds video clips in challenge to TikTok

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Instagram is adding video clips in an attempt to muscle in on TikTok's boom

Instagram on Wednesday added a new short-form video feature to the image-focused platform in a direct challenge to TikTok, which is in the crosshairs of US President Donald Trump.

"Reels" lets users record videos of up to 15 seconds and provides tools for editing, audio and effects, according to the Facebook-owned company.

"Reels invites you to create fun videos to share with your friends or anyone on Instagram," the social media platform, based in California, said in a blog post.

Trump has threatened to ban China-based TikTok in the United States on national security grounds, giving it until the middle of September to work out a takeover deal with Microsoft or another suitor.

The president on Tuesday defended his demand for the US government receive a large share of any TikTok purchase price after his stance was slammed by critics who said it appears unconstitutional and akin to extortion.

Copying competition

Reels puts an Instagram spin on the kind of playful [video](#) snippet sharing that has made TikTok a social media phenomenon.

"Reels is a big part of the future of entertainment on Instagram," the service said. "Our community is telling us they want to make and watch short-form, edited videos."

The feature is launching in more than 50 countries including Australia, Brazil, Britain, France, Germany, India, Japan, and the United States.

"Reels gives people new ways to express themselves, discover more of what they love on Instagram, and help anyone with the ambition of becoming a creator take center stage," the platform said.

The move fits Facebook's pattern of copying features that are hits at rival online services.

How the social networking titan wields its power in the market came under scrutiny last week when Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg and the heads of Apple, Google, and Amazon were grilled by a US congressional antitrust committee.

"Simply put, they have too much power," said Representative David Cicilline, a Democrat who chairs the panel which has been conducting a year-long investigation into the [business practices](#) of the four companies.

"This power staves off new forms of competition, creativity, and innovation," Cicilline said.

Any deal allowing Microsoft to buy TikTok could be transformative for the US tech giant's efforts to become more consumer-focused— if it can overcome the business and political risks.

Buying TikTok could make Microsoft a hipper, more youth-centric company after years of shifting to enterprise services and cloud computing, say analysts.

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