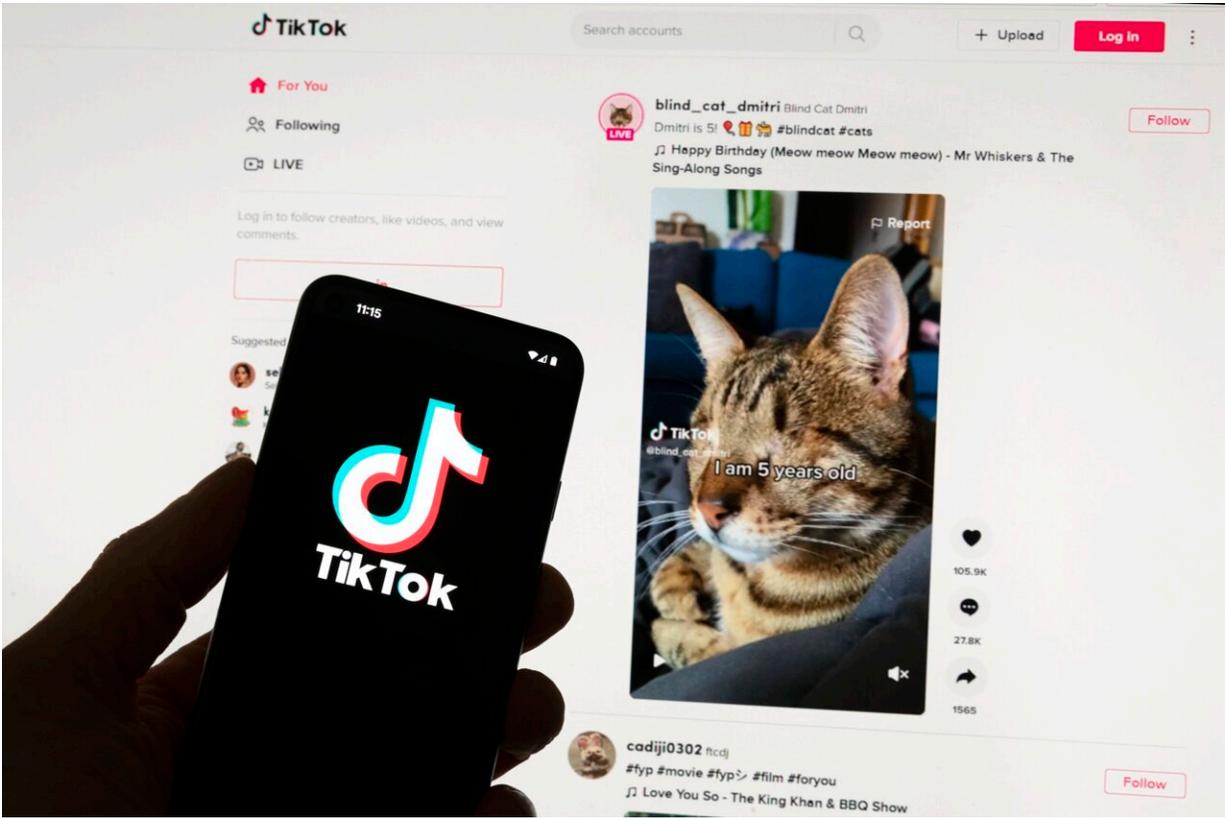


The EU ratchets up pressure on TikTok's new rewards app over risks to kids, warns of suspension

April 22 2024, by Kelvin Chan



The TikTok logo is seen on a mobile phone in front of a computer screen which displays the TikTok home screen, Saturday, March 18, 2023, in Boston. European Union regulators said Wednesday, April 17, 2024, they're seeking details from TikTok on a new app from the video sharing platform that pays users to watch videos. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File

The European Union on Monday demanded TikTok provide more information about a new app that pays users to watch videos and warned that it could order the video sharing platform to suspend addictive features that pose a risk to kids.

The 27-nation EU's executive Commission said it was opening [formal proceedings](#) to determine whether TikTok Lite breached the bloc's new digital rules when the app was rolled out in France and Spain.

Brussels was ratcheting up the pressure on TikTok after the company failed to respond to a request last week for information on whether the new app complies with the Digital Services Act, a sweeping law that took effect last year intending to clean up social media platforms.

TikTok Lite is a slimmed-down version of the main TikTok app that lets users earn rewards. Points earned by watching videos, liking content and following content creators can then be exchanged for rewards including Amazon vouchers and gift cards on PayPal.

"We are disappointed with this decision," TikTok said in a statement. "The TikTok Lite rewards hub is not available to under 18s, and there is a daily limit on video watch tasks. We will continue discussions with the Commission."

The commission wants to see the risk assessment that TikTok should have carried out before deploying the app in the European Union. It's worried TikTok launched the app without assessing how to mitigate "potential systemic risks" such as addictive design features that could pose harm to children.

"With an endless stream of short and fast-paced videos, TikTok offers fun and a sense of connection beyond your immediate circle," said European Commissioner Thierry Breton, one of the officials leading the

bloc's push to rein in big tech companies. "But it also comes with considerable risks, especially for our children: addiction, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, low attention spans."

The EU is giving TikTok 24 hours to turn over the risk assessment and until Wednesday to argue its case. Any order to suspend the TikTok Lite app's reward features could come as early as Thursday.

It's the first time that the EU has issued a legally binding order for such information since the Digital Services Act took effect. Officials stepped up the pressure after TikTok failed to respond to last week's request for the information.

If TikTok still fails to respond, the commission warned the company also faces fines worth up to 1% of the company's total annual income or worldwide turnover and "periodic penalties" of up to 5% of daily income or global turnover.

TikTok was already facing intensified scrutiny from the EU. The commission already has an ongoing in-depth investigation into the main TikTok app's DSA compliance, examining whether it's doing enough to curb "systemic risks" stemming from its design, including "algorithmic systems" that might stimulate "behavioral addictions." Offices are worried that measures including age verification tools to stop minors from finding "inappropriate content" might not be effective.

© 2024 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: The EU ratchets up pressure on TikTok's new rewards app over risks to kids, warns of suspension (2024, April 22) retrieved 21 May 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2024-04-eu-ratchets-pressure-tiktok-rewards.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.