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THE GEOPOLITICS OF "PLATFORMS": THE TIKTOK CHALLENGE FROM THE CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Through the years of technological development, the meaning of "platform" has grown from a solely technical definition to becoming one of the key factors that shape contemporary geopolitics. Originally, platforms were considered technological infrastructures created with the aim of serving either communication or commerce. Over time, however, their significance has broadened to encompass social, cultural, economic, and geopolitical dimensions. Basically, a platform is a medium or a stage where actors interact, communicate, and engage in activities. In fact, the platform is a place of coming and going where ideas, goods, and services are exchanged continuously, shaping world opinion and relations of power.

The global phenomenon of TikTok, one of the most adopted platforms for publishing short-form videos, has rapidly attracted the interest of the world's public. Boasting one billion monthly active users, it surely has proved itself as a strong competitor in the arena of social media, particularly among the youth. Success, however, was looked upon sceptically since it is owned by the Chinese firm Byte Dance. TikTok's swift rise to fame has not been without its fair share of controversy. Each of these countries, including the United States and India, has taken regulatory action on various grounds such as data privacy, content moderation concerns, and alleged links with the Chinese government. The Canadian government had started a national security review of TikTok as early as July 2020 over security concerns. Moreover, Canada has been at the forefront of enacting laws that balance platform responsibility with individual rights, making it a pertinent example for examining the broader global context of legal frameworks regulating online platforms.

In February 2023, Canada prohibited TikTok on government-issued devices due to unacceptable privacy and security risks. It mirrored the growing international concern about the collections of the app and possible links with the Chinese government. In September 2023, the Canadian government decided to press ahead with a national security review of TikTok's proposed expansion in the country.[1] Concrete details of the review itself are not provided, but succinctly, it reflects

[1] Cpi, CPI. "Canada Orders National Security Review of Tiktok." PYMNTS.com, March 14, 2024. https://www.pymnts.com/cpi-posts/canada-orders-national-security-review-of-tiktok/.

Canada's activeness in terms of national security in the digital era. The review might go all the way from asking TikTok to take some mitigating measures from Canada to halting the expansion of the company, which would contribute even more to the problems the company is already facing. Canadian state officials are also prohibited from using the messaging app WeChat and the antivirus software Kaspersky on government-issued mobile devices.

This is a measure that has been put in place due to the consumers' privacy and security concerns associated with the use of such applications on mobile devices, since both WeChat and Kaspersky are connected with China and Russia, respectively. The government of Canada raised concerns that WeChat and Kaspersky collect data on mobile devices in ways that would give access to almost everything on such devices. While there are no reports of data compromises of government information through these apps, according to a release by the Treasury Board of Canada on Monday, these measures have been taken out of caution. Canada is being proactive over the growing concerns about the security of user data and its implications on national security.

Measures are therefore being taken to scrutinise applications with care to protect personal privacy and national interests. This detailed scrutiny ensures that every app in Canada conforms to very strict standards, which minimise susceptibility and offer maximum protection on any unguarded information. The collaboration aspect is important, however, deep scrutiny of each app on its security protocols will ensure solid protection against potential threats. This approach underlines Canada’s commitment to ensure that a proper balance is struck between technological advancement and the essential requirements that ensure the citizen’s personal privacy and the country’s security interests are kept safe. This paper will outline a background, key issues, and possible implications of the current review on TikTok as part of national security in Canada.

Background

The rise of TikTok to global sensation status has stirred conversations involving the geopolitical aspect of online platforms. TikTok, owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance, gained traction in record time for highly engaging short-form videos and curated content all worked out by algorithms. In fact, TikTok has reached widespread popularity; it is a cultural phenomenon in most parts of the world, where more than a billion active users across the globe have used it.

At the same time, this rapid growth has also cultivated a number of suspicions, particularly on data privacy, censorship, and national security risks. Because it is a Chinese-owned company, there have been questions of whether this could raise the likelihood of data exploitation on the platform. Accordingly, with growing tensions between the United States and China in 2020[2], the administration of President Trump issued an executive order to ban TikTok unless ownership was moved to a US-based company.[3]

The TikTok challenge is not a fad; it's a telling event of the growing geopolitical tensions across the virtual world. That represents China's growing clout in the global tech sector, a sector itself posing a formidable challenge to the dominance of Western platforms like Facebook and Instagram. This has raised discussions on technological independence and what Chinese tech companies are doing to expand their influence beyond national boundaries. But the TikTok challenge brings into sharp focus the anxieties of Western governments on data security and national sovereignty.

The collection of extensive user data, including personal information and behaviour patterns by a Chinese-owned platform raised suspicions of surveillance and espionage. In today's world of heightened global competition, the ability to control digital infrastructure has become an important priority for nations seeking to protect their interests. The industry ministry announced that the Canadian government had launched a national security review of TikTok's proposal to expand its business in the country. The outcome, as per the results of the Canadian national security review, would range from calling upon TikTok to apply remedies and cure the situation, to something as serious as calling off the company's expansion.

This could, therefore, form a big blow to the operations of TikTok and add to the growing list of challenges that face the company. Similarly, the U.S. House approved a bill that would force

[2] Driver, Ryan Grimstad, "Understanding ASEAN: An Alternative Approach to International Relations Theory in Asia" (2018). *Dissertations and Theses.* Paper 4436.
[3] Executive Order 13942: Addressing the Threat Posed by TikTok, and Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain," Aug 2020. [Online]. Available: https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-17699

ByteDance, the Chinese owner of TikTok, to divest the app's U.S. assets or face a ban.[4] All of these have reflected growing concerns about national security and what part Chinese technology companies are playing within the global market. The Canadian review is focused only on TikTok's investment plan, the industry ministry said. That would seem to rule out a blanket ban like the one being proposed in the U.S. The Canadian government is following the bill being debated by U.S. lawmakers closely. However, they refused to comment on any details of Canada's reviews, citing they were separate from what was happening in the U.S. bill.[5]

Moreover, Canada has implemented a variety of laws and approaches aimed at the problem of harmful content on the internet. Some provisions of the Canadian Criminal Code[6] relate to the issues of defamation, harassment, and sharing intimate images without consent. The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) also touches on this as content moderation concerns about TikTok involve possible data user abuse or content change for other purposes.[7]

Canada's C-11 Bill (Online Streaming Act) and C-18 Bill (Online News Act)[8] also serve important functions in strategies directed at control of the online content and responsibility of the platforms. Such laws demand a range of services from major platforms so that their content does not endorse undesirable conduct like bullying, hate speech, or lies.

What's more, the TikTok challenge underlines how difficult it is to police digital platforms pitted against fast-moving technological development. Conventional regulations are struggling to keep pace with rapid changes in technology. This has created serious gaps and inconsistencies in oversight. The TikTok saga has indeed been a strong reminder of the wary balance in moving through the complex relationship that exists between promoting innovation and addressing critical

[4] Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. "Canada Strengthens Guidelines on Foreign Investments in the Interactive Digital Media Sector." Canada.ca, March 1, 2024. https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2024/03/canada-strengthens-guidelines-on-foreign-investments-in-the-interactive-digital-media-sector.html.
[5] Shepardson, David. US House passes bill to force bytedance to divest tiktok or face ban | reuters, March 14, 2024. https://www.reuters.com/technology/us-house-vote-force-bytedance-divest-tiktok-or-face-ban-2024-03-13/.
[6] Criminal Code of Canada, RSC 1985, c. C-46, ss. 298-301, https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/.
[7] Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), SC 2000, c. 5, https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/P-8.6/.
[8] Bill C-11, Online Streaming Act, 2021, https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-11/royal-assent.

issues around security, privacy, and the basic freedom of expression in the modern-day digital world. This is where the dire need for thoughtful strategies to protect users lies while continuing to let digital platforms thrive.

Extent and Impact of TikTok

TikTok's power extends beyond the user base, particularly among the young generation, with a great number of active users in Canada falling within the ranks of teenagers and young adults; for them, the platform has become part and parcel of youth culture. The algorithm of endless content is captivating; it shapes the trends, memes, and social norms that are a powerhouse in shaping the societal discourse.[9] This is a geometric use of TikTok as a means of reaching out to the young population of Canada, who are one day to become the future leaders and decision-makers of the country. This constitutes a very serious geopolitical game.

China looks to mould the impressionable minds of Canadian youth through tactical penetration within TikTok, carefully crafting their perception of China and its role in the world. Hence, China wants to create a friendly disposition among the youth in Canada, establishing a foundation for future healthy diplomatic and economic relations. It does this by bringing together entertainment, education, and propaganda-a show of depth in geopolitical strategy.[10] The videos are, no doubt, catchy; they are short and allow for the making of friends. However, such creation shall not allow the interests of national security to fall by the wayside. Therefore, data security is an aspect that needs to be taken care of. The ownership of TikTok by the Chinese conglomerate ByteDance raises a red flag on the issue of data exploitation for unauthorised access to sensitive information.[11] In today's digital era, the potential of having a foreign entity with extensive personal data on Canadian citizens raises very valid concerns about national security. One example could be that Chinese

[9] Siles, I., Valerio-Alfaro, L., & Meléndez-Moran, A. (2022). Learning to like TikTok . . . and not: Algorithm awareness as process. New Media & Society, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221138973

[10] Highhouse, Cole Henry. "China content on TikTok: the influence of social media videos on national image" *Online Media and Global Communication* 1, no. 4 (2022): 697-722. https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2022-0057

[11] Kosters, Lisa, and Oskar Josef Gstrein. “TikTok and Transparency Obligations in the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) – a Scoping Review.” the University of Groningen research portal, March 25, 2024. https://research.rug.nl/en/publications/tiktok-and-transparency-obligations-in-the-eu-digital-services-ac.

state-supported actors could utilise TikTok as a tool for promoting Western democracy disinformation campaigns. Let's say that a viral TikTok clip is intentionally planted to incite political violence or ridicule prospective leaders of a foreign state. It is possible that the Chinese authorities direct such trends through TikTok so that they change or create public attitudes towards particular countries or specific areas of interest. Such operations might use the TikTok algorithm to engage viewers with one-sided content that alienates and vilifies opposing views or peddles falsehoods, sometimes without claiming state involvement.[12]

Moreover, algorithmic capabilities within TikTok, designed to tailor the content for each user, raise serious questions about potential manipulation and influence. This significantly increases the risk in terms of national security, since it opens avenues to foreign actors for spreading tailored propaganda or misinformation that may undermine Canada's sovereignty and security interests.

Interconnectedness in cyberspace means that a breach or manipulation of TikTok's platform could have repercussions extending beyond the impact on individual users to susceptible government information, corporate secrets, and critical infrastructure data-a direct threat to the security infrastructure of Canada.

Added to that are the concerns about TikTok, which have been amplified due to a lack of transparency with its practices in data handling and due to its unclear ties with the Chinese authorities. The lack of explicit and transparent disclosures gives great cause for concern regarding the malicious usage of user data. A lack of clarity in this situation erodes user trust and presents a concrete danger to Canada's cybersecurity landscape.

Without explicit assurances and with strong safeguards in place, there is a very real possibility of exploitation. In fact, that vulnerability could be exploited by malicious actors, leaving Canada susceptible to everything from data breaches to sophisticated foreign influence campaigns. More clarity is required with respect to TikTok's data practices; it is otherwise indeterminable how much access there might be to user information and for what such information might be used.

[12] "China's Use of TikTok in Disinformation Campaigns: Hypothetical Scenario," *Global Digital Security Journal*, March 2024, 48–50.

In other words, the secrecy in TikTok's handling of data makes things precarious enough to highly risk exploitation. If left to persist, such a scenario may pose significant cybersecurity risks to Canada and make it susceptible to foreign influence campaigns, thus denting its national security interests.

Content Dissemination and Narrative Shaping

The real magic of TikTok is in its algorithmic capabilities, which curate and select the content being served to users based on their preferences and levels of engagement.[13] This algorithmic architecture gives China a powerful vehicle for content distribution and narrative building-a way to slice up and target specific demographics with tailored messaging. China could easily turn up the volume on TikTok, making sure its narratives would be conveyed to millions of Canadian users, courtesy of an advanced network of variously interconnected influencers, creators, and sponsored campaigns.

It allows TikTok to establish cultural communications and further mutual understanding with ease. China attempts to stir a feeling of acquaintance and affection amongst Canadian users by showcasing different cultural, culinary, and traditional aspects of Chinese life. China opens several avenues for Canadians to connect with its vast cultural heritage through dance challenges, language tutorials, or even virtual tours. These experiences allow participants to engage themselves in the invigorating, dynamic society of China. The motive behind this cultural diplomacy is to allow Canadians to see a more human side of China, far from the negative stereotypes and misconceptions that may exist in traditional media. It is also used by China to disseminate its official positions on sensitive issues such as human rights, territorial disputes, and geopolitical conflicts.[14] According to China, the country has been trying to put across its version of these issues through highly curated videos, framing them in its interests. To some, this might be

[13] Siles, I., Valerio-Alfaro, L., & Meléndez-Moran, A. (2022). Learning to like TikTok . . . and not: Algorithm awareness as process. New Media & Society, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221138973
[14] Melin, Elina. "China's Sharp Power through TikTok: A Case Study of How China Can Use Sharp Power through TikTok." DIVA, February 12, 2021. https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1527742&dswid=5049.

information manipulation or misinformation; to others, it was alternative information that challenged the dominant narrative and made Canadian users more critical.

The Dynamics of Influence and Soft Power

This will go a long way in helping China increase its influence and soft power inside Canada to shape the bilateral relationship of both countries. Joseph Nye has written that soft power is based on three aspects: culture, political values, and foreign policy.[15] These three pillars can serve Chinese interests by making China a cultural superpower, a global governance proponent, and a conscientious player in international affairs.

China effectively uses TikTok to showcase artistic talent, technological prowess, and the cultural export of the country in a bid to present itself before the world as a source of inspiration and innovation. They aim to foster mutual respect and admiration through these exchanges. All this would lay the foundation for strengthened cultural cooperation and people-to-people ties.

Beijing aims to implement its conception of a multipolar world order based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and mutually beneficial cooperation between nations.

TikTok is one such platform that assists China in broadcasting the spirit of multilateralism, solidarity, and cooperation. It then positions itself as a responsible international player in addressing global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and pandemics. China has consensus and goodwill with Canadian users; that move bolsters its position and diplomatic influence across Canada and beyond. China strategically uses TikTok as a platform to promote trade and engage in economic diplomacy, effectively showcasing the broad range of products, services, and investment opportunities of the country to both Canadian consumers and businesses alike.

[15] Nye, Joseph S. "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990): 153–71. https://doi.org/10.2307/1148580.

It aims to increase its exposure within the Canadian market through targeted advertisements, sponsored content, and integrations with e-commerce.[16] Such a strategy enables them to reach out to Canada's rich consumer base and its strong digital economy. China strengthens its position in the Canadian marketplace by developing commercial relationships and building up a level of economic interdependence. In this way, China develops positions of authority and influence over Canadian decision-makers.

Critical issues

Government officials see the threat that TikTok presents to Canadians on at least two fronts: hacking the personal privacy to collect too much information about individuals and undermining democracy through its spread of misinformation and manipulation of people.

TikTok collects a wide array of data from its users, including information around their location, browsing history, and behaviour.[17] While the company says that it stores this data outside of China and separately from its parent company, there are question marks over how effective these precautions are. The point of concern is that these data might be accessed by the Chinese government according to China's National Intelligence Law, which demands cooperation with state intelligence efforts. Social media has become a powerful tool in shaping public opinion and information dissemination.

This theoretical concern has become an immediate and real threat to Canadian national security. Of equal concern, meanwhile, is the potential impact of foreign influence campaigns, either through explicit propaganda or by way of subtlety. In this respect, the content dissemination mechanism for TikTok incorporates an algorithm-driven system, which is supposed to ensure a high level of preciseness in messaging and allows the dissemination of foreign narratives that do

[16] Zhang, Z. (2021). Infrastructuralization of Tik Tok: transformation, power relationships, and platformization of video entertainment in China. Media, Culture & Society, 43(2), 219-236. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720939452

[17] Aaronson, Susan Ariel. "Data Is Dangerous: Comparing the Risks That the United States, Canada and Germany See in Data Troves." Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2020. https://www.cigionline.org/static/documents/documents/no.241%202_0.pdf.

not align with Canadian interests. The TikTok algorithm, designed to decide what content the user sees, has gained widespread attention for its uncanny ability to personalise messages to the tastes of any given individual. That level of specificity brings up the possibility of amplification of foreign narratives that do not align with Canada's interests. This is an algorithm that seriously analyses user behaviour and preference. It keeps tabs on the kind of videos you watch, like, and share. Adding to that, it uses such information to suggest similar content to keep you hooked. The personalised way of TikTok makes it more addictive, but this often inadvertently pushes other narratives over others.

This raise concerns that the algorithm may be used to promote foreign narratives that could be inimical to Canadian interests.[18] For instance, a foreign entity or person could produce content that spreads false information or advocates for ideas that run afresh to Canadian values, and the algorithm would still be likely to push such content to Canadian users showing interest in related topics. It directly impacts public opinion and, as such, could affect national security.

Like any other online platform, TikTok is vulnerable to cybersecurity features such as data breaches, malware, and hacking attempts. In fact, the case of a security breach with TikTok is even more powerful. Because of how interconnected cyberspace is, the breach may not remain at an individual level, infiltrating governments and critical infrastructure. Moreover, the obscurity of TikTok's data practices hinders the proper assessment and mitigation of these risks. Recently, various urgent questions have been raised about the security of TikTok and how it handles users' private data. Its mode of collecting data gives it broad access to content on users' mobile devices, and it gathers sensitive information of users even when they do not save or distribute their content. Two factors come in most handy in this context: privacy and cybersecurity.[19] There is a vast amount of data contained in the app, and security experts have pointed out the gap between the TikTok platform's privacy policy and what was expected by the users.

[18] Siles, I., Valerio-Alfaro, L., & Meléndez-Moran, A. (2022). Learning to like TikTok . . . and not: Algorithm awareness as process. New Media & Society, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221138973
[19] Pellaeon Lin, “Tiktok vs Douyin: A Security and Privacy Analysis,” The Citizen Lab, August 15, 2022, https://citizenlab.ca/2021/03/tiktok-vs-douyin-security-privacy-analysis/.

This expectation mismatch has exposed the users to cyberattacks. Another factor is that the parent company of TikTok is from China. There exist hostilities between some nations and China, and people therefore feel suspicious about the privacy policy of TikTok. A number of countries have raised concerns about the possibility of Chinese firms being forced to share their data with the Chinese government. There is a growing concern that TikTok might be utilised by the Chinese government to advance narratives or misinformation that would serve its agenda. Last year, for example, news reports were on a China-based team allegedly accessing data of U.S. TikTok users, including two journalists. It was said to be part of a covert surveillance program to identify sources of leaks in the press.[20]

Security implications

Questions regarding the security of TikTok in Canada arise because of the potential risks associated with data handling. Since it belongs to a Chinese company, there has been concern about whether user data can be accessed or manipulated by foreign entities. This indeed gives rise to fear in compromising both users' privacy and national security.[21]

Another critical concern is data mining, whereby TikTok uses the personal information of the users in activities beyond their needs.[22] Samples of such activities include surveillance, targeted advertisement, and even the influencing of public opinion. There are also concerns about how TikTok handles user-generated content and the possibilities of using it in propaganda or misinformation activities.

Furthermore, interoperability issues of digital platforms raise questions about various vulnerabilities within the TikTok infrastructure. Events that may result from such vulnerabilities could have long-lasting impacts, including data breaches and cyberattacks, affecting not only

[20] Shepardson, David. “Bytedance Finds Employees Obtained TikTok User Data of Two Journalists | Reuters.” Reuters , December 23, 2022. https://www.reuters.com/technology/bytedance-finds-employees-obtained-tiktok-user-data-two-us-journalists-2022-12-22/.
[21] Pellaeon Lin, “Tiktok vs Douyin: A Security and Privacy Analysis,” The Citizen Lab, August 15, 2022, https://citizenlab.ca/2021/03/tiktok-vs-douyin-security-privacy-analysis/.
[22] Adina Feder, "A Bull in a China Shop: How CFIUS Made TikTok a National Security Problem," Cardozo International & Comparative Law Review 5, no. 2 (Winter 2022): 627-670

Canadian users but also critical infrastructures. In view of this, the regulatory measures should be given due consideration in ensuring that operations of TikTok fall within the legal and value-based frameworks of Canada. Additionally, poor data practices, or those that are vulnerable to foreign interference by TikTok, undermine Canada's control over its data, denting public confidence in digital platforms. Such a situation could result in regulatory crackdowns or limitations in the use of TikTok, thus affecting user bases and revenue streams.

Cybersecurity threats from TikTok pose a severe threat to the cybersecurity infrastructure and resilience of Canada.[23] A cyberattack, or data breach may cause significant disruption of key services, compromise sensitive information, and facilitate espionage activities. Fixing these would require expensive efforts and raise concerns about national security. Foreign influence operations on TikTok have the potential to spread discord, polarise civic sentiment, and destroy the very fabric of democratic institutions. By manipulating strategic targets in the algorithmic and content distribution processes on the service, malicious actors may amplify social conflict, destroy social cohesion, and undermine trust in democratic processes.

The erosion of democratic discourse has become an emerging emergency, driven mostly by the disturbing performance of foreign campaigns on platforms like TikTok.

This could lead to cleavages in societies and heightened conflict, eventually depleting the democratic institutions of their potency. By knowing how to work around the TikTok algorithms and the mechanisms of content dissemination, grey zones within the digital ecosystem can be manipulated to consciously heighten divisions within society. Indeed, through careful planning and effective distribution, they can sharpen the cleavages in society, alienate communities from one another, and undermine the essential cohesion that a democracy needs if it is to thrive. Moreover, such foreign influence campaigns have grown to pose serious threats to civic beliefs in democratic processes.[24] Misinformation and propaganda can be spread using the virality of TikTok

[23] Acworth, Flynn. "National Security Policy Options for Cyber Ecosystem Resilience". Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, March 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.22313419.
[24] Zhang, Z. (2021). Infrastructuralization of Tik Tok: transformation, power relationships, and platformization of video entertainment in China. Media, Culture & Society, 43(2), 219-236. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720939452

on an unprecedented scale, warping public perception and undermining trust in democratic institutions. The latter goes beyond calling the said electoral processes into question, weakening the very grounds on which society survives for democratic rule, making them vulnerable to manipulation and totalitarian encroachment. The consequences of foreign influence operations against democratic discourse, conducted through TikTok, are huge and multifaceted. These operations undermine the principles of transparency, accountability, and civic engagement that lie at the core of our democratic model. If one is not able to act firmly against this threat, then one allows these malicious actors to take over the online public space, further widening the divisions within society and jeopardising the very foundations of democracy.

Conclusion

The ever-growing trend of the social media app TikTok has evoked a state of global alarm for the potential influence it can operate within. Given the sensitivity of the app in maintaining a fine balance between creating a vibrant virtual world and the genuine concerns regarding privacy and security issues, the app needs to be treated with due caution. TikTok tends to be used as an influential mechanism through which soft power from China has been conveyed onto Canadian land, in forms of cultural interaction and in shaping public opinion.

On the other hand, while the said application persuades dialogue and mutual understanding among users, it creates concerns in terms of data privacy and misinformation. Overcoming such complexities demands collaboration and transparency. China can use TikTok as one of its channels to broaden its soft power influence in Canada through active engagement with stakeholders and squarely addressing the issue of privacy concerns. This will provide more room for mutual understanding and further consolidate cooperation between both countries. TikTok may work as a cultural exchange between Canada and China, but this collaboration in terms of privacy and misinformation concerns will be critical for the future of TikTok. It should be much more collaborative and transparent to maximise its capability of enhancing the soft power of China in Canada, with minimum violation of the privacy and security concerns of the Canadian citizens.