



## Douyin Bans Pro-LGBT Content

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Douyin, China's version of TikTok, censors pro-LGBT content, prohibiting "unhealthy and non-mainstream views on marriage and love" and taking down images of gay couples. In contrast, TikTok says it 'celebrates' the LGBT community and explicitly bans anti-LGBT discrimination—which Douyin does not.



In this report, IPVM examines Douyin's censorship and what it reveals about its PRC parent ByteDance, which did not respond to our comment requests. IPVM [previously examined](#) Douyin's strict censorship of content criticizing the PRC and its Communist Party.

### Douyin Background

Douyin ( ) is China's version of TikTok. Both are short-form video apps owned by ByteDance, a private company [headquartered in Beijing](#) and domiciled in the

Cayman Islands due to PRC foreign capital restrictions (similar to PRC firms [SenseTime](#) & [Alibaba](#).)



**Douyin**

Douyin is China's leading destination for short-form mobile videos. Powered by easy-to-use video creation tools, Douyin quickly became a highly popular app across the country. It empowers everyone to capture and present the world's creativity, knowledge, and moments that matter in everyday life, presenting a wide and diverse range of content on the platform.

For more information, please visit <https://www.douyin.com/>.

Douyin's app, with [~600 million](#) active users, is only available within the PRC while TikTok is globally available ([except in the PRC](#)) and has [over 1 billion](#) active users.

### **Bans "Unhealthy And Non-Mainstream Views On Marriage And Love"**

[Content guidelines](#) for short dramas on Douyin's Mini-Apps remind Douyin developers that Douyin will impose penalties on any content promoting "unhealthy and non-mainstream views on marriage and love" ( ):

#### 2. Video coverage content

Obscene and pornographic, exaggerating vulgar and low-level tastes, **promoting unhealthy and non-mainstream views on marriage and love**, and contrary to social morality [emphasis added]

The guidelines are from October 8, 2022. Punishment for violators includes removal of content, freezing of online wallets, and shadow-banning i.e. shutting off traffic to the content ("").

IPVM searches on Douyin's desktop website, [www.douyin.com](https://www.douyin.com), showed no popular posts promoting gay couples or explicitly LGBT topics, with many results for e.g. "same-sex marriage" consisting of dry [legal explainers](#).

### **Mandated by PRC Government**

This language is copied, verbatim, from the mandatory PRC government's [Standards and Detailed Rules for Reviewing Online Short Video Content](#) ( ) which prohibits, under Rule 68, any content that "promotes unhealthy and non-mainstream views on marriage and love" ( ).

## Post Censored For Appearing To Promote Homosexuality

IPVM found a [Douyin video](#) showing how Douyin's censorship works in action.

In the post, a male influencer tried to post a video of a male friend about to (jokingly) kiss him. The video was removed for "not following [Douyin] Community Rules" ( ) because it "has possible involvement with promoting non-mainstream views on marriage and love" ( ):



Commenters mostly laughed at the awkward phrasing of the sentence "promoting unhealthy and non-mainstream views on marriage and love" ( ) likely unaware that this is PRC law.

## Douyin No Ban On Anti-LGBTQ Content, Unlike TikTok

[TikTok's Community Guidelines](#) ban "hateful ideology" including "anti-LGBTQ" content along with Holocaust denial, White supremacy, misogyny, anti-Semitism, etc:

## Hateful ideology

Hateful ideologies are those that demonstrate clear hostility toward people because of their protected attributes. Hateful ideologies are incompatible with the inclusive and supportive community that our platform provides and we remove content that promotes them.

### **Do not post, upload, stream, or share:**

- Content that praises, promotes, glorifies, or supports any hateful ideology (e.g., white supremacy, misogyny, anti-LGBTQ, antisemitism)
- Content that contains names, symbols, logos, flags, slogans, uniforms, gestures, salutes, illustrations, portraits, songs, music, lyrics, or other objects related to a hateful ideology
- Content that promotes, supports, or advertises conversion therapy or related program
- Content that denies well-documented and violent events have taken place affecting groups with protected attributes (e.g., Holocaust denial)
- Claims of supremacy over a group of people with reference to other protected attributes
- Conspiracy theories used to justify hateful ideologies

However, Douyin's Community Guidelines, known as the [Self-Disciplinary Regulations](#), make no mention of banning anti-LGBTQ content or LGBTQ people in general.

## **TikTok 'Celebrating' LGBT Community**

The contrast between TikTok and Douyin is even clearer with [TikTok posting](#) about "celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community" in June 2022 for Pride Month:



However, there is no corresponding coverage (or even mention) of LGBT people from Douyin that IPVM could find.

In 2020, TikTok publicly [apologized](#) for censoring LGBT content and committed to undoing this, stating this happened as an inadvertent result of an attempt to "reduce bullying". However, Douyin deliberately censors LGBT content, and has so far not faced significant media scrutiny for this.

### **Showcases ByteDance Involvement In PRC Censorship**

Douyin's removal of LGBT content showcases ByteDance's strict compliance with the PRC's censorship machine, raising discrimination and freedom of expression concerns.

### **ByteDance No Response**

ByteDance did not respond to IPVM's comment request. If they do, we will update.

## **Comments (17)**

### **Undisclosed Integrator #1**

smart move

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### **Corbin Hambrick**

so.....

both company's are acting as "censors"...what's your point?

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### **Undisclosed End User #2**

Discrimination is often hand-in-hand with the darker side, like the concentration camp- sorry, "re-education facilities".

This is not unique to PRC, as this is a common tactic in places such as Russia, which makes it criminal to be LGBT.

Thank you for pointing out the backhanded actions of a company feigning inclusivity when the parent company allows this.

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### **Undisclosed Integrator #3**

In reply to Undisclosed End User #2

Did you miss the several instances where it is mentioned anti-LGBT is Chinese **law**? I fail to see how the parent company is at fault and also how this at all relates to the security industry.

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### **Corbin Hambrick**

I agree. How does this article relate to the security industry?

This could go in several tangential directions.

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### **Undisclosed Integrator #3**

In reply to Corbin Hambrick

It's IPVM, this sort of Vice-esque tabloid sensationalism is to be expected. What's next?

*"BREAKING NEWS - IPVM REPORT*

*Idaho police used intrusive methods to access phone records to track an individual alleged to have committed a crime in that state. IPVM investigates this direct threat to privacy and will insinuate the hardware providers and telecom companies involved should be tarred, feathered, and cancelled." :-P*

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### **Donald Maye**

In reply to Corbin Hambrick

I agree. How does this article relate to the security industry? This could go in several tangential directions.

TikTok bans in the US for security concerns - [President Biden has approved a](#)

[ban](#) on federal devices, and the Governors from [NH](#), [NJ](#), and [Ohio](#) have initiated bans. In the case of NJ and NH, the bans of TikTok also included the bans of Hikvision and Dahua.

Specifically, we wanted to understand what policies and procedures Douyin/Bytedance have in place to support claims of censorship and possible security-related concerns. This is an area we have experience in covering PRC video surveillance manufacturers. See our other report on Douyin censorship: [How Douyin Censors Anti-PRC, Communist Party Content](#)

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### **Undisclosed Integrator #3**

In reply to Donald Maye

IPVM is the world's leading authority on **physical** security technology covering video surveillance, access control, weapons detection and more; delivering unmatched reporting, research, and test results.

[About IPVM](#)

Don't see anything there about championing social media censorship issues, nor do I think anyone here cares.

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### **John Honovich IPVM |**

In reply to Undisclosed Integrator #3

Why are you so concerned about this post? It's factually true and we cover so many topics monthly that I don't see why this is so important to you.

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### **Undisclosed End User #4**

In reply to John Honovich

I wish all the social media platforms were as transparent as IPVM. I commend IPVM. I hold extreme political views and opinions and oppose the Wokeness creeping into every lexicon...., at least I get to

comment on it :)

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### **Undisclosed Integrator #3**

In reply to John Honovich

It is intentionally and unnecessarily misleading by stating that a social media company has banned LGBT content on its platform, when in fact it is complying with Chinese law that REQUIRES them to do so (and I expect every other Chinese social media platform does so as well). That highly relevant fact is only mentioned halfway into the article, but I suppose a title such as "Douyin Bans Pro-LGBT Content In Accordance With PRC Law" doesn't play to your M.O. Hook em with a provocative statement and get em emotional first, right?

Secondly it's a wasted effort on a topic the majority of your reader base doesn't seem to be interested in. It took the time and effort of TWO staff to write this article whose efforts could have been spent on a subject more germane to IPVM's core interests.

But then again I'm running on borrowed time here, so to speak, not having renewed my membership. So why are you so concerned about my opinion?

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**John Honovich** IPVM |

In reply to Undisclosed Integrator #3

"Douyin Bans Pro-LGBT Content In Accordance With PRC Law" doesn't play to your M.O. Hook em with a provocative statement and get em emotional first, right?

With that line of thinking, anything in the PRC can be justified - "Hikvision Cameras In Concentration Camps In Accordance With PRC Law", yes?

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### **Undisclosed Integrator #3**

In reply to John Honovich

Yes. And that's precisely how it is there whether you like it or not. Or are you suggesting Chinese corporations (Hikvision excluded as they're already a state apparatus) practice some form of civil disobedience in response to regulations and policies such as this? I hope you're not that naive because we all know [what happens to rabble rousers in the PRC](#). You're very quick to demand sacrifice from others while balking at the thought for yourself.

I don't like it either. I think the CCP's anti-freedom commie asses should be hung out to dry and the country freed and democratized. But I wouldn't try to mislead the readership about a Chinese company's oppressive policy when it's literally mandated to do so in civil or criminal law. It's disingenuous at best not to have lead with that fact.

If this article were to be fair it would have been titled "Chinese law forces Douyin to suppress LGBT content", but your writers explicitly didn't say that. They immediately attacked the company and then halfway through mentioned "oh and by the way, it's Chinese law that actually requires them to do this..." while the tone of the article remained accusatory, as if Douyin has a choice in the matter.

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### **Corbin Hambrick**

In reply to Undisclosed Integrator #3

or it could have been titled something like:

Sensorship by American and CCP Companies: both driven by their governments. Whose better at hiding it?

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### **Undisclosed #5**

In reply to Donald Maye

TikTok bans in the US for security concerns - President Biden has approved a ban on federal devices

how might this impact those external companies that work with federal orgs?

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#### **Undisclosed End User #4**

Well at least they spell out the "rules", where here in the West, the companies censor at the request of captured and infiltrated rogue Federal Agencies and hidden elite powers. And the West companies engage in cowardice shadow banning etc....

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#### **Undisclosed Integrator #3**

In reply to Undisclosed End User #4

While I don't subscribe to the conspiracy theory I agree that the West's censorship is also a problem. When an entity like YouTube or Facebook grows as large as it has, it becomes a *de facto* public service due to the influence it wields. The fact that their censorship systems have zero oversight is a problem and we've seen plenty of scandals of covert suppression of political ideologies.

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