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TIKTOK’s RISE TO GLOBAL MARKETS[[1]](#endnote-1)

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TikTok was a short-video sharing app based in China. On November 9, 2017, TikTok’s parent company, the Chinese tech company Beijing ByteDance Technology Co. (ByteDance), announced a strategic acquisition of Musical.ly, a popular short-video sharing app based in the United States.[[2]](#endnote-2) With more than 100 million[[3]](#endnote-3) users and similar features to TikTok, Musical.ly was a powerful competitor for TikTok’s international expansion into the North American markets. For ByteDance and TikTok, the closing of the Musical.ly acquisition in August 2018 was not the end goal, as it would create another new challenge. Would it be better to keep Musical.ly as a separate platform, as Musical.ly had achieved a good reputation and millions of users in the United States? Or should Musical.ly be replaced to create a global app under the TikTok brand, which was relatively new to the US market?

TIKTOK’S ORIGINS

TikTok was the international version of Douyin, a short-video sharing app launched in China by ByteDance. The app enabled users to create, share, and view 15-second videos that could include lip-syncing, dancing, comedy skits, and other physical activities. It had impressive video-editing tools that let users sync their videos to songs chosen from a massive music library, and it offered some easy-to-use special effects—such as shaking and shivering with music, hair dyeing, 3D stickers, and props. An example was the stamp filter, which allowed users to create raindrops in the video background by holding their hand(s) up to the camera.[[4]](#endnote-4)

The Company

ByteDance was a fast-growing Chinese start-up founded in 2012 by Zhang Yiming in Beijing. It operated several multimedia platforms powdered by artificial intelligence (AI).[[5]](#endnote-5) With a natural instinct for new technologies and social trends, Yiming saw an opportunity to combine the power of AI with the growth of mobile Internet services to revolutionize the way people connected with digital information.[[6]](#endnote-6) ByteDance’s use of AI technologies helped the tech company learn about users’ interests and preferences through their interactions—what users clicked on, completed, and commented on—and then feed them personalized videos. According to *Bloomberg News*, on October 26, 2018, ByteDance was then valued at more than US$75 billion[[7]](#endnote-7) after a new $3 billion round of investment from SoftBank Group Corp. This made ByteDance the world’s most valuable tech start-up.[[8]](#endnote-8)

The Short-Video Market

When ByteDance launched the Douyin short-video sharing app in China in September 2016,[[9]](#endnote-9) the short-video sharing market was not anything new and was growing. In China, Kuaishou led the short-video market by reaching 13.3 per cent penetration in January 2017, followed by Meipai at 3.5 per cent.[[10]](#endnote-10) Kuaishou was particularly popular in Chinese lower-tier cities and was dubbed “the app for small-town Chinese,” as over half of its users lived in Tier 3 and Tier 4 cities.[[11]](#endnote-11) Outside China, Musical.ly dominated the developed markets, such as North America and Europe, but it had yet to expand into China.[[12]](#endnote-12)

The high penetration of smart phones—exceeding 80 per cent by November 2016[[13]](#endnote-13)—and the rise of a new generation in China promised to sustain the growing trend of the short-video sharing market. According to an iResearch report, China’s short-video market exceeded 153 million users in 2016 and would reach 242 million by 2017, an increase of 58.2 per cent.[[14]](#endnote-14) Douyin’s general manager, Wang Xiaowei, said in an interview,

The popularity of large-screen smartphones and the acceleration of network infrastructure make people, especially the new generation, get used to expressing themselves. We believe the short-video market driven by user-generated content has great opportunities among the new generation. The existing short-video apps [in China] are either in favor of tool attributes or less attractive to young people, and there should be a music-based short-video community for [the] Chinese new generation.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Douyin’s Growth in China

During the early phases after its launch, Douyin frequently updated its versions to improve the product features and usage experience by adding new icons, creative special effects, filters, 3D posters, improved video definition, and video filming optimization (see Exhibit 1 for detailed updates between version 1.0.0 and version 1.4.0). These refinements helped make Douyin easy to use and offered creative tool kits.

Even with improved performance and powerful editing tool kits, Douyin still did not receive great attention until Yue Yunpeng (a celebrity in China) forwarded a short video with a Douyin watermark in his Weibo profile on March 12, 2017. Yue’s sharing received 83,175 likes and more than 5,083 forwards. Douyin’s operations team realized the power of celebrities in attracting users and invited a number of Chinese stars who had huge fan bases—such as Yang Mi, Lu Han, Kris Wu, and Angelababy—to join its publicity campaigns.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Promotions and Explosive Growth

From the second quarter of 2017, Douyin started to grow, which could be attributed to its heavy marketing promotions, including the attraction of stars and celebrities, the sponsorship of TV channels, and various trending hashtags.[[17]](#endnote-17) The refinement of its tool kits along with its ability to push “hot” videos to relevant users, as powered by its advanced AI techniques, enhanced Douyin’s explosive growth.

In addition to inviting stars from TV and movie studios and other platforms, Douyin invested heavily to promote its own Internet celebrities and its key opinion leaders (KOLs).[[18]](#endnote-18) During a celebration conference in November 2017, ByteDance invested $300 million to help content creators increase followers and generate revenues.[[19]](#endnote-19) Sponsoring Chinese popular variety shows through title sponsorship or product placement deals, such as “Hip-Hop in China,” “Happy Camp,” and “Everyday Upward,” also helped Douyin increase its exposure.[[20]](#endnote-20) In order to engage more ordinary users and attract creative content, various trending topics or themes in the form of hashtags were regularly promoted on Douyin. Some hashtags were particularly popular, spreading virally and attracting thousands of videos and millions of views.[[21]](#endnote-21) By December 2017, Douyin’s daily active users (DAUs)[[22]](#endnote-22) in China had reached 17.4 million.[[23]](#endnote-23)

Taking advantage of its fast growth and youth orientation, Douyin co-operated with the corporate sector—particularly fashion-based companies—for advertising campaigns. In September 2017, Douyin uploaded its first three advertising campaigns for Airbnb, Harbin Beer, and Chevrolet and attracted tens of thousands of users.[[24]](#endnote-24) On November 15, 2017, Douyin initiated a “City Catwalk” hashtag challenge in partnership with Michael Kors, a luxury American brand. Yang Mi and Mark Chao, the brand’s Chinese ambassadors, and some of Douyin’s “in-house” KOLs joined the campaign and shared videos of people performing catwalks dressed in Michael Kors products. Users were motivated to create their own catwalk videos with Michael Kors products, which created 30,000 posts and over two billion video streams.[[25]](#endnote-25)

By the end of October 2018, Douyin’s number of DAUs exceeded 200 million, and monthly active users (MAUs) reached 400 million in China.[[26]](#endnote-26) As Douyin grew into the broader market, its videos not only focused on music but covered more general and diverse entertainment such as cooking, fashion, and travel. On March 19, 2018, Zhang Nan, the president of Douyin, announced its new and more inclusive slogan: “Record the good life.”[[27]](#endnote-27)

Strengthening Supervision to Build the Community

Douyin’s growth and popularity were always accompanied by criticism of its video content as addictive and vulgar, which were not unfamiliar claims for social-media apps. As *The Atlantic*’s Taylor Lorenz indicated, “Watching too many in a row can feel like you’re about to have a brain freeze. They’re incredibly addictive.”[[28]](#endnote-28) On April 10, 2018, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television demanded that ByteDance’s Toutiao, a popular news aggregator, permanently shut down the account of Neihan Duanzi due to vulgar content.[[29]](#endnote-29) A large number of Toutiao’s users then quickly swarmed into Douyin with the same profiles and provided similar comments on Douyin’s hot videos. So Douyin temporarily removed its live-stream and comments features that day. Yiming said that he had been bothered by a “guilty conscience” in that, “Over the past few years, we put more effort and resources toward expanding the business and did not take enough measures to supervise our platform.” He announced that ByteDance would expand its team for monitoring content from 6,000 to 10,000.[[30]](#endnote-30)

On April 10, 2018, Douyin also rolled out the “anti-addiction” system—after 90-minutes of continuous usage, an alert would pop up to notify users, and after daily usage exceeding two hours, the app would be automatically locked. However, the app could be unlocked again by entering a password.[[31]](#endnote-31) Although it was difficult to control user-generated content, Douyin tried to build and maintain a healthy environment for its users, especially after gaining millions of users.

TIKTOK: DOUYIN’S GLOBALIZATION

Overseas expansion was always on ByteDance’s agenda. As Yiming said, “China is home to only one-fifth of Internet users globally. If we don’t expand on a global scale, we are bound to lose to peers eyeing the four-fifths. So, going global is a must.”[[32]](#endnote-32) In an interview with a Tsinghua University professor, Yiming revealed that his company’s globalization goal was to have more than half of the company’s users from outside China within the next three years.[[33]](#endnote-33) When Douyin was exploring its growth in China, the short-video sharing app competition in both China and global markets was becoming increasingly fierce, sharpened by the expansion of existing competitors and the emergence of new entrants. Douyin’s biggest competitor in China, Kuaishou (called Kwai overseas), had started its own global expansion.[[34]](#endnote-34) Musical.ly, after achieving dominance in the United States and Europe, expanded into China to capture that market.[[35]](#endnote-35) In view of competition as well as potential overseas markets, Douyin rebranded as TikTok for the international market on August 2017 while remaining Douyin in China.[[36]](#endnote-36)

Globalization Strategy

In an interview, Yiming explained the company’s globalization strategy as “global products + localized content”[[37]](#endnote-37) and conveyed his belief in ByteDance’s advanced AI techniques. He added that the globalization strategy was consistent with ByteDance’s mission to build global creation and interaction platforms. TikTok therefore kept very similar traits and features to Douyin’s but introduced distinct characteristics for different markets. As a user-generated content app, TikTok’s localization strategy was to offer various hashtags around local festivals, localize its stickers, and effects or filters. “Our localization strategy helps us encourage users to create relevant and local content along with incorporating global trends in the localized flavour,” said Raj Mishra, the business head of TikTok India.[[38]](#endnote-38) As of 2018, TikTok had more than 500 million MAUs globally in over 150 markets and 75 languag[es.](#_bookmark4)[[39]](#endnote-39)

TikTok in Southeast Asia

The Market and Competitors

With more than 641 million Internet users, 51 per cent of whom were MAUs, the Internet economy of Southeast Asia—including Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, and Malaysia—reached $50 billion by the end of 2017, exceeding the expectations of Google and Temasek by 35 per cent.[[40]](#endnote-40) People spent a lot of time on social media and were eager to express themselves and share with family and friends.[[41]](#endnote-41) According to an estimation by the United Nations, the median age of the population in Southeast Asia was 28.8 years.[[42]](#endnote-42) With a vast number of connected and tech-savvy youth, Southeast Asia presented a lucrative market for technology companies. TikTok’s head of marketing, Viv Gong, said, “As Indonesia has the sixth largest population of Internet users in the world, we see a huge market opportunity for our app.”[[43]](#endnote-43)

Despite attractive market prospects, there were no dominant short-video sharing apps in most Southeast Asian countries in 2017. Kwai entered Southeast Asian countries in later 2016, and, according to data on Google Play, although Kwai was in the top-100 list in Vietnam, its ranking was below 400 in other major markets in Southeast Asia.[[44]](#endnote-44)

Localizing Campaigns and Promotions

ByteDance expanded into Southeast Asian markets by establishing a local office in Indonesia in August 2017. In order to inspire the first generation of creators and celebrate the expansion, TikTok held an offline launch party in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, on September 13, 2[017.](#_bookmark5) Over 100 local stars and Internet celebrities attended the party, including Indonesian actress Salshabilla Adriani and Thai actress and singer Suppanad Jittaleela, who had more than 1.08 million and 1.29 million followers on Twitter, respectively. In Thailand, TikTok invited famous young actor and singer Leeratanakajorn Thanapob and rising actress and model Ungsumalynn Sirapatsakmetha to record videos for the promotion.[[45]](#endnote-45)

The “Internet celebrity economy” through YouTube and Instagram had been well developed in Southeast Asian countries, and some Internet celebrities had accumulated millions of followers.[[46]](#endnote-46) ByteDance’s operations team in Southeast Asia also took advantage of the powerful appeal of local Internet celebrities. “We are looking for and attracting some good content creators from social-media platforms like Instagram,” said a manager of TikTok.[[47]](#endnote-47) A number of Internet celebrities created videos and shared them to other social-media platforms like YouTube. In order to bond with content creators, TikTok periodically organized offline gatherings. “These gatherings offer a platform for the content creators to share their experiences. More importantly, they evoke a sense of belonging and loyalty among content creators,” said an influential content creator on TikTok.[[48]](#endnote-48)

To cater to local customs, the operations team added new stickers and promoted related campaigns based on each specific market. During Thailand’s traditional Water Festival, TikTok rolled out three festival-specific stickers to increase its visibility and garnered more than 40,000 users in three weeks[.[[49]](#endnote-49)](#_bookmark6) During the 2018 ASEAN Football Federation Championship in Vietnam, TikTok received more than 120,000 videos about the event and attracted 54.8 million views.[[50]](#endnote-50) As most Southeast Asians were fond of and good at dancing and singing, TikTok sponsored a variety of hashtags around dancing and singing to encourage user participation. The #tiktokramerame challenge in Indonesia attracted more than 53 million views.[[51]](#endnote-51)

According to Google Trend, TikTok had achieved a high rank among Southeast Asian countries in 2018, especially in the Video Player category, as TikTok was almost the number one app—except in the Philippines, where it was number three—in March 2018.[[52]](#endnote-52) In Thailand, TikTok garnered over 10 million downloads, almost one-sixth of the total population.[[53]](#endnote-53)

TikTok in Japan

For a long time, the short-video sharing market in Japan was largely carved up by Internet giants such as Facebook, Snapchat, and YouTube. Expanding to Japan meant TikTok had to compete directly with these giants. On the other hand, this represented an opportunity for TikTok, as the big companies were not concentrating on the short-video sharing market.

As a content-focused product, going global was never easy for TikTok, especially in the Japanese market, which had a distinct culture and an often biased view of Chinese companies.[[54]](#endnote-54) The Japanese market had always been harsh to beginners. As the director of TikTok Japan said, “Most of the time, they would not give you the opportunity for communication with the excuse of busy schedules, or there have been cases where the conversation went well but was ultimately dismissed by top managers.”[[55]](#endnote-55)

Breaking the Ice

In August 2017, TikTok rented two rooms and set up the founding team in Shibuya, a district of Tokyo, to start its expansion into Japan. The founding team of TikTok Japan consisted of seven members who were familiar with Japanese culture. The director of this team had fully blended into the Japanese society, studying and working in Japan for 17 years. The other team members were either Japanese or people who had studied in Japan.[[56]](#endnote-56)

In order to break into the Japanese market, TikTok went after the most popular Internet influencers and stars to build up its initial content pool. In the first six months, everyone on its operations team was tasked with engaging celebrities.[[57]](#endnote-57) The TikTok Japan team put in great effort and time to collaborate with its first star, Kinoshita Yukina, who installed TikTok out of her own interest. The operation team grasped this opportunity to break the ice. The director of TikTok Japan said, “It took around six or seven rounds of discussions to finally seal the deal. The star studios in Japan are particularly prudent, so we needed to talk to them time and again to familiarize them with our product and show our sincerity for cooperation[.”[[58]](#endnote-58)](#_bookmark6)

After the initial success in signing Kinoshita Yukina, the road to convince other star studios in Japan became increasingly less bumpy for TikTok, which soon got several popular stars and Internet influencers on board in Japan, including Kyary Pamyu, E-girls, and Fichers. By March 2018, videos with the TikTok watermark started becoming popular on Japan’s social networks.[[59]](#endnote-59)

Localizing Campaigns and Promotions

In addition to attracting local celebrities, TikTok customized various features and content in Japan. “Japan has a strong campus culture. Therefore, we designed contests that allowed students to participate in groups, like cheerleaders,” the director sa[id.[[60]](#endnote-60)](#_bookmark6) To cater to Japan’s “respect for similarity,” TikTok launched various hashtag campaigns that allowed users to play in groups. On TikTok Japan, some dance movements were also simplified to help overcome the shyness of Japanese users. During the period between February 14 and March 9, 2018, TikTok promoted the “TikToker Battle” campaign, including fashion, dance, amuse, talent, and technology hashtags. The most popular videos were shown on four large advertising screens at Shibuya’s busiest intersection. This campaign attracted more than 68,000 videos and received 300 million views. In terms of the TV channel promotions, and considering the undesirability of product placement in Japan, the operations team offered TV producers interesting and report-worthy stories on TikTok that would appeal to Japanese TV producers, which helped TikTok co-operate with the TV channels.[[61]](#endnote-61)

According to AppBi, a leading data analytics consulting agency in China, TikTok stood out as number seven in the top-10 list, with more than 2.5 million downloads in the first quarter of 2018.[[62]](#endnote-62) The Japanese TV network Nippon TV was also attracted by TikTok’s popularity and taped 15 minutes of street polling to feature TikTok in its morning show, “Sukkiri!”[[63]](#endnote-63)

TikTok in North America

The Competitor: Musical.ly

Before TikTok began its entry into North America, Musical.ly had become the most popular short-video sharing app. Early in May 2016, Musicaly.ly ranked number one on Apple’s App Store in 19 different countries,[[64]](#endnote-64) amassing 70 million registered users and hitting the mark of 10 million DAUs in the United States.[[65]](#endnote-65)

Debuted in April 2014 and officially launched in August 2014 by Chinese entrepreneurs Alex Zhu and Luyu Yang in Shanghai, China, Musical.ly let its users create 15- to 60-second lip-syncing videos set to various music.[[66]](#endnote-66) At the beginning, Musical.ly was launched in both the Chinese and US markets. However, compared to the Chinese market’s tepid reaction, Musical.ly had been particularly popular in the American teenager market. Due to its small team size, Musical.ly decided to concentrate on the US market. In Zhu’s mind, Musical.ly was built to be the next social network for sharing videos and was not just a lip-syncing video app. “Today the very proposition of the app is not about creating music videos. It’s not about lip-syncing. It’s about a social network,” Zhu said. “It's a community. People want to stay because there are other people.”[[67]](#endnote-67)

Musical.ly allowed users to make a duet only when they were BFFs, or “Best Fans Forever”, rather than simply followers. Since its launch, Musical.ly spawned a number of its own digital stars and a passionate creator community of “Musers” (Musical.ly users). Having become a sensation among teenagers in North America and Europe, Musical.ly tried to broaden its reach by entering into Asian markets, with the name “Muse,” on June 6, 2017.[[68]](#endnote-68) However, Musical.ly did not succeed in the market due to intense competition and its impenetrable product style.[[69]](#endnote-69)

The Merger with Musical.ly

ByteDance acquired Musical.ly as a way to tap into the US market—with Musical.ly already boasting a considerable American audience. Reportedly, the acquisition closed in November 2017 at $1 billion. Upon closing the acquisition, ByteDance allowed Musical.ly to operate as an independent platform.[[70]](#endnote-70)

CHALLENGES

Leveraging the strategy of localizing content in each specific market, TikTok had globally achieved some exciting numbers in users and rankings. However, the local focus also brought a challenge, as it was therefore difficult for TikTok to take advantage of its user base for global expansion. In the meantime, TikTok had always been surrounded by skeptics and competitors during its expansion. Faced with these challenges, could TikTok sustain its position and competitive advantages? How could TikTok make profits after spending a billion dollars in the global markets?

The major challenges that TikTok faced in sustaining its position in global markets were as follows.

Intense Competition

The popularity and success of TikTok had aroused attention and concern from many other tech companies, pushing them to release copycats or create similar features targeted at teens. In November 2018, Facebook quietly launched a new short-video sharing app called Lasso that had very similar features to TikTok. According to a report by *TechCrunch*, Snapchat had recently rolled out a new feature called “Lens Challenge” to increase user engagement by letting users post short-form videos themed to a particular song, dance, event, and more.[[71]](#endnote-71)

In China, TikTok’s main competitor, Kuaishou, had been boosted by Chinese tech giants Tencent, Alibaba Group Holding, and Baidu Inc. to join the overseas market, particularly in Southeast Asia. Tencent also invested almost $478 million to promote its own short-video sharing app, Weishi, thereby locking horns with TikTok.[[72]](#endnote-72) Academics Michael Wade and Jialu Shan said in *The Conversation* that “ByteDance cannot rest on its laurels; however, if it wants TikTok to build on its position as the first globally successful ‘made in China’ app, TikTok will need to massively expand from its base, while staving off attacks from well-funded and ambitious Chinese and global competitors.”[[73]](#endnote-73)

Quality and Content of Videos

Although TikTok racked up millions of users, many increasingly complained about the videos as “cringe” and “creepy.” According to *The Atlantic*, “It’s [TikTok’s] so painful and embarrassing that a viewer can’t help but laugh.”[[74]](#endnote-74) One example was a video of a woman standing in front of a bathroom mirror doing thumb movements to a Yo Gotti and Nicki Minaj song, and the video pans up to show that she was filming by holding the phone in her mouth.[[75]](#endnote-75)

Since the merger with Musical.ly, which was mostly popular among youth, there was an increasing notion that parents were worried about content on TikTok, such as the video that depicted a teen dancing—and then cut to the dead body of the teen’s relative.[[76]](#endnote-76) The perceived addiction also annoyed users—“The only time she [her 10-year-old cousin] interacted with us was when she asked us to be in her TikTok video,” Maulydia Yusliwan, from Indonesia, complained.[[77]](#endnote-77)

Government Regulation

TikTok had already sparked concern from local governments. On July 3, 2018, the Indonesia Communications and Information Ministry temporarily blocked TikTok after learning that it contained “pornography, inappropriate content, and blasphemy.”[[78]](#endnote-78) This ban was overturned a few days later after TikTok agreed to clear the “negative content,” increase security mechanisms, and enforce restrictions on users between the ages of 14 and 18. It also agreed to open an office in Indonesia to liaise with the government over content.

Monetization

In China, Douyin started exploring opportunities for monetization in early 2017 when it ran three advertising campaigns for Airbnb, Harbin Beer, and Chevrolet.[[79]](#endnote-79) Those three advertisements proved successful and showed Douyin’s potential for monetization. Taking advantage of hashtags in Douyin, brands could post their own hashtag campaigns to create engagement, such as Michael Kors’ “City Catwalk” campaign. Douyin also co-operated with Chinese e-commerce platforms, such as Tmall, TaoBao, and JD.com, to enable users to sell products in their videos and via links on their profiles.[[80]](#endnote-80)

In overseas markets, TikTok was still in the “burn money” stage for market growth and penetration and had yet to start generating revenues. As explained by a director of TikTok’s international markets, “There have been brands that have approached us regarding advertising but we do not intend to monetize our service at the present time and are waiting for the market to mature.”[[81]](#endnote-81) ByteDance was always generous with spending when it promoted TikTok globally. However, despite heavy promotion and a massive user base, TikTok only had a 29 per cent engagement rate, whereas Facebook’s engagement rate was 96 per cent, Instagram’s was 95 per cent, Snapchat’s was 95 per cent, and YouTube’s was 95 per cent.[[82]](#endnote-82) Facing a low engagement rate and differences across markets, TikTok’s monetization in global markets still had a long way to go.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Given the distinct user bases of TikTok and Musical.ly, both in content type and geographic regions, maintaining two different platforms to target distinct user groups appeared to be a good idea. However, combining both platforms might deteriorate the unique positioning of each platform and also risk a drop in the number of users due to possible annoyance. How much growth could the niche market of Musical.ly offer? If TikTok and Musical.ly did not benefit from each other’s unique networks, then quite possibly no synergies would arise from the high-ticket acquisition. Could the combined user bases of Musical.ly and TikTok help the growth of a combined platform via global network effects? Could they also provide stronger defences against more diversified competitors with larger user bases? The acquisition decision would determine the future of ByteDance in the global market.

This teaching case is partly funded by grants from the CIBER University of South Carolina

Exhibit 1: Detailed updates for Douyin between version 1.0.0 and version 1.4.0

Version 1.0.0

Sep 26, 2016

Version 1.0.1

Sep 29, 2016

Version 1.1.0

Nov 01, 2016

1. Perfectly fit with iOS 10

2. Support a key back to the top and refresh

3. Not happy with the releasing video? Support to return and delete

1. Support to look up address book for friends, and invite friends through QQ, Weibo

2. Greatly improve the video clarity

Version 1.2.0

Nov 24, 2016

Version 1.2.1

Dec 01, 2016

Version 1.2.3

Dec 22, 2016

Version 1.2.2

Dec 10, 2016

Version 1.3.0

Jan 17, 2017

1. Revise the “Discover” page with the hottest challenges and music

2. Add the music recommendation

3. Add new special effects and various filters

4. Improve the sound and picture quality

5. Support to share videos to MeiPai

Fix the flashback bug flashback

Change the name to “Douyin”

1. Update the filming process to press the screen for filming and release the screen for pausing

2. Hide the video releasing process

3. Optimize performance and fix bugs

1. Add colour tags for hot videos

2. Optimize video scrolling and uploading

3. Optimize filming and adjust deleting button

1. Add the @friend function for posting videos and commenting on videos

2. Support to save your videos locally

3. Support to switch between large screen and list mode for the home page

4. Optimize performance and fix bugs

Version 1.3.7

Apr 18, 2017

Version 1.4.0

Apr 28, 2017

Version 1.3.4

Mar 22, 2017

Version 1.3.5

Apr 07, 2017

Add the new function of identifying unique ID accounts

1. Update new cool special effects

2. Add 3D watermark for saved videos

3. Improve the reporting mechanism

4. Optimize performance and fix bugs

Fix bugs

1. Support music collection

2. Swipe left and right on the filming screen to select filters

3. Use the same music in the saved video for next videos

4. Add new face stickers

Fix bugs

Version 1.3.1

Jan 25, 2017

1. Add new icon for New Year!

2. Try to swipe left to easily access Ta’s home page

Version 1.3.3

Mar 17, 2017

Version 1.3.2

Mar 01, 2017

1. Add new cool sticker props

2. Support rear camera flash

3. Update the message page

4. Support one-click sharing of music and challenges

1. Support to continue filming for saved videos

2. Optimize the personal page: showing your constellation and city information

3. Add more filters

4. Ability to add video nicknames

Source: Created by the case authors from “Douyin—What’s New” [in Chinese], AppAnnie (account required), accessed July 4, 2019, www.appannie.com/apps/ios/app/ame-yin-le-duan-shi-pin-she-qu/details/.

ENDNOTES

1. This case has been written on the basis of published sources only. Consequently, the interpretation and perspectives presented in this case are not necessary those of Beijing ByteDance Technology Co. or any of its employees. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “ByteDance and musical.ly Announce Agreement to Merge,” November 9, 2017, accessed July 3, 2019, www.bytedance.com/en/news/3. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Daniel Sanchez, “Uh-Oh: Musical.ly’s Numbers Are Crashing — Just Like Vine, Dubsmash & Snapchat Before It,” Digital Music News, November 10, 2017, accessed April 16, 2019, www.digitalmusicnews.com/2017/11/10/musical-ly-userbase-crash/. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. “Dance With Rain Drop Challenge | Rain Drop Effect | Tik Tok Musically Compilation,” YouTube Video, 1:15, August 13, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhmUZxg9W7Y. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. “About ByteDance,” ByteDance, accessed July 3, 2019, www.bytedance.com/en/about#overview. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
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