



AS IT IS

China Plans New Limits on Children's Smartphone Use

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China has released an early form of new rules that aim to reduce the amount of time children spend on their **smartphones**.

The move affects companies such as Tencent and ByteDance, which run social media **platforms** and online games.

The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) published an early version of the rules on its website recently. The rules say that young people would not be permitted to use most internet services on mobile devices from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The rules also say that children between the ages of 16 and 18 would only be able to use the internet for two hours a day.

Children between the ages of 8 and 15 would be permitted only an hour a day while those under 8 could spend only 40 minutes.

Some services, such as **apps** or websites that are good for the physical and mental development of young people, will not be subject to the rules.

The proposed restrictions are Beijing's latest efforts to attempt to limit internet **addiction**, a problem it views as widespread among its youth.

In 2019, the Chinese government limited children's daily online game time to 90 minutes a day. Officials then tightened those restrictions in 2021. Children could only spend an hour a day playing online games on Fridays, weekends and public holidays.

Short-video and online video websites like Douyin, Bilibili and Kuaishou have offered youth **modes** that restrict the type of content shown to young people and the length of time they can use the service. Officials are also pushing for children to see more educational material, such as science experiments.

The latest restrictions would affect Tencent, China's largest online game company, and ByteDance, which runs popular short-video platform Douyin. The government pressures companies in China to enforce rules.

"To...strengthen the online protection of minors, the CAC has in recent years pushed for the establishment of a youth mode on internet platforms," the CAC said.

"Since the mode was launched, there has been a positive **impact** in reducing youth internet and the impact of **undesirable** information," it added.

The CAC said the rules can be commented on by the public until September 2. It did not say when the new rules would take effect.

I'm John Russell.

John Russell adapted this story based on an Associated Press report.

Words in This Story

smartphone - *n.* a mobile telephone that can be used to connect to the Internet

platform - *n.* one or a group of computer programs that are linked and that provide a service or usefulness to the user

app - *n.* a computer program that performs a special function

addiction - *n.* a strong and harmful need to do something

mode - *n.* a particular form or type of something

impact - *n.* a powerful or major influence or effect

undesirable – *adj.* bad, harmful, or unpleasant
