



## Basis Points – August 11, 2020

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### Above the Fold

#### *What's Up With All the TikTok Hype?*

TikTok, owned by Chinese company ByteDance Ltd., is the latest video-sharing app craze that's still gaining in popularity among a mostly tween, teen and Gen Z user base. While statistics are still a bit sketchy, the app reportedly boasts more than 800 million active users worldwide and has been downloaded over 2 billion times on the App Store and Google Play. Its meteoric rise from obscurity, and still relatively reasonable advertising rates, make it an interesting value proposition for marketers vying for this lucrative (yet skittish) segment of the population.

Companies like Microsoft, who is trying to purchase the U.S. operations of TikTok, and even the Trump administration, who is considering its ban, both realize the multi-faceted value of this latest digital obsession. Twitter Inc. has even pursued a deal with the company, whose value is now estimated to be somewhere in the tens of billions.

Perhaps what's most ironic is that TikTok does the same basic thing that so many other competitors do, but in a slightly different way. And given the extremely short [attention span](#) of young people in the digital age, and their need for the latest and greatest platform that their parents don't yet use (think Facebook and Snapchat), TikTok is delivering (for now) ... along with a little international intrigue.

## Three Things

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1. *Methane Gets Deregulated* – The Environmental Protection Agency, under direction from the Trump administration, and after reportedly tenuous negotiations, will rescind 2016 regulations that increased agency control over methane emissions from drill-site, pipeline and storage systems. The changes will also reduce certain industry reporting requirements and lessen the frequency of inspection for leaks of several pollutants.
2. *Could Your Local Mall Morph Into an Amazon Warehouse?* – According to the Wall Street Journal, Simon Property Group, the largest mall operator in America, is in talks with Amazon.com Inc. to potentially convert some or all of the nearly 75 Sears and JCPenney locations into distribution hubs. If any deal is approved, some existing tenants may be less-than-welcoming neighbors as Amazon is seen by many as one of a few key competitors disrupting traditional retail sales channels and straining mall traffic nationwide.
3. *Former Laptop Titan Quietly Exits the Fray* – After creating the first mass-market laptop personal computer (PC) — the T1100 — back in 1985, Toshiba sold its remaining PC business to Sharp in a deal that closed Aug. 4. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Toshiba was a top PC manufacturer, peaking at 17.7 million units a year, before losing popularity to rising competition and operating systems. Sharp now produces mid-grade, Windows-based laptops under the Dynabook label.

## Did You Know?

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### *The World's Most Expensive Private Home*

When you think of high-priced real estate, New York, London and California all come to mind — but the most expensive private home, aside from Buckingham Palace, is located in Mumbai, India. The modern structure, called Antilla, is owned by billionaire Mukesh Ambani and features 27 stories, three helipads, storage for 168 cars and living space for a staff of 600 needed to keep the home going on a day-to-day basis. It was valued at \$2.2 billion in May 2020.

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