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The Untapped Market: TikTok's Explosive Growth Beyond Traditional Demographics

Image Credit: Oliver Bergeron

CivicScience contact@civicscience.com · Published: August 14, 2025

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While TikTok's reputation as a Gen Z hangout persists in popular culture, the platform's most dramatic growth story is unfolding in an unexpected demographic: **older adults**. New data reveals that TikTok usage among Americans aged 45 and older has exploded by **1,200%** since 2019, fundamentally reshaping assumptions about who calls the short-form video platform home.

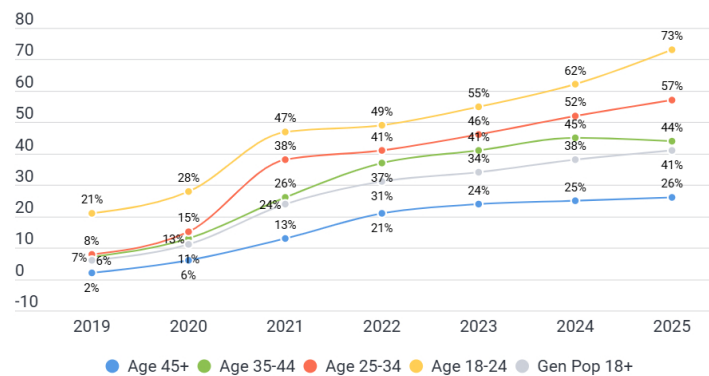
The Numbers Tell a Striking Story

Among users 45 and older, TikTok adoption has surged from just **2% in 2019** to **26% by 2025**—a thirteen-fold increase that far outpaces growth in younger demographics. This represents one of the most significant shifts in social media adoption patterns in recent years.

Breaking it down by age group:

- **Ages 35–44:** adoption climbed from **7% to 44%** (+529%).
- **Ages 25–34:** rose from **8% to 57%** (+613%).

TikTok Users by Age – Yearly Percentage



600,000+ responses from 01/01/2019 to 08/13/2025
Weighted by U.S. adults 18+
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These mature millennials and younger Gen X users drive adoption rates, making TikTok's expansion story far more complex than the simple "Gen Z app" narrative suggests.

Marketing's New Reality: The Influencer Economy Matures

For brands and marketers, these demographic shifts represent a seismic opportunity. Social media's purchasing influence extends far beyond Gen Z assumptions: **59% of US adults now follow influencers on social media**, up from **44%** in early 2024. Among those older than 45, that number is **38%**, which has grown from 32% last year.

The real story lies in buying behavior:

- **32% of U.S. adults over 45** say social media influences their purchases at least a little.
- Electronics lead the way, with **29% influence among older adults**.
- Steady gains are also seen in food and clothing.

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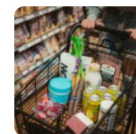
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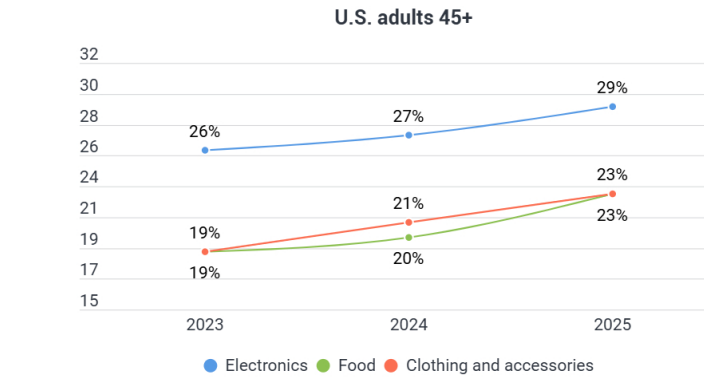
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How does social media influence the _____ you buy? – Yearly Percentage who are influenced at least 'a little'



400,000+ responses from 01/01/2023 to 08/13/2025
Weighted by U.S. adults 45+
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Older demographics typically have more disposable income and make higher-value purchases—from home goods and travel to healthcare and financial services—making them especially valuable to brands.

The Broader Implications

This demographic transformation goes beyond marketing. The convergence of TikTok's older user growth with rising influencer engagement across all age groups signals a fundamental shift in consumer behavior. When **59% of Americans follow influencers**—nearly double last year's rate—and older adults increasingly act on social media recommendations, traditional advertising models face disruption.

TikTok's expansion into older age groups also reshapes political discourse, news consumption, and cultural conversations. Older adults are not just passive consumers—they create content, share perspectives shaped by decades of life experience, and make purchase decisions influenced by what they see on social platforms.

What Do You Think? [How often do you follow trends on TikTok?](#)

Looking Ahead

The **1,200% growth** among users 45 and older is more than a statistical curiosity—it's a fundamental shift in how we understand social media adoption and influence. The platform, once seen as a Gen Z enclave, has become a genuinely multi-generational space.

This evolution suggests that the future of social media may be less about age-specific platforms and more about creating compelling experiences that unite users across generational divides. TikTok's success with older adults proves that when platforms prioritize engaging content and intuitive experiences, age becomes far less of a barrier than conventional wisdom suggests.

The mature digital wave isn't just changing TikTok—it's entirely rewriting the rules of digital engagement.

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START ANSWERING QUESTIONS



How often do you follow trends on TikTok?

- ☐ All the time
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other / No opinion

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