

RED NOTE

BLUF: Xiaohongshu (RedNote) is a Chinese social media and e-commerce platform that collects extensive user data, including location, device details, browsing history, personal identifiers, and more. Data is collected during account creation, content interaction, and even live streaming. RedNote can also share this information with third parties and business partners under certain conditions, including compliance with legal obligations. All data is stored in China, and while users can delete their accounts, data may be retained per legal requirements.



ABOUT

Name: Red Note / Chinese Name: Xiaohongshu (English Translation – ‘Little Red Book’)

Company Founded: June 2013

Company Founder: [President] Qu Fang (Miranda Qu) & [Chief Executive Officer (CEO)] Mao Wenchao (Charlwin Mao)

Active Users: 200 Million Monthly (01/2025)

Current Valuation: \$17 Billion (USD) (01/2025)



Qu Fang (Miranda Qu) Background:

Qu Fang (Miranda Qu) was born in approximately 1985 in Hubei Province, China. Qu Fang (Miranda Qu) is a graduate of the Wuhan School of Foreign Chinese and received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Beijing Foreign Studies University in 2007. After graduation, Qu Fang (Miranda Qu) joined Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA, a media, services and education company, with brands such as BMG and Penguin Random House, operating in about 50 countries around the world.



Mao Wenchao (Charlwin Mao) Background:

Mao Wenchao (Charlwin Mao), born in 1985 in Hubei Province, China, was known as "Mr. Perfect" during his time at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, where he studied Mechatronics from 2003 to 2007. After graduating, he began his career at Bain & Company, an American consulting firm. An avid traveler, Mao later pursued an MBA at Stanford University, graduating in 2011. Along with Qu Fang (Miranda Qu), he co-founded RedNote / Xiaohongshu, a platform designed to connect Chinese users with global e-commerce markets, acting as a guide for overseas shopping and social media.

Creation / Early Days of Red Note / Xiaohongshu:

Qu Fang (Miranda Qu) and Mao Wenchao (Charlwin Mao) bonded over their shared hometown, which led to the platform's creation in 2013. Early forms of the app were a series of shopping guides in PDF format, which aided Chinese consumers in the purchase of goods from overseas vendors. This early format is where Red Note / Xiaohongshu (English Translation – ‘Little Red Book’) gets its name, referring to a bundle of PDFs rather than a reference to a book of quotations by Chairman Mao Tse-Tung.

DATA COLLECTED

Data Collection at Download Stage

- Per “RedNote’s” privacy policy, data collection starts at the downloading stages of the application.
- Prior to the opening of the RedNote application, the user has already provided access to their GPS location data, IP addresses and device identifiers (search and browsing histories, and messages/in-app interactions).

Data Collection During Account Creation

- At a minimum, RedNote collects the user’s mobile phone number and network operator information.
- RedNote may collect the user’s gender, age, region, school, birthday, occupation, and interests, depending on what the user provides during sign-up or later in settings.
- If the user logs in through a third-party service, RedNote collects their phone number and other information from that service.
- For users applying for authenticated status, RedNote collects identity information (real name, ID number/photo(s), and facial recognition data).

User Interaction Data

- When the user utilizes the post, comment, like, collect, or share functions, the text, photo, video, audio, comment, like, collect, or share records the user posts will be stored in RedNote’s servers.
- Storage, Camera, and Microphone Access: The user grants RedNote permission to access their device’s storage, camera, and microphone.
- When livestreaming, the user’s geographic location will be displayed publicly, this can be turned off in settings; however, the data itself is still collected by RedNote. RedNote collects identity information during live streaming (real name, ID number, photos, and facial recognition).
- Limited Memories Function: RedNote analyzes and filters images and videos in the user’s device album based on metadata (time, scene, location).
- The user’s address book is uploaded to RedNote servers for friend and content recommendations.
- RedNote tracks the user’s clicks, searches, likes, shares, comments, and other activities within the app.

DATA COLLECTED CONT.

Device Information Collection

- Device Info: RedNote collects detailed information about the user's device, including:
 - Device model, serial numbers, unique identifiers (IMEI, IMSI, Android ID, etc.)
 - Operating system, app versions, and installed apps
 - Network and hardware information (e.g., IP address, Bluetooth address, WLAN info, etc.)
 - Sensor data (e.g., accelerometer, gyroscope)
- This data is uploaded to RedNote's servers.

Virtual Assets and Transactions

- Virtual Assets Tracking: RedNote records charge, balance, and usage information related to the user's virtual assets.
- Product/Service Orders: When the user places an order, RedNote collects transaction details, including:
 - Product/service info, order number, amount, payment method, and recipient's contact details.
- Special Products/Services: For cross-border transactions, additional personal information like real name, ID number, and ID photos may be required for customs clearance.

OTHER SECURITY CONCERNS

- Per RedNotes user agreement, any data that RedNote may collect, is also allowed to be shared with any third-parties or business partners they may have.
- RedNote also states in their privacy policy "Exceptions to authorized consent for Sharing, Transfer and Public Disclosure of Personal Information" which may be interpreted as RedNote identifying their ability to share any and all information if it meets the following criteria:

"It is necessary for the performance of statutory duties or obligations;

It is necessary to respond to public health emergencies, or to protect the life, health and property safety of natural persons in emergency situations;

It is for the purpose of carrying out news reporting, supervision by public opinion or other acts for public interest, and the processing of personal information is within a reasonable scope;

Processing personal information that is publicly disclosed by individuals or others legally to a reasonable extent in accordance with the provisions of the Personal Information Protection Law;

Other circumstances provided by laws and regulations."

RedNote claims data must be retained as explicitly required by Chinese law.

- All data collected by RedNote is stored within their servers inside the People's Republic of China (PRC)
- If the user decides to delete/cancel their account, their personal information will be removed from the RedNote Platform, except for the personal information that RedNote claims must be retained as explicitly required by Chinese law.

ENDING NOTES

The platform's aggressive data collection and its ties to China make it a significant privacy risk for Americans, especially considering the ongoing tensions between the U.S. and China over data security and espionage concerns. The extensive personal and sensitive information it gathers could be exploited or accessed by external entities, putting users' privacy and security at risk.

[Profile - Forbes: Qu Miranda](#)

[TikTok Ban | Xiaohongshu: Who's its CEO and how was it founded? | Innovation Pioneer | People | Our China Story](#)

[Chinese Wikipedia - Mao Wenchao \(Charlwin Mao\)](#)

[Chinese Wikipedia - Qu Fang \(Miranda Qu\)](#)

['When in doubt, turn to Xiaohongshu': A social media platform and its young, female, Chinese user base transforms travel and shopping](#)

[Bertelsmann at a Glance - Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA](#)

[RedNote User Privacy Policy](#)