

# Google faces China lawsuit over book scanning

December 29 2009, By JOE McDONALD , AP Business Writer

---

(AP) -- A Chinese novelist is suing Google Inc. for scanning her work into its online library.

Mian Mian, a counterculture writer known for her lurid tales of sex, drugs and nightlife, filed suit in October after the U.S. search giant scanned her latest book, "Acid House."

After a two-hour hearing Tuesday, a Beijing judge told the two sides to hold talks on a settlement and report back, said her lawyer, Sun Jingwei. He said Mian Mian, who was not at the hearing, wants damages of 61,000 yuan (\$8,950) and a public apology.

A Google spokeswoman in Beijing, Marsha Wang, said the company removed Mian Mian's works from its library as soon as it learned of the lawsuit. Wang said Google had no further comment on the suit or Tuesday's hearing.

"We think even if they remove Mian Mian's work, their previous behavior is a violation of her rights," Sun said. "We demand a public apology."

Sun said a negotiated settlement was a possibility and the court set no deadline.

Google's ambitious effort to make printed works available online has faced opposition from writers in the United States, Europe and

elsewhere. Google has scanned more than 10 million books, many of them still under [copyright](#).

In China, a government-affiliated group, the China Written Works Copyright Society, is calling on Google to negotiate compensation for Chinese authors whose work is scanned into its library.

The Google spokeswoman, Wang, said Mian Mian's lawsuit was the first that she knew of in China over the scanning plan.

Mian Mian, who lives in Shanghai, shot to fame in 2000 when she published the novel "Candy," which caused a stir with its graphic depiction of heroin use. Most of her work is banned in China, though pirated copies are widely available.

Sun said Mian Mian has no connection to the Chinese writers' group.

Google, based in Mountain View, California, negotiated a \$125 million settlement last year with American authors and publishers. It is waiting for court approval after objections by U.S. regulators and other companies that said it might hurt the growth of the electronic book market.

The Chinese writers' group said Monday it has found more than 80,000 works by Chinese authors scanned into the library.

Commenting on Mian Mian's lawsuit, the group called on Chinese writers to band together to negotiate terms with Google instead of suing. It said it is due to hold settlement talks with the company in January.

"A lawsuit is not the best way to solve this problem," the group said in a statement.

In Europe, Google is trying to avoid potential copyright infringement by scanning only books over 150 years old.

The European Commission said in October it might change copyright law to make it easier for companies such as [Google](#) to scan books and distribute copies over the Internet.

On the Net:

China Written Works Copyright Society:

<http://www.prccopyright.org.cn>

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Google faces China lawsuit over book scanning (2009, December 29) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-12-google-china-lawsuit-scanning.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--