

Imitation Google, YouTube sites emerge in China

January 28 2010, By CARA ANNA , Associated Press Writer



In this photo taken on Monday, Jan. 25, 2010, workers clean and repair broken part of a marble tablet bearing Google's logo in front of Google China's headquarters building in Beijing. Google's Android operating system should face no limits on its use by China's phone companies so long as it complies with Chinese regulations, the government said Wednesday. (AP Photo/Alexander F. Yuan)

(AP) -- Imitation Web sites of both Google and YouTube have emerged in China as the country faces off against the real Google over its local operations.

YouTube.cn offers videos from the real YouTube, which is blocked in [China](#). The Google imitation is called Goojje and includes a plea for the U.S.-based Web giant not to leave China, after it threatened this month to do so in a dispute over Web censorship and cyberattacks.

The separate projects went up within a day of each other in mid-January, just after Google's threat to leave.

"This should be an issue with Google's intellectual property, also with China censorship," said Xiao Qiang, director of the Berkeley China Internet Project at the University of California-Berkeley. "I cannot see how these sites can survive very long without facing these two issues."

Both sites were still working Thursday. It wasn't clear what Chinese authorities would do with them, if anything.

China's National Copyright Administration has been cracking down on illegally run Web sites and this month issued a code of ethics, but no statement was posted on its Web site Thursday about the Google and YouTube imitations.

Google had little comment. "The only comment I can give you right now is just to confirm that we're not affiliated," spokeswoman Jessica Powell said in an e-mail.

China is famous for its fake products, but this is the first time such prominent sites have been copied in this way, Xiao said.

The creators of the two sites could not be reached Thursday.

"I did this as a public service," the founder of the YouTube knockoff, Li Senhe, told The Christian Science Monitor in an instant message conversation. Videos on social unrest in China can be found on the site, which is in English.

The real YouTube was blocked in China in 2008 after videos related to Tibetan unrest were posted there.

Some Chinese quickly welcomed the knockoff YouTube site. "I don't know if it will last long," wrote blogger Jia Zhengjing, who has written posts against censorship.

The other site, Goojje, is a working [search engine](#) that looks like a combination of Google and its top China competitor, Baidu.

"Exactly speaking, Goojje is not a search engine but a platform for finding friends," one of the founders, Xiao Xuan, told the Henan Business Daily on Wednesday.

Xiao said the site didn't have the level of sensitive material of the copycat [YouTube](#) site and that it probably was based on the Google China site instead of the version used in the United States.

"It's quite clean by Chinese censorship standards," he said.

He guessed that based on the amount of time and work needed to build such a site on top of Google's data, Goojje had already been ready before the Google-China showdown started - and that the founder or founders chose the name "Goojje" to get attention.

The names are a play on words. The second syllable of "Google" sounds like "older brother," and the second syllable of "Goojje" sounds like "older sister" in Mandarin.

Copycat companies are nothing new in China. "Baidu included," Xiao said of China's most popular search engine. "The whole idea is following [Google](#)."

Xiao said if another copycat site like these emerges, it probably would be of Facebook - which is also blocked in China.

More information: <http://www.gooje.com/>

<http://youtubecn.com/>

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