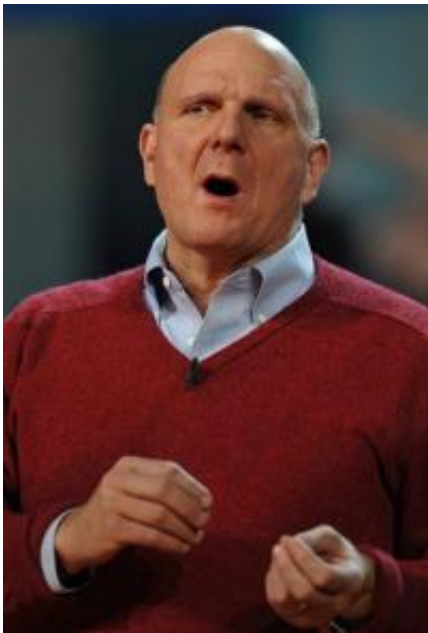


# Microsoft, HP fail to back Google's China move: FT

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Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, seen here on January 7, and his Hewlett-Packard counterpart, have declined to back Google's threat to pull out of China over censorship and cyberattacks, the Financial Times reported on Thursday.

The chief executives of Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard have declined to back Google's threat to pull out of China over censorship and cyberattacks, the Financial Times reported on Thursday.

Microsoft chief executive [Steve Ballmer](#) described Google's row with [China](#) as "the [Google](#) problem," the FT said, while Mark Hurd, CEO of

[computer maker](#) HP, called China "an amazing market with tremendous growth."

"Every large institution is being hacked," the newspaper quoted Ballmer as saying. "I don't think it's a fundamental change in the security environment on the Internet."

The FT said Ballmer declined to indicate whether Microsoft would stop censoring results on its Bing search engine in China.

Google announced on Tuesday that it would no longer filter search results in China and said it may be forced to pull out of the world's largest online market of 360 million users.

Google said the move was a protest against censorship and what it called "highly sophisticated" cyberattacks which were aimed at Chinese human rights activists and believed to have originated in China.

The FT quoted Ballmer as saying China represents a big business opportunity for Microsoft as it tries to persuade more people who use pirated copies of its software to pay for it.

The newspaper said both Ballmer and Hurd played down any wider threat to Internet security from the attacks which Google said were aimed at more than 20 other companies. Some reports have put the number of targeted firms at over 30.

"I'd hate to run off on this one example and say it's a threat to the evolution of the IT industry," Hurd told the FT.

Microsoft and HP on Wednesday announced they were forging a strategic partnership and investing 250 million dollars over the next three years to develop Internet-based cloud computing systems.

China employs a vast system of Web censorship that blocks content such as political dissent, pornography and other information viewed as objectionable.

Google, Cisco, Microsoft and Yahoo! have come under attack in recent years from rights groups, members of the US Congress and others, accused of abetting what has been dubbed the "Great Firewall of China."

Top US lawmakers have praised Google for its move this week and the Internet giant has also earned the backing of rival Yahoo!.

"We stand aligned with Google that these kinds of attacks are deeply disturbing and strongly believe that the violation of user privacy is something that we as Internet pioneers must all oppose," a Yahoo! spokeswoman said.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs confirmed on Wednesday that President Barack Obama's administration had held talks with Google.

While declining to offer details, he stressed the United States backed the "right to a free Internet."

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