

China launches strict new Internet controls

February 23 2010

(AP) -- China's technology ministry moved to tighten controls on Internet use Tuesday, saying individuals who want to operate Web sites must first meet in person with regulators.

The state-sanctioned group that registers domain names in China froze registrations for new individual Web sites in December after state media complained that not enough was being done to check whether sites provided pornographic content.

The Ministry of Industry and [Information Technology](#) said that ban was being lifted, but would-be operators would now have submit their identity cards and photos of themselves as well as meet in person with regulators and representatives of service providers before their sites could be registered.

It said the rule was aimed at cracking down on pornography.

China has the world's biggest online population, with 384 million [Internet users](#). The government operates the world's most extensive system of Web monitoring and filtering, blocking pornographic sites as well as those seen as subversive to communist rule.

The new regulations come as the government is in talks with [Google Inc.](#) about whether the U.S.-based Internet giant will be allowed to continue operating in [China](#) after saying in January it would no longer cooperate with the country's Web censorship. The two sides have given no details of the status of their discussions.

Chinese authorities have launched repeated crackdowns on online pornography and the government says nearly 5,400 people were detained last year.

More information: Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (in Chinese): <http://www.miit.gov.cn>

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Citation: China launches strict new Internet controls (2010, February 23) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-02-china-strict-internet.html>

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