

Google to leave China April 10: state media

March 19 2010



US Internet giant Google will close its business in China next month and may announce its plans next week, Chinese media reported on Friday, after rows over censorship and hacking.

US Internet giant Google will close its business in China next month and may announce its plans in the coming days, Chinese media reported on Friday, after rows over censorship and hacking.

The [China](#) Business News quoted an official with an unidentified Chinese advertising agency as saying Google would go through with its threatened withdrawal on April 10, but that Google had yet to confirm the pull-out.

The agency is a business partner of Google, the report said.

The report did not specify whether Google would close all or part of its

operations in the country.

The newspaper quoted an unidentified Google staff member as saying the company may announce on Monday the details of its exit from China and compensation for its local staff.

Google China spokeswoman Marsha Wang declined to comment on the report, telling AFP only that there had been "no update" on the company's situation.

The report was the latest in a series of clues to emerge recently indicating Google planned to leave China, which has the world's largest population of online users, at 384 million.

Google has cried foul over what it said were cyberattacks aimed at its source code and the Gmail accounts of Chinese [human rights activists](#).

The [Financial Times](#) reported last week that Google was "99.9 percent" certain to abandon google.cn, citing an unnamed source.

Chinese media said Wednesday that Google sent a notice to clients saying google.cn could close at the end of March.

The issue has sparked a simmering war of words between China and the administration of US President Barack Obama, which has called on Beijing to allow an unfettered Internet.

The dispute has exacerbated mounting tensions between the two over a range of trade and diplomatic issues.

Beijing tightly controls online content in a vast system dubbed the "Great Firewall of China", removing information it deems harmful such as pornography and violent content, but also politically sensitive material.

Google has continued to filter google.cn results to abide by Chinese [censorship](#) demands, but says it will eventually stop the screening.

[Google](#) confirmed earlier this week that it had received a letter purportedly from a group of 27 Chinese advertising agencies calling for the US company to open talks on compensation for possible business losses if it leaves China.

However, representatives of several of the firms subsequently told AFP they knew nothing of the letter and Chinese media reports have raised doubts about its authenticity.

Google's Wang told AFP the company is still "reviewing" the letter.

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Citation: Google to leave China April 10: state media (2010, March 19) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-03-google-china-april-state-media.html>

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