

Google: \$1.4M on 1Q lobby on China, other issues

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(AP) -- Google Inc. spent \$1.4 million in the first quarter to lobby the federal government on everything from its decision to stop censoring search results in China to the tussle over open Internet rules before the Federal Communications Commission.

The spending was up 57 percent from \$880,000 in the same quarter a year ago. At that pace, Google's lobbying tab would be on track to climb even more in 2010 than it did last year, when spending rose 42 percent to \$4 million.

[Google](#) has been steadily stepping up its presence in Washington in recent years and engaged in all sorts of high-profile technology policy debates.

In the first three months of 2010, the company tried to influence legislation intended to prevent U.S. technology companies from cooperating with repressive foreign governments that restrict free speech and violate human rights.

Last month, Google said it would stop filtering its China-based search engine and send visitors instead to its Chinese-language service based in Hong Kong, where Google does not censor search results. The company's move came after it uncovered a hacking attack that emanated from China and attempts to snoop on dissidents by accessing their e-mail accounts.

Google also lobbied last quarter in favor of the FCC's proposed "[network neutrality](#)" rules, which would require broadband providers to give equal treatment to all [Internet traffic](#) flowing over their networks. Although the big phone and cable TV companies oppose such regulations, Internet companies such as Google say rules are needed to prevent Internet access providers from favoring or discriminating against Web sites and services.

In addition, Google lobbied on the FCC's national broadband plan, which lays out a roadmap for bringing affordable high-speed Internet access to all Americans, and on efforts to find more [wireless spectrum](#) for mobile broadband services.

Other issues include the company's legal battle to digitize millions of books. Google has reached a \$125 million tentative settlement with authors and publishers that sued the company for copyright infringement. A federal judge in New York still must approve it, and the Justice Department argues that proposal would violate antitrust and copyright laws.

The company also lobbied on government efforts to regulate online advertising and protect consumer privacy on the Internet, as well as changes to patent law and other intellectual property protections.

According to a disclosure report filed with the House clerk's office on April 19, Google lobbied Congress, the FCC, the Federal Trade Commission, the Commerce Department, the Justice Department and other government agencies.

Among those registered to lobby for the company were: Pablo Chavez, former chief counsel to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.; Harry Wingo, former counsel to the Senate Commerce Committee; Johanna Shelton, former counsel to the House Energy and Commerce Committee; and

Seth Webb, who has held a variety of positions for lawmakers and House committees.

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