

Google reaffirms commitment to China

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Liu described China as a "very important market for Google" at a technology conference in Beijing, adding that the company would "continue to provide the best products and services for users in China as in other markets".

China had huge potential for digital marketing as fewer than two million out of its 30-40 million small- and medium-sized companies were currently able to sell their wares online, he said.

"Google, together with our team and partners, will spare no effort in helping China users and companies in digital marketing," Liu said at the China 2.0 conference sponsored by Stanford University.

China in July renewed Google's Internet Content Provider licence, after the US web giant threatened to completely shut down its operations in the Asian country over what it said were China-based cyberattacks and state censorship.

The renewal came after the California-based firm set up a new landing page at google.cn with links to its uncensored Hong Kong search engine, ending an automatic redirect that had apparently irritated authorities.

But the company has yet to get a licence to provide web mapping services in the country, which has an online population of at least 420 million.

The government said last month that it had granted the licences to 31 companies including Finnish mobile phone maker Nokia, but many other foreign firms including Google had not yet applied.

Google's share of China's online market fell to 24.2 percent in the three months to June, from 30.9 percent in the first quarter, figures from research firm Analysys International indicated.

Meanwhile, the company's major China rival Baidu increased its dominance, with its market share rising to 70 percent in the second quarter from 64 percent in the first three months of the year, Analysys said.

Shen Haoyu, Baidu's senior vice president in charge of operations, said at the conference Tuesday that the Chinese firm had "probably benefited" from Google's reduced presence in China.

"We see customers' confidence in Baidu has been increasing while confidence in Google's commitment in China declines. That has helped us," he said.

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