

Chinese micro-blog re-emerges after shutdown

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An early Chinese clone of micro-blog site Twitter that was shut down by authorities last year amid fears it was fanning unrest in the country's restive west has re-emerged.

Fanfou, which is widely believed to have been the first Chinese provider of such micro-blogging services, was restored last Thursday, the [Beijing Evening Post](#) reported.

Fanfou had more than one million users before it was forced to go offline in July last year during a government crackdown on [social networking](#) after deadly riots in Urumqi, capital of the northwestern Xinjiang region.

Beijing claimed the unrest, the worst ethnic violence in China in decades, which officials said left nearly 200 people killed and 1,700 injured, was organised through the web and mobile phone messages.

[Chinese government](#) censors also blocked US-based [Twitter](#) around that time. It remains inaccessible in China.

Bill Bishop, who blogs on China's Internet, said it was unclear why Fanfou would be allowed to restart now.

"I would assume they would have had to do a lot of lobbying" to reassure government censors that their services will not be too controversial, said Bishop.

Fanfou's website crashed last week as large numbers of visitors tried to log on, the Beijing Evening Post said on Sunday, but users can still see the site via their mobile phones.

Wang Xing, founder of Fanfou, attributed troubles with the website to technical problems, the report said.

It made no mention of why the site was shut down last year or why it was back up again.

China has a huge online [censorship](#) system that aggressively blocks sites or snuffs out Internet content and commentary on topics considered sensitive, such as China's human rights record and criticisms of the government.

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