

China pledges tougher fight on online piracy

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Authorities destroy pirated DVDs and other publications seized during a crackdown in Beijing. China will step up its fight to protect intellectual property rights by targeting online piracy, state media said Monday.

China will step up its fight to protect intellectual property rights (IPR) by targeting online piracy, state media said Monday, amid calls for Beijing to do more on widespread copyright infringement.

"It is vital to protect online IPR," Wang Ziqiang, spokesman for the National Copyright Administration, was quoted as saying by the [China Daily](#).

"If not, the traditional press, the publication industry, movies and music will face severe threats from online 'theft' if everyone goes online to get free material."

Last week, Chinese authorities issued updated rules to fight piracy and protect online IPR, the report said.

The regulations state that if someone puts another person's work online for profit without prior approval from the copyright holder, and if the transaction value is more than 50,000 yuan (\$7,600), he or she will be penalised.

Penalties will also apply if the person posts more than 500 pieces of work, the number of online hits reaches 50,000, or if the number of registered users of a members-only site posting illegal content tops 1,000, it said.

The report did not say how violators would be punished.

Officials at the National Copyright Administration were not available for comment when contacted by AFP.

[Intellectual property rights](#) are widely flouted in China, home to the biggest counterfeit and piracy market in the world.

And with 450 million people online in China -- the largest web population in the world -- the Internet has become a major battleground in the fight against IPR violations.

US and European business leaders on Friday called on Beijing to do more to respect IPR. Ted Dean, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said "inconsistent and ineffective IPR enforcement" was a serious concern.

EU Chamber of Commerce vice president Davide Cucino said that members of his group had ranked IPR protection as one of the top three obstacles to doing business in China.

China's commerce minister Chen Deming admitted enforcement of copyright laws needed to be "strengthened".

All three were speaking at a government forum ahead of President Hu Jintao's visit to the United States this week.

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