

Baidu apologises to writers in copyright dispute

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Chinese search engine giant Baidu apologised to writers who accused it of violating their copyright and promised to delete infringing items within the next three days.

Chinese search engine giant Baidu apologised on Saturday to writers who accused it of violating their copyright and promised to delete infringing items within the next three days.

"We will now make a concerted effort and devote considerable technological and manpower resources towards getting rid of any infringing content in the next three days," Baidu spokesman Kaiser Kuo told AFP.

"We apologise to any authors or publishers whose feelings may have been hurt by the presence of infringing content on Baidu."

The dispute began last week when more than 40 writers including top-selling author Han Han signed a letter blasting Baidu for providing their works as free downloads on its [online library](#) Baidu Wenku without their permission.

State media reported on Friday that negotiations between the Internet giant and Chinese writers to resolve the dispute had broken down, and that the company now faced potential court action.

Baidu Wenku was launched in 2009 and allows users to read, share or download books for free. Some books also can be purchased at a large discount from the cover price.

All documents are uploaded by Internet users and as of November Baidu Wenku had stockpiled more than 10 million files and books, accounting for 70 percent of China's online file-sharing market, according to the company's figures.

Kuo had previously defended Baidu Wenku, saying the firm had already deleted "tens of thousands of infringing items" uploaded by web users.

He denied claims that the firm had made money from Baidu Wenku, but he added the firm intended to profit from the service in the future and share the proceeds out.

Baidu has long been criticised for flouting [intellectual property rights](#). Its MP3 search service, which provides links to free but often pirated [music downloads](#), has drawn particular fire from the [recording industry](#).

The US Trade Representative's office last month named [Baidu](#) as one of the world's top marketplaces for pirated and [counterfeit goods](#).

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