

China blogger angered over losing Facebook account

March 8 2011, By TINI TRAN , Associated Press

(AP) -- Chinese blogger and activist Michael Anti wants to know why he is less worthy of a Facebook account than company founder Mark Zuckerberg's dog.

Anti, a popular online commentator whose legal name is Zhao Jing, said in an interview Tuesday that his Facebook account was suddenly canceled in January. Company officials told him by e-mail that Facebook has a strict policy against pseudonyms and that he must use the name issued on his government ID.

Anti argues that his professional identity as Michael Anti has been established for more than a decade, with published articles and essays.

Anti, a former journalist who has won fellowships at both Cambridge University and Harvard University, said he set up his Facebook account in 2007. By locking him out of his account, Facebook has cut him off from a network of more than 1,000 academic and professional contacts who know him as Anti, he said.

"I'm really, really angry. I can't function using my Chinese name. Today, I found out that Zuckerberg's dog has a Facebook account. My journalistic work and academic work is more real than a dog," he said.

Facebook officials weren't available to comment on his case. The company says its policy leads to greater trust and accountability for its users.

"We have tried to keep the rule simple and fair by saying personal profiles must always be set up in the real legal name of the individual concerned," it said by e-mail to Anti.

Dissidents in a variety of countries have argued that Facebook's policy can endanger [human rights activists](#) and others if their identities become known.

Anti said there is a long tradition in [China](#) for writers and journalists to take pen names, partly as protection from retaliation from authorities. If Facebook requires the use of real names, that could potentially put Chinese citizens in danger, he said.

"For my fellow Chinese, this policy could easily help Chinese police identify them," he said.

It's not the first time Anti has had problems with an Internet site. In 2005, his blog on a Microsoft site was shut down by the company following pressure from Chinese officials. Microsoft's action led to a public outcry.

Zuckerberg recently set up a [Facebook](#) page for his newly acquired puppy, "Beast," complete with photos and a profile.

More information: <http://www.facebook.com/beast.the.dog>

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