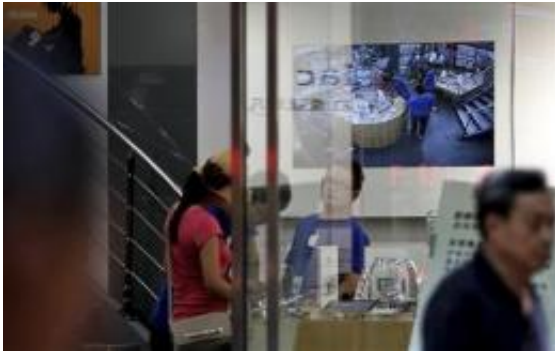


China suspends 2 of 5 fake Apple stores in 1 city

July 25 2011



In this photo taken Thursday, July 21, 2011, workers dressed as an Apple store employee attends customers at a shop masquerading as a bona fide Apple store in downtown Kunming in southwest China's Yunnan province. China, long known for producing counterfeit consumer gadgets, software and brand name clothing, has reached a new piracy milestone, fake Apple stores. (AP Photo) CHINA OUT

(AP) -- Chinese officials found five [fake Apple stores](#) in a southwestern city and ordered two of them to suspend business while they're investigated, a local government website said Monday.

Officials couldn't do anything about the other three stores - which prominently displayed Apple signs and logos - because they did not find any fake Apple products for sale, according to a report by a local newspaper posted on the Kunming city government's website.

The investigation follows a blog post last week by an American woman who lives in Kunming in Yunnan province, who stumbled across three shops masquerading as bona fide Apple stores in the city. She took photos and posted them on her BirdAbroad blog.

She said they were modeled on the company's iconic stores right down to the winding staircase and the staff wearing the customary blue T-shirts.

After the blog appeared on Wednesday, the Kunming Trade and Industry Bureau inspected more than 300 electronics stores in Kunming and found the five fake Apple stores, the city government's website said.

Calls to the Kunming Trade and Industry Bureau rang unanswered Monday.

The maker of the iPhone and other hit gadgets has four company stores in China - two in Beijing and two in Shanghai - and various official resellers.

The proliferation of the fake stores underlines the slow progress that China's government is making in countering a culture of a rampant piracy and widespread production of bogus goods that is a major irritant in relations with trading partners.

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