

# Apple under fire over China university outlet

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Technology giant Apple has come under fire in China over plans to open an outlet in the library of one of the country's oldest and most prestigious universities. Nearly 16,000 people had posted on the subject on Sina's Weibo, a popular Chinese site similar to Twitter, most of them criticising the move.

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Apple products are hugely popular in [China](#), where fans have been known to queue for days to get their hands on the latest [iPhone](#), but the plan to set up shop at the Peking University library appears to have struck a wrong note.

By Thursday, nearly 16,000 people had posted on the subject on Sina's Weibo, a popular Chinese site similar to Twitter, most of them criticising the move to hand over part of the university's library to Apple.

"Setting up in a school is acceptable, but it should be separated from teaching facilities," read one posting under the name hairuyimengA-xl. "The store occupies space in the library, despite it having so few seats already."

"In the library, several students have expressed the view that introducing commercial operations will destroy the learning environment," posted another Weibo user under the name Tianxiaqingcheng.

Apple did not return calls for comment, but a spokesman for the university who asked not to be named said the new outlet would not sell the US company's products, and would instead be a venue for students to "experience" them.

However, the China Business News daily said students would be able to fill out order forms for Apple products on the premises.

Many in China's rapidly expanding middle class have enthusiastically embraced Western brands, but it is not the first time an American company has suffered a public relations backlash in the country.

In 2007, [Starbucks](#) was forced to close its branch in the Forbidden City after a well-known television presenter said its presence undermined the "solemnity" of the historic site in the centre of the capital Beijing.

[Apple](#), which already has four stores in mainland China, announced last week it would open its first store in Hong Kong and another in [Shanghai](#) by the end of 2011.

The US firm said recently its second-quarter revenue in greater China -- an area including Taiwan and Hong Kong -- reached \$3.8 billion, six times that seen in the same period last year.

Peking University was founded in 1898 and is consistently ranked among the country's top schools.

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