

# China microblogging site to tighten controls

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Chief executive officer of Sina -- Weibo's parent company -- Charles Chao said Sunday the measures were to curb the spread of malicious rumours on the service, China News Service reported.

"There are lots of false information and rumours on Weibo, and this will cause great challenges to the government as well as vendors on our platform," the report quoted Chao as saying.

The rumours had caused "distortions and misrepresentations," Chao said as he justified more robust action to curb their spread.

"Sometimes rumours spread on Weibo too fast, so Sina Weibo is currently exploring various means to build more rumour-curbing mechanisms," Chao was cited by the report as saying.

Sina had set up "Weibo rumour-curbing teams" consisting of around 10 members to monitor the platform, with a focus on "[false information](#)," the report said.

AFP calls to Sina on Monday went unanswered.

Weibo has proven to be an effective public platform for people to report corporate as well as governmental [malpractice](#) as traditional media outlets such as newspapers are tightly controlled by the authorities.

As such, the government has grown increasingly concerned over the growing influence of Weibo and other new media platforms in China, which has the largest online population at 485 million people.

China already runs a robust [censorship](#) system of the Internet, known as the "Great Firewall," which blocks numerous overseas sites and censors information and news deemed sensitive by the government.

Earlier this month, China's propaganda chief Li Changchun met with local search engine Baidu's chief executive Robin Li, following visits by Beijing's most senior Communist Party official to Sina and video sharing site Youku's offices.

During the visit to Sina, the official had urged the two firms to stop the spread of "false and harmful information".

Thousands of people had used Sina's news website as well as Weibo to criticise the government over a July train crash in which at least 40 people died. Following the wave of online criticism, the [government](#) was forced to change its handling of the incident.

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