

China's Tencent launches English microblog site

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The English version of Tencent Weibo is the first of its kind in China, Xinhua said, in a country where overseas [social networking sites](#) such as Twitter and Facebook are blocked by a robust [web censorship](#) system.

The English language Tencent Weibo has functions for posting, discussions, private messaging, photo and video uploading, and online chatting, Xinhua said.

Xing Hongyu, general manager of Tencent's weibo business, said the English version was expected to enhance the company's influence globally, according to Xinhua.

Tencent officials were not immediately available to comment when contacted by AFP.

Sina Corp also plans to launch an English version of its popular weibo, or microblog, according to previous media reports.

China has the world's largest online population of more than 500 million users.

Weibo is becoming increasingly popular in China and the number of users more than tripled from the beginning of the year to hit 195 million at the end of June, the latest official data shows.

Many people still manage to access [Facebook](#) and Twitter via virtual proxy networks that enable them to circumvent the "Great Firewall of China" that blocks sites or snuffs out Internet content on topics considered sensitive.

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