

Chinese netizens flood Obama's Google+ page

February 26 2012, by Marianne Barriaux



US President Barack Obama at the University of Miami on February 23. Hundreds of Chinese have flooded Obama's Google+ page, apparently taking advantage of a glitch in China's censorship system to post about human rights and green cards.

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Google+ -- the US Internet giant's social networking site -- has been unavailable in [China](#) since it was launched last year, apparently blocked by the nation's strict censorship system, dubbed "the Great Firewall of China."

But over the past few days, Chinese netizens say they have unexpectedly

managed to get onto the site, and have decided to concentrate their presence on Obama's page.

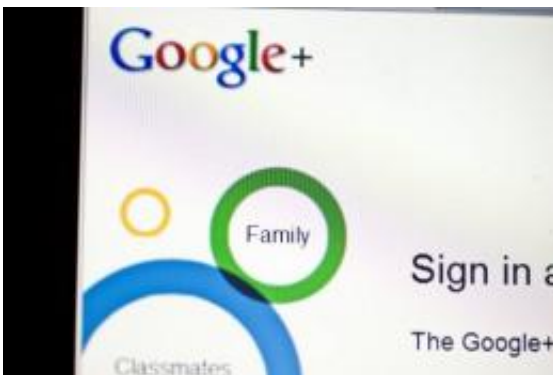
"Many people don't understand the meaning why all Chinese are coming here. We envy American people their democracy and freedom!" one netizen said in English under Obama's latest posting about his campaign's bumper stickers.

The comments centre on freedom of expression and human rights, as well as more mundane issues such as how to get US green cards.

"We are not barbaric people, we are just suppressed," one netizen wrote, while others called on the US president to "come and liberate China".

It is hard to prove if all those commenting are from China, but most write in simplified Chinese characters -- used in the mainland as opposed to Hong Kong -- and expressions are similar to those found on the nation's microblogs.

It is also difficult to determine what [glitch](#) in the Firewall they are taking advantage of.



The sign-in page of social networking site Google+. On Sunday, Google+ appeared to be available in China on some people's mobile devices but not on

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Others in China, however, were still unable to access the site, which remained blocked on their mobiles along with Facebook, [Twitter](#) and YouTube.

Some netizens urged Obama to help free activists such as blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng, who is currently under [house arrest](#), or Liu Xiaobo, the jailed [Nobel Peace Prize](#) winner.

Many of those posting comments also enquired about [green cards](#) -- US permanent residency certificates -- asking Obama to send them one along with his re-election campaign stickers.

One called on the US president to join China's ruling Communist Party.

"We will give you a big red flower, which you can wear on your chest, and honourably give you a party certificate (completely free membership for the first year)," said an online user named Duke Dai.

As part of its censorship system, China blocks most content it considers politically sensitive in its traditional media and on the Internet.

Twitter and Facebook, for instance, were made unavailable in China in 2009 apparently over official concerns that people had instigated deadly ethnic riots in the country's northwestern region of Xinjiang using the sites.

Google, meanwhile, has had a difficult time in China since January 2010, when it said it was no longer willing to self-censor content to comply with government rules.

After a few months, it decided to automatically re-route users of its mainland search engine to its uncensored site in Hong Kong and has since lost ground in China, which has the world's largest number of web users.

Some of the Chinese netizens railed against their country's censorship on Obama's page.

"We hate GFW (Great Firewall). We 'occupy President Obama' like performance art," one online user said.

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