

China web users laud Apple boss for coming out

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Store attendants help customers at an Apple store selling the iPhone 6 in Beijing on October 23, 2014

Apple chief Tim Cook's [announcement of his homosexuality](#) was the top topic on Chinese Internet forums Friday, with many users lauding him as a hero—and some joking about his declaration.

Cook wrote in an essay for Bloomberg Businessweek that he was "proud

to be gay" and considered his orientation among "the greatest gifts God has given me".

He is the first [chief executive](#) of a major US corporation to come out to the world at large.

Apple's products are hugely popular in China, one of its key markets, but conservative attitudes are still engrained in the country—the Communist government only decriminalised [homosexuality](#) in 1997, and listed it as a mental illness for another four years.

Nonetheless China's web users tend to be youthful and more liberal, and praised Cook for helping to make the world more inclusive.

"I'm really excited about this," wrote one poster on China's Twitter-like site Sina Weibo. "There must be many people who will no longer feel sad or afraid. It's full of positive energy. Hope the world will become more equal and free."

The Apple CEO said coming out was part of his personal fight to stand up for minorities, and gay weibo commentators in China said they had been inspired by his move.

"For those who discriminate against homosexual people: stick to your belief and don't waste time smashing Apple products," wrote a user describing herself as a 23-year-old lesbian.

"Every kind of love deserves to be respected. I'm prepared to come out to my parents and I hope they will understand me."

Other posters resorted to ironic humour. "I finally understand why I cannot find a boyfriend—smart boys all come out and what is left behind is just rubbish," said one.

Another referred to allegations the frame of the firm's new iPhone 6 can flex and said that Cook's news explained why the device was turning "more and more bent"—although also offering the CEO their "best wishes".

Some seized the opportunity to mock South Korea's Samsung, which has been embroiled with Apple in some high-profile patent disputes.

"I'm waiting for Samsung's CEO to come out," said a Sina Weibo user. "Don't tell me you're going to stop copying (Apple) at this critical moment?"

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