

China web portal chastised for 'rumour-mongering'

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One of China's biggest Internet portals has been accused of "rumour-mongering" and other offences by Communist authorities as Beijing furthers its online clampdown.

In a statement posted on its website late Monday, the Cyberspace

Administration of China (CAC) said that authorities met with representatives of Netease to discuss "problems" in the company's operations.

The Internet firm, whose offerings include online games, education and email services, was accused of "illegally republishing news and information, spreading pornography, rumour-mongering and other issues".

No details were provided on the alleged violations.

But Netease has its origins in the freewheeling southern province of Guangdong, and users say that the comments sections on its news stories are less strictly censored than those of other firms.

A Netease official said that the company would work to "actively spread positive energy and provide news services in strict accordance with the law", according to the statement.

The move appears to be the latest effort by the Communist Party to exert control over China's online space.

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Hundreds of bloggers and journalists have since 2013 been rounded up in a government-backed campaign against "Internet rumours".



Lu Wei, China's Minister of Cyberspace Affairs Administration, seen after giving a speech at the opening ceremony of the World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, eastern China's Zhejiang province, on November 19, 2014

Last October, China's top court announced that it was putting pressure on Internet service providers to provide the personal details of Web users suspected of "rights violations".

And in recent weeks, authorities have cracked down on [virtual private networks](#), or VPNs, which allow Internet users in China to scale the country's vast censorship apparatus, known as the Great Firewall.

The CAC said that Internet authorities in Beijing have also recently called in the heads of other top Chinese Internet firms, including Sina, Sohu and Baidu, and urged them to "take corrective measures".

"Some websites take a lax attitude towards content published for the

sake of profit and sometimes spread pornography, vulgar content and bad information, which has disrupted the orderly flow of online information and damaged the public interest," the CAC statement said.

In an editorial Tuesday, the state-run Global Times newspaper lashed out against "speculative reports" in Chinese media, saying some rumours circulated on [social networking sites](#) have proved to be "maliciously cooked up".

The editorial came after the Southern Weekly newspaper apologised for including "false information" in a report that Anbang Insurance Group, a prominent Chinese company, had benefited from its ties to a powerful political family.

"The media should remain cautious when reporting on the anti-corruption campaign," the Global Times wrote, referring to Chinese President Xi Jinping's much-publicised anti-graft sweep.

"Genuine supporters need to stay in step" with the Communist Party, the paper added.

"The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection has the final say on who has a problem and for what reasons," the paper wrote, referring to the party's internal watchdog.

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