

# China mulls new ways to control video websites

May 23 2016

---



In China, content deemed politically sensitive, violent or morally "unhealthy" is regularly blocked

Chinese authorities are exploring new ways of imposing controls on the Internet, state-run media cited experts as saying Monday, after reports said state-owned enterprises may be encouraged to take stakes in video streaming websites.

The Communist country restricts access to foreign websites including Google, Facebook and Twitter with a vast control network dubbed the Great Firewall of China, and under President Xi Jinping it has tightened its grip on broadcast, print and online media.

Content deemed politically sensitive, violent or morally "unhealthy" is regularly blocked.

New regulations being considered by China's censorship authority would allow a select list of SOEs to buy "special management stakes" of up to 10 percent in the country's popular video streaming websites, giving them the right to oversee production and decision-making, respected business magazine Caixin reported.

The Chinese-language report was later removed from Caixin's own [website](#), although the text was widely reposted elsewhere.

Video sites such as Youku Tudou, acquired last year by tech giant Alibaba for an estimated \$4.8 billion, and Baidu's iQiyi.com could be affected, with greater scrutiny over content and potential modifications to in-house productions.

The move showed that the government hopes to tighten its grip on websites—mostly privately run—over which they have had "little influence" in the past, the state-run Global Times newspaper on Monday cited Xiang Ligang, CEO of telecommunication industry portal cctime.com, as saying.



Under President Xi Jinping, China has tightened its grip on broadcast, print and online media

"The government cannot punish [the websites] on a daily basis or shut down [a website] at will as it would trigger a backlash," he explained.

The paper cited communications law professor Zhu Wei as adding that the new mechanism would be a preventive measure capable of blocking objectionable content before it was even released, unlike current regulations which only punish perpetrators after the fact.

The initial list of SOEs to take part in the venture included state broadcasters China National Radio and China Radio International, among others, the Global Times added.

The State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT) met with video websites last week to discuss the

plans, and suggested non-binding agreements between them and the SOEs as soon as June 10, Bloomberg News reported.

Some websites present at the meeting objected, but it remained unclear what the consequences of non-participation might be, it added.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: China mulls new ways to control video websites (2016, May 23) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-05-china-mulls-ways-video-websites.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.