

# App stores must register with state: China

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App stores in China must register with the state from Monday, a government statement said, as China tightens its control over the internet.

App stores are "not strict" when they examine and approve apps, the China Cyberspace Administration, the country's [internet](#) watchdog, said in a statement.

Lax standards have led to the "frequent appearance of apps that spread illegal information, encroach on users' rights and contain security hazards," it added in the statement issued last week.

China's ruling Communist party oversees a vast censorship apparatus designed to censor online content deemed politically sensitive, while blocking some Western websites and the services of [internet giants](#) including Facebook, Twitter and Google.

It passed a controversial cybersecurity bill in November, tightening restrictions on online freedom of speech and imposing new rules on online service providers.

The clampdown on app stores came just after Apple removed the New York Times from its China app store, stating that it was in violation of local regulations.

In the absence of Google Play, which is blocked, China is home to a variety of different Android app stores, though the landscape is mostly dominated by internet giants Baidu, Tencent, and Alibaba.

The first two companies control nearly half the Android app stores run in the country as of the third quarter of last year, according to a report from consulting firm Analysys.

Internet legal expert You Yunting of DeBund Law Offices told AFP the move "definitely has a political agenda", but as Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent were already managed by the [internet watchdog](#), the impact "won't be too big".

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