

China's Baidu, police crack down on 'rumours'

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Chinese internet giant Baidu has teamed up with the country's cyber police to control the spread of rumors and fake news, the company said Thursday, as authorities continue to tighten censorship ahead a major Communist Party congress next month.

Baidu, known as China's answer to Google, said artificial intelligence tools would monitor and identify "rumours" on its services—search engine, forums and blogs—on a system linked to around 370 registered police agencies around the country.

Suspicious content will be sent to the police for review and to reference organisations, such as State agencies, science academies or media, who will then be able to produce articles refuting the rumors, the official Xinhua news agency said.

"Rumors" are to be labelled as such in [search engine results](#) or on forums, accompanied by the articles offering corrections. Baidu will also build a database with recurring rumors along with the verified information.

The "cooperation between Baidu and Public Security agencies" will "encourage the sharing of information between cyberpolice and Internet companies across the country, and improve the reliability of online content" the Baidu announcement quoted a senior official of the Ministry of Public Security as saying.

Chinese authorities closely monitor and restrict cyberspace through their "Great Firewall", while websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest have been blocked for years.

But it has tightened online policing even further this year, enacting new rules that require tech companies to store user data inside the country as well as imposing restrictions on what is permissible content.

The move comes ahead of the Communist Party congress on October 18, when President Xi Jinping is expected to be given a second five-year term as the party's general secretary.

Earlier this week reports emerged of disruption to the WhatsApp messaging service—which provides message encryption technology.

Chinese cyberspace regulators also this week slapped "maximum" fines on Baidu and another tech heavyweight Tencent for allowing the publication of pornographic, violent and other sorts of banned material on their [social media platforms](#).

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