

China confirms it renewed Google operating license

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In this Jan. 13, 2010 file photo, a Chinese flag flutters outside Google's China headquarters in Beijing. Google on Friday, July 9, 2010 said Beijing has renewed the license it needs to continue operating a website in China, securing the search giant's foothold in the world's biggest Internet market despite tensions over censorship. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan, File)

(AP) -- China confirmed Sunday it had renewed Google's license to operate after a monthslong standoff over Internet censorship, saying the company had pledged it wouldn't provide "lawbreaking content."

The California-based giant said Friday it had received approval to operate in the world's most populous country, after it agreed to stop automatically rerouting users of Google.cn to its site in Hong Kong, which is not subject to China's online censorship.

The company began the rerouting earlier this year when it decided to stop censoring its search results on the mainland site. The Chinese government operates the world's most extensive system of Web monitoring and filtering, blocking pornographic sites as well as those seen as subversive to Communist rule.

Search requests at Google.cn from within mainland China now require an extra click that then takes the user to the Hong Kong site. That small concession was enough to persuade China's regulators to renew the license, the company said.

An official with Ministry of Industry and Information Technology confirmed the license was renewed for another year for [Beijing](#) Guxiang Information Technology Co. Ltd., the operator of Google's China website, the official Xinhua News Agency said Sunday.

China's decision to allow Google to continue operations has resolved a monthslong dispute that had threatened the company's future in the country.

Xinhua said that Guxiang had agreed to "abide by Chinese law" and "ensure the company provides no lawbreaking content" in its renewal application letter.

"After our assessment, we decided that Guxiang had basically met the requirements," the ministry official, who was not identified, was quoted as saying.

The website of the ministry, which regulates the Internet in China, listed Guxiang on Sunday among some 200 companies whose licenses had been renewed until 2012.

Guxiang also agreed that all content it provides is subject to the

supervision of government regulators, the official said.

The conflict arose in January when Google decided to end its four-year practice of omitting search results that the [Chinese government](#) considers subversive or pornographic. Google made the decision after blaming Chinese computer hackers for an attack it said was aimed at stealing the company's technology and e-mail information from human rights activists.

China is not yet a big moneymaker for Google, accounting for an estimated \$250 million to \$600 million of the company's projected \$28 billion in revenue this year. But the number of Internet users in [China](#) is estimated at 384 million, more than the nearly 200 million in the United States.

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