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Google censors itself for China

Leading internet company Google has said it will censor its search services in China in order to gain greater access to China's fast-growing market.



VIDEO See Google China

Google has offered a Chinese-language version of its search engine for years but users have been frustrated by government blocks on the site.

The company is setting up a new site - Google.cn - which it will censor itself to satisfy the authorities in Beijing.

Google argued it would be more damaging to pull out of China altogether.

Critics warn the new version could restrict access to thousands of sensitive terms and web sites. Such topics are likely to include independence for Taiwan and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

“ While removing search results is inconsistent with Google's mission, providing no information... is more inconsistent with our mission ”

Google statement

Chinese results toe the line

The Chinese government keeps a tight rein on the internet and what users can access. The BBC news site is inaccessible, while a search on Google.cn for the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement directs users to a string of condemnatory articles.

Google's move in China comes less than a week after it resisted efforts by the US Department of Justice to make it disclose data on what people were searching for.

VOTE

Should Google censor its search services in China?

Yes

No

Vote!

Results are indicative and may not reflect public opinion

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Google hopes its new address will make the search engine easier to use and quicker.

Its e-mail, chat room and blogging services will not be available because of concerns the government could demand users' personal information.



Google has lost ground to Beijing-based web search company Baidu

Google said it planned to notify users when access had been restricted on certain search terms.

The company argues it can play a more useful role in China by participating than by boycotting it, despite the compromises involved.

"While removing search results is inconsistent with Google's mission, providing no information (or a heavily degraded user experience that amounts to no information) is more inconsistent with our mission," a statement said.

Julian Pain, internet spokesman for campaign group Reporters Without Borders, said Google's decision to "collaborate" with the Chinese government was "a real shame".

HAVE YOUR SAY

“ **Google is a business, businesses tend to want to maximise profits** ”

Rich C, Skye and Bonn

[Send us your comments](#)

The number of internet search users in China is predicted to increase from about 100 million currently to 187 million in two years' time.

A survey last August revealed Google was losing market share to Beijing-based rival Baidu.com.

Last year, Yahoo was accused of supplying data to China that was used as evidence to jail a Chinese journalist for 10 years.

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