《关闭商业新闻网站不是限制言论自由》

导读:中国网络安全管理局表示，将特别调查新浪、搜狐、腾讯和百度等八大商业网站及其移动应用程序。

Xia Lin (pseudonym) never thought that one day he would lose his job as a reporter at one of China’s biggest commercial websites, especially at a time when it seems anyone can be a reporter.

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Along with Xia, a number of Chinese media workers are now jobless after a crackdown on commercial websites’ news branches, which are banned under new Internet management regulations.

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On July 24, the Beijing Cyberspace of Administration shut down the programs of several commercial news portals run by major Internet giants for publishing original articles related to social and political issues including "Geek News," a news program run by Sina and "People in News," run by Sohu.

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Chinese experts have argued that this move aims to better regulate information instead of restraining freedom of speech, and despite the claims of some, it should not be interpreted as a crackdown on media industry.

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The Beijing Administration of Cyberspace said that they have closed the websites, mobile applications and WeChat accounts of all these banned news programs.

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The regulation states that re-posting or releasing news articles on social and political issues can only be done if the articles were written by news agencies run by central, provincial or municipal governments.

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Xia told the Global Times that working as a reporter for a website requires similar professional skills as working at a State-run news agency.

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However, in recent years, commercial websites have to pay more and more money to repost news articles from "qualified" news agencies, which may explain why they decided to establish their own reporting teams, said Xia.

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On Monday night, China’s top Internet regulator the China Administration of Cyberspace (CAC) also released a statement, saying that special investigations into eight commercial websites and their mobile applications including Sina, Sohu, Tencent and Baidu found that these websites have "problems" in their management and personnel training.

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Specifically, the statement said that workers at the websites have "pursued economic interests blindly" and were "lacking supervision."

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