

MEDIA REGULATION

New rules imposed on Internet video content

Posted by Joel Martinsen on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 12:15 PM



Watch out for netizen journalists

The State Administration of Radio, Film, and TV is going after Internet videos.

In a notice issued on March 30, the Administration emphasized its concern over vulgarity and listed various types of content that online video hosts should filter from their sites.

Part (1) of the notice is the standard list of illegal content found in regulations on film, books, and other cultural material: no splittism, cults, or disruptions of social order.

Parts (2) and (3) are tailored for the type of content that currently appears, to varying degrees, on Chinese video hosts. Here's a translation:

(2) Internet audio-visual program service providers must edit or delete programs that contain any of the following:

1. Distortions of Chinese culture, Chinese history, and historical facts; distortions of the history of other countries, and disrespect to human civilization and the culture and customs of other countries;
2. Disparaging or mocking depictions of revolutionary leaders, heroes, important historical figures, and major domestic and foreign literary works and their main characters;
3. Disparaging depictions of the PLA, people's armed police, the PSB, or the judiciary; depictions of torture of prisoners or of the use of torture to extract confessions from criminals or suspects;
4. Displays of arrogant criminal behavior, detailed depictions of criminal activity, exposure of particular investigative techniques, or leaks of the appearance and voice of witnesses or individuals whose identity should be protected;
5. Calls for religious extremism, provocation of conflict between religions, religious sects, or between believers and non-believers, hurting the feelings of the public;
6. Promotion of palm-reading, fortune-telling, fengshui, divination, exorcism, and other feudal superstitious activity;
7. Mocking depictions of scenes of catastrophe, including major natural disasters, accidents, terrorist incidents, and war;
8. Detailed depictions of promiscuity, rape, incest, necrophilia, prostitution, solicitation, sexual perversion, and masturbation;
9. Depictions or suggestions of sexual activity, sexual process, sexual techniques, and excessive related physical contact;
10. Deliberate displays in which private parts are only obscured by limbs or small coverings;
11. Sexually suggestive or provocative content that leads to sexual thoughts;
12. Promotion of unhealthy content including extramarital affairs, love triangles, one-night stands, sexual abuse, and wife-swapping;
13. Use of "adult film," "pornographic film," "Cat III film," "hidden camera," "indecent exposure," and other provocative words and pictures in the program title or category;
14. Intense scenes of murder, bloodshed, violence, suicide, kidnapping, drug use, gambling, and the occult;
15. Excessively frightening images, text, background music, or sound effects;
16. Detailed depictions of cruelty to animals, or the capture, killing, and consumption of protected animals;
17. Content that violates personal privacy;
18. Depictions of fighting, humiliation, and obscenity affirmatively or in a manner that invites imitation;
19. Promotion of a negative or decadent outlook, world view, or value system, or deliberate exaggeration of the ignorance and backwardness of ethnic groups or social ills;
20. Clips that SARFT has cut from films and TV shows or has prohibited from being broadcast;
21. Content that violates the spirit of the law and regulations.

(3) Internet audio-visual program service providers must improve their program content administration systems and emergency response mechanisms by hiring well-qualified service personnel to review and filter content, with particular attention paid to online music videos, variety shows, film shorts, and animation, as well as "self-shot" (自拍), "hot dancing" (热舞), "pretty girls" (美女), "funny" (搞笑), "original content" (原创), and "netizen reporters" (拍客), to insure that program content does not violate the rules mentioned in parts (1) and (2) of this notice. They must also promptly handle netizen

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BOOKS ON CHINA

The Eurasian Face : Blacksmith Books, a publishing house in Hong Kong, is behind *The Eurasian Face*, a collection of photographs by Kirsteen Zimmermann. Below is an excerpt from the series:

Big in China: An adapted excerpt from *Big In China: My Unlikely Adventures Raising A Family*,



Playing The Blues and Becoming A Star in China, just published this month. Author Alan Paul tells the story of arriving in Beijing as a trailing spouse, starting a blues band, raising kids and trying to make sense of China.

Pallavi Aiyar's Chinese Whiskers: Pallavi Aiyar's first novel, *Chinese Whiskers*, a modern fable set in contemporary Beijing, will be published in January 2011. Aiyar currently lives in Brussels where she writes about Europe for the *Business Standard*. Below she gives permissions for an excerpt.

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FROM THE VAULT

Classic Danwei posts

- + **Korean history doesn't fly on Chinese TV screens** (2007.09): SARFT puts the kibbosh on Korean historical dramas.
- + **Religion and government in an uneasy mix** (2008.03): Phoenix Weekly (凤凰周刊) article from October, 2007, on government influence on religious practice in Tibet.
- + **David Moser on Mao impersonators** (2004.10): I first became aware of this phenomenon in 1992 when I turned on a Beijing TV variety show and was jolted by the sight of "Mao Zedong" and "Zhou Enlai" playing a game of

mentioned in parts (1) and (2) of this notice. They must also promptly handle netizen complaints and related matters.

SARFT's obviously been paying close attention to the wealth of programming on China's video hosts. However, it's what follows in part (4) of the Notice that has caught the attention of the mainstream media.

The Administration has reiterated its control of online programming by applying its current television and film approval process to series shown online. Given the lead time involved in obtaining permission, this provision has the potential to shake up the industry. From *The Beijing News*:

Major video websites said in interviews that the biggest effect of the Notice would be to limit the broadcast of imported TV series. According to the "permit system" stipulated in the notice, even if websites obtain broadcast rights directly from rights agents in the future, they will have a hard time broadcasting programs that have not previously been show in theaters or on TV. A manager at Tudou said that they are still in the process of reviewing the document, so for the moment it would have no material effect on the website.

OpenV's chief editor Yang said that he had only just read the Notice. He also said that copyright rules were indeed necessary for the Internet, particularly in the area of imported TV series. "However, the Internet really requires an ocean of content, and the approval process for TV stations is relatively slow. If we have to obtain the same permit as a TV station, then the timeliness of the Internet will be lost," Yang said.

Links and Sources

- SARFT (Chinese): [Notice on strengthening content management of online audio-visual programs](#)
- *The Beijing News* (Chinese): [Will watching American TV online be stopped?](#)
- Also on [Global Voices Advocacy](#)

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Comments on New rules imposed on Internet video content

Well, that rules out Journey to the West, Three Kingdoms, Shakespeare, the Bible and 99% of all world literature.

Posted by: Liuzhou Laowai | April 1, 2009 1:58 PM

Hmm... I wonder what Danwei's policy is on confidentiality. You know with my comments on NWO and other crazy *** ... would definitely constitute "distortions of other nations." I'm really paranoid about the Chinese government having their ways with me, the next time when I'm in China.

Blah. They probably got me tracked already... proly via NSA. Hmm... nothing to really worry about then, if I go bye bye, I go bye bye.

Move along, nothing to see here.

P.S -- Human civilization sucks big donkey balls.

Posted by: SomeRandomWeirdo | April 1, 2009 3:48 PM

Wow, seems we are back into Qing Dynasty

Posted by: Anonymous | April 1, 2009 3:58 PM

Also all the chinese soap operas, all the movies from Hong Kong, China and the rest of the World, all the fables for kids ...

Posted by: Anonymous | April 1, 2009 4:09 PM

What a pity they couldn't find another line item, so that Catch 21 would be Catch 22, since that's what it is!

Posted by: Shannon | April 1, 2009 6:38 PM

Two leading and three other players playing a game of ping pong. They both gave short, rousing speeches, and then were reverently interviewed by the emcee, who thanked them profusely for taking time off from their governmental duties to appear on the show.

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Posted by: Shannon | April 1, 2009 6:30 PM

I've decided to head back to America in a few months for good. It's news like this that prevent me from having second thoughts....

I am so sorry my students will have to grow up and "learn" in this dystopia.

Posted by: Phil in China | April 1, 2009 6:39 PM

They've been trying to impose a lot of feudal rules, 11 out of 10 failed, and how long do they think they can keep this up? 2 years? 5?? won't be long before the old fars in the propaganda agency die off and the new generation takes over! Yahoo!!!!

...I mean Google.

Posted by: Peteryang | April 1, 2009 7:18 PM

And as the clock is turned backward even more time runs out for the Party.

Posted by: Scott Loar | April 1, 2009 9:24 PM

Notice there's nothing there about outrageous IP violations...

Posted by: Ron | April 1, 2009 10:45 PM

Can anyone name any (mainstream, non-B, non-adult)movie that manages to violate all 21?

I can think of only "Clockwork Orange"

Posted by: Eiwell Seacock | April 1, 2009 11:22 PM

I like rule (1)... Anything could be construed as violation of rule 1. But since these rules will be applied selectively, it is up to the powers that be to rule anything they don't like to be in violation. Great way to write laws that is flexible and serve the revolution.

Posted by: Bill | April 1, 2009 11:49 PM

I'm still waiting for the day where it turns out that publishing houses have started bribing state censorship bodies to declare various publications illegal, because it encourages sales.

Posted by: Inst | April 2, 2009 5:47 AM

>>publishing houses have started bribing state censorship bodies to declare various publications illegal, because it encourages sales

Already happened, Inst. Ask anyone in the industry.

Posted by: Shannon | April 2, 2009 11:36 AM

April Fool's was yesterday. Really? Got documentation? Would be an awesome angle for journalists to pick up on.

Posted by: Inst | April 2, 2009 12:17 PM

"Promotion of palm-reading, fortune-telling, fengshui, divination, exorcism, and other feudal superstitious activity;"

顶！ 我支持！

// 小石

Posted by: Adam J. Schokora | April 2, 2009 6:33 PM