

Google ordered to stop Chinese redirection

By [Mark St Andrew, creamglobal.com](http://Mark.St.Andrew.creamglobal.com)

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BEIJING, CHINA: The Chinese government has said Google would lose its mainland internet license, today 30 June 2010, if the company continues to automatically redirect users of its Google.cn site to its Hong Kong page.



Google shut down its China-based search engine in March this year in a move against the communist government's internet censorship, and amid allegations of unauthorised email surveillance. Since then it has re-routed users to its unfiltered site in Hong Kong. Regulators have since informed Google that the company's internet license, would not be renewed if this practice continues.

"The new page will be connected with Google.com.hk," said Marsha Wang, Google's China-based spokeswoman. "The message we received from relevant authorities is that redirection is not acceptable."

The chink in the Golden Shield

Instead of automatically being switched to Google.hk, visitors to Google.cn now see a tab that says in Chinese, "We have moved to google.com.hk." Users can click on that tab to move to the site in Hong Kong, which is a Chinese territory but sits outside the Golden Shield filtering system.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Qin Gang, said he had not seen Google's announcement and could not comment on it. However, he added, "I would like to stress that the Chinese government encourages foreign enterprises to operate in China according to law."

Google maintains an advertising sales team that generates much of its revenue in the country and a fledgling mobile phone business.