

Social media site reverses LGBT ban after outcry

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One of China's largest social media sites, Weibo, has reversed a ban on users posting online content related to LGBT issues. On Friday, the social networking giant issued a statement announcing that for the next three months, it would be

deleting images, cartoons and videos that were "related to homosexuality". It also said it would remove content with "pornographic implications" or content that promoted "bloody violence". The Internet company said it was part of a new "clean-up campaign" that intended "to create a sunny and harmonious community environment" within China's online community. It also said it was complying with China's cyber-security laws.

Weibo reversed the decision on Monday following a passionate public outcry from the country's Internet users. Many of Weibo's LGBT community responded to the initial ban by posting photos of themselves with their partners, often adding rainbow emojis. Many people cited China's constitution, which protects minorities. One user said the constitution maintains that the "personal dignity" of citizens is "inviolable" and that insult directed against citizens is prohibited. A woman from Shanghai posted: "I suddenly find that in this strong country, Weibo is discriminating against and attacking this sexual minority." Weibo responded to the outcry by reversing its decision and thanking everyone for the discussion.

Sources: theguardian.com / bbc.com / scmp.com

Writing

What rules would you create for online content on social media sites? Why?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

social media / sites / online content / giant / homosexuality / violence / sunny / laws / decision / outcry / initial / constitution / minorities / citizens / prohibited / discussion

True / False

- Weibo is China's largest social media site. T / F
- Weibo wanted to ban LGBT content for a year. T / F
- Weibo said it was trying to clean up its online community. T / F
- Weibo said it hadn't considered China's cyber-security laws. T / F
- The social media site reversed the ban because people complained. T / F
- Many people posted rainbow emojis online. T / F
- China's constitution does not prohibit people insulting others. T / F
- Weibo thanked people for discussing the ban. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. reversed | a. peaceful |
| 2. issued | b. encouraged |
| 3. deleting | c. referred to |
| 4. promoted | d. abuse |
| 5. harmonious | e. overturned |
| 6. outcry | f. being prejudiced |
| 7. responded | g. protest |
| 8. cited | h. released |
| 9. insult | i. reacted |
| 10. discriminating | j. removing |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What has the ban and reversal done for Weibo's image?
- Why does the LGBT community use the rainbow as an icon?
- How angry would you be if a site banned your content for being you?
- What would you do if a social media site banned your content?
- Where does homophobia come from?
- What LGBT issues will exist in 50 years from now?
- What questions would you like to ask Weibo's boss?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. the social networking giant | a. the discussion |
| 2. videos that were related | b. cyber-security laws |
| 3. content that promoted bloody | c. emojis |
| 4. a sunny and harmonious | d. outcry |
| 5. complying with China's | e. violence |
| 6. a passionate public | f. dignity |
| 7. adding rainbow | g. issued a statement |
| 8. personal | h. community environment |
| 9. insult directed against citizens | i. to homosexuality |
| 10. thanking everyone for | j. is prohibited |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of the initial ban?
- What kind of people suggested the ban?
- Why did the site want to implement the ban?
- What issues does the LGBT community have in your country?
- How can governments promote greater tolerance?
- How "sunny and harmonious" is your society?
- What are the good and bad things about social media sites?
- What content should be banned on social media sites?

Spelling

- issued a eestttanm
- itelgedn images
- related to ylxhamtousieo
- irrpohnopacq implications
- sunny and rhasnomou
- It also said it was gplncymoi
- a nsaiaopets public outcry
- onesdperd to the initial ban
- protects nrioetsimi
- the personal idytnig of citizens
- against citizens is orpbithied
- senervrig its decision

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. b	5. a
6. g	7. i	8. c	9. d	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Social Media Sites

You think social media sites are best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): gaming sites, English study sites or video sites.

Role B – Gaming Sites

You think gaming sites are best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): social media sites, English study sites or video sites.

Role C – English Study Sites

You think English study sites are best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): gaming sites, social media sites or video sites.

Role D – Video Sites

You think video sites are best. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): gaming sites, English study sites or social media sites.

Speaking – Sites

Rank these with your partner. Put the best sites at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| • sports sites | • social media sites |
| • gaming sites | • English study sites |
| • video sites | • news sites |
| • music sites | • shopping sites |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.