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China sets new rules on Internet news

Reuters Sunday, September 25, 2005; 8:03 AM

BEIJING (Reuters) - China set new regulations on Internet news content on Sunday, widening a campaign of controls it has imposed on other Web sites, such as discussion groups.

"The state bans the spreading of any news with content that is against national security and public interest," the official Xinhua news agency said in announcing the new rules, which took effect immediately.

The news agency did not detail the rules, but said Internet news sites must "be directed toward serving the people and socialism and insist on correct guidance of public opinion for maintaining national and public interests."

Established news media needed permission to run a news Web site, it said. New operators had to register themselves with government information offices.

China has a dedicated band of cyber police who patrol the Internet with the aim of regulating content. Postings that criticize the government or address sensitive topics are quickly removed.

Registration was a feature of rules imposed earlier this year aimed at not-for-profit Internet activities, such as personal Web sites and blogs.

Since March, university on-line discussion groups have been

QUIZ

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TiVo's latest software upgrade gives broadcasters the ability to erase recorded material after a certain date. What shows recently sparked online complaints after users discovered they were marked for deletion?

- A. "Desperate Housewives" and "Lost"
B. "King of the Hill" and "The Simpsons"
C. "Joey" and "ER"
D. "Reba" and "Smallville"

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restricted to students, removing a once popular outlet for Chinese keen to publicize their views on sensitive issues. Student users and site managers must register using their real names.

The biggest Chinese Web portals include those operated by Sina Corp. <SINA.O> (www.sina.com.cn) and Sohu.com Inc. <SOHU.O> (sohu.com). Both carry news.

Access to many foreign news Web sites is routinely blocked.

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