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Green Dam Youth Escort deployment temporarily halted
Jinhui Computer System Engineering (for original Green Dam Youth Escort logo)

[China Delays Order to Deploy Buggy Censorware](#)

Following strong objections from both its citizens and international bodies

The government in Beijing has indefinitely delayed its order that required all computers sold in China after July 1st to have a particular content-filtering application installed by default. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology announced this decision only one day before the order was to come into effect.

Back in early June, the Chinese government issued a controversial mandate for all PC manufacturers to pre-install an application called Green Dam Youth Escort on computers sold in the country starting from July. According to the officials, this software is supposed to protect the country's children from "unhealthy Internet content."

Since then, the order and the application itself have come under scrutiny from hackers, security researchers, international civil rights, or trade associations, foreign governments and, ultimately, the computer users themselves, who identified multiple issues with both.

Hackers who reverse-engineered blacklists used by the software pointed out that keywords not only targeted explicit adult material, but also content considered politically sensitive by the government. This effectively transforms Green Dam Youth Escort from a parental control application into a mass censorship mechanism.

Furthermore, security researchers have [identified](#) critical design flaws that are a constant source for remotely exploitable vulnerabilities. Given the massive number of computers in China, malicious hackers could potentially exploit these bugs to create the world's largest botnet to date.

Additionally, a U.S.-based company developing a similar piece of content-filtering software called CYBERsitter has brought forth significant evidence that Green Dam [contains](#) proprietary code stolen from its own program. After sending out cease-and-desist letters to PC manufactures and announcing plans to launch lawsuits in the U.S. and China, the company started experiencing denial of service and spear phishing attacks against its servers and employees.

The NY Times [reports](#) that 22 international business organizations signed a complaint letter regarding the order to deploy Green Dam, which was sent to China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. The European Union also described the software as a clear attempt to limit free speech. The U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke and U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk also [sent](#) an official letter to the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Ministry of Commerce, asking them to cancel and rethink the order.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) does not plan to cancel its original plan of having the software deployed on all newly sold computers. Government representatives explained that this decision to delay the order was to give PC manufacturers more time to comply with the requirement. "The ministry would keep on soliciting opinions to perfect the pre-installation plan," an MIIT spokesman [commented](#) for Xinhua, China's official news agency.