

25 June 2009

By: Lucian Parfeni, Web News Editor



Google.com and Gmail were blocked in China for several hours  
Flickr

## [Google.com and Gmail Blocked in China](#)

*The two sites were unavailable for several hours*

Google is under attack again by Chinese officials and, now, they've blocked the company's global search page Google.com, as well as the popular online email manager Gmail. Both services were unavailable to Chinese Internet users starting at 9 p.m. local time, but were still accessible through external proxies. This show of force can only be interpreted as a direct warning for Google - it is no longer untouchable.

"We have received reports that most users cannot access Google.com in China ... We are investigating the matter and hope that the service will be restored soon," Google said in a statement. The service has since been restored, but this is the first time, since Google.cn was founded, that the main site was blocked in the country.

The search giant has just recently [removed](#) the Google Suggest feature from the Chinese version of the site after repeated warnings by the authorities who claimed that it frequently linked to inappropriate content. The government, however, was not satisfied and ordered Google.com to display results only from inside the country, as a punitive measure. While Google complied with this request too, by removing the button that allowed users to search for foreign sites as well, some websites still made it to the results, which, many believe, prompted the blocking of the Google properties.

Most of the Chinese traffic goes to Google.cn, with only five percent of the searches conducted on the main site, however, it is still very important for the company. Google.com is preferred by international advertisers over the local version and the other Google services, like Gmail, are available only from the main site. The company is yet to respond to this recent incident and it may not happen at all, judging by previous accounts like the blocking of any search related to the Tiananmen Square several days around the date of the 20th anniversary of the massacre, which Google also failed to comment upon.