

60 accounts closed over their content

Sixty social media accounts will be shut down for disseminating commercial speculation, vulgar content and other reasons, according to a statement released by the Beijing Cyberspace Administration on Wednesday.

Seven social media platforms, including Sina Weibo, WeChat, Tencent and Baidu, provided the accounts, most of which dealt with celebrity gossip—including the well-known China's No 1 Paparazzi Zhuo Wei, which has released information about celebrities' private lives and sex scandals many times.

Some of the other offenses listed by the administration included publishing fake information or releasing personal celebrity information to gain public attention. Some of the information had negative social impacts, it said.

The administration said internet service providers should increase their control of information released by users and immediately stop the spread of information deemed illegal based on the cybersecurity law that took effect on June 1.

The new law, adopted in November by the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, aims to better shield key information infrastructure and citizens' personal information against hackers and data thieves.

The law will not infringe on privacy or restrict free speech online, the administration said, adding that it targets information made public by internet users, not personal communications.

On Wednesday afternoon, Sina Weibo released a statement that social media is an important platform for communications between celebrities and their fans. Accounts that spread rumors should be shut down to protect the rights of the celebrities and Sina Weibo users, it said.

In April, Sina Weibo account Liuyishou posted an article saying that two actors—Li Yifeng and Yang Mi—had an extramarital affair. Li's studio released a statement rejecting the rumor.

Although Liuyishou posted an apology, the article had been reposted more than 100,000 times and had damaged the public image of both Li and Yang, the statement said.

In 2013, judicial authorities said for the first time that spreading rumors on the internet could be punished as a crime of provoking trouble. But that has not deterred some from starting and spreading rumors.

"Some rumors not only disturb public order but undermine the core values of society," said Qiao Xinsheng, professor of law at Wuhan-based Zhongnan University of Economics and Law.