

## Wikipedia fights 'infiltration' by Chinese group

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A woman uses the Wikipedia online encyclopedia on an iPad in Cologne, Germany, on Jan. 13.

**Photo: EPA-EFE**

Seven editors have been banned from Wikipedia in a bid to stop what the US-based Wikimedia Foundation Inc termed “infiltration” by a Chinese group to control the volunteer-edited encyclopedia’s online content, BBC News reported on Friday.

The banned editors had been linked to a group based in China and their attempt to “infiltrate” the Web site posed a threat to the “very foundations of Wikipedia,” the foundation told BBC News.

The foundation had been investigating the assault on the Chinese-language Wikipedia for almost a year, BBC News reported, citing foundation vice president of community resilience and sustainability Maggie Dennis.

She said that information this summer pointing to “credible threats” to the safety of volunteers prompted the foundation to initiate a “rapid response.”

“This case is unprecedented in scope,” the report cited Dennis as writing in an internal message to volunteers.

The foundation is battling against “capture” by a group that seeks to edit Wikipedia to advance a particular viewpoint, she wrote, adding: “Controlling content was an aim.”

However, she said: “I am not in position to point fingers at the Chinese state nor in possession of information that would lead me to do so.”

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BBC News cited Hong Kong Free Press reporter Selina Cheng (鄭雪兒) as saying that members of the territory's Wikipedia community are fearful of commenting on articles that the authorities deem sensitive.

They fear "they may be targeted as a result of their identities being known," she said.

Weeks earlier, the foundation enacted security measures to protect the personal information of Wikipedia users in territories that block access to the Web site, including China, BBC News said.

Wikipedia also took action against the editors because it feared they might have convinced users to reveal their identities by arranging social events or exchanging messages, then betraying them to the authorities, Dennis told BBC News.

"When the foundation has credible information that some volunteers may not be interacting in good faith — and in this case, there was plenty — we may feel it necessary to protect the community by removing those individuals from access," she told BBC News.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2021/09/19](#)