

For Public Release

RE: GAC Introductory Meeting with Tencent on WeChat and Information Manipulation

From: "Green, Martin" <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
To: "Sutherland, Allen" <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>, "Chayer, Marie-Helene" <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Cc: "Walshe, Bridget" <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>, "Rogers, Daniel" <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>, [redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca, [redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca, "Stinson, Sarah" <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Date: Fri, 15 Sep 2023 17:19:26 +0000

Hi – this is very interesting. IAS has led assessments on related issues, including: high-risk social media firms and their links to state-sponsored disinformation and foreign influence risks; hostile state investment and involvement in our sovereign information environment and data ecosystem(s); and the evolution of these threats and risks to Canada and our closest allies, including artificial intelligence-enabled disinformation and deepfakes. We would be pleased to support PCO S&I and DI colleagues based on that intelligence analysis, if helpful

Cheers – M

Martin Green

Assistant Secretary to Cabinet/Secrétaire adjoint du Cabinet
 Intelligence Assessment/Évaluation du renseignement
 Privy Council Office/Bureau du Conseil privé

[redacted]

From: Sutherland, Allen <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 9:00 AM
To: Chayer, Marie-Helene <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Cc: Walshe, Bridget <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>; Green, Martin <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>; Rogers, Daniel <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>; [redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>; Stinson, Sarah <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: GAC Introductory Meeting with Tencent on WeChat and Information Manipulation

On commence peut etre

DI would be interested in connecting with them re. Canada Declaration on Online integrity. We chat is not currently a signatory.

AI

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 15, 2023, at 8:04 AM, Chayer, Marie-Helene <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca> wrote:

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Thanks Bridget. This is interesting. I agree that it would be worth a chat at DMCIR, perhaps in the context of a broader discussion on counter FI strategy. I assume that PS is aware?

Al, Martin, Dan – for you info. Probablement pas une solution miracle, mais une avenue intéressante.

MH

From: Walshe, Bridget <[redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 7:56 PM
To: Chayer, Marie-Helene [redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Cc: [redacted]@pco-bcp.gc.ca>
Subject: GAC Introductory Meeting with Tencent on WeChat and Information Manipulation

Good evening,

You may recall that, as a follow up to the Rapid Response Mechanism report outlining a disinformation campaign impacting MP Michael Chong, GAC planned to engage with Tencent, the parent company of WeChat.

GAC provided a read-out on their recent meeting with Tencent. Of note, Tencent offered to use techniques, [redacted] to stop Canadians from receiving the type of content that GAC flagged as disinformation. Such an action would not block the content from users outside of Canada.

I'll flag to MOG. Would you like me to share with PMO?

And, given the previous discussions, would you like us to flag to IAS for DMCIR follow-up?

Thanks,

Bridget

Summary:

1. IOL spoke to Tencent (developer of WeChat) registering concerns regarding the recent activity discovered on the WeChat platform targeting a Canadian MP, published in a recent [GAC statement](#).
2. Tencent [redacted] were unable to uncover or remove the activity described in the [RRM Canada report](#). [redacted] they did not receive any user complaints about the activity.
3. Tencent demonstrated willingness to establish regular, open communications with GoC on trust and safety issues, and shared that there could be mechanisms [redacted] [redacted] which the company could use to address coordinated inauthentic behaviour; however, since groups are closed, they would need problematic content to be flagged by users. Tencent also said that they

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will share access to a Government Request Policy Channel for the WeChat platform.

4. Tencent agreed that they would review the [Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online](#) and the [Christchurch Call to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online](#), and would consider public support for these two initiatives.

Report:

1. While IOL maintains lines of communication with several social media platforms, the call on September 8, 2023, was an introductory call with Tencent (parent company of WeChat), [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. Tencent is one of the largest multimedia conglomerates in the world, with significant business in entertainment (such as video games, online video, sports, and music) and e-commerce and social media industries. The company has many partnerships with Western companies, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
2. **Weixin vs Wechat:** [REDACTED]. Tencent's two platforms: the China-based Weixin and international WeChat platform. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. The two platforms have different features and [REDACTED] teams that develop, maintain, and moderate those spaces, and have different trust and safety features between them. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
3. Tencent noted that the company does not monitor private messaging on WeChat, [REDACTED] the "user flagging" feature was crucial to trigger platform action on any problematic content, such as harassment, bullying, and false information.
4. **Canadian context:** Tencent representatives emphasized that WeChat users in Canada are not able to access [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] feature that was a key aspect of RRM Canada's reporting – without explicitly opting in to receive this content; in other words, in Canada, users need to subscribe to this content. It is not promoted to them by default.

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5. **Tencent expressed willingness to work together on necessary takedowns**, noting that the preferred moderation action is [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Tencent representatives said that their goal was upholding human rights like freedom of expression, and suggested that [redacted] could be perceived as a solution offered a fair balance between protecting speech while avoiding complicity in political interference in democratic processes.

6.

[redacted]

[redacted] Tencent representatives asked [redacted] and would examine the [Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online](#), a voluntary code of conduct publicly supported by other popular social media companies operating in Canada such as Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and ByteDance (TikTok). However, Tencent representatives underscored that the company does not sell political advertising, nor do they do micro-targeted advertising of any kind. Since the company does not sell political advertising, it is not implicated by the political advertising registry requirements of the *Canada Elections Act*.

Drafted: IOL [redacted]

Approved: IOL/Wettlaufer

BCC:

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