

China Uncensored
229 W 28th St, Floor 7
New York, NY 11101

April 3, 2017

Apple CEO Tim Cook
1 Infinite Loop
Cupertino, CA 95014

Why Is Apple Censoring a Comedy Show About China in Taiwan and Hong Kong?

Dear Mr. Cook,

We recently submitted to Apple our Apple TV app for approval. The app is called China Uncensored, where viewers can watch our TV show of the same name. We applied for approval after our YouTube channel grew past 400,000 subscribers.

Unfortunately, your company decided improperly to remove us from the app stores in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Below is the relevant part of your legal department's notice to our app developer, MAZ.

Apps must comply with all legal requirements in any location where you make them available (if you're not sure, check with a lawyer). We know this stuff is complicated, but it is your responsibility to understand and make sure your app conforms with all local laws, not just the guidelines below. And of course, apps that solicit, promote, or encourage criminal or clearly reckless behavior will be rejected.

While your app has been removed from the China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan App Stores, it is still available in the App Stores for the other territories you selected in iTunes Connect.

It is absurd to argue that China Uncensored solicits, promotes, or encourages criminal or reckless behavior. It is a TV comedy show that covers China news. It is similar to The Daily Show in the United States.

Being a former China journalist myself, I understand why China Uncensored appears to violate some of the bogus laws in mainland China, which is ruled by the authoritarian Chinese Communist Party. As you recall, in 2013 the same Communist Party mobilized its state-run media apparatus to unfairly slander Apple over its warranty policy. No doubt, China Uncensored likely falls under some of mainland China's dubious legal categories such as:

- Undermining national unity
- Spreading rumors
- Disrupting social order

There is no point in disputing your app store decision with respect to mainland China, given that a person can be arbitrarily detained and tortured there without due process under the current regime.

But Hong Kong and Taiwan are not ruled by the Chinese Communist Party. They are regions that operate under independent legal systems, and have been treated as independent regions by the US government. The China Uncensored TV show is fully legal in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. We have a growing number of YouTube viewers in those places, and we hope to have some of them switch to watching us on Apple TV. (Note that Google has not censored us in either region.) We urge you not to censor China Uncensored in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Following Apple's advice to check with a lawyer, we have retained a public interest attorney who will represent us and is prepared to bring in a major law firm to take legal action, although we would prefer to resolve this matter quickly and without lawyers.

If necessary, we are also prepared to discuss this issue with US federal regulators, who, while having no jurisdiction over Hong Kong or Taiwan, are nonetheless concerned with Apple's business operations in general as Apple moves competitively into the television industry.

We may also raise this with the Trump administration, which has expressed concern over many aspects of US trade with China.

We request that you unblock the China Uncensored app from the Hong Kong and Taiwan app stores within (30) days. Otherwise, please present us a list of law(s) in Hong Kong and Taiwan that our China Uncensored app supposedly violates.

On April 4, we will circulate petition in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere where viewers can express their support for unblocking the China Uncensored app.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Chappell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Chappell" clearly legible.

Chris Chappell
Creator and Host
China Uncensored