

Methodology:

Our data set contained 41,861 articles (article title, timestamp, author, views, URL) shared in the news section on Wenxuecity.com between January 1, 2019, and August 28, 2020.

We categorized all outlets with at least 100 articles on Wenxue City (59 outlets) as either a publicly funded Western outlet (e.g. Voice of America, BBC), international media (e.g. New York Times, Liberty Times, United Daily News, Apple Daily), Beijing-friendly media (e.g. Hong Kong's Sing Tao Daily), Chinese private media (e.g. Southern Metropolis Daily, Sohu.com), General News (“综合新闻” on Wenxue City and news aggregator ZAKER), or Chinese state media (e.g. China Daily, Xinhua). See the full list of authors and categories below.

Together, these authors account for 63.3% of all articles on Wenxuecity.com within the analyzed period. We reserved the Beijing-friendly categorization for private outlets, both domestic and international, that third parties had categorized as CCP-influenced, or that had a documented instance of major censorship or had undergone a transition in ownership that led them to self-censor or take on other CCP-oriented practices. For example, despite being published in the United States, the Chinese-language newspaper The China Press (侨报) was [rated](#) by the Jamestown Foundation as one of four major overseas Chinese newspapers directly or indirectly controlled by Beijing. Due to the censorship of Weibo, Weibo bloggers such as the famous blogger 牛弹琴 (“cow who plays piano”) were also categorized as Beijing-friendly. The categorization of Chinese state media was made based on the leadership of the outlet.

We further created subsets for three categories: General News (a catch-all term for stories without a designated author), as well as two topic areas of interest to the Chinese leadership (Hong Kong and Xi Jinping/CCP) to assess Wenxue City's editorial stance. For each of the topic areas, we randomly subset 100 articles for each topic and classified them as:

1. Unrelated
2. CCP-sympathetic
3. Neutral
4. CCP-critical

General News:

We searched articles listing the author as 综合新闻 (“General news”) and randomly sampled 100 articles for our analysis.

Examples of headlines:

1. Unrelated:

- “4 years of litigation for the ‘I am God’ license plate! American old man wins”
- “Siberian tiger died of pneumonia in China zoo was brought to the table”

2. CCP-sympathetic:

- N/A

3. Neutral:

****N.B.:** Articles that were critical but factual of the United States were categorized as neutral, even if they originated from a CCP media source, as they revealed neither a sympathetic nor critical stance toward the CCP itself. A small number of articles in this category took on a hyper-politicized slant. In one case, Wenxue City used a divisive headline for a relatively neutral article: a short article about U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was titled “[Yang Jiechi Holds Dialogue with Pompeo, ‘The Enemy of Humanity’](#)” on Wenxue City. In the original publication on China Daily News, the article had been published as “[Yang Jiechi Holds Dialogue with Pompeo.](#)”

- “11 police injured in multiple fires in Washington late night riots, at least 17 arrested”
- “The deadlock in the new U.S. rescue plan is hard to break, Pelosi refuses to restart negotiations”

4. CCP-critical:

- “Hao Haidong’s ‘seriously wrong remarks’ was blocked by the entire network”
- “Chinese officials hype about new crown American manufacturing theory, Chinese Academy of Sciences ‘experts’ expressed ambiguous attitude”

Hong Kong:

We searched for article titles including “香港” or “港” to create a subset of 2,357 articles on Hong Kong.

Examples of headlines:

1. Unrelated:
 - “Under a fog of financial difficulty, Hong Kong Airlines struggles under Hainan Airlines”
 - “A city full of masked people! Here it’s even worse than Hong Kong, this place is headed down “a path of slow death””
2. CCP-sympathetic:
 - “‘Anti-extradition treaty’ becomes ‘anti-China’: Several mainland-funded companies are being viciously attacked”
 - “Elderly Hong Konger writes a 22-page letter to his Taiwanese compatriot: ‘I look forward to the reunification of our country.’”
3. Neutral:
 - “After the Hong Kong government banned masks, this hairstyle grew in popularity”
 - “HKU Professor: Hong Kong’s deeper contradictions are being revealed, both sides must tolerate each other”
4. CCP-critical:
 - “Hong Kong, Tiananmen, the U.S.-China relationship and the future of Hong Kong”
 - “Hong Kong can’t wait! Nearly 1000 people plead with the British government to offer permanent residency”

CCP/Xi Jinping:

We searched for article titles including “习近平” or “共产党” to create a subset of 1,222 articles on the CCP/Xi Jinping.

Examples of headlines:

1. Unrelated
 - N/A
2. CCP-sympathetic:
 - “Xi Jinping’s speech about ‘the struggle’: We must struggle against dangers, not against Hong Kong”
 - “Ye Xuanping’s ashes are cremated: the Central Government appears on site to bid him farewell”
3. Neutral:
 - “Kim Jong Un sends Xi Jinping condolences on the viral outbreak, says North Korea will offer aid to China”
 - “The Party’s Hong Kong/Macau system gets another shake-up: the coordination small group gets upgraded to a leading small group”
4. CCP-Critical:
 - “At the hearing in Washington: From Mao Zedong until Xi Jinping, America has always been seen as the enemy”
 - “‘The Party does not represent China!’ In America, this phrase riles up the Party to no end”