Chinese internet publishing options

The rules and regulations governing the publication of website content in mainland China are overseen by PR China. This paper is our understanding as of the date of publication.

Publishing internet content in mainland China, such as a website or app, is subject to national government rules and regulations enforced locally by the city/region.

These rules and regulations require your business to have access to an Internet content publishing (ICP) license before publishing on the Chinese Internet. Different levels of ICP licenses allow you to publish various types of content and trade online.

However, there are ways to publish online in China without needing an ICP for your business. These are Chinese platforms and services, such as Chinese e-mail, social media, and search engines, where service providers must ensure their customers comply with Chinese publishing rules and regulations.

Under certain conditions, Access to China can assist international businesses in establishing their online presence in China by serving as an agent for their Chinese publications. There are many ways to publish your online content in China. We recommend considering all options before making a selection.

These options are in three groups;

- International and Chinese e-Commerce platforms
- International and Chinese System as a Service (SaaS)
- Your internet presence.

Note: "International" in the context of this paper means "any platform or service running outside mainland China" and includes Hong Kong and Macau.

No ICP is needed for internet content published outside China, including Hong Kong and Macau. However, access to your internet content outside China may be blocked (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, etc.) or slowed down, making it unusable (e.g., Google).

We recommend you perform two activities, regardless of your trading intention.

- Test your internet content accessibility from mainland China. Review what can and cannot be seen, webtest.accesstochina.com

- Register your company brands in China. For more information, please see the article on intellectual property.

If you need any further information, please get in touch with us at support@accesstochina.com

Management summary of Chinese internet publication options

- **International and Chinese e-Commerce and IT platforms**

In mainland China, e-commerce and IT platforms are very popular. The service providers have the Chinese government's approval to publish on the Chinese Internet. Therefore, you do not need an Internet Content Provider (ICP) license to use the providers' services.

The Chinese platform suppliers ensure that customers comply with Chinese publication and trading rules and regulations.

If you are selling from within mainland China, you will need a Chinese business to process payments, file tax returns, and handle other administrative tasks. Most SDPs offer an international service that allows you to sell to mainland China without requiring a local Chinese company.

Option	Short Description	Our View
International search engines	Bing has 35.96% of the search market in China. Google is blocked in China. Google has 19.4% worldwide Mandarin traffic. Article: Chinese search engines	**Good Option**
Chinese search engine	- Baidu 47.07% - 360 search Haosou 8.08% - Sogou 3.69% - Shenma 1.68% Article: Chinese search engines	**Option for consideration for Baidu (SEO in Mandarin)**
Overseas eMalls	- Amazon - eBay - etc Article: Chinese e-Commerce	**Poor option**
International Chinese retail e-Malls	- Tmall Global - JDBuy international - Redbook - Pinduoduo Global Shopping - Douyin E-Commerce Global	**Option for consideration** **It can be costly**

	• DHgate Article: **Chinese e-Commerce third-party vs website**	
Chinese local retail e-Malls	• Taobao • TMall • JDbuy • Pinduoduo • 1688.com • Redbook • Meituan There are many local Chinese e-malls. You will need a Chinese company or person to sell these e-Malls. Article: **Chinese e-Commerce third-party vs website**	**It is a good place for research** **You require a local Chinese agent**
Chinese B2B platforms	Alibaba (B2B platform) is the largest and most widely used business platform in China and internationally. This has been very successful for Chinese and overseas companies worldwide. It is the perfect place to research the world market. In listing, you will open your company to a potential 60% of the world market. Article: Chinese e-Commerce	**Option for consideration**
International media channels	International media channels are blocked in China. This is a problem when you use media channel content on your website. Although your website is not blocked, it displays missing content when accessed in China. You can check what can be seen in China: website page test	**Review your website content**
Chinese media channels	China has powerful media channels, including Tudou, Youku, and QIY. Over 100 media channels are in China, and they are tightly regulated. Overseas companies can upload their business media content to some of these services, provided they comply with Chinese regulations. Article: information being updated	**Possible option**
International social media	All international social media sites, including LinkedIn, are blocked in China.	**Review your website content**

	You can check what can be seen in China: https://webtest.accesstochina.com Article: information being updated	
Chinese social media	Chinese social media is very successful, with millions of consumers and businesses. There are many social media platforms. The biggest is WeChat. Overseas consumers and businesses can use WeChat and be seen in China. TikTok, available to overseas consumers and businesses, is not accessible in China. Article: information being updated	**Possible option**
Chinese AI	China is quickly developing and rolling out the Internet of Things (millions of devices per month). Again, Chinese rules and regulations are still to be developed. Article: information being updated	**Option to monitor**

International and Chinese System as a Service (SaaS)

Software as a service (SaaS) is a software licensing model. It is delivered on a subscription basis, centrally hosted, and managed. It is sometimes referred to as "on-demand software" and was formerly called "software plus services" by Microsoft.

An overseas company can offer SaaS to a business or consumer in mainland China, provided the service runs outside China.

If you already have SaaS, please check that your software components are accessible from China: https://webtest.accesstochina.com (including the help desk/support systems).

Option	Short Description	Our View
International public internet	Your SaaS is running internationally outside China. Check that your service can be seen and used in China: https://webtest.accesstochina.com. Article: information being updated	**Possible option**

Chinese enclosed network	Your SaaS is hosted locally in China and accessed by Chinese offices via a non-public port and firewall configuration, allowing only office-to-office connections. Article: information being updated	**Good option**
Chinese white Label	White-label your SaaS to Chinese businesses. The Chinese company will be responsible for the ICP and for ensuring the software remains under control. Article: information being updated	**Good option**
Chinese public	Local Chinese hosting, ICP certification, and a Chinese business will be required, as will locally hosted software. Article: information being updated	**Option for consideration**
Split services between Chinese and international SaaS	Local Chinese hosting, ICP certification and a Chinese business will be required. Host the "Front" of your software in Hong Kong (with a direct connection) and host your backend software elsewhere. This will significantly enhance IPR protection. Article: information being updated	**Good option**

Your business website in China

Publishing your internet content internationally or within China using a hosting service, server, or similar solution.

Option	Short Description	Our View
Use your existing website	This is the "do nothing" option. You can leave your website on its existing domain and platform. Problems with domain names and website response times in China often prevent your business, products, and services from being visible. Check that your website can be seen and used in China: https://webtest.accesstochina.com. Article: Business domain name has not been found in China	**The first point to be checked**
Asia website hosting	A copy of your website (using a local Chinese-hosted domain is recommended) on our Asia hosting services with direct access to China's internet. Website content often needs to be updated to make your website visible in China. Article: Access to China Asian cloud services	**Work is often needed to update and maintain the website**
Dynamic cloud platform	A dynamic copy of your website (a reverse proxy) with direct access to China's internet. Corrections to your website are made dynamically as required, ensuring the content remains visible. Article: Make your business website seen and found in China	**Good Option**
Trading without borders	Trading without borders is a concept started by Alibaba over eight years ago. Alibaba has found a way to enable overseas businesses to trade online in China by splitting their website between China, marketing, data, and Hong Kong for order processing. Our dynamic cloud platform enables your business to streamline ordering processing more simply.	**Good Option**

	Article: products and services without borders	
Your internet presence is running in China.	Before you publish your internet content in mainland China, you will require an ICP certificate. To achieve this, you will need to create a Chinese business. Article: Chinese ICP – Internet Content Provider	**Costly option**

Chinese Internet publication options

International and Chinese Service Delivery Platforms (SDP)

A platform is a service where you upload your internet content.

International search engines (a)

The two leading global search engines are not used in mainland China.

Google access has slowed down, so opening the home page takes over 60 seconds. While Bing and Microsoft search engines are available in China, their usage is less than 2%. Yahoo, again owned by Microsoft, is not used in mainland China.

These search engines are widely used in Asia.

- Hong Kong – Google (80%) Yahoo (20%) – (Cantonese / Mandarin)
- Taiwan – Google (50%) Yahoo (50%) – (Taiwanese / Mandarin)
- Singapore – Google (95+%) (English / Mandarin)
- LA – Google (95+%) – Largest Chinese community outside Asia (Cantonese / English)

We recommend that you have Chinese SEO for these markets.

For more information, please see the Chinese search engine.

Chinese search engines (b)

China has developed its search engines over the last 20 years. The market is dominated by;

- Baidu – 77.73%
- Shenma – 9.35%
- 360 Search– 6.37%
- Sogou – 3.59%
- Google – 1.67%
- Bing / Yahoo – 1.14%

Date: April 2018

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- Sogou – 3.59%
- Google – 1.67%
- Bing / Yahoo – 1.14%

Date: April 2018

Historically, Google has been accessed from China using VPNs. However, international VPNs are now closed in China; therefore, Google traffic is expected to decrease as 2018 progresses.

Most Chinese search engines support the main functionality you can find in Google.

Examples: webmaster, advertising, etc.

When the Chinese search engine accepts marketing payments, the website owner is responsible for monitoring the website's content.

If you are using a Chinese search engine for advertising, you will need to provide extensive information, including company and product certification/registration details. The search engine is responsible for validating all companies before they accept advertisements.

Your business does not require ICP certification to use this internet platform.

We strongly recommend setting up SEO for these search engines to ensure you are listed in both the language of your internet content and in Cantonese and Mandarin.

For more information, please see the **Chinese search engine.**

Note: Shenma only started in 2017, but its adoption has been formidable. Shenma combines e-Mall contents into a single search engine, "all the products," in one place.

International retail e-Malls (c)

The Chinese online retail market is estimated to be worth $500bn in 2018, of which 15% to 20% comes from purchases of international goods, bringing the market to up to $100bn.

Most of China's (90%+) online retail sales come from e-malls and online department stores, such as Amazon, Tmall, and JD.com.

There are three types of platforms;

- International e-Malls
- Chinese international e-Malls
- Chinese local e-Malls.

International goods are available on all these types of platforms.

International e-Malls can be seen in China, with acceptable response times.

Amazon has the largest share of international e-Malls in China. Although Chinese companies often use eBay to sell internationally, it is not used in any volume for international purchases in China.

There is a local Chinese version of Amazon, China Amazon. China's Amazon has a very low market share, both internationally and domestically.

The general issue with overseas e-commerce sites is shipping to China. This includes posting, tracing, returns, customer clearance, and other related activities. Many products in international retail e-malls are not set up for the Chinese market, e.g., postage.

A starting point could be to set up your products on Amazon for shipment to China.

There are Chinese shipping agents that will handle the end-to-end postage and delivery. It is only a matter of time before postage costs and shipping processes to China become as cost-effective as sending goods from China.

Source of data: www.statista.com - China

For more information, please see Business to Consumer

Chinese International Retail e-Malls (d)

The share of the international e-Mall business from central China.

- TMall global – 27.6%%
- Kaolo – 20.5%
- JD International – 13.8%
- YIP International – 9.8%
- Amazon (international, not China Amazon) – 9.1%
- Sunning – 2.5%
- Jumei – 2.4%

Annual stats: 2017

Estimate value for international retail business – 2018 - $120bn

Apart from Amazon, all these retail e-Mall platforms are owned by Chinese companies.

These platforms operate in Hong Kong, enabling international companies to trade in mainland China. Hong Kong trading is based on the principle of one country, two systems. As far as mainland China is concerned, trading with Hong Kong is akin to trading with an international country.

Therefore, international businesses can list their products online in Hong Kong without needing a Chinese company to trade with or an ICP license, e.g., via Tmall Global.

The retail e-Mall platforms then list the international products in search results inside their China e-Mall platforms under the subheading "trading without borders." This method of marketing and trading in China has been very successful.

Trading on these Platforms can be costly. Please review all costs before embarking on the use of Chinese e-Malls

Please visit "**Being Seen in China**" for more information.

Chinese local retail e-Malls (e)

There are many local Chinese retail e-Mall platforms. They have been very successful. Today, the Chinese online retail market has overtaken the USA in size and is now the biggest in the world.

The protected value of the online retail market for 2018: $500 (including $100bn plus from international sales)

The market share in 2017 is as follows;

Tmall and Taobao – 60.99%

JDBuy – 25.6%

Sunning – 4.5%

VIP.com – 3.8%

Gome – 1.2%

Dangdang – 0.73%

China Amazon – 0.7%

Yihaodian – 0.5%

Jumei – 0.3%

Please note: WeChat is missing from the above statistics. WeChat is a platform that enables many Internet activities, including online shopping. It has been very successful.

To market and sell in local Chinese retail markets, you will need a Chinese company or an agent to sell your products on your behalf.

In addition, you will have to meet many appropriate local Chinese testing standards, such as the electrical product "CCC" certificate.

These platforms are good places to research your products and your competitors. You may find that your products are already being sold or there is a copy. Registering your brand in China is essential.

Please visit "**Being Seen in China**" for more information.

Chinese business platforms (f)

This Chinese business platform was the first significant presence on the Chinese internet.

The best-known business platform in mainland China is Alibaba

Like other Chinese business platforms, this platform enables companies to market their product and services within mainland China and worldwide.

If you are using a Chinese business platform that charges for services, you will need to provide information, including your company's and products' certification/registration details.

Since these are not e-commerce platforms, you don't need a Chinese business license. As a platform, your company doesn't require an ICP license.

Please visit "**Being Seen in China**" for more information.

International media channels (g)

Access to China has enabled these platforms to redevelop your site so it can be seen and found on the Chinese internet.

- WiTravel - Opening the Chinese market to your tourist destination
- B2B66 - Enabling your business to be seen and found on the internet in China
- B2C66 - Giving your business access to the Chinese consumer

Therefore, it is very likely that your business's internet content cannot be seen in China.

For Chinese businesses, there is no simple way to find overseas products and services.

Like most businesses worldwide, Chinese companies begin their search for products and services online.

Given the slow response times and blocked content, Chinese businesses searching the Internet will see about 25% of the content of international Internet businesses.

It is highly probable that your business's internet content, including your website, social media, etc., cannot be seen in China.

Fast to implement, at 10% of the cost to create a new website;

Our platforms "front ends" your existing business internet content, removing the need for a second website for the Chinese market.

- sufficiently reduces the costs of developing a new website for the Chinese market: $400 to $600, not $4,000 to $6,000.
- sufficiently reduces implementation time: days, not weeks or months.
- Your existing systems process your Chinese internet enquiries and orders, removing the need to monitor and maintain a different system for the Chinese market.
- No need to maintain two databases: product, prices, etc.
- No need to maintain two systems: lowest operational costs.

Make your internet content visible and discoverable on the Chinese internet.

Our platforms allow you to use your existing internet content and enable;

- Your business's internet content to be seen in China
    - Replace blocked internet content
    - Speed up your website response in China
    - Locally re-host multi-media, allowing access in China
- Allow your internet content to be seen in China
    - Local hosting and domain name
    - Translate SEO data into Chinese
    - Chinese search engine submission

Access to Chinese platforms provides your business with a gateway to the Chinese internet.

Access to China has developed three platforms to effectively enable your business's internet content, e.g., websites and videos, to be seen on the internet in China at a cost lower than an economy plane ticket to China per year.

- WiTravel - Opening the Chinese market to your tourist destination
- B2B66 - Enabling your business to be seen and found on the Chinese internet
- B2C66 - Giving your business access to the Chinese consumer

All the international social media platforms are blocked in mainland China.

It will not be shown if you use international social media content on your website.

Using international social media content inside China is not an option.

Please see **website.accesstochina.com** to learn more.

Chinese media channels (i)

There are over 100 social media channels in mainland China. Social media is a very popular and effective way to communicate with Chinese consumers.

Some of these platforms allow businesses and members of the public to load video content, e.g. YouKu.

Most of these video platforms are looking for media content.

You must be a Chinese business to open an account on some social media platforms.

Some Chinese agents can assist you in loading social media content onto these platforms. In doing so, they will take responsibility for the content in mainland China.

Again, monitoring the content is the responsibility of the social media platform's owner.

No Internet Chinese publishing certification is needed to use social media platforms.

International social media (j)

Most international social media platforms are blocked. The exception to this in the past has been LinkedIn. We now see LinkedIn blocked on some Chinese internet networks.

Before this year's changes, many Chinese people had used VPNs to access the Chinese internet. Many Chinese VPNs have been shut down, so the use of international social media from China will decrease.

The images will be blank if your website contains content from International social media, such as Instagram.

Please see **website.accesstochina.com** to learn more.

Chinese social media (k)

There are many social media platforms in China. The most popular platforms are owned by or are in trading partnerships with Tencent or Alibaba.

The most popular social media platform today (June 2018) is WeChat. However, this could change as Shenma, a search engine in partnership with Alibaba, grows. Alibaba's social media platform is Weibo.

People from overseas can join these platforms from outside mainland China.

Company membership on social media platforms is often required for a Chinese business. The rules for using Chinese social media frequently change as Chinese companies try to go global with their products and services on the platform.

Monitoring the platform's content is the responsibility of the media platform owner.

On the Internet, ICP licences are required to use these platforms.

International Internet of Things (l)

The International Internet of Things needs local infrastructure to collect data to operate in China.

A company that does this will need an ICP license and a Chinese business.

We recommend working with businesses in China that are already developing and/or using the Internet of Things.
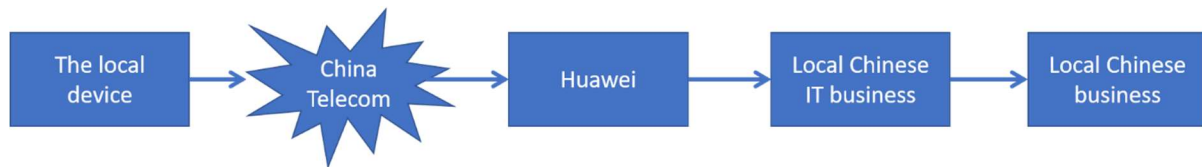
The more interesting opportunity lies in how international companies develop products and services that utilise the Internet, particularly among large Chinese companies. For example, China Telecom is seeking further opportunities to expand its use of the Chinese Internet of Things.

Please get in touch with Access to China for more information ….
support@accesstochina.com

Chinese Internet of Things (m)

The Chinese Internet of Things is developing rapidly.

In this example, China Telecom and Huawei partner to develop the services.

The Internet of Things requires a local connection to the Internet, such as a SIM card. To create these networks, you need a telecom ICP license, which is unavailable to international businesses.

International businesses in this market should look for a business partner in China.

Chinese System as a Service

International public network (n)

Supplying international services to the Chinese market does not require an ICP license, as the service is delivered outside China and any trading is conducted there.

The service fees can be paid from China using a Chinese or international credit card, provided your credit card processing company supports UniPAY credit cards.

For larger transactions requiring a bank transfer from China, a formal agreement with payment terms and other details will be required. The Chinese business will have to register the agreement at the bank to make payments.

Two major inhibitors will stop the development of international Chinese business.
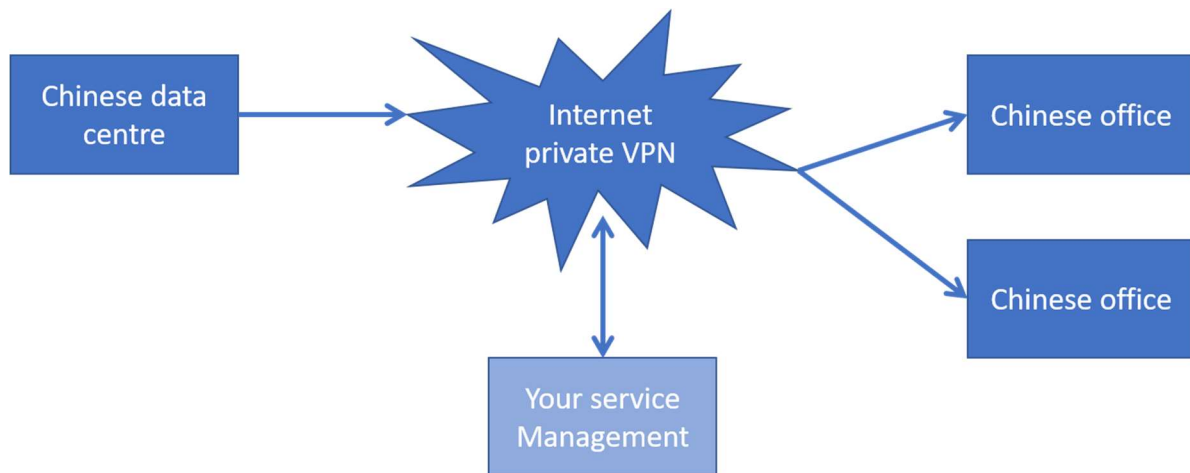
- Not finding your business on the internet from China. More information is here.
- Cannot access your internet presence from China … More information is here.

Chinese enclosed network (o)

An enclosed network is where the Chinese company access your services over an enclosed network within mainland China.
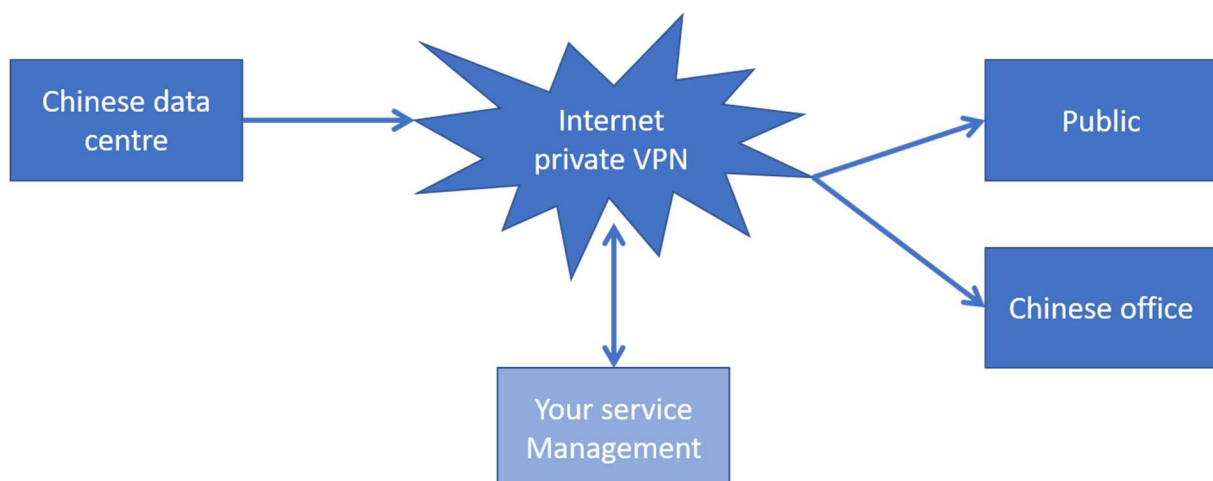
In this scenario, the public cannot see the service, so an ICP license is not required.

We recommend running the service from a Chinese data centre to achieve good local response times and performance.

Chinese white label network (p)

White labelling involves running a service on behalf of another business, specifically a Chinese one. In the example, the Chinese business owns the white-label service brand name.
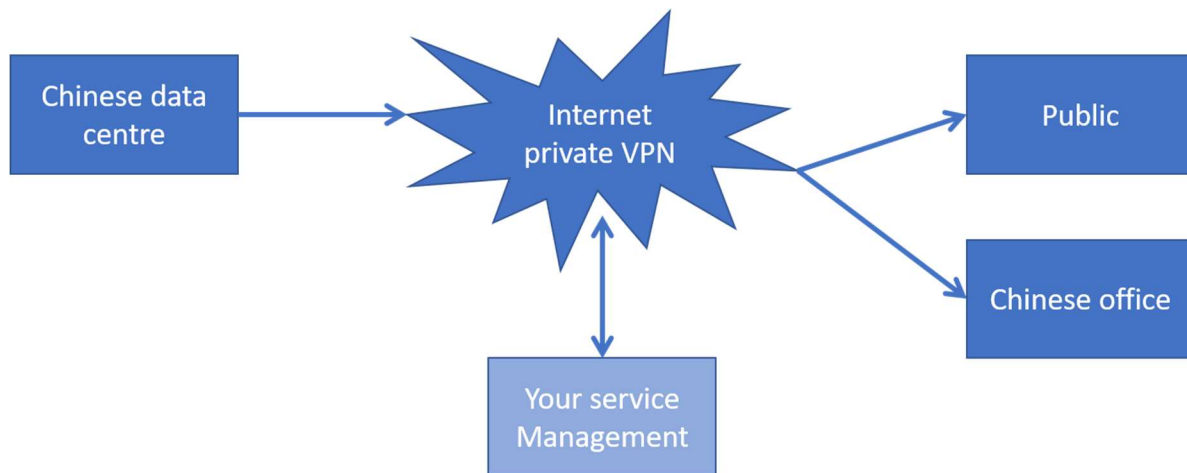

You will require an ICP licence, and the Chinese company is responsible for obtaining it.

If you conduct online trading inside mainland China, you must add Chinese payment gateways to your system. Please ensure the Chinese company arranges for the Chinese payment gateways to be tested and enabled for trading. Please visit "Being Seen in China" for more information.

Chinese public service (q)

This is the same as a white label, with the significant difference being that you are responsible for the ICP license, a Chinese trading company.
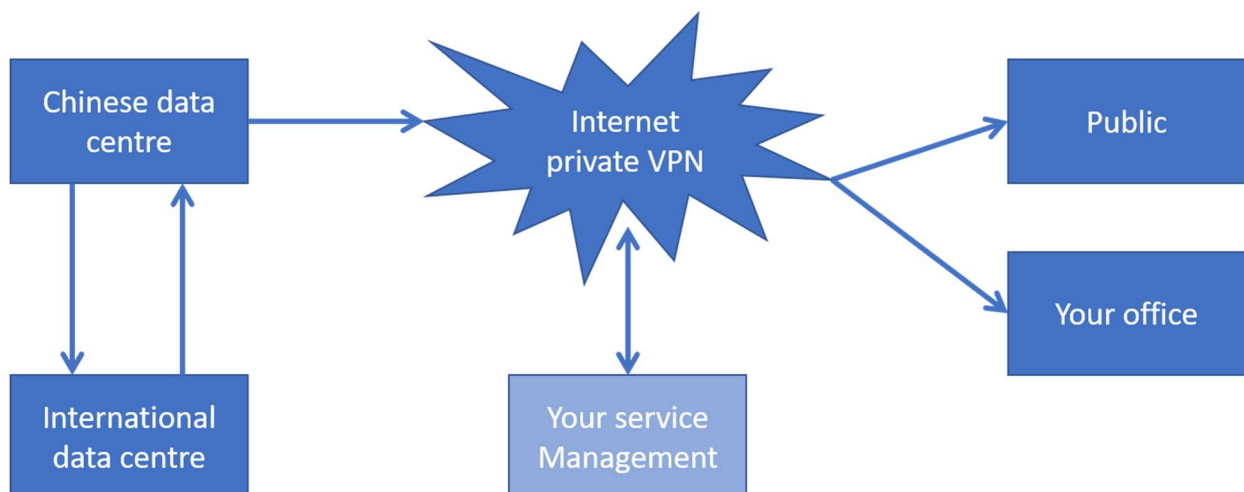

We recommend implementing the creative Chinese service only if you have customers ready to use it immediately.

Split services between Chinese and international SaaS (r)

This example can apply to any of the above SaaS's.

We recommend splitting front-line services from backend services. This will allow you to move the backend services outside China. You may also be able to keep your USP coding under your control on your existing platform.

The options you could consider;

- Create a bespoke configured proxy server
- Frontend website and local data for the collection of user data.
- Locally held data for all static information, e.g., Media

The solution will balance local response times and overall user experience with protection, your software, and your service's USP.

Your internet presence

Your internet presence is running internationally.

Your service/internet content is running on the international internet before you look at trading in China.

The first point to look at is your response times from China

Please see **website.accesstochina.com** to learn more.

We also recommend working through the Chinese Internet Checklist

Your internet presence is running in China (t)

You want to set up your services in China.

You will need a Chinese business and ICP license.

We recommend starting with the Chinese Internet Checklist.

If you're starting your own business in China for the first time, we recommend consulting a mentor with experience in this area, such as a trade organisation or the CBBC.

International software recommendations

Software companies supplying Chinese businesses must ensure that the Chinese company applies for an ICP license. We recommend that the ICP application be included in any business agreement.

Our other recommendation for overseas software companies selling in the Chinese market is to register their software with the Chinese authorities. This is like "brand registration" for software. It will protect your software from direct copying but not from reverse engineering.

If the option exists, we recommend implementing your frontend software only in China and leaving the backend processing at your current location. This option is only available for systems that require transferring small amounts of data, or for customers who are prepared to wait as data moves worldwide.