

# The Asian Reporter

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Please send all correspondence to: The Asian Reporter  
922 N Killingsworth Street, Portland, OR 97217  
Phone: (503) 283-4440, Fax: (503) 283-4445

News Department e-mail: news@asianreporter.com  
Advertising Department e-mail: ads@asianreporter.com  
General e-mail: info@asianreporter.com  
Website: www.asianreporter.com

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Publisher **Jaime Lim**  
Contributing Editors

**Ronault L.S. Catalani (Polo), Jeff Wenger**  
Correspondents

**Ian Blazina, Josephine Bridges, Pamela Ellgen, Maileen Hamto, Edward J. Han, A.P. Kryza, Marie Lo, Simeon Mamaril, Julie Stegeman, Toni Tabora-Roberts, Allison Voigts**  
Illustrator **Jonathan Hill**  
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**MY TURN**

■ **Wayne Chan**



## The rush of rabble rousing

I've never been known to be much of a rabble rouser. I don't even know where I can find any rabble that needs rousing. You can say a lot of things about me, but "troublemaker" has never been one of them.

I file my taxes on time and don't take any ridiculous deductions. I drive a sensible but safe Honda hatchback. Even our dog is mild-mannered.

But I must say, every time I'm in China, I definitely get a bit peeved at how they limit my access to the internet.

It's not even that I want to do anything remotely radical. I'm not trying to subvert the government. I don't actually follow

Chinese politics closely enough to have much of an opinion.

No, what I'd like to do are the mundane things everyone does online — but can't do in China.

Since when does the Chinese government care whether I can find a jet-skiing bulldog on YouTube? What do they find objectionable about me making jokes on Facebook about a cheeseburger made out of two Krispy Kreme doughnuts as buns? Just what is so subversive about my tweet to sell individual sheets of toilet paper to tourists in China who didn't come prepared? What government official is going to be offended if I do a google search to find out if former National Basketball Association player Yao Ming has ever knocked himself out walking through a low doorframe?

Well folks — there you have it. Apparently, I've found my rabble. I guess it's time for me to start rousing.

For the first time, at the suggestion of some friends, I decided to sign up for a Virtual Private Network. It's basically a service that allows me to bypass China's censorship. I was actually told that

such a network isn't even illegal in China and that many people do it.

And while it may be perfectly legal in China (where I am currently writing this column), I really do feel like the cat who caught the mouse.

All of a sudden, my newfound freedom from censorship allows me to do daring things online that



I usually don't have time for (or particularly any interest in) back home.

I just commented on a post on my Facebook page my theory about the way people drive here in China: Instead of using defensive driving skills, they seem to use "the force." Then I tweeted about how I spent \$12 on two small bottles of

water to help me wash down \$2 worth of dumplings. And to top it off, I posted a picture on Instagram of my friend and I doing the "horse riding move" from the "Gangnam Style" video while walking along the Great Wall.

What can I say? I'm a rebel.

Does the Chinese government approve of how I just uploaded a video on YouTube of my friend eating traditional Peking Duck wraps along with some corn chips tucked inside? I doubt it. Would they condone my watching a hilarious video of a dog and cat fighting over their pet bed instead of dutifully watching a particularly dramatic (and screechy) moment of a Peking Opera? Again, probably not.

Let me make something perfectly clear. When I'm back home, I don't spend a lot of time doing things like, say, watching old reruns of "Star Trek" on my laptop. But darn it, if you're going to try and limit my access to it, all I can say is, "Beam me up, Scotty!"

I figure, sometimes you just have to throw caution to the wind and take a stand.

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**The Asian Reporter is published on the first & third Monday each month.**

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**December 15, 2014 to January 4, 2015 edition:**

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**January 5 to 18, 2015 edition:**

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