

CHINA DAILY

Hudong.com Expands Abroad

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Hudong.com, the world's largest Chinese online encyclopedia, announced it has partnered with overseas Chinese websites as part of a strategy to expand its user base abroad.

The partnerships make Hudong.com the first Chinese internet encyclopedia to emerge in markets otherwise dominated by Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia offering more than 10 million articles in 250 languages, including Chinese.

"It's the right time for Hudong.com to reach the overseas Chinese community," Pan Haidong, founder of the website, said. "We think we understand the Chinese language and people better than Wikipedia. We believe we can do a better job."

Hudong.com, which contains over 3 million articles from nearly 2 million users, is first targeting

Chinese living in North America through an alliance with U.S.-based wenxuecity.com, the largest Internet news portal for overseas Chinese in America.

The company is also partnering Sina.com, a news and entertainment portal owned by Shanghai-based Sina Corp., as well backchina.com, a U.S.-based news forum for overseas Chinese, and mitbbs.com, a community site for Chinese living abroad.

Users of these websites will be able to link to user-generated encyclopedic content from Hudong.com when they click on certain key words contained in articles on the sites.

The parties are still working on revenue sharing agreements, he said.

Hudong.com utilizes a range of social networking functions to attract Chinese internet users, including chat forums, fan groups, short messaging services and bulletin boards.

The website rewards members through a ranking system where users are upgraded to a higher status on the site based on the points they earn. Members also can win prizes, like laptops and iPods, for high participation on the site. Baidu Baike, another popular Chinese online encyclopedia, has a similar model.

"In Chinese mainland, we have done a lot of innovation on the product and with the community," Pan said. "We think we are prepared well for the overseas Chinese community."

In contrast, Wikipedia uses a reputation system to promote its members based on their participation on the website and the quality of the content they contribute. Promotion is subject to peer approval, and the site's volunteer administrators are elected by the community.

In September, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales visited Hudong.com in Beijing to accept the donation of Wikipedia's Chinese trademark, which the company had registered for Wikipedia in China.

"I had a meeting with Jimmy Wales, and we talked a lot on how to cooperate," Pan said. "Wikipedia is not regarding Hudong as a competitor. Strategically we are very much partners."

"We may work with [Hudong.com] in the future," Wales said in a phone interview. "But right now we have no specific plans."

Hudong.com's plan to enter overseas Chinese markets is linked to its IPO strategy within the next two years. Earlier this year, the company received a capital injection of \$30 million from venture capital firm DCM.