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Searching in China: Check Your Engine First

With China's internet community exceeding 450 million users, companies seeking to reach out to customers and contacts in the Middle Kingdom have a good chance of being found through their websites—OR DO THEY?

Using the major search engines in China to search on my own company name, Blue Heron Holdings, from outside China and in English provided the following varying results:

Baidu.com. By far the most popular and widely-used Chinese search engine. Second listing was Blue Heron Holdings.

Google.cn US-based Google's China page redirected me to their Hong Kong page (Google.com.hk). First listing was Blue Heron Holdings.

Soso.com Owned by Chinese internet giant *Tencent*, which is best known for the instant messaging program QQ, Soso.com did not have a listing for Blue Heron—at least not on the first page.

Sogou.com. Internet portal *Sohu.com*'s platform gave use a top listing but only through a link to *Tianji*—China's version of Linked In—and only to Chinese-translated content that I don't recall submitting.

Gougou.com. This site does not allow users from outside China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau for "copyright protection reasons." The message is slightly different in Chinese and English versions.

Bing.com Microsoft's search engine has a link to a Chinese language search engine, but not sure of its location. First listing was Blue Heron.

Panguso.com The new search engine of Chinese government news agency Xinhua did not find me under "articles" or "websites." Just as well.

Considerations for optimizing your website for China searches:

- Have Chinese content
- Work with local providers on search engine optimization—there can be fees specific to each search engine
- Create web content, look, and feel that appeals to Chinese users
- Understand your goals in reaching out to Chinese internet users
- Experiment. The platforms above obviously all have their own methods for searching.

Good luck!



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