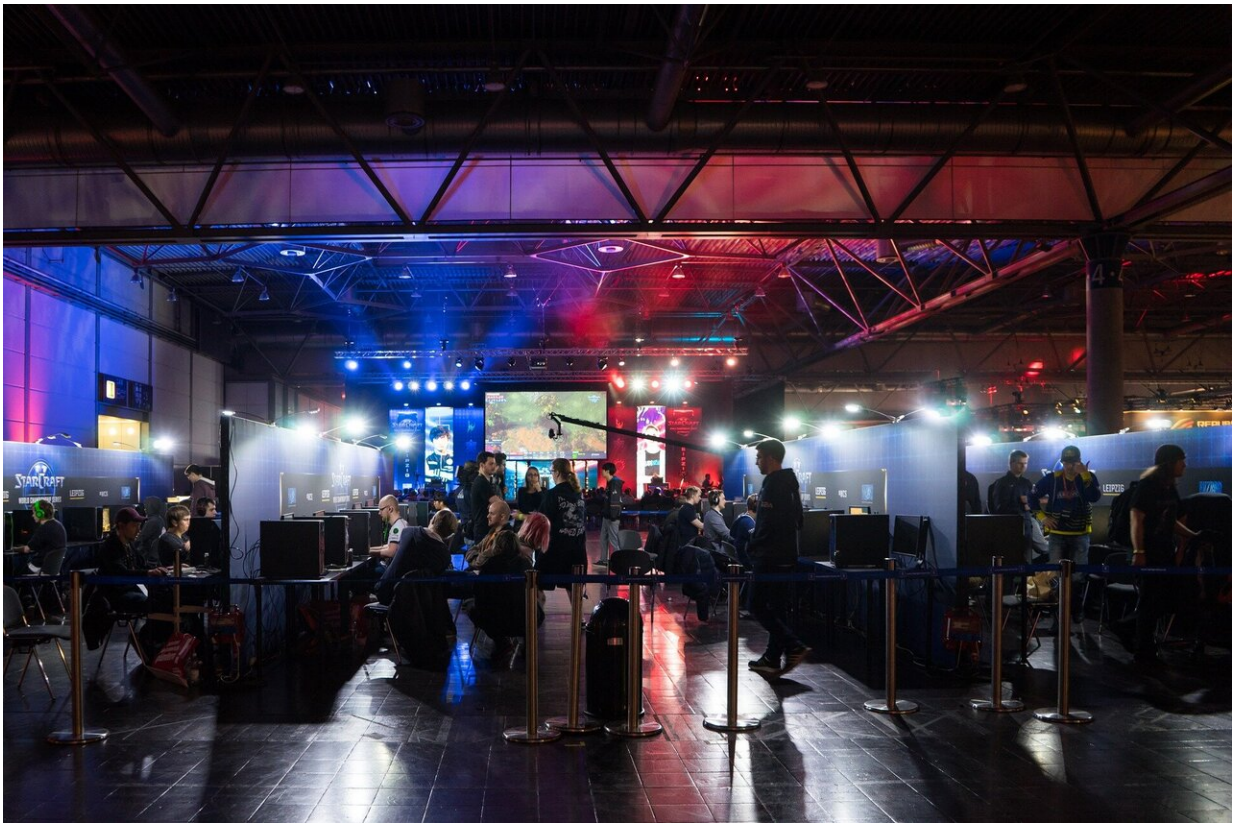


China approves first foreign video games since crackdown

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Chinese regulators approved 44 new foreign video game titles Wednesday, the first to be allowed to hit the market since an industry crackdown to rein in minors' gaming habits swept the sector last year.

Beijing moved against the country's vibrant gaming sector last August as part of a sprawling crackdown on big tech companies, including a cap on the amount of time children could spend playing games.

Officials also froze approvals of new titles for nine months until April, but a growing number of domestic titles have been approved since then.

China's gaming regulator, the National Press and Publication Administration, on Wednesday said it had approved 44 new imported games in December including Nintendo's Pokemon Unite.

It separately approved 84 new domestic titles. The body normally approves foreign titles in batches a few times per year. The last foreign game approvals to be handed out were in June 2021.

Earlier this month, China granted homegrown tech giant Tencent its first video game licence in 18 months, ending a dry spell that had threatened its position as the world's top [game](#) maker.

China's [video game market](#) shrank more than 19 percent year-on-year in November, according to a Wednesday report by Chinese gaming consultancy Gamma Data.

The approval signals a relaxing of China's strict attitude towards [tech companies](#), although games are still censored for politically incorrect themes.

During the crackdown, hundreds of [game](#) makers pledged to scrub "politically harmful" content from their products and enforce curbs on underage players to comply with government demands.

Restrictions announced last year but still in effect allow players under the age of 18 to play for up to three hours a week.

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