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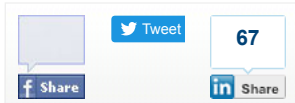
Sorry, Americans: Goldman kicks U.S. clients out of Facebook deal

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By Laurie Segall, staff reporter January 17, 2011: 4:34 PM ET

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Goldman Sachs' American clients looking to buy Facebook shares through the company's exclusive and highly publicized private placement deal are out of luck.

The financial services giant said Monday that it will only be offering shares to its non-U.S. clients, a decision it attributed to the "intense media attention" the deal has attracted since it came to light earlier this month.



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"Goldman Sachs concluded that the level of media attention might not be consistent with the proper completion of a U.S. private placement under U.S. law," the company said in a written statement. "We regret the consequences of this decision, but Goldman Sachs believes this is the most prudent path to take."

Goldman said its decision "was not required or requested by any other party." But keeping its Facebook coup out of the U.S. market could help Goldman steer clear of tricky questions from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, which is probing the **fast-growing "secondary" market** for shares of privately held companies.

Goldman dumped kerosene on that market earlier this month by inviting some of its richest clients to participate in a **\$1.5 billion private fundraising round** that values Facebook at \$50 billion. Goldman **ended its solicitation early** because of overwhelming interest from its clients.

Facebook has been on a growth tear this year, topping 500 million users. It recently passed Google as the most visited site on the Web, according to a recent [Hitwise study](#).

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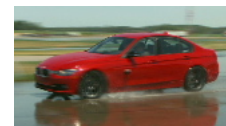
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Index	Last	Change	% Change
Dow	23,333.82	▲ 5.19	▲ 0.02%
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S&P 500	2,572.98	▼ -2.23	▼ -0.09%
Treasuries	2.38	▼ -0.00	▼ -0.17%

Data as of 1:53pm ET

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