

Harvard Tracks Russian Blogs

October 20, 2010

The  Moscow Times

There are more than 5 million Russian blogs online, but only about 11,000 of them constitute an active “discussion core,” Harvard researchers said.

Results from an ongoing two-year [study](#) of the role of the Internet in Russian society, initiated by the Berkman Center in March 2009, were unveiled this week in Washington and debated at the Institute of Peace in New York.

The Russian blogosphere is largely free of state interference, and the “news diet” of its users is “more independent, international and oppositional than that of Russian Internet users overall,” the study said.

Findings indicate that bloggers from the “discussion core” can be grouped into four clusters: politics and public affairs; culture; regional affairs; and instrumental, or paid blogging. But the clusters are less isolated than similar groups in U.S. and Iranian blogospheres examined by the Berkman Center.

The “discussion core” has relatively few pro-government bloggers, although many users affiliated with pro-Kremlin youth groups are involved in instrumental blogging, the report

said. Unlike the rest of the world, Russian bloggers prefer platforms that combine functions of blogs and social-networking services. LiveJournal.com remains the main platform for the “discussion core” users.

Popular blogger and lawyer Alexei Navalny, who attended the study's presentation in Washington on Monday, said relatively few Russian web users are interested in politics and accused the government of financing many political blogs, Lenta.ru [reported](#).

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