

Medvedev Tweets Birthday Greetings

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President Dmitry Medvedev made a rare personal response with his Twitter microblogging account on Friday, answering a young student's request for birthday wishes in a chipper tone at about 1 a.m.

It was one of few occasions that Medvedev has sent a Twitter message to a private citizen despite the thousands of messages directed toward him since he signed up for the service in June.

Yulia Oleinik, who was turning 17, asked Medvedev for the birthday greetings shortly after midnight on Friday, when she sent a message to Medvedev's Twitter handle, @KremlinRussia. "Dmitry Anatolyevich!!! It's my birthday today. Wish me a happy birthday! Yulia)))."

An answer followed about one hour later: "Sure, of course, Yulia! Happy birthday! I wish you happiness)))"

The emoticon "🙂" is the Russian version of the Western smiley face.

Oleinik, who goes by [@oleynik_julia](#) on Twitter and writes on Twitter and on her LiveJournal blog that she is a student in Moscow State University's journalism department, thanked Medvedev later that morning.

She then typed: "Medvedev congratulated me on Twitter! It's crazy. I didn't expect such a great start to the day)."

Medvedev has a so-called verified account with the U.S.-based message service. Though a staffer could have made the "tweets" on his behalf, it is his personal account.

Oleinik did not respond to requests for comment from The Moscow Times.

Her blog does not reveal her political interests or what she thinks of the president. She does, however, follow presidential aide Arkady Dvorkovich on Twitter.

A Kremlin spokeswoman said Friday that she could not explain why Medvedev replied to Oleinik's message.

"Apparently, he decided to do so. I don't think there is any official explanation for it," the spokeswoman said on customary condition of anonymity.

Medvedev has more than 100,000 followers on his Russian-language Twitter [account](#), as well as more than 50,000 for his English-language [page](#), which is a translation of his Russian account.

Twitter shows countless messages addressed to @KremlinRussia, and the president has typed out nearly 300 tweets in Russian since the summer, when he opened his accounts at Twitter's headquarters during an official trip to the United States.

But Medvedev usually reserves direct messages for officials, such as California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger during his visit to Moscow earlier this month. In another instance, he [reminded](#) Kirov Governor Nikita Belykh following a Kremlin session on Aug. 31 that using Twitter during government meetings was distracting.

Other than Oleinik, Medvedev has responded to at least one other regular tweet — when Vladimir Solovykh, who uses [@tmftheone](#), asked Medvedev this month whether he "was real."

"I reply: definitely real," Medvedev tweeted back.

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