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Yandex Compiles Top Searches of 2010

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Russians will remember 2010 by the terrorist attacks in the Moscow metro, the record heatwave, and the dismissal of Mayor Yury Luzhkov, judging by the list of top search queries for the past year's events published by Yandex on Wednesday.

The annual list, which is based on queries for Yandex, the country's largest search engine with 64 percent of the market, does not include regular events like holidays and movie premieres.

Public's interest in Russia current events peaked in late March, with 1 million requests daily, when two suicide bombers set off explosives in the Moscow metro, killing 40 people, Yandex said in a statement.

The summer wildfires, which swept through more than 20 million hectares of forest, destroyed more than 2,000 houses and blanketed cities in acrid smog, came in second.

The record-breaking heatwave, which some experts said was responsible for a higher mortality rate in Moscow, was the year's third biggest topic, as Internet users rushed to their

computers to check forecasts and find out where to get air conditioners.

The Winter Olympics in Vancouver, where Russia had it's worst post-Soviet finish ever, came in fourth on the list, beating September's sacking of Luzhkov, which was the fifth most popular search topic among Yandex users in 2010. The embattled mayor was forgotten soon after his ouster, which kept Internet users' attention for an even shorter period than the dismal showing in Vancouver.

The relocation to a new address of Russia's most popular torrent tracker, which moved from Torrents.ru to Rutracker.org following a police crackdown in February, was longest running top search, generating 100,000 to 250,000 requests a month through September, Yandex said.

The list for 2009 did not separate regular and unique events, but swine flu and Michael Jackson's death led among one-time happenings, an analyst for Yandex told The Moscow Times by e-mail.

Yandex also attempted to predict what would interest Internet users in the coming year, with the traditional holidays, the selection of the host city for the 2018 Winter Olympics, the Eurovision contest finale and certain movie and video games releases topping the list of 2011's expected popular queries.

The company gave a monthly breakdown for its forecasts but excluded summer's last month, saying “it's best not to give predictions for August in Russia.” August is considered an unlucky month after it saw numerous accidents and calamities in recent years, from 1998's default to this year's heatwave and wildfires.

The total number of search queries in the Russian segment of the Internet surged 44 percent year on year in November to more than 2.5 billion requests, quintupling over the past three years, Liveinternet.ru reported Wednesday.

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