

Apple Considers First Moscow Store

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Apple is looking for space near the Kremlin so Medvedev won't have to go to California to get his next iPhone. **Dmitry Astakhov**

Apple is exploring the possibility of opening its first retail store in Moscow, according to media reports. The web site [ifoAppleStore.com](#) reported last week that an official Apple store could be coming to Moscow. According to the site, senior vice president of Apple's retail business Ron Johnson and vice president of real estate Bob Bridger visited the city last month.

The purpose of their visit was to review space for the new store. According to the web site, they settled on 1,500 square meters in the yet-to-be opened Hotel Moskva, but a lease agreement has not yet been signed.

The visit was confirmed by a source in one of the city's leading electronics retailers, as well as a real estate company. Apparently, Apple management visited several possible store sites.

According to one source, Apple has engaged Cushman & Wakefield as consultants for the retail space selection. A spokesman for Cushman & Wakefield declined to comment

to Vedomosti, as did a spokesman for Apple.

Apple is looking for space in the prestigious stretch from Okhotny Ryad to Pushkin Square, said Anna Savenko, deputy director at Jones Lang LaSalle. Savenko said the Apple Store could open later this year or in 2012. But another source pointed out that Apple currently only performs a corporate marketing function in Russia and in order to run its own retail outlet it would need to have the right to conduct full-scale business.

In addition, Apple usually opens stores in countries where it already operates its music service iTunes, said Anton Pantelyev, a spokesman for retailer M.Video, but there are no indications of that happening in Russia yet.

Eastern Europe is currently devoid of any Apple Stores, according to the ifoAppleStore.com web site, and the opening of its first store in Russia could signal a significant commitment to expanding growth in the region, similar to that of its plans for Asia. Currently the most eastern store in Europe is the recently opened Altmarkt-Galerie in Dresden, Germany. But beyond that there are no Apple stores in any of the 15 republics of the former Soviet Union.

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