

MegaFon Closes Online Texting After Leak

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July 19, 2011

The  Moscow Times

Cell phone operator MegaFon closed its online service to text messaging Tuesday following the leak of some 8,000 messages, just as bloggers reported a similar leak for the Russian Post's package tracker.

MegaFon, whose messages popped up in the cache of the Yandex search engine Monday, blamed Yandex, saying its browser toolbar might have caused the leak, RIA-Novosti [reported](#) Tuesday.

MegaFon deputy director Valery Yermakov dismissed earlier reports that his company's web site had failed to ban the indexing of private messages by search engines, saying that if that had been the case, the messages would have appeared on search engines other than Yandex.

But a source close to Yandex told The Moscow Times that the company was "surprised" by MegaFon's allegations. "The search engine cannot be blamed for doing its job," the source

said, who refused to be identified because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

A similar problem has struck the EMS Russian Post delivery service, whose data on parcel tracking, including the names and addresses of senders and shipment costs, could be fished out from the Yandex cache, prominent Internet expert Anton Nosik said on his blog Monday.

A Russian Post spokeswoman confirmed the leak Tuesday but said it had been resolved. "When problems are discovered, they are fixed immediately," she said by telephone.

It remained unclear whether MegaFon or Yandex would face any legal trouble from people whose information was compromised, but legal experts said there were grounds to sue.

Any MegaFon clients who sue over breach of privacy have a 90 percent chance of success and may win compensation of up to 60,000 rubles (\$2,100), said Lyudmila Shmagina, a senior lawyer with the Moscow Association of Lawyers.

"MegaFon should take responsibility," she said, Itar-Tass [reported](#).

The senders, however, have slim chances of winning any compensations because the online messaging service, which was closed "for reconstruction" as of Tuesday, does not store any information about those who send the messages, said mobile phone expert Eldar Murtazin.

"Senders are like people who drop a letter in your post box and walk away," Murtazin said by telephone Tuesday.

The Federal Mass Media Inspection Service said Tuesday that it was looking into the situation, following the lead of the Investigative Committee, which had opened a check Monday.

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