

Social Network Vkontakte Shut Down Groups Devoted to Suicide

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Amid a wave of media reports concerning teen suicide in Russia, social network Vkontakte has closed a number of groups dedicated to suicide-related topics, RIA-Novosti reported Thursday.

A spokesperson for the country's biggest social network by number of users said there is no directed effort against groups devoted to suicide but that it has closed some of them due to complaints about the groups from users.

Vkontakte competitor Facebook started a suicide prevention program on the American version of its site in December, RIA-Novosti reported.

Russian media outlets have reported a number of youth suicides in cities around the country in recent days after a pair of 8th-graders jumped to their death from the 16th floor of a Moscow region apartment building last week. After the incident, children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov recommended the creation of a federal program to address the problem of teen suicide.

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