

Medvedev Vows to Uphold Internet Freedom

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President Dmitry Medvedev speaking about Internet issues on a video blog posted online Wednesday.

President Dmitry Medvedev said Wednesday that Russia would not institute censorship on the Internet, calling such a move "impossible" and "senseless."

Medvedev, who has actively promoted an image of himself as being Internet-savvy, also said the Internet and social networks should be used to make government more transparent and to increase public participation in policy work, according to comments from a video blog posted on the Kremlin website and played Wednesday at an Internet commerce conference. As examples of work done in this area, Medvedev cited efforts made to create a user-friendly interface for soliciting public feedback on new laws and for the submission of policy ideas.

The Internet should be used "to expand citizens' participation in solving the most important issues, and to increase the quality of state governance," Medvedev said.

The president said the Internet must be policed for false information and for illegal materials, such as child pornography and the promotion of terrorism, but said the Internet in Russia will

not be censored.

"We're not talking and will not be talking about any kind of censorship on the Internet. That is impossible — I've said this on multiple occasions. It's simply senseless," Medvedev said.

Press freedom organization Reporters Without Borders last month listed Russia in its 2012 "Enemies of the Internet" report, naming the country as one "Under Surveillance," which means that the government has threatened Internet freedom. The report said Russia was included on the list because it "has used cyber-attacks and has arrested bloggers and netizens [Internet citizens] to prevent a real online political debate."

Russia has Europe's largest number of Internet users. Fifty-eight percent of Russians now use the Internet with some regularity, compared to 30 percent in 2008, according to the results of a survey published Wednesday by state-run pollster VTsIOM. The percentage of Russians who use the Internet daily has jumped to 38 percent from 11 percent in 2008.

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