

Deputies Propose Internet Blacklist

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Deputies from all four Duma factions are backing draft legislation to draw up an Internet blacklist that would restrict access to "harmful" online content.

The bill, which was proposed by a group of lawmakers from United Russia, the Communist Party, A Just Russia and the Liberal Democratic Party, envisages tasking a federal agency with creating and maintaining a unified state register of websites containing banned material, Kommersant reported.

Sites promoting child pornography, drug use and suicide are considered especially harmful under the new guidelines and could be immediately added to the blacklist. For all other cases, blocking content would require a court order.

Once harmful material is identified and entered into the register, web-hosting companies would be obliged to demand its deletion from the site's owners within 24 hours. If the material is not withdrawn, the hosting company must then block the site. As a fail-safe, service providers could step in if the hosting company fails to act.

Internet experts, however, doubted the effectiveness of the blacklist strategy.

"It's practically impossible [to regulate the Internet]. You see, the Internet develops far quicker than life. If today you ban a harmful site, tomorrow it will have moved to a new address," Natalya Kasperskaya, general director of software firm InfoWatch, told the business daily.

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