

News Sites Start Age Rating Their Content

By [Nikolaus von Twickel](#)

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"Анна Герман". 2-я серия **12+**
Ночные новости
Премьера сезона. "Без свидетелей" с участием Ксении Кутеповой, Андрея Ильина, Дарьи Мороз **16+**
"Борджиа". Новые серии **18+**
Премьера. Фильм "Далеко по соседству" **12+**
Новости
Фильм "Далеко по соседству". Окончание **12+**
Джеймс Вудс в комедии "Откровенный разговор" **12+**

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16:50
Первый документальный
Поединки. Похищение бомбы
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ПРЕМЬЕРЫ
3-6 сентября в 17:00
3 сентяб

Хранимые судьбой (12+)
Армен Джигарханян, Татьяна Янокова,
Давай пожен

Хочу на с
Давай пожен

Since a new media law took effect Sept. 1, small markers have appeared on major TV channels' websites marking the appropriate age group for each program. Above, part of a TV schedule on the website of state-run Channel One.

The country's new law on child protection caused a new round of major headaches for media outlets Monday when it became clear that the law obliges online news sites to set age limits for potentially harmful content.

Some big online news resources, including Gazeta.ru, Lenta.ru and Newsru.com, added an "18+" adult content warning to the bottom of their websites, meaning that access to these sites could be banned in public places, including Wi-Fi hot spots.

The law, which was signed by then-President Dmitry Medvedev in December 2010 and came into effect on Sept. 1, obliges radio and television stations to inform their audiences about each program's suitability for various age groups. It introduces limits of 6, 12, 16 and 18 years

and stipulates that media outlets classify the content themselves.

As a consequence, small advisories — sometimes in red — sprang up on major [TV channels' websites](#) denominating the appropriate [age group](#) for each program.

The law says that TV channels must display an age advisory, which must cover no less than 5 percent of the screen, for at least eight seconds at the beginning of any program affected, and it must be repeated after commercial breaks.

The law made headlines last week when it became known that TV channels might have to edit some children's cartoons, including Soviet classics and "The Simpsons," because they contain smoking and violence, which can be aired only after 11 p.m.

Alexander Zharov, the head of the Federal Mass Media Inspection Service, told Rossiiskaya Gazeta in an interview published Monday that radio stations playing music with explicit lyrics should broadcast corresponding age limits four times a day.

He [said](#) most print media and news agencies are exempt. But his spokesman, Vladimir Pikov, made it clear last week that online outlets registered separately with the watchdog will have to comply.

Most online media, which normally publish hundreds of news items per day, have decided to give a single advisory for their whole site — but with different outcomes. Thus, Komsomolskaya Pravda's site, Kp.ru, gave itself a "12+" rating, Vedomosti.ru added a "16+", and the sensationalist Lifenews.ru portal put up an 18+.

"There are just so many things unclear," said Vedomosti.ru editor Pavel Sukhov. "As a business publication, we hardly carry violent content, but what if we report about people dying in a flood disaster?"

He added that the law gives no guidelines about where to publish the age limit.

"What we do not like is that a single article defines the threshold for the whole publication," Sukhov said.

Vedomosti is published by Sanoma Independent Media, which is also the parent company of the Moscow Times.

Some newspapers, including The Moscow Times, Kommersant and Moskovsky Komsomolets, have not placed any advisories on their websites yet.

Experts said that while a 16+ advisory carries little consequences, an 18+ advisory entails that a site will have to be blocked in public places to protect children. Lawyers have argued that public access includes not only Internet cafes but public Wi-Fi hot spots.

"This can be quite harmful for a commercial news site," said Irina Levova of the Russian Association of Electronic Communication, and industry group.

Levova, who coordinates the association's Internet media commission, noted that the State Duma in July passed amendments to the law that exempt most websites. "Only sites

registered as media failed to get into this amendment," she said, adding that she had no explanation for this omission.

The commission is now in talks with the Federal Mass Media Inspection Service to implement additional amendments that would address those issues.

Meanwhile, some took the new rule with a dose of humor. The Regnum.ru news site said in a disclaimer that "this resource may contain (adult only) 18+ articles" but added another below saying, "This resource contains IQ135+ articles."

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