

Ministry Wants to Shield Kids From Public Wi-Fi

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 04, 2012



A recent proposal related to the new Internet-blocking law would prohibit access to public Wi-Fi for minors. **Maxim Stulov**

The Communications and Press Ministry has proposed banning children from using Wi-Fi networks in public, potentially making cafes, restaurants and other locations providing the service responsible for enforcing the law.

An official with the ministry's Federal Mass Media Inspection Service, known as Roskomnadzor, said the ban should apply to people under 18 years old.

Locations providing Wi-Fi access would be held legally responsible for implementing the rule, and failing to meet the proposed measure would result in a fine ranging from 20,000 rubles to 50,000 rubles (\$640 to \$1,600), Vedomosti [reported](#) Thursday.

In Moscow alone, thousands of cafes, fast-food outlets and restaurants, as well as many

parks, shopping malls and hotels, have Wi-Fi networks, which let laptop and handheld-computer users go online without a cable or modem.

Maxim Ksenzov, one of the watchdog's deputy directors, announced the plan at a Wednesday conference with Internet media representatives, Vedomosti reported, citing participants in the conference.

Ksenzov said the proposal is tied to the Internet restriction law that goes into effect Nov. 1, allowing the government to block Web pages that fit the law's definition of material harmful to child welfare.

Under that law, the government can force websites, website-hosting companies and Internet service providers to block offending sites.

Watchdog spokesman Vladimir Pikov [told](#) RIA-Novosti the service hasn't decided whether Wi-Fi providers or owners of businesses offering their own Wi-Fi would be responsible under the law.

Citizens are no longer considered minors in Russia when they reach the age of 18, but people can obtain permission from regional authorities to marry at 16 and can get a motorcycle license at that age.

At national cafe chain Shokoladnitsa, "there are no methods at present that make it possible to identify the age of users logging on to the free Wi-Fi in our shops," said Gennady Sbytov, the company's vice president for information technology.

"We see a solution to the [broader] issue in restricting access to certain web portals, in accordance with the law, for all guests," he said by e-mail. "That way, Wi-Fi access would remain available."

Sbytov said any Wi-Fi restriction at Shokoladnitsa would happen only if required by law.

Also affected by the proposal would be other major food chains providing free Wi-Fi, such as Subway, McDonald's and Kofe Khaus.

Related articles:

- [Channel Will Edit 'Simpsons' to Comply With Media Law](#)
- [Working Group Supports Closing Entire Websites](#)
- [News Sites Start Age Rating Their Content](#)

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/10/04/ministry-wants-to-shield-kids-from-public-wi-fi-a18299>