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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Election Webcams Lead Yandex Searches

By Rachel Nielsen

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Bigger than the releases of an Apple iPad computer and the Star Wars version of "Angry Birds," the live videos of ballot boxes and bundled-up voters on the government's elections-monitoring website topped one of Yandex's search lists in 2012.

Among product releases, scientific discoveries and other firsts this year, the one that drew the most queries in Yandex's search engine was the introduction of Webvybory2012.ru, the Internet giant said Monday.

The website featured live feeds of many of the country's polling stations — more than 91,000 of them — during the March 4 presidential election.

Run by telecommunications company Rostelecom, the website aired nonstop footage of each polling place. The measure was in response to allegations of fraud caught on video during State Duma elections in December 2011. Critics say some cameras recorded similar violations

in March.

Also among the 10 most-searched firsts were three technological debuts. Those were Microsoft's Windows 8 operating system, Apple's iPad 3 tablet computer and the Apple iPhone 5, which is scheduled for release in Russia on Friday and appeared as No. 2 on the list.

Third was the Higgs boson, a landmark discovery in physics, while "Innocence of Muslims," the amateurish short film about the Prophet Muhammad that triggered deadly riots in Muslim countries, was fifth.

Among Yandex searches for various events this year, the presidential elections again came in at No. 1, while the end of the world was only No. 10.

Dec. 21, 2012, is the date that the Mayan calendar gives for a cataclysmic finish to human existence, according to some interpretations.

Other occasions making the top 10 events researched on Yandex included the Summer Olympics in London, the European Football Championship in Ukraine and the Eurovision Song Contest, in which a group of elderly women from Udmurtia performed a folk song in costume.

Movie actress Marina Golub, 54, who was killed in a car crash in October, was the most-researched woman. American pop singer Whitney Houston, 48, who died suddenly in February, generated the second-highest number of searches.

A gaggle of English words dominated the "What is...?" and "Who is...?" categories, with Russians using Yandex to find out the definitions of hipster, supervisor and freelancer.

Yandex counts phrases and finds out which of them point to the most popular topics, spokeswoman Yekaterina Karnaukhova said.

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