

MTS Proposes Licensing for Skype

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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MTS vice president Ruslan Ibragimov has complained to the Federal Mass Media Inspection Service and the Communications and Press Ministry about the lack of regulation being applied to Internet-based communication services such as Skype, Vedomosti reported Monday.

Ibragimov suggested that the regulators check that Skype and other providers of "over-the-top services" are complying with the licensing requirements and define them as market players.

OTT service providers do not invest in the development of infrastructure, despite using phone networks created and developed by regular phone operators, Mobile TeleSystems spokesperson Irina Agarkova said.

According to Agarkova, creating conditions for joint construction and development of communication networks could solve the problem and MTS will continue to pursue a policy of cooperation with online service providers.

Representatives of two other major communications providers, VimpelCom and MegaFon, said both companies shared MTS's position, but had not addressed it formally.

Meanwhile, the owners of major OTT services Microsoft and Google declined to comment on the issue.

The Popularity of OTT services has been growing steadily in recent years in Russia.

A recent poll conducted by AC&M Consulting showed that 18 percent of mobile phone owners use Skype, while two-thirds of mobile phone subscribers in big cities had made phone calls over the Internet.

Experts say that although the share of OTT services in overall voice-traffic constitutes only 1-2 percent, the situation will change quickly as Skype and similar services such as WhatsApp and Google Talk gradually take over not just voice traffic, but text messaging services as well.

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