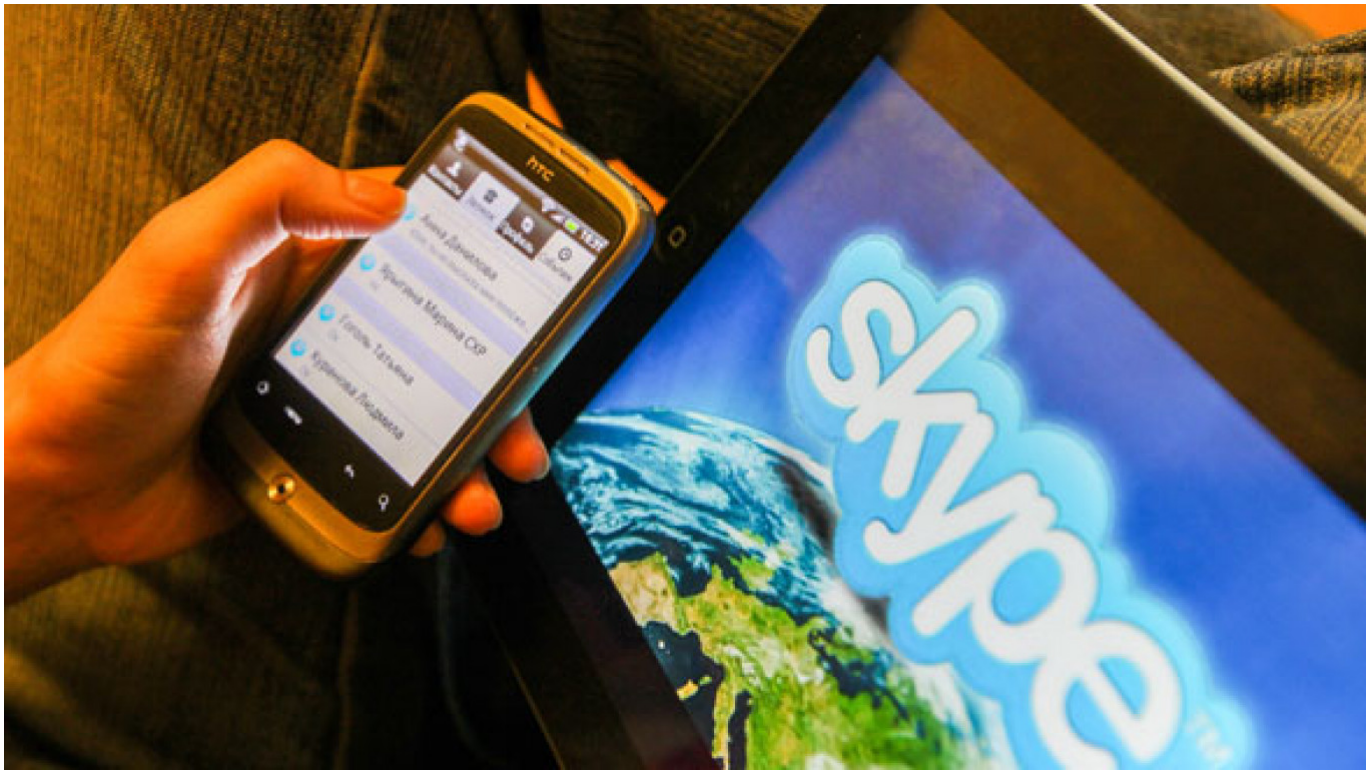
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Skype Agrees to Share Information With Russian Authorities

By The Moscow Times

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Information about Russians using Skype will be shared with authorities if the Duma passes its anti-terror bill. **Maxim Stulov**

Microsoft said it will share information about the Russian users of its Skype service with law-enforcement agencies, if recent legislation requiring it to do so is approved.

The U.S. software giant said it would comply with "any" laws that Russia adopts, including any requirements to provide information about the local users of its Skype voice-over-IP (VoIP) and online messaging service, Itar-Tass reported, citing a written statement from the company.

Amendments to anti-terrorism laws that would oblige online communication service providers to store for six months "information about the reception, transferring, delivery and processing of voice information, written texts, images, sounds and any activities made by the users," and to supply that information to government agencies, were introduced to the

State Duma on Wednesday by a group of deputies led by United Russia lawmaker Irina Yarovaya.

The specifics of which data would be recorded and shared was to be determined later by the government, if the bill is adopted.

The bill comes in the aftermath of a series of terror attacks in the southern Russian city of Volgograd last month and tightening security in the run-up to the Sochi Winter Olympics in February.

Compliance with the legislation will not be without cost. Russia's leading search engine Yandex, which will also be affected by the proposed legislation, said storing large amounts of detailed information about online users would require additional software and labor from website operators and online service providers, Interfax reported.

"The bill envisages storing for six months information about virtually all the activities of the users. Only weather forecasts and television program listings might be exempt from the new rules," a Yandex spokesperson said.

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