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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Officials Boycotting Apple Products Amidst U.S. Surveillance Concerns

March 27, 2014



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Government officials have swapped their iPads for Samsung tablets in an effort to prevent U.S. electronic eavesdropping, the communications minister said.

The disappearance of iPads from Cabinet meetings was unrelated to sanctions that followed Russia's annexation of Crimea, but was caused by "purely technical" security considerations, Communications and Mass Media Minister Nikolai Nikiforov said, RBC reported on Wednesday.

The switch "took place not very long ago," he added.

Samsung was an official laptop at the Sochi Olympics, while iPads were not particularly welcome, with Games employees covering up the Apple logo on visitors' laptops to prevent ambush marketing.

Following a Wall Street Journal report about an increased U.S. interest in spying on Russia after the Crimea crisis, Nikiforov said in an Instagram message on Monday that "U.S. security services have put an end to the further use of U.S. computer software and hardware in Russian government and related sectors."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/03/27/russian-officials-boycotting-apple-products-amidst-us-surveillance-concerns-a33383