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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Website Creates List of Top 20 'Anti-Russian' News Sources

By Christopher Brennan

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The Dozhd television studio before a press conference on the situation at the channel.

Media outlets Ekho Moskvy, Dozhd and Novaya Gazeta are the most "anti-Russian" news sources, according to a computer algorithm developed by a pro-Kremlin website.

Politonline.ru formulated its list of the top 20 "anti-Russian" daily news sites operating in Russia based on how often they use certain politicians' names and other key words together with an analysis of the positivity or negativity of their tone.

The site's "lexical and semantic content analysis" was conducted from Feb. 28 to March 31, covering a large part of Russia's build up to and annexation of the Black Sea Crimea region last month. Words like "Anschluss," "annexation" and "isolation" were deemed negative and anti-Russian when used in connection to Russian policy, while using words like "unification" and "support for Crimea" were considered to be positive and pro-Russian.

The sites, which include some of the most well respected Russian newspapers and websites like Kommersant and Vedomosti, were then given points based on their perceived negative attitude to Kremlin policy and support of "the U.S. position and 'the new authorities' of Ukraine and the Maidan."

Alexander Dugin, a conservative Eurasianist and a political adviser to Russian leaders, reposted the top 20 on his Facebook page, saying that it provided a list of media outlets that should be closed or blocked.

Though Dugin oscillates between being considered an influential voice in Russian politics and being regarded as a wildly-bearded fringe figure, media outlets — including those that fell on the Politonline list — have been under increasing pressure in 2014.

Dozhd television channel, which is known for its independent coverage of politics, was dropped by Russia's major cable operators earlier this year after it incensed the more conservative sections of Russian society with a poll it ran about World War II. The resulting lack of revenue led Dozhd to appeal to viewers for support in a fundraising drive last week, which reportedly raised more than $1.5 million.

Last month, Galina Timchenko, editor-in-chief of the popular news site Lenta.ru, was fired and replaced by a pro-Kremlin editor after publishing an interview with a Ukrainian nationalist leader, a move that has created a noticeable shift in Lenta's editorial slant.

The Top 20

1. Ekho Moskvy

2. Dozhd TV

3. Novaya Gazeta

4. The New Times

5. Newsru.com

6. Radio Freedom/Radio Liberty

7. RIA Novy Region

8. Slon.ru

9. RBK and RBK Daily

10. Vedomosti

11. Snob

12. Rosbalt

13. Grani.ru

14. Ezhednevny Zhurnal

15. Lenta.ru

16. Kommersant

17. Russky Zhurnal

18. Forbes Russia

19. Znak.com

20. Moskovskiye Novosti

Contact the author at c.brennan@imedia.ru Follow him on Twitter for updates — @CKozalBrennan and @MoscowTimes

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