

'Kitten Bloggers' to Be Exempt From New Russian Blogging Law

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Bloggers who simply 'post kitten pics' won't be held to stricter standards.

Russia's newly tightened regulations for popular bloggers will be applied highly selectively, a senior governmental official has said.

The law, which comes into effect on Aug. 1, obliges bloggers with a daily audience upward of 3,000 unique visitors to register with the state and disclose their identities.

Popular bloggers will also have to follow the state laws governing mass media — i.e. avoid false information and expletives, and post no porn or extremist materials — though they get none of the media's rights.

Disobedient bloggers could face blacklisting by the Federal Mass Media Inspection Service.

However, the majority of Russian bloggers will not be asked to register, the watchdog's deputy director Maxim Ksenzov said, Lenta.ru reported Tuesday.

"If you post kitten pics, speak in a civilized manner and publish no classified information, you

may never be required [to register], even if you have a daily audience of 1 million visitors," Ksenzov said.

He did not elaborate on which bloggers would be required to register.

The law's numerous critics have claimed it could be used for political persecution.

In March, Ksenzov's agency blacklisted access to the highly popular LiveJournal blog of anti-corruption crusader and opposition leader Alexei Navalny, accusing him of promoting mass riots.

Russia has radically tightened Internet regulations since the outbreak of grassroots anti-Kremlin protests in 2011 to 2013, which were coordinated online, including by Navalny.

Ksenzov also spoke in May of a possible ban in Russia on Twitter and Facebook, though that earned him a rebuke from Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

See also:

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