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# Russia Asks Facebook, Google, Twitter to Comply With Law on Data Storage

By The Moscow Times

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If Google, Facebook or Twitter "do not obey with the demands of the Russian law, they will be subjected to administrative sanctions."

Russia's media watchdog has sent notifications to Google, Facebook and Twitter, demanding they register as "organizers of information distribution" under a law that experts say paves the way for banning the few remaining platforms of free speech in the country.

Maxim Ksenzov, deputy chief of the Roskomnadzor watchdog, said his agency would "force [the three Internet companies] one way or the other to obey the law," the Izvestia newspaper reported Friday.

In accordance with the law, websites and online services registered as "organizers of information distribution" are required to keep information about their Russian users on servers located inside the country.

Ksenzov said his media watchdog agency was "in no particular hurry" to force the three Internet giants to comply with the new law, Izvestia reported. Under a new deadline set Wednesday by the State Duma, the companies have until the end of this year to register with Roskomnadzor — more than a year earlier than the original date.

If Google, Facebook or Twitter "do not obey with the demands of the Russian law, they will be subjected to administrative sanctions," Ksenzov told Izvestia. "Those three resources must make a decision about placing their data centers in Russia, and about the law on bloggers."

The so-called bloggers' law, part of the same legislative package, requires bloggers whose pages receive more than 3,000 visitors per day to register as mass media and comply with a strict set of requirements — similarly to Russia's newspapers or television stations, but without any of the professional media's rights.

Ksenzov did not specify what kind of "administrative sanctions" Russia may apply to foreign Internet companies for a failure to comply, but the head of legal services at Russia's domain name registration center, Sergei Kopylov, told Izvestia that a fine "would not be the main thing."

"If websites do not register, Roskomnadzor has the right to send them a second notice demanding they rectify the violation within 15 days," he was quoted as saying. "Otherwise, the agency has the right to blacklist the online platform — that is, to block it from access by Russian Web users."

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