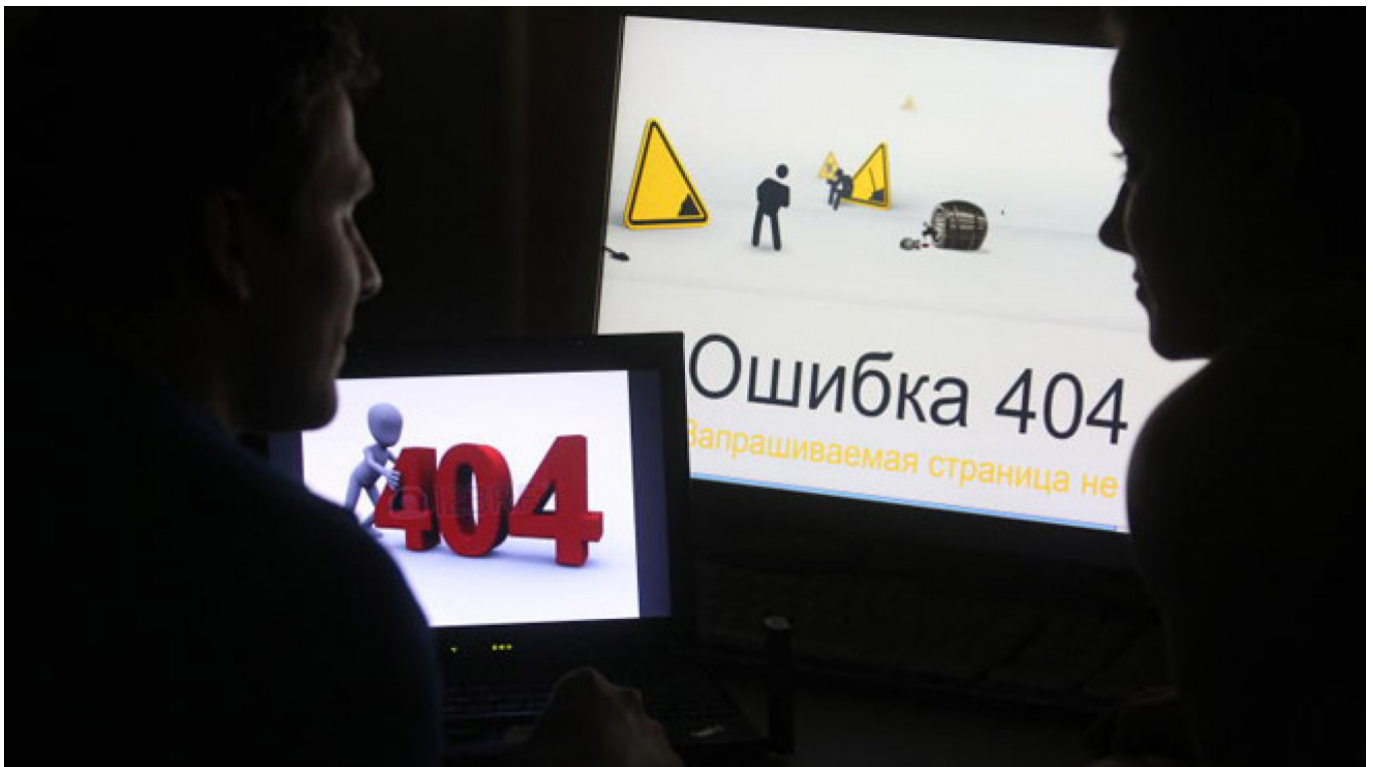


Majority of Russians Endorse Internet Censorship

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Russia has ramped up its regulation of the Internet since late 2011, when record-breaking anti-Kremlin street protests broke out in Moscow, driven mostly by tech-savvy netizens.

The majority of the Russian population supports a curb on Internet freedoms in theory, a new study showed Tuesday.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents in a new poll by the independent Levada Center said the World Wide Web had enough dangerous websites to mandate censorship. Another 31 percent were against it, and 16 percent were undecided.

Russians' approval of Internet censorship decreasing: A similar poll in 2012 found that 63 percent of respondents supported restrictions of online freedoms.

In the more recent poll, which was carried out from Sept. 26 to 29 among 1,630 adults across the country and had a margin of error of 3.4 percent, only 15 percent said they would support a hypothetical bill limiting access to the global Internet in Russia. Thirty-seven percent were against the idea, and the rest were uninterested.

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The country's leadership was recently reported to be holding a closed meeting to discuss Russia's possible disconnection from the global Internet. A Kremlin spokesman said it was to draft a contingency plan in case Russia's enemies cut off its segment of the Web from the rest of the world.

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