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Russian Schoolchildren to Get Crash Course on Web Security

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The lessons on Web security are intended to make Russian students aware of some of the "threats that come from the Internet, the Education and Science Ministry said.

Russian schools will hold lessons on Web security this week, teaching children about spam messages and malware as well as how to recognize "malicious information" they might come across online.

The lessons, to be offered at all of Russia's school between Monday and Thursday, are intended to make students aware of some of the "threats that come from the Internet," according to recommendations posted on the Education and Science Ministry website.

Topics include common online problems such as spam, malware, cyber-bullying, privacy issues and copyright violations, according to the description. In a separate part of the lesson, students will be asked to identify "malicious information" presented in some undisclosed examples.

The ministry's statement did not elaborate on what might constitute malicious information,

but the assignment comes amid claims by officials and state-run media that Western news reports are harmful to Russia, and on the heels of President Vladimir Putin's assertion Friday that U.S. policies are "against our interests."

A number of prominent Russian websites have already been blocked this year, in what critics say is evidence of a clampdown on independent online media for their criticism of government policy.

In March, the media regulator blocked access to opposition news site Grani.ru as well as the Live Journal blogging account of opposition member Alexei Navalny, who had used the site to publish exposes on the supposed corruption of Russian officials.

Meanwhile, Russia's media watchdog earlier this month handed an extremism warning to opposition website Novaya Gazeta — tipped by some as a possible Novel Peace Prize contender for its reporting on the Ukraine crisis — after it published an article likening the policies of Russian lawmakers to those of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

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