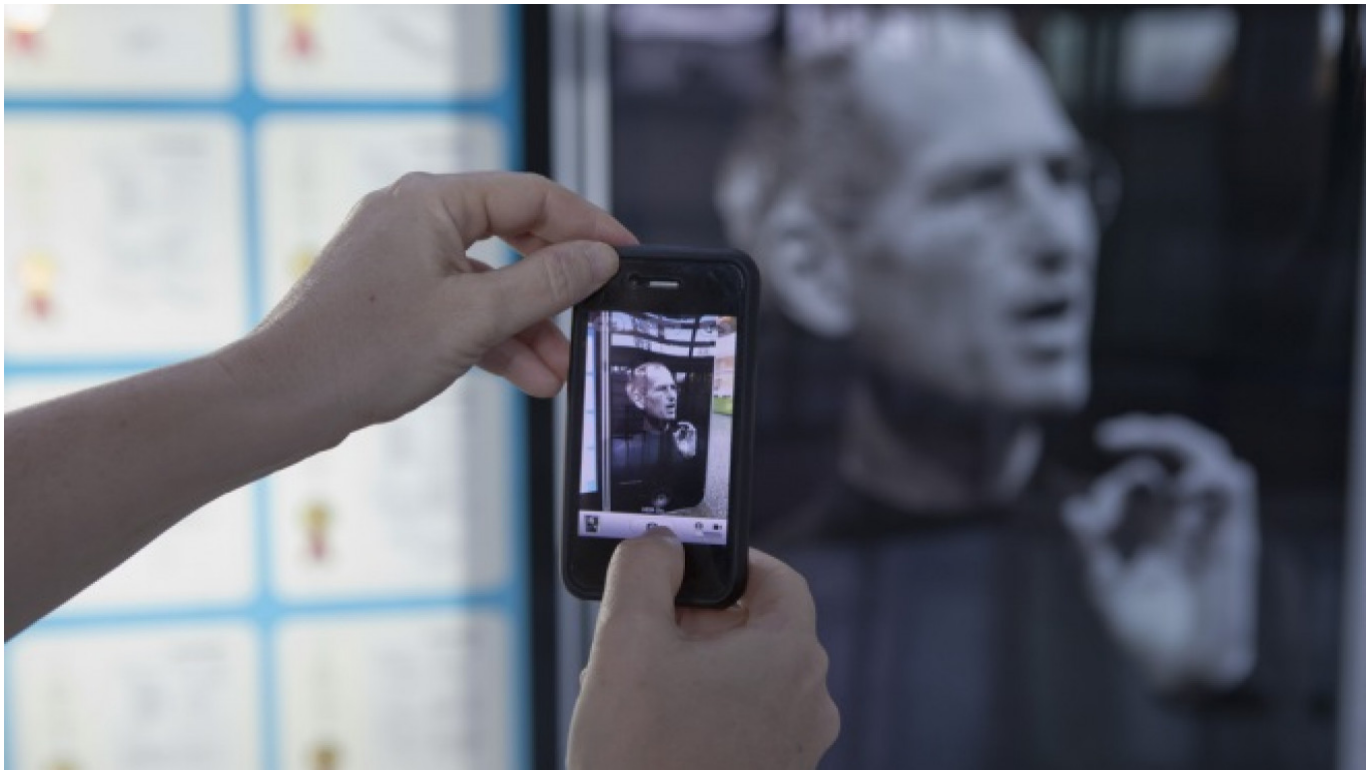
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Russian Memorial to Apple Founder Dismantled After CEO Says He's Gay

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A memorial to Steve Jobs has been dismantled in St. Petersburg after Tim Cook who succeeded him at the helm of the company came out as gay.

A memorial to Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs has been dismantled in St. Petersburg after the man who succeeded him at the helm of the company, Tim Cook, came out as gay.

The two-meter-high monument, in the shape of an iPhone, was erected outside a St. Petersburg college in January 2013 by a Russian group of companies called ZEFS.

Citing the need to abide by a law combating "gay propaganda," ZEFS said in a statement on Monday that the memorial had been removed on Friday — the day after Apple CEO Cook had announced he was homosexual.

"In Russia, gay propaganda and other sexual perversions among minors are prohibited by law," ZEFS said, noting that the memorial had been "in an area of direct access for young students and scholars."

"After Apple CEO Tim Cook publicly called for sodomy, the monument was taken down to abide by the Russian federal law protecting children from information promoting denial of traditional family values."

Promoting "traditional values," President Vladimir Putin last year signed a law prohibiting the spread of "gay propaganda" among minors.

Putin says there is no discrimination against gay people in Russia and the law was needed only to protect young people, although members of the gay community say its passage has increased problems for them.

ZEFS — or West European Financial Union — groups companies offering a range of products and services in areas such as real estate, construction, advertising and microfinancing.

Cook said he had decided to come out to help move forward civil rights, confirming a fact that had been widely known in the Silicon Valley tech community but was rarely discussed.

Steve Jobs, who died in 2011, was not gay.

Vitaly Milonov, a St. Petersburg legislator who has campaigned against gay rights and was among legislators behind the law signed by Putin, has called for Apple's CEO to be prohibited from entering Russia, Russian media have reported.

Maxim Dolgopolov, the head of ZEFS who ordered the removal of the monument, expressed opposition to personal sanctions in Monday's statement, but supported the "protection of traditional values" by law.

"Sin should not become the norm. There is nothing to do in Russia for whose who intend to violate our laws," he said.

The "gay propaganda" law caused outrage and protests in the West, particularly in the run-up to the Winter Olympics hosted by Putin in the Black Sea resort of Sochi in February.

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