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Google Pulling Engineers Out of Russia Amid Tightening Control, Report Says

By The Moscow Times

December 12, 2014



Google will shutter its engineering operations in Russia.

U.S. Internet giant Google will shutter its engineering operations in Russia and transfer staff to offices outside the country after Moscow tightened data storage requirements for Internet firms, the company told media on Friday.

Google, which employs over 50 engineers in Russia, has declined to confirm how many employees will be moved or why they have chosen to close their Russian engineering operations.

Moscow has moved to clamp down on Internet companies amid Western sanctions over Ukraine and fears of U.S. spying following leaks by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. Russia earlier this year passed legislation requiring Internet companies to store personal data on Russian citizens inside the country. The law comes into force next year.

Despite pulling back its staff, Google plans to increase investment in Russia, where e-commerce is booming as access to the web spreads across the country's 140 million population.

According to The Wall Street Journal, Google may retain some sales and support personnel in Russia.

Google said in a statement: "We are deeply committed to our Russian users and customers, and we have a dedicated team in Russia working to support them."

Google claims nearly a third of Russia's search market, about half the share of local provider Yandex.

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