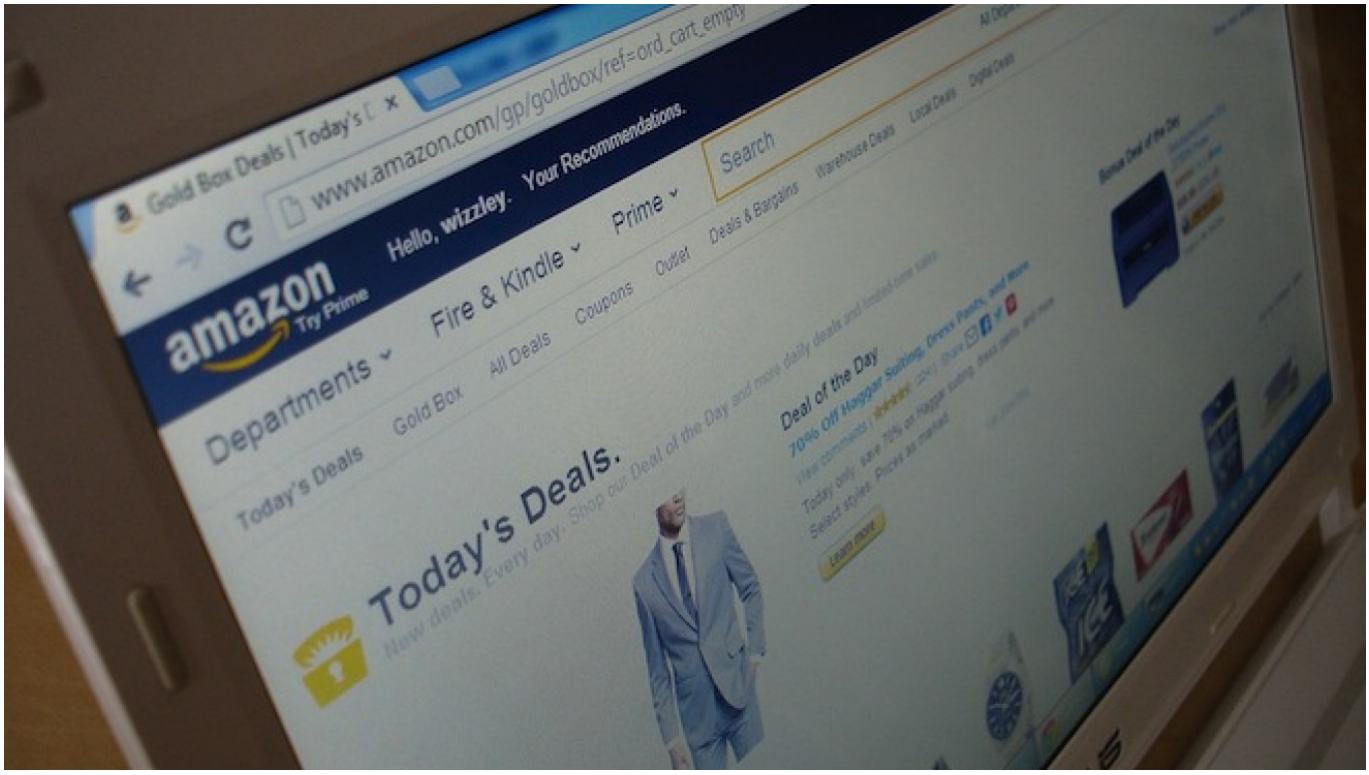
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Amazon Leaves Crimea Over U.S. Sanctions on Russia

By The Moscow Times

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Amazon has asked Crimean users to shut down their accounts.

E-commerce giant Amazon has asked Crimean users to shut down their accounts within a week due to U.S. sanctions on the region, which Russia annexed from Ukraine last year, local news agency Kryminform reported late last week.

"Due to economic sanctions recently announced by the United States government ... you must remove all resources from AWS [Amazon Web Services] and close your AWS account by 12 a.m. PST, Friday, February 13, 2015," a copy of the letter posted on the outlet's website said.

Amazon did not respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Major U.S. companies have been leaving the region one by one since U.S. President Barack Obama in December followed the European Union in declaring a ban on the export of goods, technology and services to Crimea.

"[The order] is intended to provide clarity to U.S. corporations doing business in the region and reaffirm that the United States will not accept Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea," Obama said in a statement.

Russia's seizure of the peninsula in March set off a political maelstrom whose impact is still being felt in the sanctions-struck Russian economy and Ukraine's war-torn eastern regions.

U.S. tech giant Apple was reported to have severed ties with Crimea-based app developers and cut off sales of its products there in late January. The company has repeatedly declined official comment.

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