

Russian Social Media Site VKontakte Faces U.S. Blacklist... Again

February 10, 2015

The  Moscow Times

The International Intellectual Property Alliance has recommended that the U.S. government declare Russia's most popular social network, VKontakte, a piracy website for at least the third year in a row, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Tuesday.

The website, commonly called "Russia's Facebook," might again appear on the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative's blacklist along with social network Odnoklassniki and torrent site Rutracker.org, the report said.

Internet piracy remains widespread in Russia despite the government's obligation to combat it after joining the World Trade Organization in 2012.

VKontakte, which is Russia's second most popular website after Russian-language search engine Yandex, has 88 million domestic members. It is owned by the Mail.ru Group, the report said.

Russia is a primary concern among countries breaching intellectual property rights, along

with China, India, Indonesia and Thailand, the newspaper reported.

But a blight on VKontakte's reputation might not lead to it being blocked completely because the site is reportedly trying to implement necessary measures to prevent piracy.

The Russian government earlier suggested charging VKontakte users a fixed amount of money to gain access to copyrighted content.

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