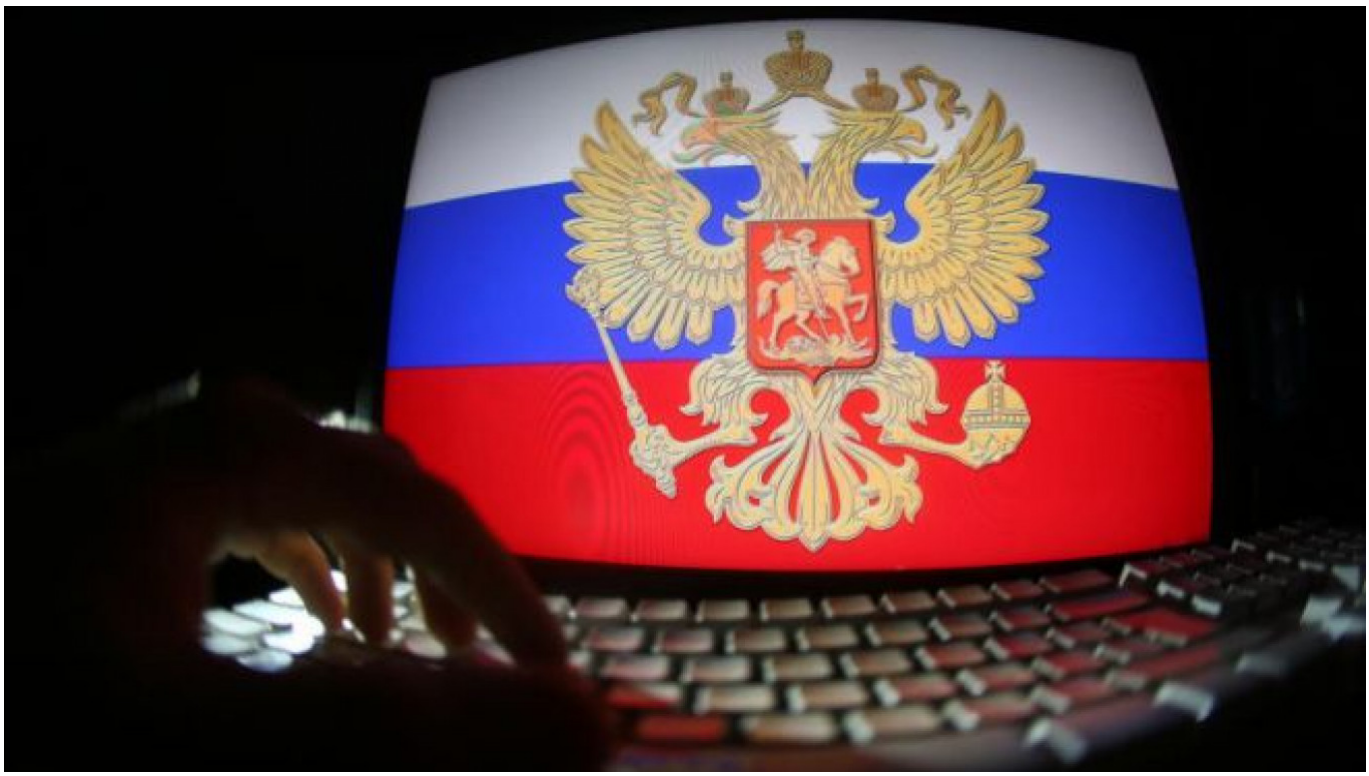
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Internet Privacy Bill Gets Initial Approval in Russian Assembly

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The bill seeks to emulate European Union rules on the "right to be forgotten", under which search engines must take down certain results that appear under a search of a person's name.

Russian parliament gave initial approval on Tuesday to a law that would require Internet search sites to remove outdated or irrelevant personal information from search results on request from users.

The bill, passed by the State Duma lower house in its first reading, seeks to emulate European Union rules on the "right to be forgotten", under which search engines must take down certain results that appear under a search of a person's name.

The regulation has sparked a debate over censorship issues because Web firms have to make judgment calls on individual cases, balancing rights to personal privacy against the freedom of information.

Yandex , Russia's biggest search engine, has said it does not want to have to decide whether information is unreliable and fears the law will be misused as users would not have to provide

a court order, evidence or justification.

"The limitations introduced by this bill reflect an imbalance between private and public interests. This bill impedes people's access to important and reliable information, or makes it impossible to obtain such information," the company said.

Unlike the EU legislation, the Russian bill would force search engines to erase information about a person even if it is in the public interest. Failure to comply could result in a fine.

Google in Russia declined comment.

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