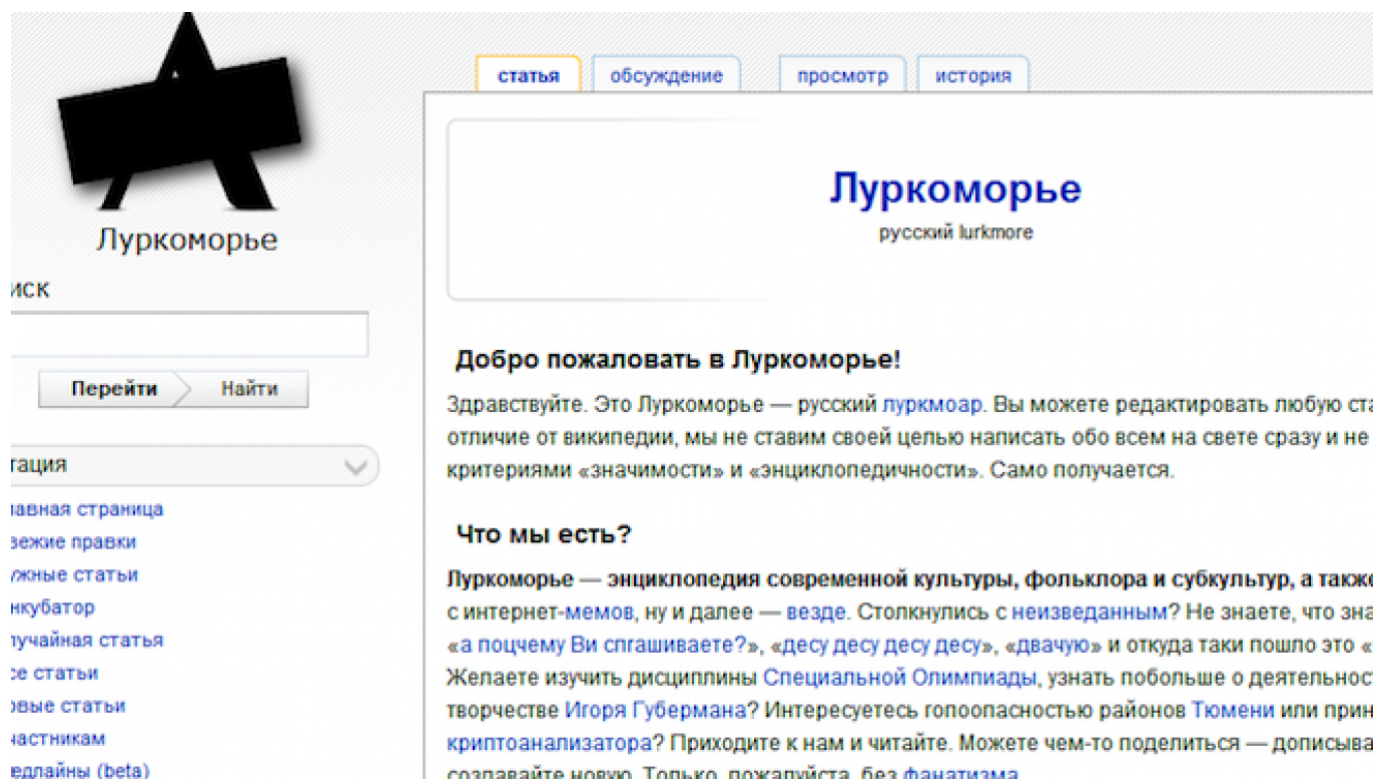


Beleaguered Lurkmore Website to Suspend Operations Amid Trouble With Russian Authorities

June 22, 2015



A screenshot of Russian-language online encyclopedia Lurkmore.

Russian Internet resource Lurkmore is suspending operations and will switch to “a regime of conservation and cultural commemoration,” founder Dmitry Khomak announced on Facebook on Monday.

The move follows a spate of recent issues Lurkmore — which describes itself as an “encyclopedia of folklore and sub-culture” — has had with Russian media watchdog Roskomnadzor, Lenta.ru reported.

According to Lenta.ru, Lurkmore was founded by Khomak in 2007.

Khomak specified that his decision doesn't mean a total closure of Lurkmore. “It's obviously not the end of the project. It's the end of a wonderful era for all of us,” he wrote in the post.

The site has been the object of close examination by Russian authorities in recent years. Last

April, Lurkmore was asked to take down a page featuring unsanctioned images of Russian singer Valery Syutkin, Lenta.ru reported. Also, according to Lenta.ru, in 2014 Roskomnadzor blacklisted five pages on the site for carrying information on drugs and threatened to block the site altogether. Subsequently, Lurkmore complied with the watchdog's request to delete the pages.

In 2012, two articles published on the website led to its temporary listing in the country's official registry of forbidden sites for propaganda of narcotics, the news site added.

Khomak explained on Facebook that his decision to freeze the site was significantly affected by the recent designation of science non-profit Dynasty as a “foreign agent.” “If they destroyed them [Dynasty] without even looking, then they are certainly not going to miss us,” Khomak said on Facebook in answer to a comment by another user. He also mentioned that he is currently facing personal financial difficulties.

In his post, Khomak also expressed disappointment at the lack of coverage of recent censorship cases — including those involving Lurkmore — by the Russian media. “Between autumn and spring it has become clear that we no longer have a [free] press. No one took notice of [web-based hosting service] Github getting blocked,” he wrote on Facebook. “The press paid attention at the beginning of the story with Syutkin, but not to its end.”

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