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Head of Russian State-Run News Agency 'Blocked' From Facebook, Instagram

By Jennifer Monaghan

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Kiselyov said that his Facebook page was taken down by the site's administrators.

Dmitry Kiselyov, the firebrand director of state-run news agency Rossiya Segodnya, opened accounts on popular social networks Facebook and Instagram over the weekend, only to find they had both been blocked within a matter of hours, the Kommersant business daily reported Saturday.

Kiselyov, who is known for his vociferous anti-Western and socially conservative views, promised in one of his first posts on Facebook to use the popular social network as a platform to "discuss everything from radioactive dust" to the LGBT community, according to Kommersant.

That post referenced two of Kiselyov's most controversial moments as a journalist. Last year, he asserted in a television broadcast that Russia could turn the United States into "radioactive dust" if it had to. He also once famously said the hearts of gay people that died in car crashes

should be burned to avoid the possibility of organ donation, saying these organs were "unsuitable for extending the life of another."

But just a few hours after Kiselyov launched his accounts on Facebook and Instagram, they were taken offline, he said via Russian social media site VKontakte, where he also opened an account later Saturday.

As of Sunday afternoon, anyone trying to access his Facebook or Instagram accounts was greeted with a sign saying that they were inaccessible.

Kiselyov said that his Facebook page was taken down by the site's administrators, adding that he had been consistently blocked from logging back into the site.

"The page was unexpectedly deleted. Attempts to restore it by the recommended methods — confirming one's identity via one's mobile phone and even sending in [a copy of one's] passport — did not work," he said in a VKontakte post.

Not everyone has taken Kiselyov's version of events at face value. The BBC's Russian service reported an alternative version of events Saturday, claiming that Kiselyov had deleted his Facebook profile voluntarily after receiving hundreds of abusive messages within the space of a few hours.

Meanwhile, Kiselyov's Instagram page suffered a similar fate to his Facebook profile after he uploaded several photos from Crimea, where he is currently vacationing, Kiselyov said via VKontakte.

It was not immediately clear why Kiselyov, who once called social media "a waste of time," decided to open up an account on Facebook before creating an account on Russian analogue VKontakte.

In an open letter published Saturday by RIA Novosti, Kiselyov said his experiment with American social networking sites was now over.

Contact the author at j.monaghan@imedia.ru

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