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Putin's New Internet Adviser Reportedly Former Owner of Illegal Torrent Website

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Russian President Vladimir Putin's newly appointed Internet adviser has links to an illegal torrent website, the business daily Vedomosti reported Monday.

German Klimenko is the former owner of Torrnado.ru — a torrent website offering illegal downloads of movies and series, Vedomosti said, citing two of the well-known Internet entrepreneur's "acquaintances."

The business was handed over to Klimenko's son when he took up his government position, the report said, citing one acquaintance.

Klimenko told the Russian News Service that he was not the owner of Torrnado "in a legal sense," saying it was owned by the Eco PC company and added the service was not illegal.

"There is a procedure that is absolutely legal: [when] copyright holders contact us, we remove [the content,]" he was cited as saying, without specifying his own role in the company.

Although hugely popular in Russia, torrent websites and sharing websites are illegal

according to Russian anti-piracy legislation. One of Russia's most popular torrent tracker websites, Rutracker.org, was closed down late last year.

New to the job, Klimenko has already made a name for himself as someone who is happy to turn a blind eye to online copyright infringements.

Klimenko recently told the Rossia-24 television channel that persecuting torrent websites during an economic crisis was useless, the Prime news agency reported.

“When the [economic] situation is so grave, I think you shouldn't unnecessarily terrorize people with such questions,” he said.

Klimenko is also the owner of blogging platform Liveinternet and social media monitoring website Mediametrics.ru.

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