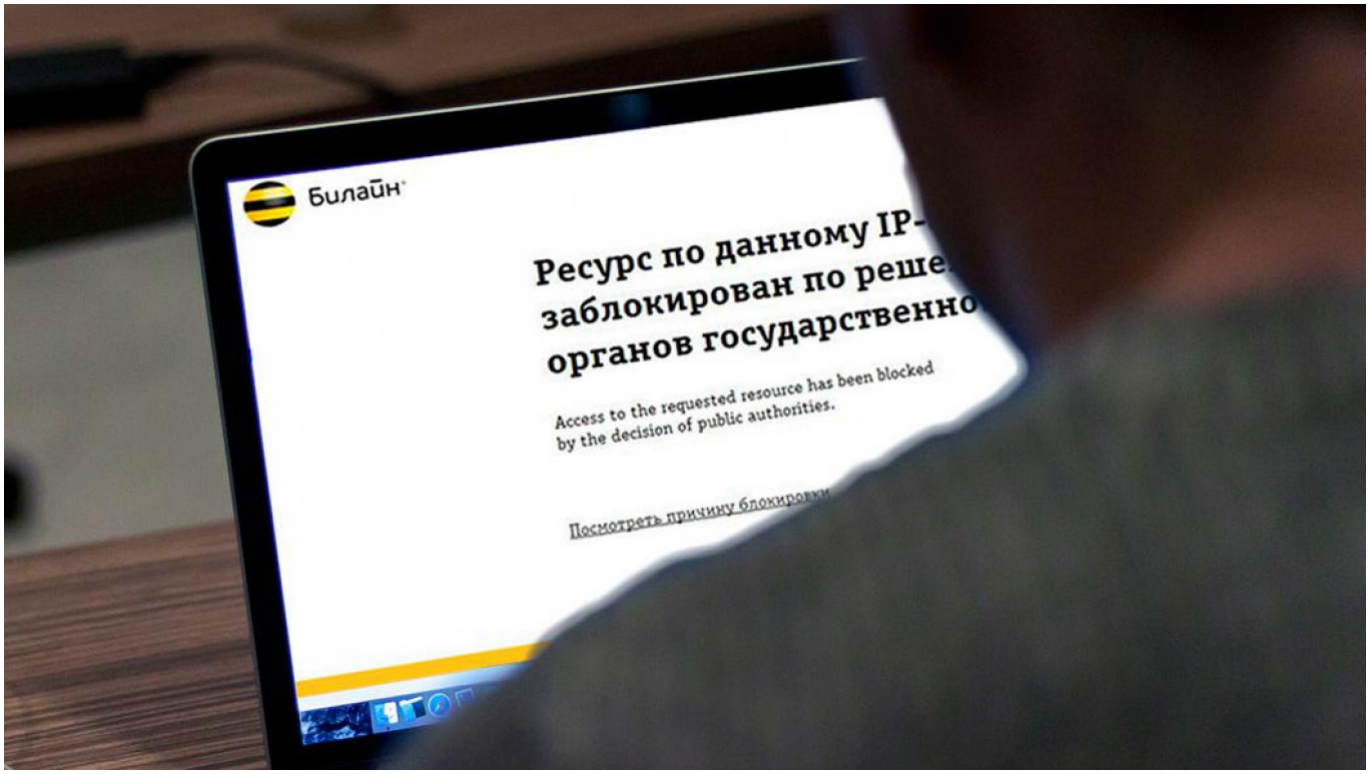
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Pornhub Fails to Win Over Russian Censors With 'Premium Account' Offer

September 15, 2016



Pixabay

State censors in Russia cut off access yesterday to the world's biggest pornography website, Pornhub. The website appeared on the list of websites banned by the government agency Roskomnadzor on Tuesday, Sept. 13. A Russian court will rule whether the ban will remain in place at a later date.

A Russian Internet without the Web's most visited source for porn isn't a total novelty. Officials blocked Pornhub a year ago, too, after a judge in Krasnodar decided that the website violated child protection laws and illegally produced and distributed pornography (a criminal offense in Russia).

The court that banned Pornhub this time is in Voronezh. Judge Vladimir Panasenko told the Meduza news website that he scarcely remembers the ruling. "The thing is," he recalled, "it was sometime back in May, and I hear several cases every day. It's hard for me to say now what this was about and how it went." According to court records, Panasenko ruled that

Pornhub illegally distributes pornographic materials. “Why [state prosecutors] brought the case to the Voronezh court, I don’t know,” he told Meduza this week.

According to the Alexa Internet, Inc., which provides commercial web traffic data, Pornhub.com is the 40th most popular website in Russia, outranking major media outlets like Ekho Moskvy, Vesti.ru, Gazeta.ru, and others.

Pornhub has always been playful when it comes to public outreach. In January, for instance, Pornhub’s “Insights” statistical project reported that visitors from Russia showed a 438-percent spike in searches for pornography related to “My Little Pony” over the previous year.

Yesterday, Pornhub reached out to Russian state censors with an offer: un-ban the website and the government agency can have a free “premium account,” with full access to Pornhub’s petabytes of adult content.

Roskomnadzor’s Twitter account, which has also dabbled in the unserious, later rejected the deal, responding with a bit of awkward English, apparently implying that masturbation and procreation are mutually exclusive.

Embed:

> @Pornhub sorry, we are not in the market and the demography is not a commodity.
>
> — Роскомнадзор (@roscomnadzor) September 15, 2016

After this exchange, Pornhub made another facetious public appeal, this time to U.S. President Barack Obama.

Embed:

> .@BarackObama please pardon @Snowden. Russia just blocked https://t.co/ukBPXIE2PX, he needs out ASAP!
>
> — Pornhub ARIA (@Pornhub) September 15, 2016

Eager to get in on the fun, the travel metasearch engine Aviasales launched a parody website mimicking Pornhub’s design. The lefthand column includes categories like “Amateuer Travel” and “Musturbation Destination [sic],” and the nine featured videos have captions such as “Wild orgy at Crimean beach” and “Dude shows his girl Hong Kong and lets her touch.” Clicking on any of the videos redirects visitors to the site’s real homepage, while some of the side options offer other nuggets: “Pornstars” sends people to Aviasales’ staff directory, and “Hand job wanted” redirects to the company’s job listings, for instance.

Meanwhile, deprived of easy access to the world's largest porn site, Russian Internet users are amusing each other with masturbation humor. A few gems on Twitter stand out:

Embed:

> новость дня, конечно pic.twitter.com/bd9RAOnqPu
>
> — Duran / Дюран (@userdie) September 14, 2016

In the days of old, there was life! But then... / they banned smoking in public places / and put sanctions on groceries / and closed Pornhub.

Embed:

> блокируя порнхаб и юпорн, власти поддерживают отечественного производителя pic.twitter.com/egItkr5hpB
>
> — Nadya Tolokonnikova (@tolokno) September 14, 2016

"Blocking Pornhub and Youporn, the [Russian] authorities are supporting domestic producers."

Embed:

> когда вовремя запретили Pornhub https://t.co/LGW1ThRA6q
>
> — марвин химтрэйл (@niemalsnoch) September 15, 2016

"Just as Pornhub is banned." [Caption reads: "Sexually hyperactive male Galapagos tortoise saves his subspecies from extinction."]

Embed:

> Nothing was blocked today in Russia pic.twitter.com/NCHZEg2Fk5
>
> — English Russia (@EnglishRussia1) September 14, 2016

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