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ICANN VP Says Russia Would Have to Ban Electricity to Isolate the RuNet

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Amid concerns in Moscow that Russian Internet users face the threat of isolation from the World Wide Web, a prominent Internet authority is arguing that nothing short of banning electricity could rob Russians of their access to global cyberspace.

According to Mikhail Yakushev, a regional vice president at the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, which maintains the Web's global domain name system, cutting off Russia from the Internet would be technologically possible only through "the destruction of every Russian power station, without exception, and criminally prosecuting anyone who still wants to use electricity."

Yakushev told the Rambler News Service that the use and development of the Internet in Russia will continue "despite any attempts to 'destabilize' it, both 'from abroad' and 'from within,'" arguing that Internet technologies are designed to operate with stability, regardless of "extraneous factors."

Earlier on Thursday, Vladimir Putin’s Internet advisor, German Klimenko, said in an interview that Russia could be cut off entirely from the World Wide Web. Klimenko defended new regulations proposed by Russia’s Ministry of Communications as a protective measure.

"In the law, we are talking about the protection of critical infrastructure, which should be located in Russian territory," Klimenko said.

"For example, hackers can penetrate the structure of commercial banks and steal money. This is bad, but if they get into the system of the Central Bank, there will be big trouble."

Klimenko pointed out that the West has cut off Crimea from online services offered by companies like Microsoft and Google, creating problems for domain owners based in the area, he said.

The Kremlin advisor insists that ordinary Russian Internet users would not be affected by the government’s proposed regulations.

Yakushev told The Moscow Times that he was unaware of Klimenko's remarks, when he spoke to Rambler.

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