

Kremlin's 'Patriotic Education' to Target Russian Kids Online

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Ivan Sekretarev / AP

Russia's Education Ministry has said it will use social media to create a new generation of patriotic Russian schoolchildren.

The ministry's latest "patriotic education program" hopes to stir "feelings of loyalty to the Fatherland" among Russian youth and prepare them to "fulfill their civic and constitutional duties to protect the Fatherland's interests."

Officials hope that an outside contractor will build the ministry's presence on Russian social network sites *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*, as well as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Livejournal and Telegram messenger, according to an [official tender released on Monday](#).

In return for the 8 million ruble (\$142,000) contract, the lucky winner is expected to grow the ministry's internet audience by 25 percent by the end of 2017.

Related article: [Russia's Kids Are Alright \(Op-Ed\)](#)

Officials were keen to stress that the role went beyond posting photos and updating accounts. Any company which wins the tender must be prepared to work with bloggers and mastermind special hashtags for Russia's kids to use during public holidays, [Russian tabloid Izvestia reported](#).

Teacher's Day — celebrated in Russia on Sept. 1 — is just one special occasion which officials hope to target online.

"Children will willingly [use the hashtags] to congratulate their teachers," the Education Ministry press service told the newspaper.

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