

Russia Targets VPNs in Internet Clampdown

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Russia's media watchdog is asking online anonymizers and VPN services to restrict Russians access to blacklisted sites.

Anonymizers and VPNs (Virtual Private Networks) allow internet users to bypass regional restrictions on locally blocked sites by routing their data through a proxy server based abroad.

Markus Saar, general director of the VPN HideMy.name, was targeted by officials after his domain was blocked by a court in the provincial Russian region of Bashkortostan, [the Vedomosti newspaper reported Monday](#).

The state agency delayed unblocking the site, even when all of the disputed content had been removed, Saar said. Instead, they contacted the company director via letter, asking him

to restrict users' access to all blacklisted content.

Related article: [Russia's Top Cop Wants Internet Censorship to Fight U.S. 'Info War'](#)

While the site has since been unblocked, Saar condemned the move as "official pressure" on an independent company.

In a statement, Roskomnadzor spokesman Vadim Ampelonsky claimed that some proxy services were already cooperating with the government. He also stressed that anonymizers and VPNs which did not comply with regional laws were illegal in Russia and would be banned.

More than 100 VPN sites and services are currently blocked within Russia, Vedomosti reported.

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