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Russia Blocks Google Temporarily in Tax Dispute

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Russia's media watchdog blocked internet giant Google for several hours on Thursday in a bid to enforce a tax ruling made in 2016.

Google.ru appeared on Russia's register of banned sites for approximately three hours on Thursday afternoon, with a number of internet providers restricting users' access.

The site was blocked as as part of a ruling made last year against a Russian bookmaker.

Officials said that Google redirected users to the bookmaker's site, which was blocked as part of an ongoing tax dispute with the Russian authorities.

Alexander Zharov, the Russian internet regulator Roskomnadzor, said that Google had been promptly removed from the agency's list of blacklisted sites as soon as the banned link had been removed.

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It isn't the first time the Russian government has sparred with the U.S. internet giant.

Members of the Russian State Duma have approved the third reading of a bill nicknamed the "Google Tax Law" in June 2016, requiring foreign IT companies to pay value added tax (VAT) on the sale of online content.

Other problems have flared between Google and Russia's Federal Anti-Monopoly service in 2015, when courts ruled that the company had violated the law by pre-installing certain applications on mobile devices.

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