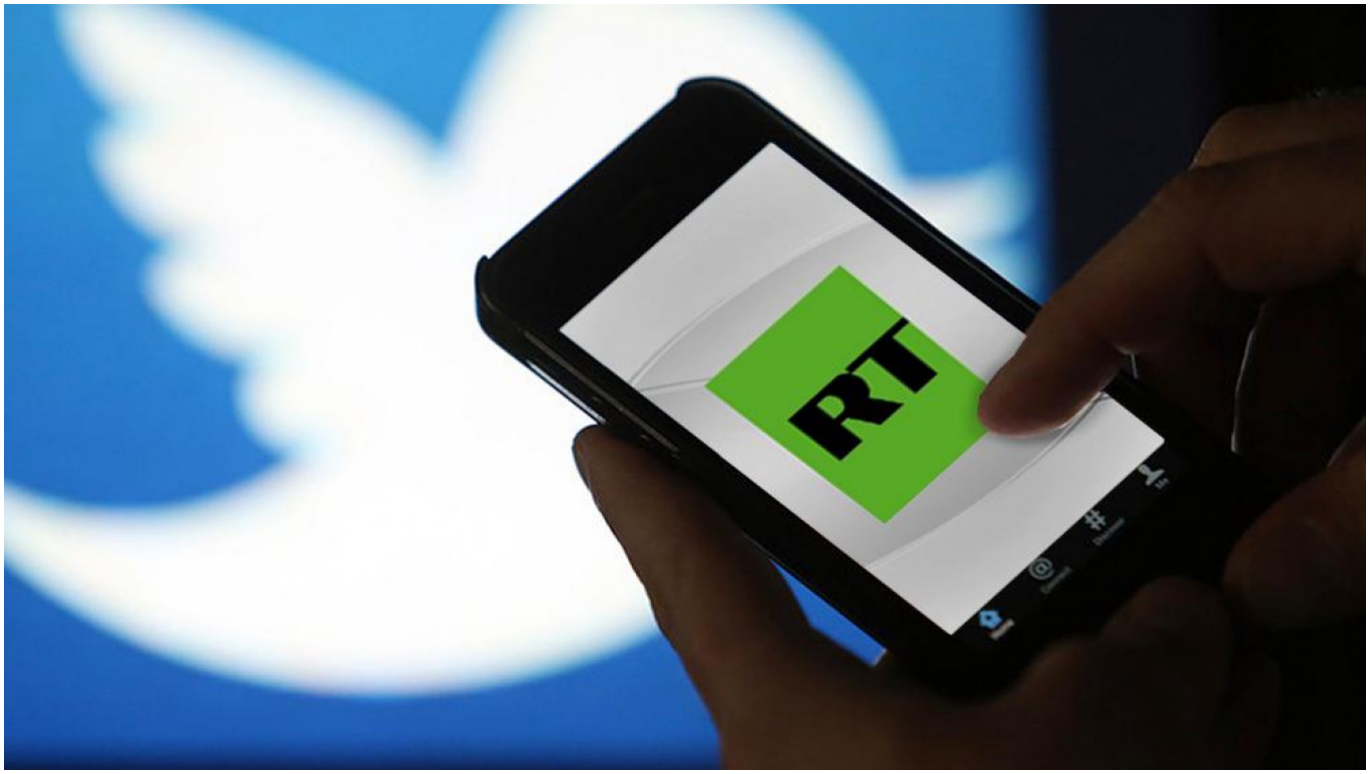
The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Twitter Drops Advertising From Kremlin-Funded Sites Sputnik and RT

October 26, 2017



Pixabay / MT

Twitter will be "off-boarding" advertising from the Kremlin-funded news outlets Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik, the social media site announced Thursday.

The decision is a response to allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.

"We did not come to this decision lightly, and are taking this step now as part of our ongoing commitment to help protect the integrity of the user experience on Twitter," the company wrote in the announcement.

Twitter founder Jack Dorsey tweeted that Twitter will be "donating all projected earnings ($1.9m) to support external research into the use of Twitter in elections, including use of malicious automation and misinformation."

Twitter cited its own "retrospective work" and "the U.S. intelligence community's conclusion

that both RT and Sputnik attempted to interfere with the election on behalf of the Russian government."

Embed:

> Off-boarding advertising from all accounts owned by Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik.
>
> We're donating all projected earnings ($1.9mm) to support external research into the use of Twitter in elections, including use of malicious automation and misinformation. https://t.co/zIxfqqXCZr
>
> — jack (@jack) October 26, 2017

Seemingly pre-empting the announcement, Margarita Simonyan, RT's the editor-in-chief, earlier on Thursday tweeted: "Hope @jack won't forget to tell @congressdotgov how @Twitter pitched @RT_com to spend big $$s on US elex ad campaign."

She added, in a subsequent tweet, "A reminder @RT_com is an exemplary @Twitter partner."

The news site also published an Op-Ed, in which it claimed, "RT has never been involved in any illegal activity online, and that it never pursued an agenda of influencing the U.S. election through any platforms, including Twitter."

The state-funded news agency RIA Novosti published a screenshot apparently showing that the Twitter account of Sputnik's French branch no longer had access to Twitter's ad service.

The move comes as the American branch of RT has resisted attempts to register under the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA).

President Vladimir Putin has vowed a tit-for-tat response if RT America or Sputnik, another Kremlin-controlled English-language website, faced pressure in the U.S.

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