

Russian Law Banning VPNs Comes Into Effect

November 01, 2017



Sascha Kohlmann / Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)

New regulations increasing the Russian government's control over the Internet by [banning](#) anonymous web surfing software went into force on Wednesday.

Russian lawmakers in late July amended existing regulations to include internet proxy services. The services, known as VPNs, allow users to gain access to blocked websites by replacing the user's IP address and hiding the user's physical location. Anonymous web surfing software is hugely popular in Russia.

Under the new rules, VPNs will be required to [register](#) with the state's media watchdog Roskomnadzor within 30 days. Internet services are also obliged to block access to websites included on Roskomnadzor's blacklist within three days.

Proxy services that don't register with the state media watchdog will be blocked within 24 hours. Access can only be restored once they comply with Roskomnadzor's requirement to

sign up to the registry.

Related article: [The Kremlin's VPN Ban Has KGB Roots \(Op-ed\)](#)

The new law also requires online messaging services to link users with their phone numbers and to block users who disseminate “illegal information.” Critics deride the VPN ban and the increasing online government regulations as clampdowns on Internet freedom.

Roskomnador is currently [testing](#) the ban’s implementation with search engines, VPNs, and the cyber-security firm Kaspersky Lab. Norway’s Opera Software, Mail.ru, Sputnik, and three anonymizers with some 10 million users in Russia are also participating in the test.

The Nov. 1 VPN ban follows an Oct. 1 amendment that [bans](#) search engines from displaying results for blocked websites.

Before signing the VPN regulation into law last summer, President Vladimir Putin [issued](#) an executive order creating a strategy through 2030 to establish greater government regulation over the internet.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/11/01/russian-law-banning-anonymous-online-surfing-comes-into-effect-a59434>