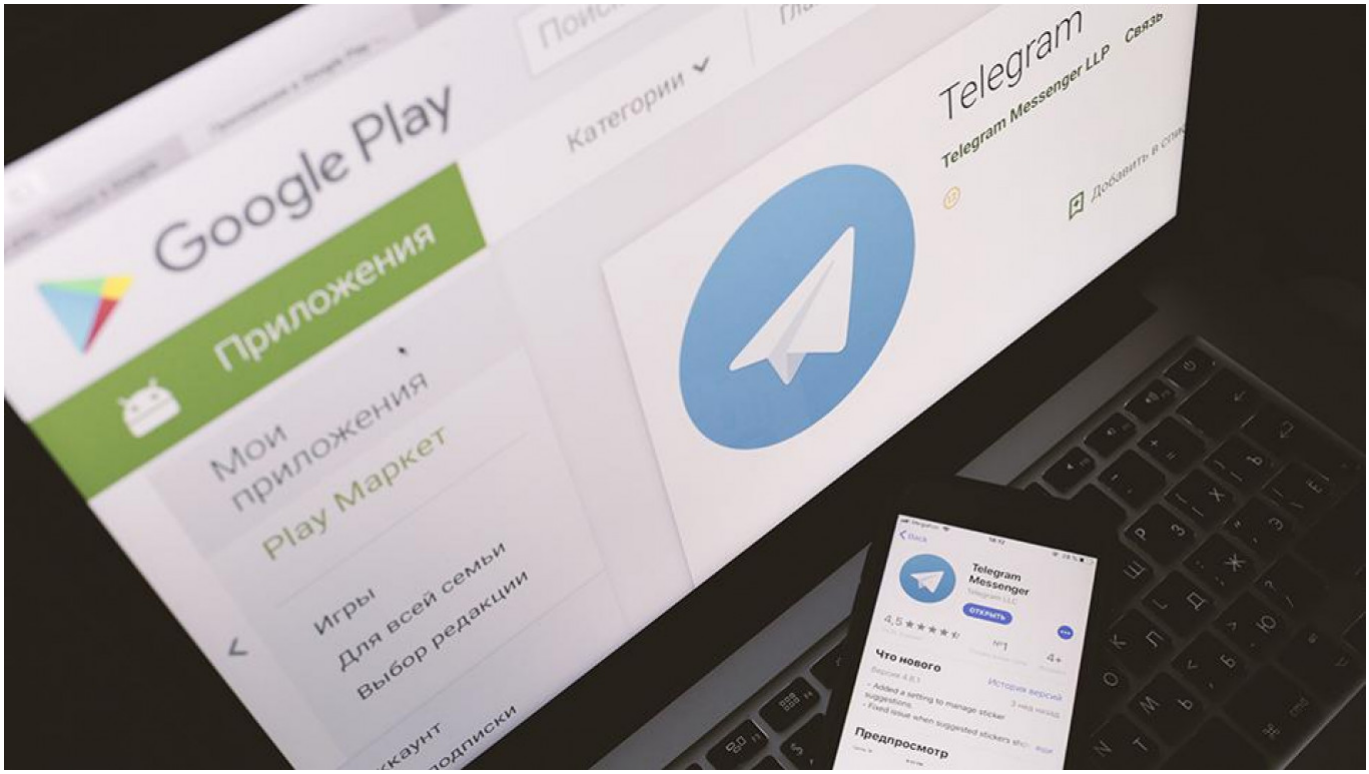
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Bookstore Flees to Telegram After Website Outage

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Tatyana Flegontova / TASS

A Russian children's bookstore has opened a Telegram channel after its website fell victim to the authorities' efforts to ban the messaging app.

Ordinary Russians could not buy travel tickets, transfer or take out money, purchase insurance policies or play games online after state media regulator Roskomnadzor began blocking Telegram on April 16.

The regulator dismissed 42,000 unrelated complaints of disrupted website service as "not containing correctly formulated complaints."

Related article: Russian Internet Users Suffer Under Chaotic Telegram Ban

“Here we are, our website has been blocked on day 10 of the Telegram block,” Marshak Books wrote in its first Telegram message Wednesday.

The store said it had opened a Telegram page “to be closer to you so that you’ll learn how we’re living, growing, what our new arrivals are, and how we all live now.”

Roskomnadzor, one day after announcing that it blacklisted a series of Google Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, has issued a series of tweets denying that it added the IP addresses of Google services to its blacklist.

Telegram reported that its active base of an estimated 15 million Russian users has shrunk by 3 percent in two weeks, while the media monitoring website Medialogia has registered 76 percent fewer views on the app since April 16.

Citing Telegram’s refusal to grant security services access to its users’ encrypted communications, Roskomnadzor blacklisted almost 18 million Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, including those of Google and Amazon.

Update: Telegram Analytics responded on Thursday to Medialogia's claim of 76 percent fewer views. They said the monitoring website was calculating activity based upon a misleading window of time. Telegram has not observed a drop of 76 percent.

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