

Russian Lawmakers Look to Ban Email Users Who Share Illegal Content

By [Reuters](#)

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A group of pro-Kremlin lawmakers has drafted legislation that would allow authorities to block individual email or online messenger users who circulate banned content.

The bill is likely to alarm advocates of internet freedoms, but the lawmakers say the legislation is needed to combat a wave of hoax bomb threats that have been sporadically called in across the country in recent years.

Under the proposed legislation, Internet companies would be required within 24 hours to block individual users who circulate illegal content if the Roskomnadzor state communications watchdog asks the companies to do so.

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Companies that fail to comply would face a fine of 1 million rubles (\$15,350).

"In practice, it is efficient to completely block a user, not the individual messages sent by them," said Andrey Klishas, one of the lawmakers who drafted the bill.

Russian internet search company Yandex and Google declined to comment. Representatives of Facebook, Viber and Mail.ru Group have not yet responded to a Reuters request for comment.

Over the past five years, Russia has introduced tougher laws that require search engines to delete some search results, oblige messaging services to share encryption keys with security services, and make social networks store Russian users' personal data on servers within the country.

The Kremlin says it is trying to protect the integrity of the internet's Russian-language segment. The Kremlin's opponents fear the authorities are using security as a pretext to ramp up surveillance online.

Related article: [Putin Signs Internet Isolation Bill Into Law](#)

To become law, the bill must be approved in three votes in the lower house of parliament before it is sent for approval in the upper house and then signed by President Vladimir Putin.

The bill can still be amended, but is likely to pass. Other bills tightening controls of the internet have been signed into law in Russia despite opposition from activists and industry lobbyists.

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