

Russia Touts ‘Sovereign’ Social Media After Major Facebook Outage

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Robin Worrall / unsplash

Russian officials [highlighted](#) the need to develop the country’s own “sovereign” social media platforms after a massive outage at Facebook’s vast family of apps affected billions of users worldwide late Monday.

Facebook and its Instagram and WhatsApp platforms essentially "disappeared" from the internet for several hours after a traffic routing problem left the sites unreachable for several hours Monday evening. Facebook blamed the outage on configuration changes it made to routers that coordinate network traffic between its data centers.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the widespread outages “answer the question about whether we need our own social media and internet platforms.”

Zakharova issued the remark on Telegram, an encrypted messaging app developed by Russian-born tech entrepreneur Pavel Durov that attracted some [50 million](#) new users while Facebook and its sister apps were offline Monday.

Related article: [Russia's Pursuit of Internet Sovereignty Backfires, Again](#)

Dmitry Marinichev, President Vladimir Putin's internet ombudsman, [told](#) state media that Facebook's outage showed the need for Russia to increase its competitive advantage in the digital world.

"Countries need to monitor the competition in the field of information and prevent such a simple monopolization of the information space," Marinichev told the TASS news agency.

The Russian government has in recent years moved to isolate the Russian online space with laws and technology aimed at creating a so-called "sovereign internet," and measures that require devices to be sold pre-installed with Russian-made software.

Experts have for years expressed doubt in Russia's ability to implement the technology needed to completely isolate itself from the rest of the internet, though reports earlier this year showed Russia had succeeded in [physically disconnecting](#) from the rest of the internet during an annual test.

Putin himself has [railed against](#) social media giants for "replacing legitimate democratic institutions" and "controlling society."

AFP contributed reporting.

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