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Russia to Require Netflix to Stream State Television Broadcasts

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Russia has in recent months tightened restrictions on foreign internet giants' operations within its borders. **CardMapr / unsplash**

Russia's state media watchdog will require Netflix to offer state television channels to its Russian customers after it added the U.S.-based streaming service to its register of "audio-visual services" Tuesday.

Roskomnadzor's register, which was created in late 2020, applies to online streaming services with over 100,000 daily users and requires them to comply with Russian law and register a Russian company.

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Registered services are also required to provide streams of 20 major Russian federal television channels.

From March 2022, Netflix will be obliged to offer broadcasts from flagship state-owned Channel One, entertainment-focused NTV and the Russian Orthodox Church's in-house channel Spas, which means "Saved," to its users within Russia.

The laws that Netflix must now obey include controversial provisions banning the promotion of "extremism" — a restriction which has been used against supporters of the anti-Kremlin opposition.

Russia has in recent months tightened restrictions on foreign internet giants' operations within its borders.

Google and Apple were both forced to remove content related to jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and his associates ahead of Russia's September parliamentary elections after authorities threatened to prosecute the tech giants' local employees.

Last week, Russia slapped Google and Meta with record fines totaling $125 million, accusing them of repeatedly failing to delete content Russian censors had flagged as illegal.

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