The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Demand Spikes for Pirated Microsoft Windows – Kommersant

June 27, 2022

Arian Darvishi / unsplash

Russia-based web searches for pirated Microsoft products including the Windows operating system have skyrocketed after the company halted sales in the country over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the Kommersant daily reported Monday.

The U.S. tech giant behind the software that runs on over 1 billion devices worldwide announced the suspension of new sales in Russia in the early days of the war in March. In June, Microsoft said it would significantly scale down operations.

According to Kommersant, Google searches related to Windows 10 activation methods have surged by as much as 250% in the past three months.

Queries for free Excel spreadsheet downloads rose by 650% in June alone.

Related article: Putin Says Russia Must Cut Dependence on Foreign Technology

The past week has seen a 47-fold increase in searches for Windows 10 Media Creation Tools after users in Russia started receiving error messages when attempting to download Windows 10 and 11 installation files from Microsoft's official website.

At the same time, Russian software developers based on the Linux operating system have reported a slight uptick in sales in recent months, Kommersant reported.

Russian government agencies have reportedly begun switching from Windows to Linux, which is used by around 2% of desktop computers, as Microsoft has suspended tech support for its products in Russia.

But IT experts expressed doubts to Kommersant that Linux would fully replace the more user-friendly Windows in Russia.

"More paid applications are created for Windows, where the quality of development, testing and user protection from errors is higher," Igor Martyushev, development director at Russian software distributor Marcel Distributions, told the newspaper.

Last week, Microsoft vice chairman and president Brad Smith said the company would continue withdrawing from the Russian market until its full exit.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/06/27/russian-demand-spikes-for-pirated-microsoft-windows-kommersant-a78116