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Parallel Imports Cut Russian Keyboard Supplies – Kommersant

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Experts forecast computer keyboards without a Russian language layout to reach 10% by the end of 2022. **Serghei Starus/TASS**

Laptops and computer keyboards with Russian-language layouts are increasingly reaching Russia under a government scheme to maintain imports despite Western sanctions and an exodus of international businesses over the war in Ukraine, the Kommersant business daily reported Monday.

Russia's "parallel import" scheme allows the supply of keyboards and laptops originally intended for foreign markets without approval from trademark owners.

The Industry and Trade Ministry said a Russian layout can be engraved on keyboards within the country without affecting the overall price of the product.

Demand has doubled for laser engraving services to change keyboard layouts into Cyrillic script, with keyboards and laptops coming mostly from Turkey and the United Arab Emirates this year, experts told Kommersant.

But the practice involves unpacking the devices, which customers would then be less likely to buy, and sometimes completely removing the keyboard, which could cancel warranties, according to Kommersant.

Russia has imported 2 million keyboards at a value of 4 billion rubles ($69 million) and 1.4 million laptops at a value of 90 billion rubles ($1.5 billion) in January-June 2022, according to the retailer M.Video-Eldorado.

Experts forecast the share of non-Russian keyboards to reach 10% by the end of 2022.

Government tenders have also been affected by Russia's keyboard parallel import mechanism.

"There are problems with supplying automated workstations [with Russian keyboard layouts] to departments as part of contracts that had already been signed," an unnamed government source was quoted as saying.

"The terms of the tenders prohibit contractors from delivering workstations without a keyboard or with an English keyboard layout," they added.

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