

Team Navalny, Investigative Media Launch App to Dodge Russian Ban

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Robin Worrall / unsplash

Jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny's team has joined four Russian and foreign investigative outlets in launching a smartphone app aimed at bypassing unprecedented restrictions on Russians' access to independent media.

Dubbed "Samizdat" in a nod to the bootleg handwritten publications that were circulated to circumvent Soviet censorship, the app features investigative reports from Team Navalny, Russian outlets Proekt, iStories and The Insider, and Netherlands-based Bellingcat.

Russia has banned or blocked all five of the organizations on various grounds before and after launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine that led to an even wider [crackdown](#) on dissenting voices.

"All Russian independent media have faced unprecedented constraints in recent years. But it's investigative journalists who suffered the most," Proekt [said](#) Friday.

“The purpose of this attack is to destroy investigative journalism in Russia and make information about corruption, dictatorship and war inaccessible to Russians,” [wrote](#) The Insider.

Samizdat, which is available to Apple and Android users, is described as an aggregator for the separate publications without a single editorial policy or overriding structure.

Its creators say Russia-based users can access the app without the need for VPNs.

Russian authorities [said](#) this summer they have blocked more than 138,000 websites and links containing banned information in a bid to combat what Moscow views as “fake news” about the invasion of Ukraine.

Independent internet freedom watchdogs say the number of blocked websites is closer to 5,300.

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