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Russian YouTubers See Drop in Views Amid Government Slowdown Efforts – Vedomosti

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Popular Russian YouTubers have experienced noticeable drops in view counts over the past month, with some losing as much as 80% of their audience on the platform amid what appears to be government attempts to throttle YouTube, the Vedomosti business newspaper reported Wednesday, citing an industry analytics report.

According to the report, published by the social media analytics company JagaJam, some of Russia's most popular YouTubers saw their views drop between 12% and 78% from July 22 to Aug. 25 compared to the previous month.

Among the hardest-hit accounts was children's blogger Vladislav Bumaga, whose view count dropped by 78%, leaving him with just over 100 million views overall. Tech blogger Valentin Petukhov also saw a 12% decline, attracting around 21.2 million views in the same period.

Some bloggers have also reduced the number of videos they publish on YouTube, according to JagaJam, such as Dima Maslennikov, one of Russia's highest-earning video bloggers. His channel published 50% fewer videos on YouTube between late July and August.

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Online users in Russia began experiencing sharp declines in YouTube loading speeds in early August after Russia's state-owned telecom giant warned that "technical issues" caused by Google's removal of equipment from the country would lead to slowdowns.

At the same time, Roskomnadzor called on Google CEO Sundar Pichai to restore over 200 YouTube channels belonging to pro-government Russian media, the authorities and other public figures.

In late August, Russia's media regulator Roskomnadzor warned internet providers to stop efforts that speed up YouTube loading speeds after they began implementing workarounds to the slowdown, including rerouting user traffic from Google's Russian servers to those in Europe.

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russian authorities have accused YouTube and Google of spreading "terrorist" anti-war content, fueling speculation that the video-streaming website might be blocked entirely.

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