The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Google Restricts Account Creation in Russia, Digital Ministry Says

September 26, 2024

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Google has restricted the creation of new accounts inside Russia, state media reported Thursday, citing Russia's Digital Communications Ministry.

Authorities said that Telecom operators reported a "significant decrease in the number of SMS messages sent by" Google to users in Russia, referring to messages the tech company uses to verify new account creation.

While two-factor authentication via SMS for existing Google accounts remains functional, the Digital Communications Ministry warned that this service may not continue indefinitely. It advised users to back up their data, consider switching to alternative authentication methods or move to domestic services instead of Google.

Earlier this month, users in Russia reported that they could no longer register new Google accounts using Russian phone numbers. However, according to some reports, problems with that began months earlier.

Meanwhile, in August, Russian users began experiencing widespread outages on YouTube, followed by slower loading speeds across the country.

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

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/09/26/google-restricts-account-creation-in-russia-digital-ministry-says-a86486