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Russia Blocks a Record 417K Websites in 2024

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Russian authorities blocked a record 417,000 websites in 2024 as the state continued to tighten its control over the internet, the independent news outlet Vyorstka reported Tuesday.

According to Vyorstka's analysis of data from the internet freedom NGO Roskomsvoboda, a total of 523,000 websites were restricted last year. Of those, access was later restored to approximately 106,000, leaving more than 417,000 sites permanently inaccessible.

Despite the record number of blockings in 2024, the highest total ever recorded was in 2023, when authorities restricted access to 571,000 online resources. However, only 197,000 remained blocked by the year's end.

The number of permanently inaccessible websites in 2024 was twice that of the previous year and nearly five times higher than in 2022.

At the same time, the number of unblocked websites sharply declined from 183,000 in 2022

and 374,000 in 2023 to just 106,800 in 2024.

The Federal Tax Service was responsible for the highest number of website bans last year, with 142,400 blocked resources on its list at the beginning of 2025.

State communications watchdog Roskomnadzor came in second, restricting access to more than 132,000 websites.

An unspecified government agency was behind the blocking of 62,100 resources, while the Moscow City Court and other judicial bodies collectively restricted more than 60,600 pages. The Moscow City Court alone accounted for approximately 50,000 of those cases.

According to an anonymous Roskomsvoboda expert, the "unspecified government agency" — which first appeared on Roskombadzor's register in November 2022 — serves as a stand-in for the Prosecutor General's Office, as the types of blockings attributed to this entity mirror those previously initiated by the Prosecutor General's Office. The reasons for the reclassification remain unclear.

In 2024, 85.5% of website restrictions were imposed extrajudicially. Several government agencies have the authority to issue such bans: The Interior Ministry blocks content related to drug distribution; the Federal Tax Service targets gambling sites; the Finance Ministry restricts access to piracy websites; the Central Election Commission enforces election-related restrictions; and Rospotrebnadzor censors materials concerning suicide.

Roskomnadzor and the Prosecutor General's Office remain the primary enforcers of online censorship, restricting content related to LGBTQ+ issues; materials from individuals and organizations labeled as "foreign agents"; articles deemed to spread "false" information about the military; and information about circumventing government-imposed internet restrictions.

Since March 2024, Roskomnadzor has also intensified its efforts to block virtual private network (VPN) services and restrict access to articles explaining how to access blocked websites.

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