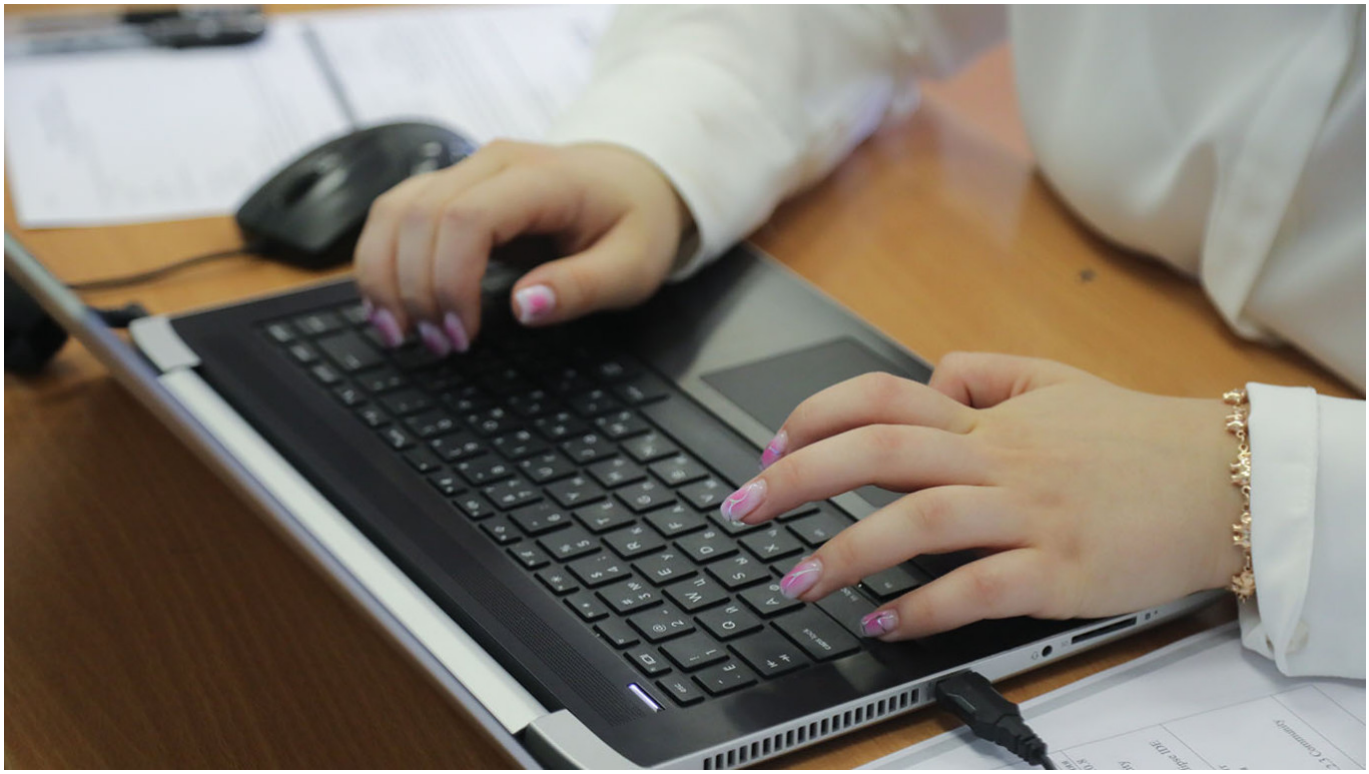
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Russian Developers Urge Ban on Microsoft Windows for School Exams

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Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency

A major Russian software industry group is urging authorities to ban the use of Microsoft's Windows operating system during school exams, citing a conflict with the country's recent ban on foreign software in government agencies.

The Domestic Software association of software product developers, which represents more than 300 Russian IT companies, sent a letter to the Digital Development Ministry, the Education Ministry and the federal education watchdog Rosobrnadzor.

In it, the group criticized a recent Rosobrnadzor directive stating that the Unified State Exam, which is required for university admission, would be administered exclusively on Windows.

The developers argue that this approach violates a presidential decree that came into force in January 2025 that prohibits the use of foreign software by government institutions and their contractors.

Instead, the association is advocating for a switch to domestically developed operating systems such as Astra Linux, RED OS, ALT Linux and ROSA OS.

They also propose that Russia's official exam preparation guidelines be revised to include instructions on using Russian office software suites like R7-Office and MyOffice.

New federal regulations introduced earlier this year restrict the procurement of foreign software and offer financial incentives for adopting Russian-made alternatives.

A new law will further tighten controls from Sept. 1, requiring that only software registered with the Digital Development Ministry be used in critical national infrastructure, including education.

Russia's campaign to replace foreign software in schools began in 2023, following the withdrawal of licensing support from Microsoft and other U.S. tech firms amid Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine.

That September, Education Minister Sergei Kravtsov declared that all Russian schools had completed the transition to domestic software.

However, Anastasia Gorelova, the head of the education committee at the Association of Software Developers, said in August 2024 that only around 60% of schools and universities had actually made the switch.

Olga Chernyadyeva, head of educational programs at Russian software company ASCON, said the full shift across all schools will take several more years.

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