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Russia to Test Students' 'Traditional Values' With New App

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Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

Russia plans to roll out an app to measure how strongly university students embrace "traditional values," the Vedomosti business newspaper reported Tuesday, citing a government procurement notice.

The Russian Sport Ministry's University of Sport on Sept. 15 awarded a 1.3-million-ruble ($15,700) contract to a little-known Moscow software company to create a web and mobile application that will test students, score their responses and provide administrators with dashboards ranking individual and group results.

The app will sort results based on categories such as "patriotism and citizenship," "cultural and spiritual traditions" and "ethical norms." Administrators will have the ability to see full student profiles, including name, faculty and year of study, alongside their value scores.

The software company, Blue Cats Games, was given 15 days to develop the app, although it was not immediately clear whether the app had been developed by Tuesday's deadline and

whether it would be used outside the Russian University of Sport.

Vedomosti reported last month that Moscow's Higher School of Economics (HSE) had been commissioned to develop the "scientifically grounded" methodology for evaluating students' adherence to spiritual and moral values.

HSE claimed the tool could be used to monitor risks of "destructive and unlawful behavior" among young people, raising questions about its potential use for ideological monitoring and identifying at-risk groups.

The university stressed at the time that its methodology could be scaled across Russia's entire higher education system.

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The latest app comes amid the Kremlin's efforts to elevate "traditional values" into a central theme of state ideology. President Vladimir Putin signed a decree in November 2022 outlining the state's role in preserving "traditional Russian spiritual and moral values" rooted in family, religion, patriotism and cultural heritage, while rejecting Western liberal norms.

Polling shows that most Russians associate "traditional values" with family, children and care for loved ones, yet experts told Vedomosti that many students struggle to define traditional values precisely.

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