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Viral Video in Russia Calls on IT Workers to Resist Internet Controls

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An IT worker identifying himself as Dmitry. **YouTube**

A little-known Russian YouTuber has gone viral after calling on IT workers to resist government orders to block virtual private networks, or VPNs, as major domestic websites begin restricting access to the censorship-circumvention tools.

In a video called "An Appeal to IT Workers on VPN Blocks," a man identifying himself as Dmitry urges others working in the tech sector not to "build an iron curtain for ourselves with our own hands."

Dmitry said the company where he works recently received instructions from Russia's Digital Development Ministry to block VPN use within a week or face the loss of government benefits. That deadline aligns with earlier reports that more than 20 major online platforms in Russia were ordered to curb VPN use by mid-April.

"The requirements are confusing, and nobody knows how to actually implement them," Dmitry says in the appeal. "I just felt this incredible sense of protest against the whole

situation."

Related article: Russian Websites Begin Blocking VPN Users as Internet Controls Tighten

"When they start asking us to put restrictions on ourselves, it starts feeling like some kind of death squad tactic. It's just total nonsense. We aren't even doing this to 'other' people anymore. We're doing it to ourselves," he adds.

"I'm not going to be doing this," Dmitry says. "To anyone in any way connected to IT... don't indulge this nonsense."

The video has garnered nearly 450,000 views and tens of thousands of likes since it was published on YouTube on April 7.

On Wednesday, major Russian websites and online services began blocking users who tried to access them with VPNs, The Moscow Times reported. Those restrictions follow months of mobile internet disruptions across Russia and government-imposed slowdowns of the messaging apps WhatsApp and Telegram.

Downloads of VPNs surged in Russia after authorities started blocking Western social media platforms and scores of Russian independent news outlets following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

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