

Yandex Supports Silicon Valley Startup

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SAN FRANCISCO — Yandex is expressing its affinity for Blekko, a Silicon Valley startup trying to build a spam-free search engine, with a \$15 million investment and a commitment to share some of its computing power and other technology with its new U.S. partner.

Blekko is getting an additional \$15 million from another group consisting mostly of its earlier investors — U.S. Venture Partners, CMEA Capital and PivotNorth Capital.

The alliance announced Thursday marks the first time Yandex has invested in a U.S. search service, according to Arkady Borkovsky, chief technology officer of Yandex's Silicon Valley lab. Yandex and its 3,000 employees hope to learn more about the nuances of U.S. search requests from Blekko.

"There could be a future for us here," Borkovsky said. "This is an interesting experiment for us, and we are quite excited about it."

Yandex's investment in Blekko comes four months after it raised its profile in the United

States with an initial public offering of stock that has not been a big hit on Wall Street so far.

Blekko, which employs 27 people in Redwood Shores, California, tries to fight the search litter, or spam, that can clutter the results of market leader, Google, and its two main rivals, Yahoo and Bing, by relying on humans to use hash tags to highlight the most useful results under frequently searched topics.

Russia is one of the few countries where Google is a laggard. Yandex's share in the country is almost as large as the one Google holds in the United States. The advantage has not been as nearly as lucrative for Yandex, whose revenue this year is expected to be about \$650 million. Google's U.S. revenue this year is expected to be between \$17 billion and \$18 billion.

Skrenta believes that Yandex can help Blekko broaden its reach and improve its results. Besides giving it more money, Yandex is letting Blekko use some of its servers. That will give Blekko the means to more than double the size of its search index, which currently spans about 3 billion web pages on 750 servers, Skrenta said.

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