

Foreign Ministry Embraces E-Diplomacy

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Foreign Ministry building, one of the Seven Sisters skyscrapers, near metro Smolenskaya.

The Foreign Ministry is taking steps to expand its online presence, with plans to open a Facebook account and increase the number of its Twitter feeds.

The Foreign Ministry's move to attract online followers comes after President Vladimir Putin met last week with top diplomats and called on them to take up new approaches to transmit the government's message.

“You must explain our points of view again and again, on various platforms and using new technologies until the message gets across,” Putin said, according to an official present at the meeting, Kommersant reported.

The Foreign Ministry is working on creating a Facebook page and wants to increase diplomats' use of Twitter, a ministry official told the business daily. The ministry currently has more than 40 Twitter accounts and has told embassies to create more.

On July 7, the ministry launched a dedicated YouTube account, where users can watch the latest news briefings, interviews and television appearances by prominent diplomats.

Several high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials, such as Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov and Ambassador to Britain Alexander Yakovenko, are already active on social-networking sites.

But with roughly 2,500 followers between them, their popularity on social media pales in comparison to that of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who has more than 1 million followers, and Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich, whose tweets are read by close to 150,000 accounts.

In an Agence France Press ranking [<http://ediplomacy.afp.com/#!/countries>] updated daily, Russia on Monday stood in 14th place out of 146 countries for the effectiveness of its e-diplomacy, with 2.64 million people reading Russian diplomats' blogs.

The United States ranked first, with almost 44 million people following U.S. diplomats' online comments. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Britain and Japan also featured in the top 10.

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