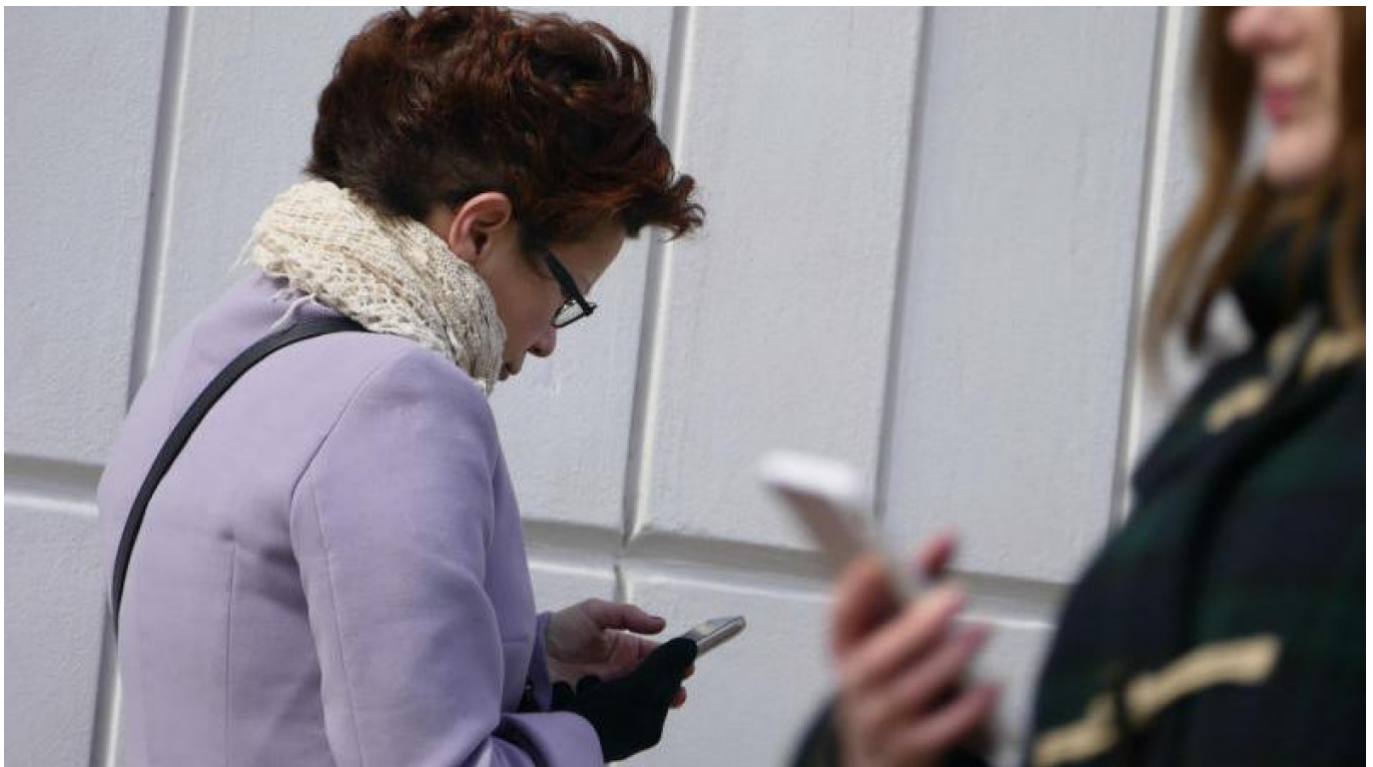


Russian Cell Operator MTS to Store User Data in Pilot Anti-Terror Scheme

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Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti

Russian cell phone operator MTS will be the first company to start storing users' data under controversial new anti-terror laws.

MTS will be running a pilot program in an unnamed Russian city, [Russia's Vedomosti newspaper reported Wednesday.](#)

The trial run will test whether existing technology could be used to enforce the laws.

Related article: [Russia's Data Storage Laws Among 'Most Destructive Policies of 2016'](#)

The storage equipment needed for the program will be provided by Russian technology company Norski-Trans, which already provides electronic surveillance hardware for the Russian government.

Company director Sergei Ovchinnikov confirmed it was working with the Russian Communications Ministry on storing users' data under the new laws.

He said that new proposals on expanding the government's existing monitoring systems, including the installation of additional storage capacity, were still under consideration by Russia's Federal Security Service.

An unnamed Norsi-Trans partner told Vedomosti that MTS would be first in line to test the equipment. Another unnamed source claimed that the pilot scheme would target users in “a major Russian city” but did not specify.

The new data storage law forms part of conservative anti-terror reforms authored by United Russia politician Irina Yarovaya, which were signed by President Putin in July 2016.

The new laws require mobile operators to store customers' messages, including photos and videos, for six months. Metadata, such as information on the time and date a message was sent, must be kept for three years. Companies will also face a fine of up to 1 million rubles (\$15,700) for not decoding users' data at the request of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). The law is currently due to come into force on July 1, 2018.

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