

Kremlin Seeks to Monitor Russians' Online Activity – Reports

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The Kremlin is in talks to set up a system to monitor what Russian internet users watch online, the Vedomosti business daily reported Thursday, citing unnamed government sources.

Russia has in recent years attempted to curb internet freedoms by blocking access to certain websites and messaging services such as [Telegram](#). The country has required search engines to delete some search results, messaging services to share encryption keys with security services and social networks to store Russian users' personal data on servers within the country.

Related article: [Russia Continues Fall in Internet Freedom Ranking — Freedom House](#)

The Kremlin seeks to understand the types of content Russians watch online and which websites impact public opinion the most, Vedomosti's sources said. Viewership data is also

needed to collect taxes from digital ads and calculate the audience size of Russian-made television shows, the newspaper reported.

The Russian market research firm Mediascope will most likely be involved in gathering data on the public's online habits, Vedomosti [cited](#) government and media industry sources as saying. Mediascope CEO Ruslan Tagiyev declined to comment.

Both advertisers and content creators need a universal monitoring tool to evaluate Russia's internet audience, deputy communications minister Alexei Volin said.

Related article: [Russia Flirts With Internet Sovereignty](#)

“It's a requirement for the industry's development,” Vedomosti quoted Volin as saying.

Alexander Zharov, the head of the state media watchdog Roskomnadzor, agreed that internet audience data is currently “unverifiable and not really audited.”

Presidential administration officials have reportedly held talks on the potential monitoring system with major television and online media companies. Three unnamed media companies have confirmed they took part in the talks. The discussions are still in their early stages, Vedomosti cited its sources as saying.

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