

Russia Starts Thwarting YouTube Speeds

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Eric Piermont / AFP

YouTube will be slowed down in Russia due to “technical problems” with Google’s equipment in the country, state-owned telecom giant Rostelecom [announced](#) Friday.

Rostelecom said in a statement that “growth in traffic” had led to a “serious overload” of equipment that is used to speed up the loading of YouTube videos and other Google services.

“This may affect the download speed and playback quality of YouTube videos for users of all Russian operators,” Rostelecom said.

Google [disconnected](#) its Google Global Cache (GGC) service, which allows local providers to offer the U.S. giant’s content with lower waiting times, from Russian servers as early as spring 2022, reports said at the time.

The Russian government has been deliberately slowing down YouTube since Thursday and is “attempting to shift responsibility” for the issue onto Google, the independent news outlet

Meduza [reported](#), citing an anonymous Russian telecom industry source.

Russia plans to continue “degrading” YouTube’s operations in the country and start blocking it in September, the pro-Kremlin news outlet gazeta.ru [reported](#) Friday, citing an anonymous Kremlin source and adding that a second unnamed source referred to plans to block YouTube this fall.

The Kremlin denied that Russia had started restricting access to YouTube, [saying](#) “the problem is with equipment that hasn’t been updated for more than two years.”

“It’s YouTube that’s taken this position regarding our market, we weren’t the initiators,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. “Leaving this market has its own technological consequences.”

YouTube suspended monetization and suspended all payment-based services in Russia over the war in Ukraine.

The video hosting site has nonetheless been a vital platform for independent journalists and opposition members as the country has blocked Facebook, Instagram and virtually all remaining independent media websites.

Since invading Ukraine in early 2022, Russia has [accused](#) YouTube and its owner Google of spreading “terrorist” anti-war content, fueling speculation that it could face an outright ban.

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