

## Putin's Plan to Disconnect Russia from the Global Internet



Credit: worldatlas.com

**What is the law?** Russian President Vladimir Putin has passed a law to allow Russia to create a separate internet for its citizens. It will come into effect on 1 November, 2019. The Kremlin (often used to refer to the Government of Russia) calls it a 'sustainable, secure and fully functioning' network that will work independently from the rest of the world.

**Why was this done?** The government says that this law was passed to protect Russia's access to the internet if it is disconnected from the global World Wide Web infrastructure. This will make it difficult for other countries to spy on or interfere with Russia's internet use.



Credit: Pixabay

**What does it mean for the users?** Russia has one of the largest user bases of the internet in the entire world. Almost 78% of its population uses it. As this number grows, the government feels the need to monitor content consumed by its people. According to this new law, during a state of emergency, the world wide web can be shut down completely. The government would then have complete access and control over the information being given to its citizens over its own internet. Foreign media and news access would also be limited to information permitted by the Kremlin.

Internet censorship is not new to this country. Since 2012, several websites have been blocked and the blacklist is growing by the day. The parliament had previously signed a law that can jail people for 15 days for speaking out against government officials. The recent law created an uproar and thousands of people protested against this bill. They said this is similar to what China is doing and will limit the access of internet to the people.

**A debate rekindled?** This gives rise to a not-so-new debate. It's a people versus the establishment scenario. There are plusses and minuses to both sides. The Internet has been an amazing platform for people to get their ideas and opinions heard and debated. It has also been used to spread misinformation and to incite political and other groups. Is this kind of control over information justified in today's times, or are China, Russia, and some other countries putting in place policies that are strangling the right of an entire generation to undiluted information access?

Write to us at [mail@currentkids.in](mailto:mail@currentkids.in) and let us know what you think!

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