



Controlling the Kremlin's Narrative

OE Watch Commentary: Directing the country's information narrative remains a top Kremlin priority. Having seized the controlling heights of the information realm (primarily TV), the Kremlin leadership can ensure that its perspective is disseminated throughout Russian society. As the first accompanying excerpt from the pro-business daily, *Kommersant* points out, television remains the primary "source of information for the Russians." According to the article, while the internet has "overtaken the radio and newspapers... television continues to be the most popular means of obtaining information."

There are growing concerns, however, that many Russians, particularly the young, are turning to the internet for information. Over the past several years, the Kremlin has been implementing measures to better regulate internet traffic. The second excerpt, also from *Kommersant*, describes proposed legislation which calls for "protective measures to be introduced 'to ensure the long-term and stable operation' of the internet in Russia." While the article fails to describe the exact details of this proposed legislation, it does refer to Russia's desire to obtain "internet sovereignty," which would allegedly "make the Russian internet 'stable in the face of external threats.'"

As an apt example as to how the Kremlin directs the country's information narrative, the third excerpt, from the official news agency *TASS*, describes how Russian officials plan to introduce "the Pobeda [Victory] TV channel" later this spring, which will be dedicated to broadcasting movies and other programs dealing with the Great Patriotic War (WW II). The Soviet victory over Nazi Germany has become the centerpiece of the current Kremlin ideology. Though it has been nearly 75 years since the end of the Great Patriotic War, this costly achievement serves as the martial prism through which the Kremlin information machine often portrays the West. Just as in 1941, fascists tried to destroy the USSR, so today, according to much of the Kremlin-directed media, dangerous forces in the West (e.g. Ukraine, NATO, US) are again preparing to attack. To defend the motherland against these "threats," the Kremlin will direct and use all the information tools in its arsenal. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

"...Television still occupies top position as a source of information for the Russians..."



Meeting with heads of Russian print media and news agencies.
Source: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56639/photos/52069>, CC 4.0.

Source: Yekaterina Grobman, "Россияне поверили в интернет и неформальные медиа: Но телевидение пока остается главным каналом информации (Russians Have Placed Faith in Internet and Informal Media. But Television Remains Main Channel of Information at Present)," *Kommersant*, 24 January 2019. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3861488>

Television still occupies top position as a source of information for the Russians.... At the same time, the internet as a main source of information has taken second place, overtaking the radio and newspapers.... Television continues to be the most popular means of obtaining information: Three-fourths (76%) of respondents watch television broadcasts.

Source: Dmitriy Shestoporov, Natalya Korchenkova, "Суверенный рунет набирает скорость (Sovereign Russian Internet is Gathering Speed)," *Kommersant*, 18 January 2019. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3855920>

The Ministry of Communications and Mass Media is proposing not postponing the draft law on a "sovereign Russian internet," which has been criticized by market participants, the Expert Council under the government, and ANO Tsifrovaya Ekonomika. The reform may be costly for the state, business representatives think...

...As Kommersant has reported earlier, the authors of the draft law, which was submitted on 14 December, are insisting on the need for protective measures to be introduced "to ensure the long-term and stable operation" of the internet in Russia....

Denis Davydov, a board member at the Safe Internet League, stated that the opponents of the draft law "are actually implementing" points in the US cyber-strategy, which state Washington's intention to prevent other countries from acquiring internet sovereignty....

Source: "Новый телеканал "Победа" запустят в России весной 2019 года (New "Victory" channel will launch in Russia in the spring of 2019)," *TASS*, 29 January 2019. <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/6053961>

Created for the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, which will be celebrated in 2020, the Pobeda TV channel will appear on Russian air in the spring of 2019.

"...In modern Russian society, the memory of the Great Patriotic War and the celebration of Victory Day remain the most important factor uniting people..."