

Journalist

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International programme "Russian media and journalism"



Editorial



Isabelle Zawadzka

We met on Monday 13th April, we came from different parts of Europe but all with the same purpose : discover Russia and its culture. Russia is located partly on the European continent. Only a few hours separate us from this huge, powerful country. But there is something magic about Russia. We cannot ignore it and consider practicing our future jobs without taking it into account. Some of us study Journalism, some others Public Relations. In order to get a better view of the world, it was obvious for us that this exchange programme offered by the Lomonosov Moscow State Univeristy will bring us a lot for our general knowledge.

The purpose of this magazine is to expose the results of what we learned during this exchange programme and the results of our research about Russian media. All the articles were written by ambitious and curious students willing to open their minds to some topics subject to clichés.

Thanks to Marina Rudenko, who put the magazine together, and to Diana Kulchitskaya, who organized and led all the programme and the visits to different media outlets, our publication can now be published.



Léna Augurelle is 20 years old. She studies communications in Brussels at IHECS. She is currently in her third year and she is specialized in Public Relations. She really enjoys her studies. She is interested in photography and arts and likes to go to exhibitions. One of her passions since her childhood is the cinema. One of her dreams is to travel around the world, she really wants to discover other countries and other cultures. That is why she is really happy to be here in Moscow.



Sarah Faraci is a 20-year-old student in Public Relations. She studies at IHECS, a communication school in Brussels. Currently, she is in her 3rd year of study. She really likes to communicate with people, that's why she chose to study communication. She also likes to travel and to visit other countries because she wants to discover other cultures. Sarah also wants to improve her English and to meet a lot of people. She would like to do her Master's abroad.



Her name is Julie Picquot. She is from Belgium and is studying Public Relations at IHECS, in Brussels. After finishing her Bachelor's degree by the end of June, she will apply for a Master's degree in PR. She is sociable, curious and open-minded. She likes meeting new people from all kind of countries and traveling much to discover other countries' cultures. She speaks French, English, Dutch and a bit of Spanish. Her interests are media, community management, social networks.



Adrien Lambert is a 24-year-old Belgian student at IHECS in Brussels. He will get his Bachelor's degree in applied communication at the end of the year and he wishes to obtain a Master's degree in Public Relation, specialized in crisis management. Adrien is very interested by the way organisations and companies communicate with each other. After graduation he would like to work in a communication or PR agency. He decided to take part in the MSU programme to discover Russia. He loves to meet new people and exchange ideas with people from different cultures.



Stephanie Boydens is 22 years old, and is a student in her third year studying Public Relations at IHECS, a communication school, in Brussels. She enjoys travelling throughout the world in order to learn about people. She would like to improve her knowledge in different cultures, explore different mentalities which is why she is preparing a trip to Thailand this summer to a orphanage. She is a perfectionist. This quality may be useful for her future.



This is Karen De Decker from Belgium and she is 19 years old. She loves to write, talk and she is very curious. That's why she studies journalism at the Thomas More Collage in Mechelen. As specialization she chose radio and print. In her spare time she works at 'Project Wolf', a local radio station. Together with a friend, she presents her own radio program called 'She-Wolf'. Her dream is to become a good radio host.

Journalist

Internation project «Russian media and journalism-2015»

Staff : Lena Augurelle, William Bernard, Stéphanie Boydens, Karen De Decker, Leonie De Preter, Sarah Faraci, Charline Franken, Julia Just, Ralitsa Koleva, Adrien Lambert, Eva Larsimont, Jorik Leemans, Sara Magniette, Camille Pagella, Jean-Denis Paschal, Johannes Perterer, Morena Piazza, Julie Picquot, Ana Sere, Kathy Stoffen, Nicola Tournay, Isabelle Zawadzka, Arianna Mengoni, Eleonora Olivieri, Giulia Bini

Layout : Marina Rudenko
Instructor : Diana Kulchitskaya
Contact : referent@smi.msu.ru



Jean-Denis Paschal Belgian crooner at first, but also a 21-year-old Belgian student, studying Public Relations at IHECS in Brussels. His main subjects of interest

include the different influences pressuring on the media, and most of all how they work. Trying to understand the tricks of communication, he believes that there are no trends that aren't prepared by experts.

The goal of his studies is to understand how those fake "social trends" are made, how they are decided, how they work, and mainly how they influence us in our everyday lives. He'd like to understand how those influences are made in Russia, as they are produced in a very different way than the ones in Europe.



Julia Just is currently writing her Master's thesis in media studies at Humboldt University Berlin, Faculty of Philosophy. In her studies she is particularly interested

in the interdisciplinary character of different forms of media that can be analyzed from theoretical perspectives of philosophy, sociology, linguistics and science. Since February 2015 she studies at Moscow State University, where she participates in media and language classes. During this period she would like to broaden her knowledge of Russian cultural, political and social life, and gain an insight into the media landscape of Russia and Moscow in particular.



Ralitsa Koleva is a student of TV and international journalism at Sofia University in Bulgaria. She has studied also in Antwerp, Belgium. She has been a trainee in one of

the biggest Bulgarian online media. She has published articles about arts, culture, social issues and politics. She is also interested in film directing, cinematography and photography. She would like to do a Master's degree in the sphere of Globalisation, Development and Media in order to create an international media and work in international organizations, such as the UN. The "Russian Media and Journalism" programme is an excellent experience for her professional plans. She is passionate about Russian history, arts and culture, and it is a pleasure for her to get to know Moscow from a first-hand experience.



Kathy Stoffen is a 22-year-old student, who is currently completing her third year of a Bachelor's degree in communications with pre-orientation

in public relations at the Institute of Advanced Studies of Social Communications (IHECS) in Brussels. She is also strongly involved in political associations. She has been assuming the responsibility of the communication of the youth section of a Belgian political party. She is planning to do a Master's in Public Relations and keep participating in the political life of her country.



Isabelle Zawadzka was born in Brussels and raised in Polish traditions, Isabelle is a 24-year-old student studying journalism at IHECS. Her interests include art,

culture and human beings in general. Art is the expression of someone's feelings. There are as many types of arts as there are people on earth. Culture is what shapes the human being. Finally, the human being is a complex equation. Isabelle's goal is to travel around the world and understand the way people live. That is why communication, open mindness and curiosity are driving her life.



Sara Magniette is a 20-year-old student in Journalism. She studies in Belgium, at IHECS. She is currently in her third year of studies and she is planning to do a

Master's degree in European journalism. She likes to travel and she just came back from an exchange in England. She is interested in international programmes and in improving her knowledge of different cultures. That is why she wanted to participate in this project in Moscow. In the future, she would like to work in documentary production.



Eleonora Olivieri is a 23-year-old undergraduate student. She lives in Pietrasanta, near Lucca, with her family. Eleonora studies Modern Languages at Pisa University.

For this reason she is here in Russia until May 15. After her graduation, she would like to become an interpreter and would like to move to Vancouver, Canada.



Ana Sere is a 20-year-old student. At the moment, she is in her last year of a Bachelor's degree at IHECS in Brussels. Her field of study is communication for social change,

though her programme offers a broad range of classes. She has always been interested in improving her language skills through practical experience; therefore she has taken every exchange opportunity she had. After her Master's, she aims to pursue a global career related to social matters such as communications for gender discrimination, development or cultural diversity.



During his life, Jorik Leemans wanted to become everything: from a fireman when he was a child until an actor in his early teenager years. Now he is nineteen years old

and decided to choose a different profession. After getting his Bachelor's degree in journalism at Thomas More College in Mechelen, he hopes to be a print journalist one day. The ideal would be to combine his passion for theatre and music with his love for journalism. Becoming a critic or cultural journalist would fit perfectly with that description.



Leonie De Preter from Belgium is 21 years old and is studying journalism at the Thomas More college in Mechelen. She chose television and radio as a specialization.

She decided to participate in this project because she wants to gain new experiences and would like to learn more about Russia.

Later she wants to work for a commercial TV channel in Belgium as a reporter. Her big dream is to become a TV presenter.

In her free time she works on an online TV-channel "TV Mechelen" as a reporter.



Giulia is a 25 year-old student from Santa Croce sull'Arno. She is 25 years old and she studies translation at the University of Pisa. She really likes studying languages because

this gives her the opportunity to travel a lot and to meet new people. Right now she is doing an internship in Moscow because she wants to improve her Russian language.



Sara De Zolt is a student in Foreign Languages at the University of Pisa. She is specialized in the Russian, English and German language. She would like to do a Master's degree in the sphere of East-European Studies and Political Science, and work for international organizations, such as the UN or the European Parliament. She applied for the "Russian Media and Journalism" programme, because she has always been interested in journalism and fascinated by the Russian history and culture.



As a 20 years old public relations student, Charline Franken is much interested in international communication. She's coming from Belgium and therefore she's open-minded and eager to discover new cultures. The exchange program in the Faculty of Journalism is a great opportunity to meet and understand another way to use media's and to manage the press world. For her future, she would like to get to know more about the worldwide media system and how to use them to solve national and international issues.



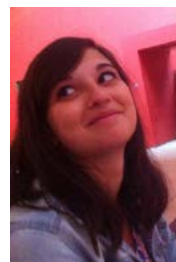
Eva Larsimont is a third year Bachelor degree student at IHECS Brussels (communication school). She is specialized in Public Relations. She really loves her studies and she hopes to succeed in this specific field especially in the field of music. She will have a master degree in the public relations field in 2 years, she will also follow it at IHECS in Brussels. She hopes later to be able to combine her professional life with her hobbies.



Camille Pagella is 24 years old and she has been studying journalism for four years now. Camille was born and raised in Geneva, Switzerland but she now lives currently in Brussels, Belgium. Camille has always loved to travel and discover new countries and cultures. Her second passion is writing, this is why she turned to journalism. Camille is very interested in International Affairs and she wants to cover them using a pen and a camera.



William Bernard is a 22 years old Belgian student. He studies at IHECS, in Brussels. William studies communication. He wants to do a Master in Public Relations and specialize in crisis management and international relations and affaires. William would like to work as a spokes-person in the field of politics or in a private company.



Morena Piazza is 21 and is studying journalism in Belgium. She loves photography and she's writing since forever. She has learned a lot within these years and is now more than convinced that she wants to be a journalist. Travelling and meeting new people and cultures is a huge part of her life and that's why her articles and projects are mostly social and cultural.



Arianna Mengoni is 23 years old, and lives in Prato, a town near Florence, in Tuscany, Italy. She studies Modern Languages at Pisa University and now she's attending a Master degree course in Scientific and Literary Translation. She studies English and Russian.



Johannes Perterer, 26 years old, is an Austrian journalist and a student in the Erasmus Mundus Journalism Master's degree programme with a specialization in War and Conflict journalism. The first semester of the degree took place at the journalism school in Aarhus in Denmark, the second at the University of Technology in Sydney and for the past year, he has been studying at Swansea University in Wales.



Nicola Tournay is a 21-year-old undergraduate student, and he is in his third-year studying Applied Communication at IHECS (Brussels). Hence, the program "Russian media and journalism" fits his professional goals as well as his cultural interests for contemporary Russia.

American TV soap operas going "Russian style"

by Isabelle Zawadzka

American series have been flooding the European media market for the past 20 years. Russia has also adopted this trend but made it in a special way.

How I met your mother, Ugly Betty, the Nanny, Doctor House,... Those are only a few of the American series that everybody is watching now especially "in streaming". There is kind of a madness around this trend: streaming platforms are created in order to grant access to those 20 or 40-minutes short films, subtitles in different languages are now available on some websites. There are also some platforms that warn you of the release of your favorite series and also platforms that remind you, which episodes of the TV-series you follow you have already seen. American productions have completely flooded the European market and they are now a real must-see in TV-culture.

Russia has also followed suit. However, Russians have twisted the series madness in their own way. Russians usually don't speak English. If you are travelling to this fascinating country, you will encounter some difficulties to communicate with them. That is probably the reason why many of the must-see series are remade following the "Russian style".

According to Russia Beyond the Headlines, 80% of the primetime hours in Russia are devoted to TV-series. As the national production could not follow the demand, Russian media decided to remake some American series. Producers invest so much money in these reproductions that the public sometimes doesn't even know that actually their favorite TV-soap is American. The success of the remakes is so huge that it becomes a nightmare for the producers: they have to sustain the audience focus on a large range of series instead of focusing on a smaller number of truly national productions.

Russia is undoubtedly a great world power. The difference between Russia and the US is obvious. But what is remarkable is the fact that American culture succeeds in sneaking subtly into the strong Russian culture.

In front of the TV screen

Russian and Italian television: similar or different?

by Arianna Mengoni,
Eleonora Olivieri, Giulia Bini

Russia and Italy sometimes seem very different, when it comes to culture and traditions. However, even if it sounds like a paradox, the two countries share some common features when speaking about the media system on a regional scale. “Indeed, Russia has a regional dimension, which means it includes a great variety of languages. Italy along with its dialects, is represented on a local dimension,” says Dr. Mikhail Makeenko, Associate Professor at the Chair of Media Theory and Economics at the Faculty of Journalism, Moscow State University.

The situation changes when we talk about media system on a national scale. Since Russia is one of the largest countries in the world, when we deal with Russian television, we need to be aware of the fact that the country is divided into 9 hour zones. Indeed, from Kaliningrad to Magadan, there are 11 time zones. As a matter of fact, Russian networks are numerous and they change depending on the geographical zones. Nevertheless, the main channels are more than 20 and among them some of the most important ones are: 2x2, Central'noe televidenie SSSR, Dožd, NTV, Pervyj kanal, Rossija 1, Rossija 2, Rossija 24, Rossija K, STS and VGTRK.

The same doesn't apply to Italy, since the peninsula has a smaller geographical surface if compared to Russia, so it does not have to cope with this problem. Italian networks are broadcast on a national scale, with one exception for the five regions with a special status, which have specific channels broadcast only for them. Despite the fact that Italian television is national, the main channels can only be viewed for an annual fee. “This system is completely different in Russia, where national networks receive a budget from the state and they do not use public funds,” adds Mikhail Makeenko. The main national Italian networks are 7 and while RAI (Radio televisione italiana S.p.a) covers the first three main channels, Mediaset, a private company owned by Silvio Berlusconi, includes the other three channel with the highest share. The seventh channel, instead, works on its own.

As Mikhail Makeenko points out, one of the greatest differences between Russian

and Italian TV is connected with its usage of foreign content. While Italian television provides a lot of imported content during day time or even during pre-prime time, Russian networks broadcast it only during night time. “Russian soap operas are transmitted on national channels, while in Italy content imported from foreign countries has a larger appeal to the audience,” says Mikhail Makeenko.

Another important difference between Russian and Italian television is that in the former we found sector-based channels, like Rossija K, a television network dedicated to culture and arts-oriented shows, or Rossija 2, a television channel primarily broadcasting sports. In the latter, instead, the first 8 channels are not sector-based but they deal with any sort of argument, such as the news, cartoons or sports. After the digital terrestrial television was successfully introduced in 2012, new sector-based television channels were added to the original ones. Among these, seven are dedicated to the entertainment of children and teenagers, like Rai Yoyo, while others, like Tgcom 24 and Super tennis, only to culture and sports. In addition to this we need to say that Italian channels are, in general, politically oriented: the first three RAI channels belong to the left political wing,

while the others from four to six are right oriented, the seventh channel can be considered as the most neutral one, or at least it tries to give a more balanced opinion. Indeed, the journalists working in that channel try to avoid providing their own opinion and to give an objective perspective. “In Russia most of the channels are linked to the most important political figures of the country, but this does not represent a problem, as we consider it a special feature we share with some other countries, like Italy”—admits Makeenko.

In Italy programs are interrupted every 10/15 minutes for commercials. This happens because Italian television earns money by selling air time to the companies that like to share the advertisements on the channels. For example, Nike company pays a lot of money to make its advertisements available during spots events. “In Russia we had some problems with advertisement, as the country has time-limits imposed by the state,” says Makeenko. “It can not broadcast more than 9 minutes of advertisements on national networks. Moreover, when speaking about pay TV we can say that now the limits are higher. Advertisement is forbidden if the channels provide more than 25% of international content per day of,” he adds.



Ukraine: how propaganda happens on all sides

by Johannes Perterer, Julia Just

Even though the “propaganda model” was created 27 years ago by Herman and Chomsky, its relevance cannot be understated when looking at the coverage of the Ukraine conflict in Russia and in the West. The model states that media are inherently biased and exist to “manufacture consent” and support for the current state of society in order to serve the interests of the political and economic elite. Media bias originates from within the dependence of journalists on official sourcing, which gives states the power to frame information in their favour. While Russia has always been regarded as an autocracy that engages in large scale television propaganda and keeps press freedom at bay, it is time for Western media to look in the mirror as well. The working climate of many Russian journalists is dominated by self-censorship and conformism, but so is that of journalists in Western Europe, only in a more subtle way.

Journalists do not live and work in a void, they have values of their own which guide their thinking. Scientific enquiry has shown that even in the so-called “post-national” Europe, the nation state still remains the crucial frame of reference in foreign news making. Due to the tribalistic nature of human thinking, it is always easier to see your own nation state or part of the world as “good” and everyone else as the opposite. The Ukraine crisis has shown once again that this feature is not exclusive to journalists in autocracies like Russia. Both sides, the so-called West and Russia are engaged in propaganda and are trying to propagate their version of events. The version of the West is that Russian president Vladimir Putin is an evil aggressor who broke international law. The Kremlin’s version is that Russia saved Crimea from Ukrainian fascists and is supporting self-determined independence movements of “ethnic” Russians in Eastern Ukraine. Both sides engage in propaganda, yet only in the Russian case the propaganda is visibly orchestrated.

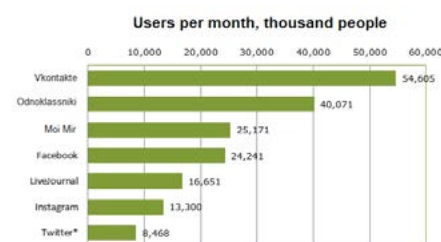
About a month ago the Kremlin released a two and a half hour long documentary trying to validate its version of the annexation of Crimea. In it, President Vladimir Putin

himself is commenting the “bringing home” of Crimea and how Russia allegedly saved it from fascist forces in Kiev. The documentary was obviously state propaganda that is supposed to manufacture consent for the Russian government’s geopolitical goals. In the West, the rather odd situation is that propaganda happens too, but without a guiding hand at the top. Nevertheless, there is certainly a fair deal of conformism among journalists to stick to the narratives provided by their own governments. Coinciding with the propaganda model, one could suggest that journalists in the West predominantly “manufacture consent” for the interests of their governments, just like they do so obviously in Russia. This is shown by the fact that in the Western coverage, the geopolitical interests of the United States and the European Union are often ignored, implying that the West or at least Europe is only interested in the spread of democracy and human rights.

This brings up the question what the civil society can do to get a balanced view of the Ukraine conflict. In the West, one-sided coverage about the annexation of Crimea was followed by a wave of criticism directed towards mass media. The obvious bias in the coverage led many people to lose trust in the mainstream media and turn to alternative sources for news such as social media and independent Youtube news platforms. In Russia, a similar development took place, yet it was marginal in numbers. Only 60 percent of the Russian population has access to the Internet and state TV channels are still the unchallenged champions of the media landscape. It is not that bloggers and independent Youtube-news do not exist in Russia, but it is in the interest of the Russian government that the size of their audience is very limited compared to that in Europe or the United States.

Propaganda can only be dismantled in a diversified media landscape. Even though it takes place on all sides of the Ukraine conflict, Western societies profit from a diversity of voices in their media landscapes to question official narratives. A small minority of Russian media do the same, but the Russian government will do everything in its power to stop alternative news sources from gaining viewer- and readership.

The democratic impact of social media



Russiansearchtips.com/category/social-media-in-russia/

Social media are really used in Russia. Since the last decade this trend is more and more visible. In fact, 62% of the Russian population use Internet. The local Facebook, VKontakte, is the most used social network in Russia with more than 100 million users.

Now the question is: can the social media bring democratic changes in a society?

Couples of examples show that it is possible. In some countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Hong-Kong, social media had a significant impact, provided free information and helped the citizens to organize a protest against the government.

But there is not only a good side of the usage of social media in this context. The government, for example, can interfere in the social media and in such a way it can stop the opponents and destroy the chances for any democratic changes.

In the case of Russia, the local social networks like VK are much more controlled by the authorities. It is a democratic problem because people cannot express themselves as they would be able to do in Western media like Facebook and Twitter which are less controlled. In fact they were used during the winter protests of 2011 by the opponents of the government and the citizens, to organize demonstration against electoral fraud.

But Twitter and Facebook are not totally free from the government ‘control. It already happened that the government asks to delete some politicized events or accounts. It shows that social media are never safe from governmental pressures.

Another obstacle for democracy is the new law, which will be implemented in 2016, it will impose to social media to provide all the information of the users.

To conclude, the answer to the main question “can the social media bring democratic changes in a society?” is not clear. There is obviously a positive impact, as seen during the winter protests but it is maybe not enough to talk about a complete democratic change.

Is censorship necessary?

by Adrien Lambert

For European citizens it is difficult to understand the way media in Russia work. Since our youngest years we were overexposed to notions such as freedom of speech or freedom of press. Censorship and state-controlled media is something inconceivable for us.

What we must understand is that, in Belgium, even with our freedom of press, censorship, more precisely self-censorship, does exist.

The best examples arise from reactions after the acts of terrorism against Charlie Hebdo. Out of fear of retaliation, newspapers, movies and even cultural exhibitions were cancelled or postponed. Here we don't speak about censorship, this is an ugly word which is hated, but we speak about security measures; we say that we don't want to offend the public or that we are trying not to revive tensions.

So, "what's the deal with Russia?" Well this is a difficult question.

For a country which was highly controlled less than 20 years ago, it isn't surprising that the concept of completely free press is a distant dream. However, to my mind, the notion of completely free media is utopian in the rest of the world as well. There is always control over media, but it is not always labeled as censorship.

In Russia, state owned media do not speak about censorship, but evoke "trustworthy information" or, and there we can see the link with Belgian media, they justify it by mentioning the necessity of keeping political stability. In Europe, censorship is used to prevent "disturbing the public order".

Understanding Russia's situation is a necessity before you start judging your European point of view. Russians are fed up with it, even if some of them might agree with you and are revolted by the way media coverage is done in their country.

Obviously working in the media in Russia seems very hard. According to Human Rights Watch, there are still a lot of journalists being threatened and a lot of control over the civil society through selective implementation of the law, restriction and censorship. Russia is also 147th out of 168 in the World Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders).

Will Russian media be able to evolve towards more freedom by themselves or does the change need to come from somewhere else? Aren't there other, more urgent, issues to fix first (political diversity, economic stabilization)?

One thing is certain, it will not -and should not- be imposed by a foreign country.



“In Russia investigative reporting is becoming popular among bloggers”

By Ralitsa Koleva, Sara De Zolt

Nowadays, the majority of Russian media are often accused of not being neutral, spreading mainly state propaganda and concealing the truth. Nevertheless, there are liberal private funded newspapers and online media, speaking out against corruption and reporting scandals, discovered through journalists' investigations. These enquiries reveal the widespread deception at the highest state levels. Despite the so believed autocratic rule's pressure on the media, investigative journalism is still doing well in the Russian press. Roman Anin, an investigative journalist working for "Novaya Gazeta", gives important answers about this type of journalism in Russia, and how it will develop in the future.

Many people think about Russia as a country with a really autocratic rule. So what is the current situation of the investigative journalism in the country?

In investigative reporting I would say everything is not so bad. Because when the authorities are corrupt it means that the investigative reporters have a lot of work to do. This is why there are number of investigative newspapers. There is not any investigative reporting on TV, because TV is controlled by the state, and the state will not allow anybody to investigate what is going on. But if you take media, such as "Novaya Gazeta", "Vedomosti", "RBC Daily", "Forbes Russia" and some others, including online newspapers, then there is a plenty of investigative reporting in them. And what is also good is that the investigative reporting is becoming more popular among bloggers. Today there are very famous bloggers who sometimes do even a better job than the journalists. So I would say that investigative reporting in Russia is developing and that there are plenty of good investigative reporters in different newspapers.

What effect has the investigative journalism in Russia? Has it changed something in society or in the way the government does its job in the recent years?

Of course the investigative reporting in Russia doesn't have the same impact as it has in other countries. Because in the majority of cases, if it comes to big names and high-ranking officials, then there isn't any reaction. Even if you prove that this guy has stolen a billion of dollars, and you have all the documents to prove it, then

nothing happens. In this sense investigative reporting doesn't have any effect on the situation in Russia at all. On the other hand, if people write about some middle-ranking officials, about local authorities, then the impact is bigger. Then even some decisions might be made and it may lead to some results. Even a criminal case can be started.

Can you give us an example of a successful investigation, which led to a result?

The blogger Alexei Navalny published a story about the property owned by a member of the parliament—Mr. Pekhtin. And he left his position in the State Duma. Six years ago I published an investigation about a general, who is now the head of the paratroop forces in Russia and he was punished as well. Not long ago I published an investigative reporting about the Ministry of Defense, which bought coal from some companies affiliated to the Minister of Defense. There was a criminal case started and it was going for about a year. It resulted in some arrests, but not of the main guys. I can give you not so many, but there are examples. In all the cases they come not to the big names. The most recent example when everything was proved and nothing happened was the story I published about a month ago. It was about the deputy director of the main secret services in Russia—FSB, which is a successor of the KGB. And I proved that the wife of the deputy director of FSB owned an apartment, which was not declared in his official declaration. According to the law he should have been fired just the next day. But nothing happened. The authorities replied that there was a technical mistake, and that was why his apartment was not listed in the declaration.

In such cases what does the society do? Isn't there some reaction?

There are no rights; there are no meetings... They just read the stories and they say: "Hold that. It is." That is all.

So is this type of journalism popular among the journalists themselves? Are they afraid to do this kind of job? If we consider forms of repression such as the murder of Anna Politkovskaya...

It is difficult to say. It is not a general thing; it always depends on the person. Sure, some reporters are afraid to do investigative reporting and they prefer to do just day by day reporting, like news and so on. Some reporters are not. Everything is different in the different news-

papers.

Are there in the years after the murder of Politkovskaya other so brutal forms of repression against investigative journalists?

Anna Politkovskaya was killed in 2006. Anastasia Baburova and Stanislav Markelov were killed together by neo-Nazis in 2009. Anastasia wrote some stories about neo-Nazis and Markelov was the lawyer who helped her with information and in general was anti-Fascist. Natalya Estemirova was killed in 2010 in Chechnya. She was writing stories about kidnappings of people in Chechnya. As we believe, she was killed by the Chechen secret services close to Mr. Kadyrov. And there were plenty of other examples of violence against journalists. The most famous one is, I would say, the assassination attempt against Mr. Oleg Kashin, who was working for "Kommersant" and now lives in Switzerland. He was beaten as I believe because of his stories about pro-Kremlin youth organisations and he survived.

Were some of people involved in these cases punished?

In one of them. The neo-Nazis who killed Baburova and Markelov were all sentenced.

Do you believe they were the real criminals?

Yeah, sure.

Have you ever doubted because of the pressure if you would like to continue doing your job?

It is always a kind of choice you make. It is silly to say that I am not afraid because some of the topics are really hot and there is a certain risk that somebody can kill you. But day by day, year by year, you are getting used to this situation. My idea is that you should not listen to your fears. Fears should not command you what to do or not. That is why it is my choice not to listen to my fears, nor to be afraid and I should write about what I believe is important. But of course I understand that this is dangerous and if something happens, it was my choice.

Have you ever been threatened?

Yeah, but I would not say that it was something very serious.

Can you give us details?

I can't give you the exact details, but let's say the most dangerous period starts when you send the requests to people about whom you write. And then they know that you are investigating them. And after you send the requests sometimes you receive some calls, sometimes they send other people to tell you that you should better stop, otherwise you can face big problems. But we



Roman Anin is a journalist, who does investigations in the economic and financial fields. He started his career in 2006, when he became a reporter of the Moscow newspaper “Novaya Gazeta”. Until 2008 he worked in the sports section of the media. Anin was sent to cover the war in South Ossetia, and afterwards he moved to the newspaper’s investigative section. He has revealed important cases of corruption in the military, politics and business. He received three prestigious Russian awards for investigative journalism: the Artem Borovik award, the Youlian Semenov award and Andrey Sukharov award. He received also the Knight International Journalism Award. He takes part in cross-border investigations with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalism (ICIJ) and the Organised Crime Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), of which he is a member.

don’t care. But still I should point out that in the last ten years the situation has changed a bit. So today people prefer to bribe you than to kill you. To offer you a huge amount of money than to kill you. Because of course it is Russia, but nevertheless the people are becoming more clever.

In which type of media the investigative journalists have the most freedom? Press, TV, radio, or online?

In Russia? The press, of course. The TV... I wouldn’t say that this is media. It is a stupid propaganda. Of course they do not do investigative reporting. At all.

Have you ever been rejected by a certain media to be published?

No. Every story I have found has been published. I can give an example to what extent “Novaya Gazeta” is a free newspaper. 51% of “Novaya Gazeta” is owned by the staff and 39% is owned by Mr. Alexander Lebedev, who is a banker. And one time I did an investigative story and the main person in the story was a friend of Mr. Lebedev. And he went to Mr. Lebedev and told him: “One of your reporters is writing about me. Could you please stop him?” And the story was not stopped, it was published. So even people who give us money cannot stop the stories.

So isn’t it hard for such type of liberal publication as “Novaya Gazeta” to exist in Russia in the current situation?

It is, because in terms of marketing we are popular among rich people. And on the ordinary market we would have been a very good platform for advertisers and a platform for other sources of income. But in Russia, in the current situation, advertisers do not come to us, because

they are afraid to advertise themselves in a newspaper which is considered to be an opponent of the authorities. They are afraid that if they publish their ads in “Novaya Gazeta” and give us money, they would face problems with the authorities. For financing, as they believe, an oppositional newspaper.

How does the newspaper survive?

Still we have some advertisers, and we get financing from the shareholders, from Mr. Lebedev. Today he does not give any money at all. And that is why we face a lot of problems, with salaries and so on... We might even close the print version in May, which was recently announced by our editor-in-chief, if we do not find an investor.

Can you give your forecast on how the investigative journalism will develop in Russia in the next few years?

I am optimistic about that, if all of the newspapers are not shut down, and all of the reporters are not arrested. It is possible, actually. But I am positive because today more and more investigative reporters are getting more skillful in investigation. They are more and more using online technologies to follow the money, to follow the people and so on. Which was impossible even 3 years ago, I would say. People were more traditional, they didn’t do online searches, they didn’t use databases from Florida, from New York, from Sweden, from any place in the world. 80% of the things we found and published came from online, open sources. This was one of the reasons why bloggers became so good investigative reporters. They do investigations without even getting out of

their apartments. That is why I believe that in the future and even today it is becoming more and more difficult to hide some things. There are so many sources where you could find this and that. The only thing you need is to wish to do it and nothing else. And you can get the skills for just half a year. When I came to the investigative section, it was impossible to imagine it and I needed so much time to get the right skills. How to develop sources, how to meet people, how to protect information, how to get information from the US or from the UK. And today everything is so easy.

The amount of news which could be found on the Internet could probably bring some change to the society in Russia.

I hope so, but you should not link the development of the society and the development of the investigative reporting. Because these might be different things. The majority of the investigative reporters at least share common values—democracy, anti-corruption and so on. But the society may not share the same values. In Russia 86% support Vladimir Putin and the things which were done in Ukraine. This is a very dangerous thing for me—you can’t expect anything good from a society, which backs up the war, the corruption and so on.

Do you think this percent of supporters is real?

I believe so, actually. If you leave Moscow and you go to the regions, you will find that people prefer to get news from the TV. They don’t read and they are not used to looking for other sources of information. Let us say impartial information. It is very common in the majority of regions. But someday something will change.

Who are you: a Yandexer or a Googler?

by William Bernard,
Jean-Denis Paschal

Russia and the U.S. are competing not only in the political sphere, but also in the field of the Internet. There's a new Cold War between the countries, but this time in the sphere of IT technologies. When a Russian company started Yandex as a search engine, Google was created in the USA a few months later. When Americans launched Facebook, Russia started Vk.com.

Unfortunately for "Yet ANother in-DEXer" (the original name of Yandex), the company does not reach the figures it used to have. The share of the Russian biggest Internet enterprise is shrinking and it's slowly losing its top position in Russia. In 2011, its market share was 62%, and now the Russian search engine monster can boast only approximately 55%.

The Google invasion

Yandex lost 8% of the market share in Russia but that does not mean that another company is ready to take over the first place. Indeed, the second in the chart is Google with almost 40%.

One third, you would say, is not enough to compete with its Russian enemy but big enough to be heard. The American company came from far away when it comes to the Russian territory. In the last half decade, they gained up to almost 15% of the market share and they keep growing. Yandex already counterattacked by pursuing Google in front of the Russian law for unfair practice on smartphone platforms in early 2015.

Where is the battle going to lead? No one knows yet but one thing is sure that Yandex is not ready to let Google take over the top place. By acquiring many foreign start-ups or well known high-tech companies, Yandex became

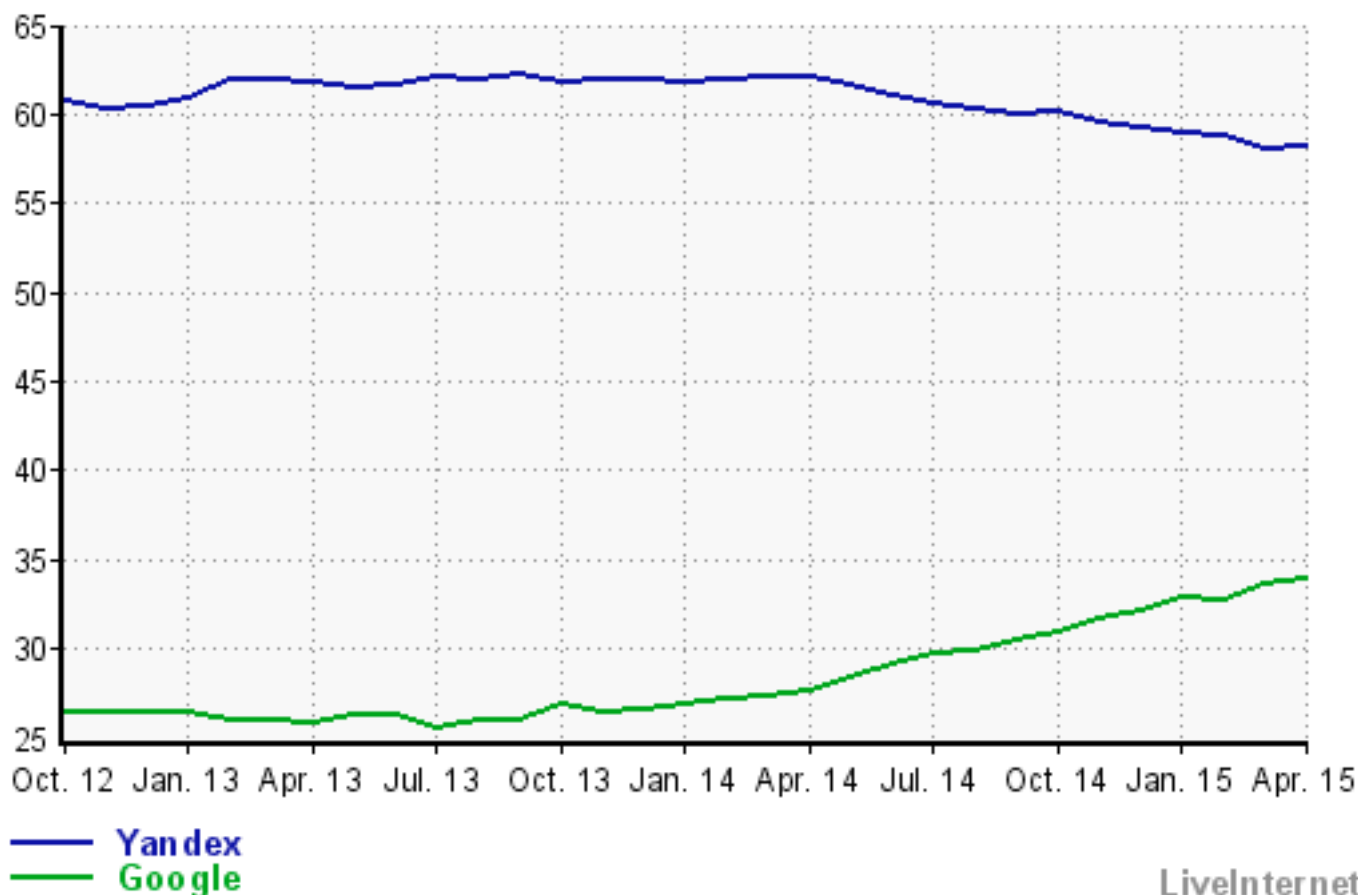
the largest media property in Russia by generated revenues by March 2013.

The Russian forerunner

Opposed to what most of Westerners would think, Google is not older than its Russian competitor. Yandex search engine was invented in 1993 by Comptek, but officially launched in 1997. Comptek was founded by Arkady Volozh and Arkady Borkovsky, then it subdivided itself 3 years later to become the well known Yandex we can use today. Google, on the other hand, started its search engine in 1998. Since then, Yandex became the most popular Internet tool in Russia and Russian speaking countries.

Nowadays, Yandex offers a great amount of services to its customers. From Yandex.Maps to Yandex.Translate, followed by Yandex.Mail. Will it make you lose your Google?

Share (%)



Big brother is watching you

A Belgian opinion on the Russian bloggers law



Jorik Leemans, Leonie De Preter, Karen De Decker

Since the 1st of August, 2014 a new Russian law dominates the Internet. Russian bloggers and social media fanatics with more than 3,000 daily visitors are from now on considered as mass media. In other words, this means that they have to register themselves and therefore cannot write anything anonymously anymore. Russian authorities can now easily keep an eye on those sites.

Let us be honest, we never expected Russia to have an open media landscape. Probably, that is our own fault and caused by the way Belgian press reports on this country. But we cleared our minds and came with a clearer vision to Moscow. At first sight, we were positively surprised by the lectures given in the Lomonosov State University. The Russian media appeared to be different from what we thought. But then, we heard about this law in one of the lectures and we were back to where we came from.

Island of freedom

We thought it was rather weird that a lot of media companies receive state support instead of being privatized. But taking away people's Internet, their last real island of freedom, is something our little Belgian heads really cannot understand.

The law is part of three measures that the government has

introduced to regulate the Internet in Russia. Ok, if it is to block extremist statements from the World Wide Web, but not if it is to impose fines up to 105,000 euros, to get blogs and sites offline and to force people to reveal their identity is for us absolutely not tolerable.

Control of speech

We have a blog ourselves, not that we have 3,000 readers a day, still we could not imagine being controlled by the government and not be able to write what we want and how we want to. Is this what we call 'press freedom' or 'freedom of speech'? In our humble opinion, this sounds more like a mind trapped in its own body. We absolutely agree that bloggers should not write anything they want anonymously, but if necessary this should be possible.

In this way, Russia takes a step back instead of forward. The freedom of speech is a human right and should not be limited in any way. What the Russians need is an open culture and a more free minded law system. So dear Russians: like Big Brother, everything you do on the Internet can and will be seen by your government. We took our precautions and wrote this opinion piece on good old-fashioned paper, because you never know...

Belgium: my country as seen by Yandex

by Nicola Tournay

The Russian search engine Yandex released earlier this month a map of the world, which shows the three top keywords, associated with each country. According to Yandex, this map reflects the Russian vision of the world. Three percent of the Russian search queries would be associated with the name of a country. Much of these keywords are difficult to understand from my Belgian point of view. I can easily get why France is associated with "songs" and "language" (knowing that Russians are historically fascinated by the French culture), but "meat" makes me more perplexed. It may be related to meat paste, but in general French culinary clichés make me first think of all about wine and baguette. Are Russian

tourists afraid of being out of meat in the delicate Mediterranean France? However, top search queries concerning my own country Belgium were the most surprising to me: "Belgian shepherd", "carpet" and "beer", the last keyword being the only one that I expected (with "waffles" and "chocolate"). I had to launch an investigation into this matter. The Belgian shepherd was easy to decipher. Given that we have far more cows than sheep in Belgium and that being a "shepherd" is not a popular occupation, it became obvious to me that this term refers to the dog breed.

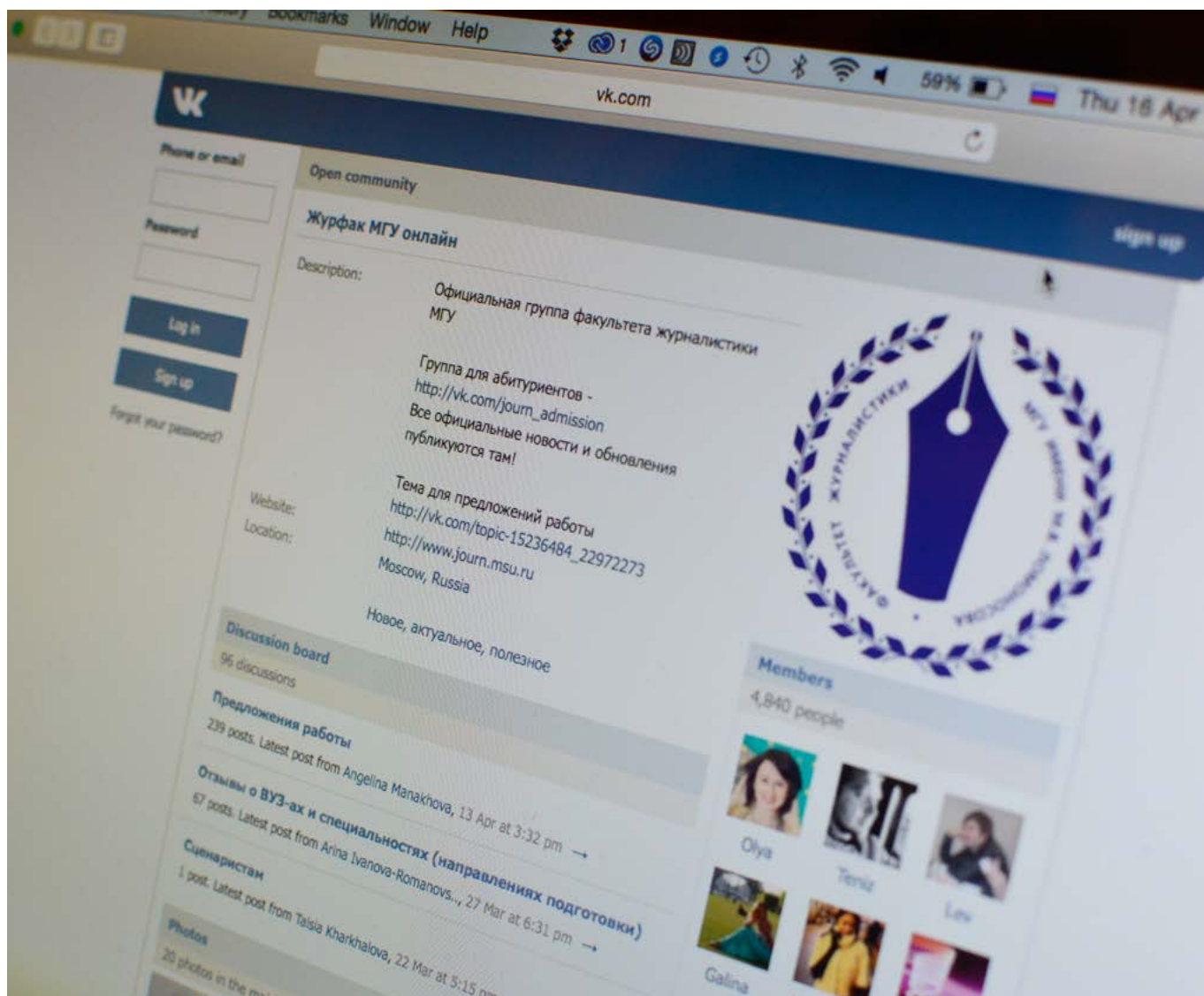
It should be noted that the third top keyword associated with Germany was "German shepherd" but I wouldn't dare to conclude that Russians are carnivorous dog-lovers. Let's go back to my keywords. "Car-



pet" was a tough one. As far as I know, Belgians don't have any original tradition in this craft. Some buy oriental or Ikea carpets, most think it is old-fashioned, dusty and un-washable. Maybe "carpet" relates to a long tradition of embroidery in Bruges. Then pillows and communion dresses apply more than carpets (and I fear for the Russian good taste). Wrong track. Suddenly, I remembered that each summer, from mid-Au-

gust till the end of the month, a hundred of volunteers assemble a carpet of thousands of flowers on the mythical Grand Place, in Brussels. Viewed from the sky, the flowers look like one giant colorful carpet. Last year, the volunteers made one with oriental designs to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Turkish immigration in Belgium. This year I suggest we celebrate Russians and their taste for colorful carpets.

How does Russia handle social media?



by Sarah Faraci, Charline Franken,
Julie Picquot

Social media aren't equally used by people around the world, especially in Russia, where they have developed their own national social networks. Among these there is, **Vkontakte.ru**, the Russian Facebook which is the most famous social media with more than 46.8 million users (among 143 million Russians). It owes its success to all the content available for the users. They can download music and videos for free.

At the Faculty of Journalism, Moscow State University, Sofia Skolotina, who is one of the people in charge of Public Relations, is doing SMM for the Faculty. In her opinion, students don't use Facebook as much as

Vkontakte because of privacy issues. Their greatest fear about the worldwide social network is that they can't control propagation of posts enough. Because of the confidentiality policy of Facebook and the fact that they are selling personal data, Russians trust Vkontakte much more. Although according to Alena Popova, a social networks expert, Russians are still active on Facebook. As she says, quoted by RFI.fr, they are usually citizens of big metropolitan areas like Moscow and Saint-Petersbourg, they have a university degree and are highly demanding towards social media.

Concerning the Faculty of Journalism, it is mainly active on Vkontakte, Instagram and Twitter. The accounts are popular among the students, which is proved by the number of followers

the groups have. The Faculty VK account gathers 4.834 followers (Twitter 3.321 and Instagram 1.781). The activity is quite frequent as there are posts made at least every two days. The posts on social media concern mostly events, conferences and journalism articles. Their goal is to inform students of what is going on in their university. Sofia says that there are many more people attending an event, if she mentions it on the social networks. To avoid conflicts and keep the school neutrality, they never talk about subjects like politics and religion. Even though the Faculty is situated in Moscow, it doesn't have any official Facebook account.

To conclude, we can say that Russians' usage of social media is really peculiar and different from other countries.

How the Russian gay legislation impacts the media

Ana Sere and Sara Magniette

Hillary Clinton's first campaign video, released on Monday, has been forbidden to minors by a Russian TV channel. According to them, the video breaks the anti-gay propaganda law, as it features a gay couple. The law already had an impact on Russian media in the past.

Officially running for president, Hillary Clinton released her first campaign video on Monday, which ended up being somewhat controversial in Russia. It features a few seconds of two men holding hands, announcing they will get married over the summer. Though it was a way for the presidential candidate to confirm her support of equal rights, the video got the 18+ rat-

ing on the Russian channel TV Rain. Indeed, it feared to break the law, which bans LGBT public discussions within earshot of minors, as it is considered to be gay propaganda. "There are no legal precedents for this law, so we just don't know what comes under this law and (what) doesn't," TV Rain told CNN.

The law is meant to protect children from propaganda, in this case defined as: "distribution of information that is aimed at the formation among minors of nontraditional sexual attitudes." Approved by the President Putin in 2013, its goal is to prevent the normalization of "deviant sexual behavior", an offense punishable by fines.

The consequences for some organizations, such as the media, are more severe.

The fine is higher and the business can be forced to cease operations temporarily. Alexander Suturin, editor of the weekly *Molodoi Dalnevostochnik*, was the first journalist targeted by the law. In 2014, he published an interview, quoting a gay man who believes in the normality of his orientation. After paying a fine that went three times over the region monthly wage, he argued that the Constitution outlaws discrimination.

"The federal anti-gay law, by repressing some journalists, creates a climate of fear, as explained by Igor Iasine, a gay activist. "The law causes the media channels to act as their own censors and remove any references to LGBT," he says as quoted by *HumanSpectrum*.



Russiansearchtips.com/category/social-media-in-russia/

A Russian Medium Spread Worldwide

by Camille Pagella, Morena Piazza

Russia Beyond the Headlines was launched 8 years ago. The media outlet is sponsored by Rossiyskaya Gazeta which is the official Russian government newspaper. Even though the editorial values are liberal and separated from Rossiyskaya Gazeta, they are suffering from the association.

16 different languages, 24 countries and 30 international newspapers, Russia Beyond the Headlines is everywhere and for everyone. The goal? Reaching foreign audiences by showing the news from a Russian point of view and focusing on the Russian internal issues, which are not covered by international newspapers. The way to do it is to be published as a supplement

of big national newspapers such as El Pais, The New York Times, La Repubblica, The Daily Telegraph, Le Figaro, and so on. In Belgium for example, it is the newspaper Le Soir, which has been chosen as a partner to publish every two months the Russia Beyond the Headlines supplement of eight pages.

Trying to march with a ball and chain

«The articles on these pages are produced by Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russia), which takes sole responsibility for the content». This is what people can read every issue of the supplement. It is confusing when we know that Rossiyskaya Gazeta is the official mouthpiece of the Russian government. «Yes, sometimes it is a problem that we are directly related to Rossiyskaya Gazeta. But our content is our production and is not con-

trolled at all,» explains Alexey Lossan, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief for Business and Economics of Russia Beyond the Headlines. The other thing to know is that the liberal supplement is not owned by the newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta. It is owned by the holding company, which is wearing the same name and which is as well the owner of the newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

«We don't write in Russian, because we don't have any partners in Moscow.» So, Russia Beyond the Headlines is not even published in the country. A way to avoid state control? «I won't say that every media outlet is free in Russia. But we are because we need to be equal to the [foreign] newspaper we are published with.» Indeed, there is a Russia Beyond the Headlines correspondent in every newspaper editorial office with which RBTH works.



Will Netflix conquer Russia?

by Kathy Stoffen, Stephanie Boydens

While other Western companies leave Russia, such as NBC universal or Spotify, Netflix with its increasing notoriety throughout the world, intends to enter the Russian market within the next two years.

The American company has good arguments to seduce: quantity of series and movies that we can watch when, where and as much as we want for only 427 roubles per month.

This project, which seems very lucrative at first sight, is on the way, but it seems that the huge American company is missing some details. Indeed, there is a big part of the American and European video content translated or subtitled, that can be already found in Russia thanks to Russian services on cable TV and on the Internet.

There is a possibility for Netflix to fail on the Russian IPTV market. Indeed, we have already observed this kind of situation in the past. Many giant companies from America never succeeded in having a monopoly in Russia. Corporations such as Facebook and Google are replaced by local initiatives. Therefore Facebook is not the top social network (VKontakte is number one) and Google is not the first search engine of Russia (Yandex takes the first place).

According to Dr. Mikhail Makeenko, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Journalism, the same scenario could happen to Netflix. Russian competitors as IVI.ru or VIGO provide services for PC's, mobiles, tablets, smart



TV, etc. and don't feel threatened by U.S companies.

«Certainly Netflix will find it's audience, but most of the content that is available on Netflix right now, can be find on other over the top services like IVI, Vigo that are already popular in Russia,» Makeenko adds.

Netflix conquered America and revolutionized the way of watching TV

in more than 40 countries. Now they hope to extend their services to Russia. The market is big, but the competition is even bigger. On one hand, we can't predict the situation when Netflix will arrive to the Russian market because things are changing very quickly in this field. But on the other hand, what is certain is that Netflix will have to fight for it.

Few facts about Netflix

- Netflix is an American company, which proposes movies and series in streaming on the Internet. This huge company is already established in America, the Caribbean and in some European countries such as Finland, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, etc.
- Netflix was born in 1997 in the United States, but its real success took place a few years later, with the expansion of bandwidth and the popularization of streaming in 2007. Netflix arrived three years ago to Europe, with its introduction in the United Kingdom, thanks to its wide range of English series.

