

Russian bloggers accuse authorities of cyberwar

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The attack, which began earlier this week, was a so-called distributed [denial of service](#) (DDoS), which overloads a website's bandwidth by making thousands of computers access it repeatedly, its owner said.

SUP, the company that now owns LiveJournal, has said the recent series of attacks are the worst in the service's history and have started to target the entire service rather than specific blogs.

"Somebody really wants LiveJournal to cease to exist" and its popular users to switch to standalone platforms that are easier to destroy, wrote SUP's development manager Ilya Dronov on his blog after the site was offline for several hours on Monday.

The site was inaccessible again on Wednesday morning.

The problem started with DDoS attacks on Alexei Navalny, who has used his blog to talk about corruption in the government and the ruling United Russia party, said Maria Garnayeva, an expert at Internet security company Kaspersky Lab, who posted information about the attack on her blog.

Navalny started targeting United Russia earlier this year calling them "the party of swindlers and thieves" which turned into an Internet meme. Shortly after, spammers started inundating all of his posts with derogatory comments.

Last month bloggers found ads on freelancing websites that invited people to leave hundreds of spam comments on Navalny's blog for 14,000 rubles per month, however the advertisement was not traced to any organization.

Cyber attacks have been used against bloggers before, notably during the brief 2008 war between Russia and Georgia against Cyxymu, a Georgian [blogger](#) whose blog, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts were attacked, crashing the platforms for several hours.

Many bloggers said the attacks are most likely orchestrated by the authorities through Nashi, a pro-Kremlin movement believed to act on the orders of influential Kremlin advisor Vladislav Surkov.

There is almost "total correspondence in goals and times between public

acts by Surkov's proteges and the attacks of the cyber criminals," wrote popular blogger and Internet entrepreneur Anton Nossik in a comment on Snob.ru.

LiveJournal, which was created in 1999 by a US college student, became immensely popular in [Russia](#) not just as a blogging tool but a platform for creative and political discussion.

In 2007 however the service was sold to Russian company SUP, which was criticized by many bloggers who feared that the platform would now be more vulnerable to pressure from the authorities.

Most of Russia's opposition figures and social activists keep blogs on LiveJournal that they use to rally support and comment on current events.

"LiveJournal is really a zone of freedom, and the attack on it is preparation for parliamentary and presidential elections. It is pure politics," opposition figure Boris Nemtsov said on Finam FM radio this week.

"Hardly anyone could have done this other than the security services," he said after the site's problems kept him from posting an entry about his pamphlet "Putin. Corruption."

"Seems like both times [LiveJournal](#) was downed by Kremlin people as a rehearsal of some "X hour" to break communication among the active part of society," political analyst Mikhail Delyagin wrote on his blog.

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