

# Russian lawmakers target Internet movie 'piracy'

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The new bill would make it possible to block websites providing copyright [video content](#) unlawfully without a formal court process.

Copyright holders would have to provide documents to the Moscow City Court for a court order, which could then be used by Russia's communications watchdog Roskomnadzor to block the offender if the content is not removed willingly.

The Duma lower [house of parliament](#) speedily approved the measures in second and third readings, with the final vote of 337 to one. The bill will now be heard in the upper chamber before President [Vladimir Putin](#) signs it.

The bill will "stop the dissemination of pirated content on the web," said Sergei Zheleznyak, a [lawmaker](#) with the majority United Russia party who is deputy speaker of the Duma.

Internet companies have unanimously blasted the bill, saying it was put together without consulting with the industry or existing legislation in other countries, and will harm those providing content legally.

"The bill sets new, often technically unfeasible demands," [Google](#) Russia said in a statement emailed to AFP. An example is the demand for the provider to block all content on a certain IP address, which can have hundreds of websites.

The approach essentially "wipes out the whole garden plot instead of just pulling out the weeds," opposition deputy Dmitry Gudkov said on the floor of the parliament Friday.

"The bill as it stands is a time bomb for not just the [Internet industry](#) but for copyright holders themselves" who may be using legal content to generate profit from publication online, Google said, adding that it had

sent many proposed amendments to the lawmakers which were ignored.

Initially the proposed bill concerned works of literature and music as well, but the final version only impacts video.

If it is approved by the upper chamber of parliament and signed by Putin, the provisions will come into force on August 1.

Russia's biggest social network VKontakte, which is used by millions to share and listen to music, temporarily blocked many foreign tracks ahead of the vote, though it was not clear whether the move was a preemptive measure or a way to protest against the bill.

A recent poll by Levada Centre showed that 17 percent of Russians watch new films by downloading them from the web for free.

Russia has battled the industry of pirated films ahead of its accession to the World Trade Organisation last year by raiding markets selling bootlegged DVDs.

However there are still dozens of websites where movies can be downloaded for free through torrents or watched online.

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