

Russian MPs back 'right to be forgotten online' law

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Russia's lower house of parliament on Tuesday gave initial backing to a bill requiring Internet search sites to remove access to inaccurate and outdated personal information, despite protests from the country's biggest search engine, Yandex.

The Duma lower house passed what has been dubbed the "right to be

forgotten online" bill in its first reading with just one opposition lawmaker voting against it.

The bill allows people to order Internet search engines to remove links to information that is inaccurate, but also to information that is accurate but happened more than three years ago and not a crime, as well as to information published unlawfully.

The [search engine](#) must remove links within three days or write to the person explaining the reason for refusal. The person who receives a refusal can contest it in court.

Yandex argued that the law, which if passed would enter force January 2016, breaches people's right to gather information online.

"The bill ignores the right to search" it said in a statement ahead of the first reading.

Yandex criticised the bill for allowing [accurate information](#) to be suppressed and for requiring search engines not just to remove specified links but any reference at all to the information cited.

"This demands endless time," it said.

The bill is being rushed through parliament after being submitted on May 29. Its authors are a cross-party group of MPs.

Vedomosti business daily wrote Tuesday that the bill reflected the ideological mood of the times.

"Forgetting is extremely important for a society oriented towards the past," it wrote in an editorial.

The bill "contradicts the Constitution's article on freedom of speech and creates threats for business," Vedomosti wrote.

It pointed out that the three-year limit on [information](#) would allow politicians standing for election to remove inconvenient facts from their past.

Russia's bill comes after a series of rulings around the world on what search engines can tell users, raising concerns over the potential for censorship.

Under the European Union's "right to be forgotten", citizens have the right to require search engines to erase results involving them after a period of time.

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