

Russian photo app Prisma makes splash, woos investors

June 21 2016

One of Russia's leading Internet companies said Tuesday it had snapped up a stake in mobile app Prisma that restyles photos as works of art and has gone viral days after its launch.

Mail.Ru, controlled by billionaire Alisher Usmanov, announced it had "become an investor in Prisma" just over a week after it hit the market on iPhones and was downloaded some 650,000 times.

Prisma lets users edit photos with filters that refashion their snaps in the style of iconic artists including Roy Lichtenstein, Pablo Picasso and Vincent Van Gogh.

It uses "neural networks and artificial intelligence" to achieve the result, the app description states.

The app, created by Russian programmer Alexei Moiseyenko will be launched for Android in July.

"We are inspired by the fantastic success of this app conquering the world so rapidly with its beautifully simple idea and unprecedentedly fast technology," said Mail.Ru chairman Dmitry Grishin was quoted as saying in the company statement.

The investment has been expected as Prisma creator Moiseyenko has been a project manager at Mail.Ru international subsidiary My.Com, before hurriedly quitting Monday, possibly due to the app's success.

A source quoted by RBK news agency evaluated Mail.Ru's stake at 10 percent and not more than \$2 million.

Moiseyenko has said that the [app](#) took only 1.5 months to develop and the team did nothing to promote its release.

The creator of Russia's most popular social networking site VKontakte, or VK, Pavel Durov, angered stakeholders when he launched a side project of his own, the Telegram messenger, part of the reason for his eventual departure and sale of his share in the company.

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Citation: Russian photo app Prisma makes splash, woos investors (2016, June 21) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-06-russian-photo-app-prisma-splash.html>

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