Benchmarking Public Demand:

Russia's Appetite for Internet Control

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VCIOM

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Benchmarking Public Demand: Russia's Appetite for Internet Control was produced as a part of the Internet Policy Observatory, a program at the Center for Global Communication Studies, the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. The report was written by Erik Nisbet and based on the survey designed and implemented by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) in partnership with the Center for Global Communication Studies.

The Internet Policy Observatory (IPO) is a program tasked with researching the dynamic technological and political contexts in which internet governance debates take place and serves as a platform for informing relevant communities of activists, academics, and policy makers, and showcasing data and analysis. The Observatory sponsors research and studies ongoing events and key decisions on Internet policy. To learn more about the project or to inquire about research collaborations with the IPO, please visit globalnetpolicy.org or email internetpolicy@asc.upenn.edu.

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Contents

Foreword

By Monroe Price

What is the role of public opinion in the making of Internet policy? This seemingly simple question undergirds an important strand of research at our Internet Policy Observatory (IPO), part of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication.

It is useful to determine, for example, the relationship of public opinion to "multistakeholderism," the reigning model for the shaping of Internet policy. Those committed to multistakeholderism believe that the "public" is represented through the interacting complex that encompasses government, business, and civil society.

"Public opinion" has a different vector. It can be seen as the amalgamated desire of designated publics, variously constituted. At the same time it is "sui generis" and therefore public opinion, in this sense, surmounts stakeholder status. It is, at least in its ideal form, the thing it represents itself to be. And achieving an understanding of the public and defining public opinion is central as it is the public whose legitimating arc is frequently invoked.

In illiberal democracies, and semi-authoritarian states, as well, public opinion can operate as an element of "voice" in the sense implied by Albert O. Hirschman in *Exit, Voice and Loyalty.* Notice of public opinion can serve as an early warning system of disapproval or dissatisfaction with official policies. As a form of intelligence, it can indicate to national leaders whether their actions are deepening loyalty or quickening the impulse for radical change. Government and officials shape, invoke, and follow public opinion. These factors—definitional, contextual, institutional—suggest the significance of continuing and intense attention to public opinion as a key variable in the global effort to resolve questions of Internet governance.

As an important participant in international organs of Internet governance, without question, Russia is an important theater for pursuing these inquiries about public opinion's role in the making of Internet policy. Russia's internal regime is evolving, and evolving dramatically. The Russian government has turned to Internet policy as a means to sustain this evolution and "sell" its autocratic model of governance to the Russian public while dampening internal and external sources of dissent. The Russian regime has become an initiator of new tools and mechanisms of control, sometimes harsh and repressive. Thus, Russia provides a useful policy model for semi-authoritarian states attempting to restrict Internet freedoms throughout Central Asia and beyond. Accordingly, we have turned to Russia as locus for testing methodologies, drafting questions and drawing forth implications on the role of public opinion in Internet governance.

What does public opinion tell us? The report—reproduced below—is illuminating. From the perspective of assessing the public's demand for Internet freedom, the results are somewhat discouraging. For example, only a complete ban of the Internet, a la North Korea, seems to be a motivating factor for Russians to mobilize in defense of Internet freedom - otherwise most other forms of government censorship do not motivate the citizenry in any actionable way. Pluralities, if not majorities, of Russians believe the Russian government should censor online foreign media news and websites - and that foreign countries are using the Internet against Russia.

Some key data points from the executive summary that show the lack of support for Internet freedom in Russia - and the support for censoring especially foreign sources of information are:

1. Almost half (49%) of all Russians believe that information on the Internet needs to be censored.

2. A plurality (42%) of Russians believe foreign countries are using the Internet against Russia and its interests. About one-quarter of Russians think the Internet threatens political stability (24%).

3. Large percentages of Russians do not like having information critical of the government or calling for political change being available online. About four out of five Russians (81%) stated a negative feeling toward calls to protest against the government and changes to political leadership. Likewise, a similar percentage of Russians (79%) feel negatively toward websites and social networking groups that are used to organize rallies and demonstrations against the government. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Russians also disapprove of negative

information about public officials being available online.

4. Pluralities of Russians believe a social network group that is used to organize anti-government protests (46%), the video by Pussy Riot (45%), the website for the group that exposed the government blacklist of websites (44%), and bloggers that call for regime change (43%) should be censored by the Russian government.

5. The Russian government and the Russian security service were virtually tied in the percentage of Russians (42% and 41% respectively) that cited these organizations as trusted regulators of the Internet, though more Russians ranked the Russian security service (17%) as their most trusted regulator of the Internet as compared to the Russian government (13%).

6. About half of Russians (51%) believe the primary motivation of the government legislation creating a blacklist of websites is the maintenance of political stability as compared to 13% of Russians who believe the primary motivation was limiting democratic freedoms.

7. The plurality of Russians (39%) believe personal blogs should be regulated the same as mass media websites.

8. About one in five (18%) Russian Internet users replied that they had heard about a new legal requirement that new websites should be registered with the Russian government agency that manages online communications. Out of these Internet users who had heard of the law, a rather large majority (70%) supported the law and a small minority (20%) opposed it.

One of the most significant questions raised by the study involves what assumptions to make about further and future impact of public opinion on Internet policy. Civil society groups and others often think of public opinion as a residual check on authoritarian behavior and as a reservoir of strength for the achievement of international norms. But, as the study indicates, the opposite may be true. Publics can lag on information and media rights. And where both regime and public opinion are restrictive, positive change, especially by external actors, will be hard to achieve.

There are implications. One consequence of this line of analysis is to question the value of focusing so heavily on state institutions as the core area for thinking about harmful regulation. The way in which public opinion is shaped is significant here. The "public" is a collection of demographics ascertained, mulled over, and refigured by strategic players (governments, religions, NGOs and corporations) trying to mold these segments for their own benefit. How public opinion is retooled becomes a matter of competing strategic players affecting allegiances—a subject I explore in *Free Expression, Globalism and the New Strategic Communication* (recently published by Cambridge University Press).

Gregory Asmolov gives examples of this contest to shape the public's opinion: Public opinion concerning Internet regulation is partly (perhaps largely) a function of whether the communications environment is perceived as dangerous—a place, in the rising Russian imagination, of suicide promotion, pornography and cultural and moral dissipation. And, as Asmolov's essay suggests, officials keen on regulation can be instrumental—together with allies in society—in fostering the sense of peril and fomenting insecurity. By so shaping the background, public opinion is channeled towards favoring repressive tendencies. There is a loop, then, between shaping and invoking public opinion. The existence of this loop points toward the direction global public policy will likely take: the need for greater attention to the significant public background views with all the complexity that it implies in a transnational context. This IPO study provides an important example of this feedback loop between the fixing of ideas of peril and the dynamic consequences for public opinion concerning freedom of expression.

Our study implies an environment of interaction—where elements of civil society demand regulation, or are relatively indifferent to regulation or where government prompts the conditions that provoke or spurs demand and the government responds. And there's a related possibility: Professor Joseph Turow has suggested a "sociology of resignation," where some version of "the public," considering some outcome close to inevitable, acquiesces in a far less than optimal outcome. Turow's context for the sociology of resignation was a tendency to accept privacy incursions, but the concept could be applicable to Internet content regulation. In this way, the public becomes habituated to an environment of control.

I conclude with an expression of gratitude. There are many lessons embedded in this survey of Russian public opinion, lessons of methodology, of demography and of differential philosophies about the role of technology and information in society. We are grateful to Dr. Olga Kamenchuk, Director of International and Public Affairs at VCIOM, who facilitated this research in her typically professional manner. She had been a visiting scholar at our Center for Global Communication Studies and at the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Professor Erik Nisbet of Ohio State University's Department of Communication was instrumental as a wise counsel and contributing his analysis to the study. Gregory Asmolov, already acknowledged in this Introduction, is a brilliant PhD student at LSE and a frequent contributor to our teaching and writing programs and was a consultant on the study. Briar Smith and Laura Schwartz-Henderson of CGCS and the IPO, carefully and devotedly helped steer this project from initiation to conclusion.

Executive Summary of Survey Results

Profile of Russian Internet Users

The plurality of adult Russians may be categorized as "heavy Internet users" who use the Internet either every, or almost every, day (42% of the population). "Internet non-users" who report not having been online in the last six months account for 38% of the population. "Light Internet users" who report using the Internet occasionally to several times a week during the previous six months are 20% of the population.

Adult heavy Internet users in Russia are young and well educated, with 59% between the ages 18 and 34yrs of age and nearly half (45%) having attended university. They are equally split between men and women. Adult Russians who do not use the Internet are predominately over 55 years of age (59%), female (59%), and a small minority has attended university (14%).

Russian Internet users most commonly use the Internet for to search for information for personal use (63%), communicate in online social networks (62%), and read national news (45%). The least frequent activities include searching for friends (15%), downloading/purchasing software or apps (15%), managing online finances (12%), looking for employment (10%).

Primary Sources of Information

Central Russian TV dominates as the number one source of information for 60% of all Russians and cited one of the three top sources of information for 84% of all Russians. Online news sites were as selected as the primary source of information for 10% and in the top three sources of information by 29% of Russians. Online social networks were selected as the primary source of information by 6% of Russians and in the top three sources of information by 25% of Russians.

Central Russian TV (80%), online news sites (52%), and online social networks (46%) are three most commonly cited sources of information by heavy Internet users. Light internet users most commonly cite central TV (82%), regional TV (41%), and either central newspapers (34%) or online news sites (35%) as within their top three sources of information.

News on TV (90%), Russian news sources in general (87%), and newspapers (86%) are overwhelmingly trusted sources of information by Russians. In comparison, foreign media in general is trusted by 43% of the population, though Internet non-users (34%) are significantly less likely to trust foreign media as compared to heavy Internet users (45%).

Among Internet users, crowd-sourced resources such as Wikipedia are trusted the most (81%), followed closely by Internet publications (75%). Two-thirds (66%) of Internet users trust online social networks as sources of information and a bit over half (55%) trust online forums and blogs. Tips from friends are overwhelmingly the most trusted (92% of Russians) offline source of information about businesses and products. Internet stores such as Amazon (67%) and online customer reviews (67%) are the most trusted online sources of commercial information by Russian Internet users.

Russian Attitudes about the Influence of the Internet and Dangerous Content

In total, about half of Russians (53%) believe the Internet has a positive influence on society while about one-third (31%) of Russians believe it has a negative influence. This perception varies widely by frequency of Internet use with majorities of heavy Internet users (76%) and light Internet users (61%) believing it has a positive influence and a majority of non-users believe it has a negative influence (55%).

A plurality (42%) of Russians believes foreign countries are using the Internet against Russia and its interests. One-third (33%) of Russians believe the Internet substantially increases the rate of suicide. About one-quarter of Russians believe the Internet threatens family values (27%) and political stability (24%). The perception that the Internet threatens social ties in Russia is held by 21% of Russians.

Large percentages of Russians have negative feelings toward politically controversial content being available online. About four out of five Russians (81%) stated a negative feeling toward calls to protest against the government and change of political leadership. Likewise, a similar percentage of Russians (79%) feel negatively toward websites and social networking groups that are used to organize rallies and demonstrations against the

government. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Russians also have negative feelings toward negative information about public officials being available online.

Russian Attitudes about Internet Censorship

Almost half (49%) of all Russians believe that information on the Internet needs to be censored. This percentage varies substantially by frequency of Internet use, with 57% of non-users believing online information needs to be censored compared to 43% of heavy Internet users who feel the same.

Copyrighted material (59%), foreign news media websites (45%), other foreign websites (38%), and materials promoting ethnic/racial hatred (37%) are the most frequently mentioned categories of online content that Russians feel the government should censor. Preferences did not vary significantly by frequency of Internet use.

A majority of Russians (59%) believe online pornographic homosexual content should be censored by the Russian government. Pluralities of Russians believe a social network group that is used to organize anti-government protests (46%), the video by Pussy Riot (45%), the website for the group that exposed the government blacklist of websites (44%), and bloggers that call for regime change (43%) should be censored by the Russian government.

Russian Attitudes about Internet Regulation

The Russian government and the Russian security service were virtually tied in the percentage of Russians (42% and 41% respectively) that cited these organizations as trusted regulators of the Internet, though more Russians ranked the Russian security service (17%) as their most trusted regulator of the Internet as compared to the Russian government (13%).

Non-users of the Internet as compared to heavy Internet users are substantially more likely to cite government institutions or agencies as their trusted regulators of the Internet such as the Russian government (46% vs. 36%), Russian security service (44% vs. 37%), and the Russian presidency (37% vs. 25%) as compared to heavy Internet users.

In contrast, heavy Internet users, as compared to non-users, are substantially more likely to trust regulators of the Internet without official ties to the Russian government such as private industry (32% vs. 18%), NGOs and other civil society groups (27% vs. 14%), and international organizations without ties to Russian officials (12% to 5%).

A little over one-third of Russians (35%) had never heard or was unaware of the Russian legislation creating a blacklist of websites censored by the Russian government, though this percentage varied substantially by frequency of Internet use. Almost half (49%) of non-users had never heard of the law as compared to about one-third (34%) of light users and about one-quarter (23%) of heavy users.

About half of Russians (51%) believe the primary motivation of the government legislation creating a blacklist of websites is the maintenance of political stability as compared to 13% of Russians who believe the primary motivation was limiting democratic freedoms. Heavy Internet users were more than twice as likely as non-users (18% vs. 8%) to believe the primary motivation of the blacklist law was to limit democratic freedoms.

A majority of Russians (56%) believe the state is obliged to consider the public's opinion and see public advice on Internet regulation. About one-third of Russians (36%) believe the state can consider public opinion if it so wishes but in the end may act according to its own preferences and 9% of Russians believe the state should not pay any attention to public opinion when regulating the Internet.

The plurality of Russians (39%) believe personal blogs should be regulated the same as mass media websites, 15% of Russians believe personal blogs should be regulated less than mass media websites, and 13% believe they should be regulated more, and 14% believe they should not be regulated at all. However, a very large percentage of survey respondents had difficulty answering the question, with nearly one out of five (19%) replying that it was too difficult to tell.

Russian Citizen Mobilization and Protest

Russian Internet users (62% of survey respondents) were asked a series of questions about citizen mobilization and protest in furtherance of Internet freedom. A majority of Russian Internet users (59%) do not believe

the regulation the Internet affects their personal freedom while 41% believe that they are impacted by regulation.

A small percentage of Internet users (14%) believe protests against Internet censorship occurring in their local community are possible and about one in ten Internet users (9%) said they would take part in such protests if they occurred or approximately 6% of the total Russian population.

The top reason for mobilizing in defense of Internet freedom cited by Internet users was a complete ban on the use of the Internet (40%). A complete ban on the Internet in the workplace was a distant second with 11% of Internet users citing this reason. Other forms of Internet censorship such as government being allowed to remove any form of content (7%), ban of personal blogs or websites of opinion, cultural, or opposition leaders (7%), and temporarily shutting off the Internet due to protests (7%) were cited by a very small minority of Internet users.

About one in five (18%) Russian Internet users replied that they had heard about a new legal requirement that new websites should be registered with the Russian government agency that manages online communications. Out of these Internet users who had heard of the law, a rather large majority (70%) supported the law and a small minority (20%) opposed it.

Russian Internet users were asked under what circumstance they would or would not support the Russian government temporarily shutting down the entire Internet within Russia. Overall, 58% of Internet users would be in support of such a shutdown, with the case of a national emergency garnering the most support (48%) followed by 9% of Internet users believing a temporary shutdown would be justified in the case of a mass protest and 1% citing another reason. In contrast, 42% of Internet users believe the shutdown of the Internet by the Russian government would never be justified no matter the situation.

Profile of Russian Internet Users

The percentage of Russians using the Internet has more than doubled between 2009 and 2012 growing from 29% in 2009 to 64% in 2013[1]. However, since 2012 the growth of Russian Internet penetration has stagnated with no significant growth. Respondents to the survey may be split into three segments based on their frequency of Internet use (see Figure 1). The largest segment is "heavy Internet users" who use the Internet either every, or almost every, day (42% of the population). The second largest segment is "Internet non-users" who report not having been online in the last six months and accounts for 38% of the population. The smallest segment is "light Internet users" who report using the Internet occasionally to several times a week during the previous six months (20% of the population).

As detailed in Table 1, Russians who have not accessed the Internet in the last six months are overwhelmingly 55 years of age or over (59% of segment), are more likely to be women (59% of segment), and are very unlikely to have attended any university education (14% of segment). In comparison, heavy Internet users are the mirror image of non-users in terms of age and education, with heavy Internet users likely to be thirty-four years of age or younger (59%) and almost half attending or completing university education (45%). Also in contrast to the other two segments, heavy Internet users are split evenly 50/50 between men and women. Light Internet users are more similar to heavy Internet users than non-users in terms of age and education, with 80% of light users under the age of fifty-five years and the plurality (40%) having attended or completed university. However, their gender split (42% male, 59% women) resembles non-users.

Internet users were asked about the types of online activities they did during the last month. Table 2 lists those activities in which at least 10% of Internet users reported participating. Among all Internet users, the most popular activities were searching for information for personal use (63%), communicating in social networks (62%), and reading national news (45%). The least common activities were looking for a job (10%), online banking (12%), searching for people with similar interests (15%), and downloading software or apps (15%). The greatest differences in reported activities between heavy Internet users and light Internet users were downloading/ listening to music (45% vs. 23%), reading forums or blogs (31% vs. 11%), and corresponding by e-mail (45% vs. 26%).

1 International Telecommunication Union ICT Indicators 2014 Database

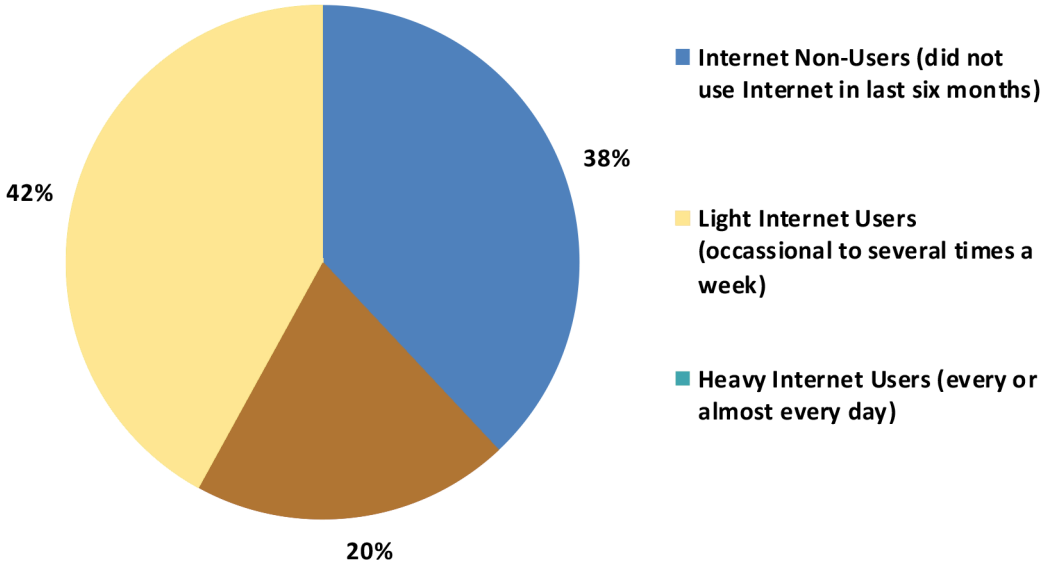

FIGURE 1: RUSSIAN FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE (percentage of total respondents)

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of total respondents)

	Frequency of Internet Use		
Demographic Category	Non-Users	Light Users	Heavy Users
Age			
% 18-34 years old	6	34	59
% 35-54 years old	35	45	32
% 55 or more years old	59	20	8
Gender			
% Men	42	42	50
% Women	59	59	50
Educational Attainment			
% Vocational Secondary Education or Less	45	24	23
% Completed Vocational College	41	36	33
% Incomplete University or More	14	40	45

TABLE 2: ONLINE ACTIVITIES DURING LAST MONTH BY INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of Internet users, mutiple responses)

	Frequency of Internet Use		
Type of Internet Activity	% of Light Users	% of Heavy Users	**% of All Internet Users**
Search for information for personal use	52	69	**63**
Communicate in social networks	54	66	**62**
Read national news	39	48	**45**
Correspond by e-mail	26	45	**39**
Download, listen to music	23	45	**38**
Download, view video	25	43	**37**
Read international news	24	35	**31**
Search for information for work	27	35	**32**
Read forums or blogs	11	31	**25**
Use Internet telephony (Skype, etc.)	15	27	**23**
Stream Internet TV	11	24	**20**
Play online games	13	22	**19**
Chat/forums/blogs	8	22	**17**
Online shopping	9	21	**17**
Read books	12	20	**17**
Download, purchase apps, software	9	18	**15**
To search for friends, people with similar interests	12	16	**15**
Manage bank account through the Internet	5	15	**12**
Look for a job, part time job, freelance	7	12	**10**

Primary Sources of Offline and Online Information

Survey respondents were asked to rank their top three primary sources of information they relied upon the most. Sources which garnered at least 10% of responses are presented in Figure 2 with the percentage that selected each source as their primary, secondary, or tertiary source of information. Central TV is by far the most popular source of information among Russians, with 60% of Russians selecting this communication channel as their primary source of information, 17% selecting as their secondary source, and 7% as their tertiary source – 84% of all respondents in total. Regional TV is the next most popular source of information with 46% of Russians citing it was one of their top three sources of information and 31% citing it as their number one or two ranked source. Central newspapers are the third most cited source of information with 30% of Russians ranking them in their top three sources, though only 5% cite them as their primary source.

In contrast, online news sites are the second most often cited primary news source next to Central TV, with 10% of Russians naming them as their primary source of information and 29% placing it within their top three sources overall. Online social networks round out the top five most popular source of information in Russia with 25% of all Russians citing them and 6% of Russians naming them as their primary source of information.

Table 3 provides the percentage of Russians that named each source as one of their top three sources of information combined by Internet use segment. Though Russian central TV is the most cited source of information across all Internet use segments, non-users were significantly more likely to cite central TV (88%) as compared to light (82%) and heavy (80%) Internet users. Regional Russian TV (54%) was by far

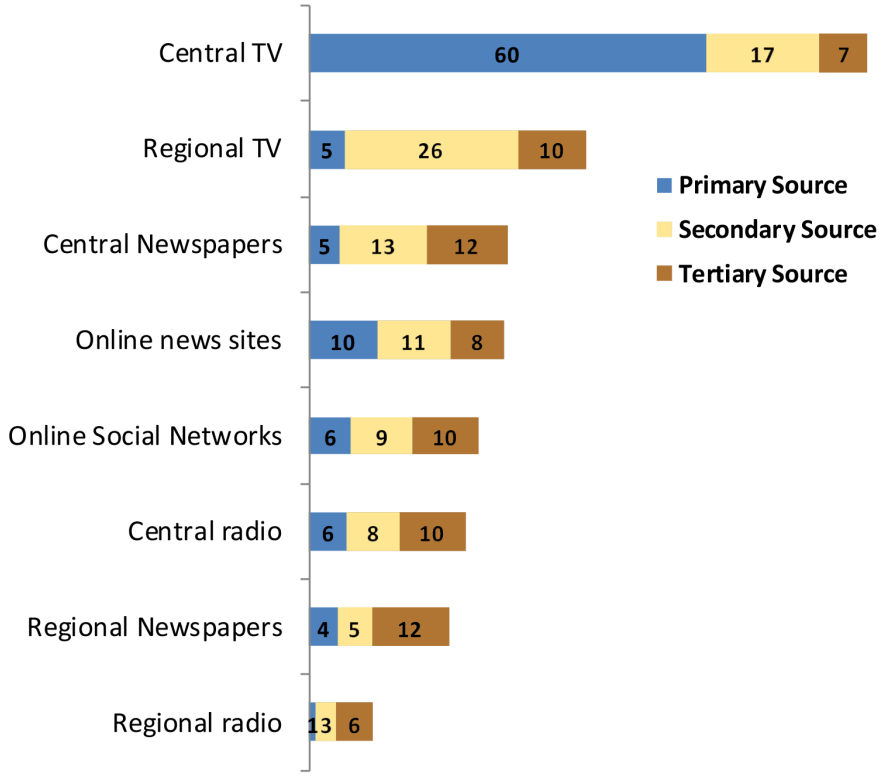

FIGURE 2: TOP THREE PRIMARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION
(percentage of respondents who ranked each source, single reponse)

the second most mentioned source of information by Internet non-users followed by central newspapers as a distant third (36%). Regional Russian TV was also the second most cited source of information for light Internet users (41%) albeit at a significantly lower frequency than non-users.

However, in terms of their third overall most popular source of information, light users cited both central newspapers (34%) and online news sites (35%) in approximately equal amounts. Heavy Internet users cited regional Russian TV (32%) and central newspapers (22%) with much lower frequency in compared to the other two Internet use segments. Instead, heavy Internet users were significantly more likely to mention online news sites (52%) and online social networks (46%). All in all, these survey results suggest the possibility that heavy Internet users may be more likely to rely on primary sources of information less directly controlled or influenced by the Russian government as compared to non-users and light users of the Internet.

How much trust Russians place in different types of information sources was asked of survey respondents (see Tables 4 and 5). The types of information sources were split into two general categories, 1) general news and information and 2) information about products and businesses. Not surprisingly, non-users tend to trust offline sources more than light and heavy Internet users, except in the case of foreign media, whereas significantly higher percentages of light (42%) and heavy (45%) Internet users trusted foreign media as compared to non-users (34%). Otherwise, TV news, Russian news in general, and newspapers all enjoyed very high levels of trust across all three segments.

There was very little difference between light and heavy users in terms of their trust in online sources of news and information. For both segments, online sources of information such as Wikipedia were trusted the most (85% and 83% of light and heavy users, respectively). The least trusted online source of general news and information were online forums and blogs for both light (53%) and heavy (58%) Internet users.

Turning to commercial sources of information, offline sources such as tips from friends enjoyed a great deal of trust (90% or greater for all three segments) from all respondents, with mass mailings the least trusted (31-36%) across all three segments. The other notable variation was for TV advertisements which light (50%) and heavy (48%) Internet users were more likely to trust as compared to non-users of the Internet (41%). As an online source of commercial and product information, 75% of heavy Internet users trust online stores and shops, their most trusted source of information, as compared to 61% of light Internet users. In contrast, the most trusted online source for light Internet users (67%) for commercial or product information were online customer reviews. Otherwise, light and heavy Internet users had similar patterns of trust, with least trusted online sources of information being dating websites (39% for light, 36% for heavy) and Internet advertisements (34% for light, 31% for heavy).

TABLE 3: TOP 3 PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION BY INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of total respondents, mutiple responses)

	Frequency of Internet Use			
Top 3 Primary Source of Information	% of Non-Users	% of Light Users	% of Heavy Users	**% of All Respondents**
Central TV	88	82	80	84
Regional TV	53	41	**32**	**42**
Central newspapers	36	34	**22**	**30**
Online news sites	0	35	**52**	**29**
Online social networks	0	29	**46**	**26**
Regional radio	30	23	**18**	**24**
Regional newspapers	34	20	**10**	**21**
Central radio	14	9	**6**	**10**
Blogs	0	4	**7**	**4**
Foreign mass media	0	2	**5**	**2**

TABLE 4: TRUST IN SOURCES OF GENERAL NEWS AND INFORMATION BY INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of respondents who cited using source, single response)

	Frequency of Internet Use			
Type of Source	% of Non-Users	% of Light Users	% of Heavy Users	**% of All Respondents[1]**
News on TV	94	91	87	90
Russian news sources in general	89	87	**85**	**87**
Newspapers	91	90	**81**	**86**
Foreign media in general	34	42	**45**	**43**
Internet Sources				
Folk Encyclopedia on Internet (e.g. Wikipedia)	n.a.	85	**83**	**81**
Internet Publications	n.a.	76	**78**	**75**
Online social networks	n.a.	69	**67**	**66**
Forums and Blogs	n.a.	53	**58**	**55**

TABLE 5: TRUST IN SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PRODUCTS AND BUSINESS BY INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of respondents who cited using source, single response)

	Frequency of Internet Use			
Type of Source	% of Non-Users	% of Light Users	% of Heavy Users	**% of All Respondents[1]**
Tips from friends	90	92	93	**92**
TV advertisements	41	50	48	**46**
Mass mailings	31	36	33	**34**
Internet Sources				
Internet stores/shops (e.g. Amazon)	n.a.	61	75	**67**
Online Customer Reviews	n.a.	67	68	**67**
Company or organizational websites	n.a.	63	62	**63**
Emails from companies and stores	n.a.	54	49	**49**
Dating websites	n.a.	39	**36**	**36**
Internet advertisements	n.a.	34	**31**	**31**

1. For non-Internet sources, percentage of all respondents reported, for Internet sources, % of only Internet users reported
2. n.a. = not applicable

Russian Attitudes About the Influence of the Internet and Dangerous Content

Survey respondents were queried on whether they perceived the Internet as having an overall positive influence on people's lives, an overall negative influence, or no influence at all. In total, about half of Russians (53%) believe the Internet has a rather positive influence, about one-third (31%) believe it has a rather negative influence, and the remainder (16%) believe it does not have any influence on people's lives.

However, as illustrated in Figure 3, the perceived influence of the Internet varies significantly by frequency of Internet use. A majority (55%) of non-users perceive the Internet as having a negative influence on people's lives as compared to about half as many light (23%), and even fewer heavy (15%), Internet users. Conversely, three-fourths of heavy Internet users (76%) perceive the Internet as having a positive influence, followed by 61% of light Internet users, only one in five (21%) non-users. About one-quarter of non-users (24%) believe the Internet has no influence at all, a perception shared by even fewer light (16%) and heavy (9%) Internet users.

Beyond beliefs about the Internet's overall positive or negative influence, Russians were also asked if the Internet posed a threat across five different dimensions, namely a) threatening Russian political stability, b) substantially increasing the rate of suicides, c) threating family values, d) threatening the strength of social ties in Russia, and e) being used as a tool against Russia by foreign countries. Figure 4 provides the percentages of Russians that agreed, disagreed, or were indifferent to these perceived threats of the Internet.

Half or more of Russians disagree that the Internet threatens Russian political stability (50%), family values (53%), and the Russian social ties (56%). A plurality (42%) of Russians agrees that the Internet is being used by foreign countries against Russia. Russians are very split on whether the Internet increases

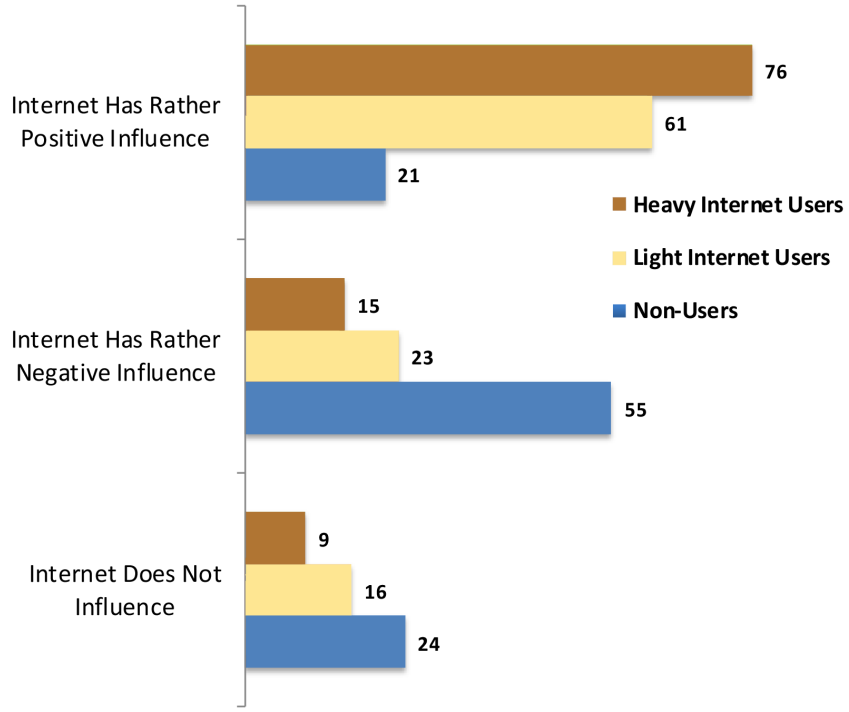

FIGURE 3: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET BY INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of respondents who cited using source, single reponse)

the rate of suicides, with one-third (33%) agreeing that it does, about one third indifferent (35%), and one-third (33%) disagreeing with the idea.

However, opinions about these possible threats from the Internet vary substantially across the three Internet use segments as exhibited in Table 6, with non-users substantially more likely to view the Internet as threatening as compared to light and heavy Internet users. For instance, a plurality of Internet non-users (39%) agree that the Internet threatens family values whereas large majorities of light (62%) and heavy (70%) Internet users disagree. Also in contrast, one-third of non-users (33%) agree that the Internet threatens Russia's political stability as compared to 22% of light and 19% of heavy Internet users who feel the same.

The perception that the Internet is being used by foreign governments against Russia has a plurality of agreement among Internet non-users (46%) but opinions are much more split among light and heavy Internet users. A plurality of light internet users (45%) also agrees that the Internet is being used against Russia by other countries but at the same time, 35% disagree. The idea that the Internet is being used against Russia by foreign countries finds the least support among heavy Internet users with the plurality (43%) of heavy users disagreeing with this perception and about one-third (36%) agreeing.

In addition to perceptions of influence and threat, survey respondents were asked whether they personally felt positively or negatively about seventeen specific types of information being publicly available on the Internet (see Table 7). These types of information fell into four broad categories of content: 1) socially or culturally offensive (i.e. pornographic, violent, obscene language), 2) recruiting information for fringe religious sects or extremist groups, 3) politically controversial or illegally downloadable content (i.e. protests, copyrighted material), and 4) information harmful to health and wellbeing (i.e. how to commit suicide, smoking promotion).

Across all seventeen types of Internet content, Russians felt most negatively about scenes of child abuse

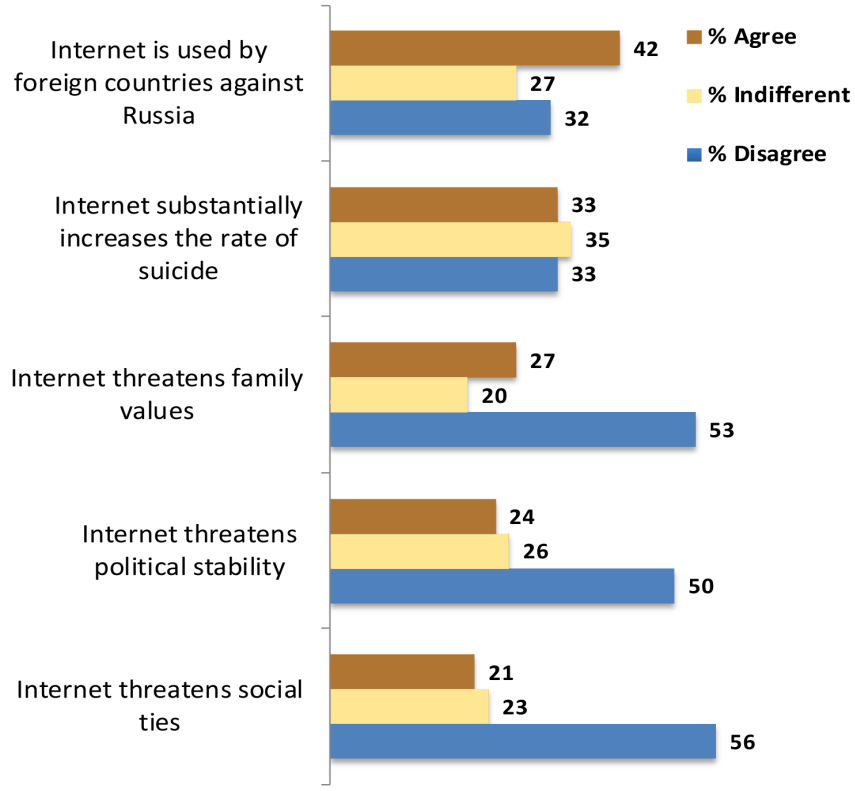

FIGURE 4: PERCEIVED THREAT FROM THE INTERNET (percentage of total respondents, single reponse)

TABLE 6: PERCEIVED THREAT FROM THE INTERNET BY FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS
(percentage of total respondents, single response)

	Frequency of Internet Use					
	% of Non-Users		% of Light Users		% of Heavy Users	
Type of Threat	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Internet threatens family values	39	29	27	62	18	70
Internet threatens demographic situation	29	34	18	67	16	71
Internet threatens political stability	33	29	22	60	19	63
Internet is used by foreign countries against Russia	46	17	45	35	36	43
Internet substantially increases the rate of suicide	37	20	34	36	28	42

TABLE 7: FEELINGS TOWARD TYPES OF INTERNET CONTENT (percentage of total respondents, single response)

	Valence of Feeling		
Type of Internet Content	% Positive	% Indifferent	% Negative
Socially or Culturally Offensive			
Scenes of child abuse	1	3	96
Scenes showing the use of drugs	1	4	95
Scenes of aggression, violence, and cruelty to people	2	5	94
Content specific to sexual minorities, such as homosexuality	1	5	94
Violence and cruelty in online games	2	9	90
Pornographic materials	2	9	89
Texts/video/images with obscene language	4	15	82
Recruiting Information for Fringe Groups			
Calls to join radical or extremist groups	1	6	94
Calls to join religious sects	1	8	91
Calls to join fraudulent business opportunities	2	16	83
Politically Controversial or Illegal			
Calls to protest against governments and for change of the current political leadership	2	17	81
Websites and social networking groups that are used to organize rallies and demonstrations against authorities	3	18	79
Negative information about public officials	5	22	73
Copyrighted video	9	21	70
Harmful to Health or Wellbeing			
Information on how to commit suicide	1	5	93
Information about weapons, explosives, and their production	2	9	90
Promotion of smoking, alcohol	2	13	86

(96%), scenes showing drugs (95%), scenes featuring aggression or violence toward people (94%), content specific to sexual minorities (94%), and calls to join radical or extremist organizations (94%). Content that is politically controversial or illegal was the least objectionable, though a solid majority (70%) felt negatively about copyrighted video being publicly online and 73% feeling the same about negative information on public officials. Even more Russians felt negatively toward websites/social networking groups that organize anti-government protest activities (79%) and online content that calls for anti-government protests or changes in political leadership (81%).

In terms of feelings toward different types of content, there was consensus across the three Internet use segments in reporting negative sentiment toward social or cultural content such as scenes showing child abuse, drug use, aggression, or homosexuality (see Table 8). However, significant differences in negative feelings among Russians based on their frequency of Internet use arose in the cases of violence in video games (95% of non-users vs. 84% of heavy Internet users), pornographic materials (95% of non-users vs. 85% of heavy Internet users), and content featuring obscene language (89% of non-users vs. 76% heavy Internet users).

The other types of content in which there was significant variation in negative feelings by frequency of Internet use (again see Table 8) were primarily political or legal. For example, 89% of non-users felt negatively about websites or social networking groups that are used to organize rallies and demonstrations against authorities compared to 72% of heavy Internet users who felt the same. Likewise, 83% of non-users had negative feelings about negative information concerning public officials being publicly online as compared to 66% of heavy Internet users who felt the same. The single largest difference in negativity among Internet use segments was in the case of copyrighted video material being publicly available online, with 84% of non-users feeling negative toward this content compared to only 59% of heavy Internet users.

TABLE 8: NEGATIVE FEELINGS TOWARD TYPES OF INTERNET CONTENT BY INTERNET USE SEGMENT (percentage of total respondents, single response)

	Frequence of Internet Use		
Type of Internet Content	% of Non-Users	% of Light Users	% of Heavy Users
Socially or Culturally Offensive			
Scenes of child abuse	97	96	96
Scenes showing the use of drugs	97	97	93
Scenes of aggression, violence, and cruelty to people	96	95	92
Content specific to sexual minorities, such as homosexuality	96	94	91
Violence and cruelty in online games	95	93	84
Pornographic materials	95	88	85
Texts/video/images with obscene language	89	81	76
Recruiting Information for Fringe Groups			
Calls to join radical or extremist groups	96	95	91
Calls to join religious sects	94	91	89
Calls to join fraudulent business opportunities	89	82	78
Politically Controversial or Illegal			
Calls to protest against governments and for change of the current political leadership	86	80	77
Websites and social networking groups that are used to organize rallies and demonstrations against authorities	89	75	72
Negative information about public officials	83	71	66
Copyrighted video	84	67	59
Harmful to Health or Wellbeing			
Information on how to commit suicide	95	94	91
Information about weapons, explosives, and their production	95	91	85
Promotion of smoking, alcohol	90	87	81

Russian Attitudes About Internet Censorship

Russians were asked an overarching question about whether information on the Internet should be distributed freely without any censorship or whether some censorship by the government is necessary. Figure 5 depicts their preference by frequency of Internet use segment. Overall, 11% of Russians believe the Internet should be completely free of government censorship, though there was substantial variation by frequency of Internet use. For example, 16% of heavy Internet users do not believe in any government censorship at all compared to just 5% of non-users.

Almost half (49%) of all Russians believe that information on the Internet needs to be censored, and again this percentage varied substantially by Internet use. Fifty-seven percent of Internet non-users believe information online needs to be censored by the government as compared to a significantly lower 43% of heavy Internet users. The percentage of Russians who believe government censorship depends on the type of content in question is at 40%, with no significant variation in percentages across the three Internet use segments.

Russians were asked two sets of questions asking what types of online content specifically should be censored or blocked by the Russian government. The first asked Internet users to choose up to three types of Internet content that the Russian government should censor (see Figure 6). The top three most cited types of content were copyrighted material (59%), followed distantly by foreign news media websites (45%) and a virtual tie for third place between other foreign websites (38%) and materials promoting ethnic or racist hatred (37%).

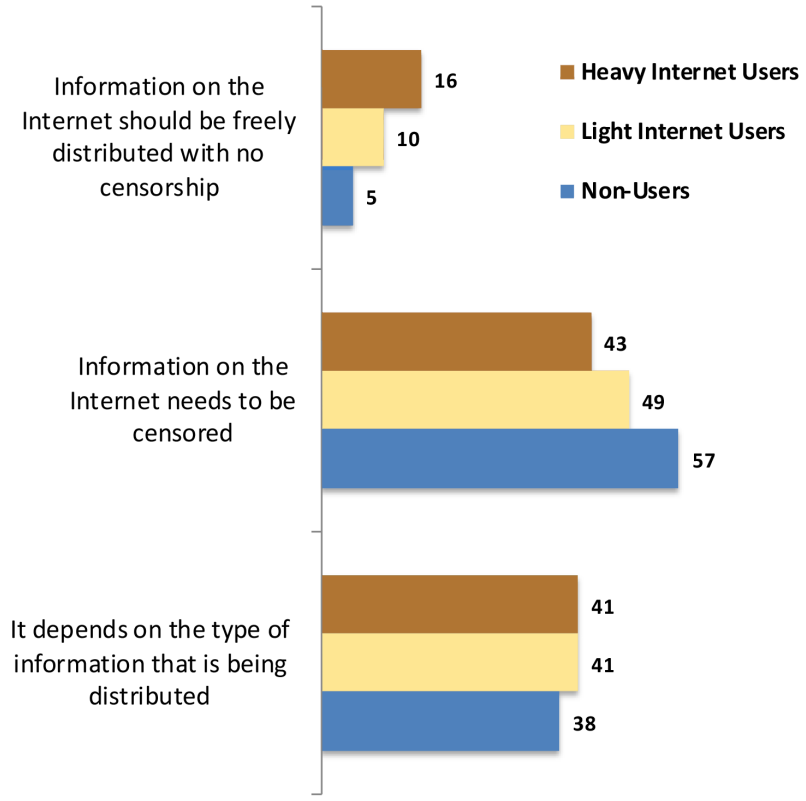

FIGURE 5: OVERARCHING VIEW OF INTERNET CENSORSHIP BY FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of total respondents, single reponse)

Differences in preferences for what types of content to censor varied very little by frequency of Internet use. The only noteworthy exception were Russian preferences for government censorship of other foreign websites where 39% of Internet non-users, 46% of light Internet users, and 34% of heavy Internet users chose this this type of content. This lower support among heavy Internet users for censoring other foreign media websites is consistent with their lower levels of belief that the Internet is being used against Russia by foreign countries and higher level of trust in foreign media as compared to Russians in the other two Internet use segments.

The second question asked Russians if they agreed or disagreed with five specific types of Internet content being censored or blocked: 1) the video by Pussy Riot, 2) a blogger that calls for regime change in Russia, (3) a social network group that is used for organization of protests against the government, 4) a pornographic website with homosexual content, 5) the website for the group that exposed the blacklist of blocked websites (see Figure 7).

Among Russians, there is large majority support for the government to block/censor a website with homosexual content (59%). Furthermore, this support is highest among heavy Internet users (62%), followed by non-users (59%) and light users (55%). A plurality of Russians agree that a social network group that is used for organizing anti-government protests (46%), the video by the anti-government female punk rock collective Pussy Riot (45%), the website that exposed the government's blacklist of blocked websites (44%), and bloggers that call for regime change (43%).

There is little variation in agreement in censoring these other specific types of online content by frequency of Internet use except in the case of the website that exposed the Russian government's blacklist of blocked websites where heavy Internet users (48%) are significantly more likely to agree that the government should censor this content as compared to light Internet users (39%) and non-users (43%).

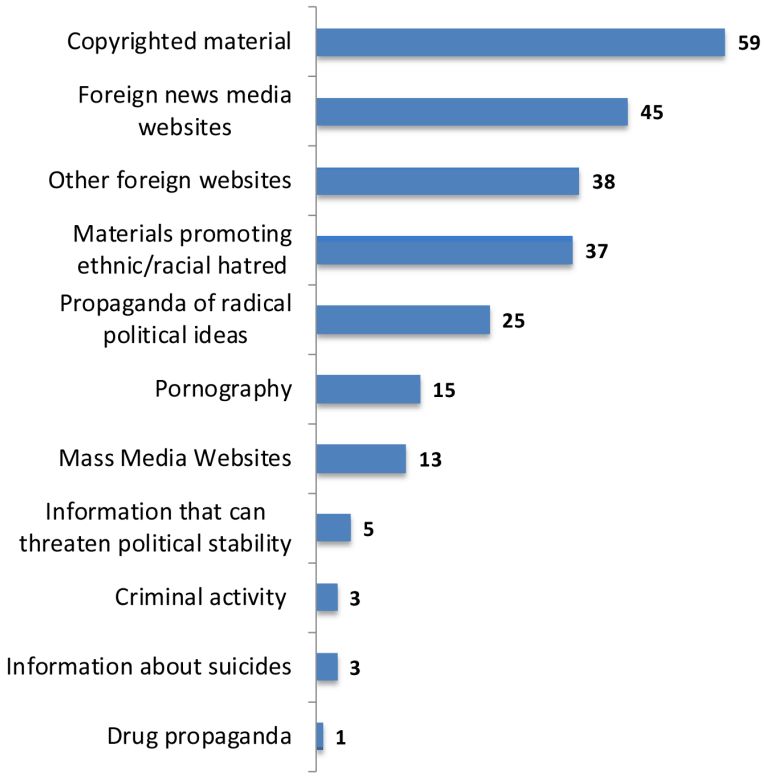

FIGURE 6: PREFERENCES FOR GENERAL TYPES OF INTERNET CONTENT RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD CENSOR (percentage of total respondents, multiple reponses)

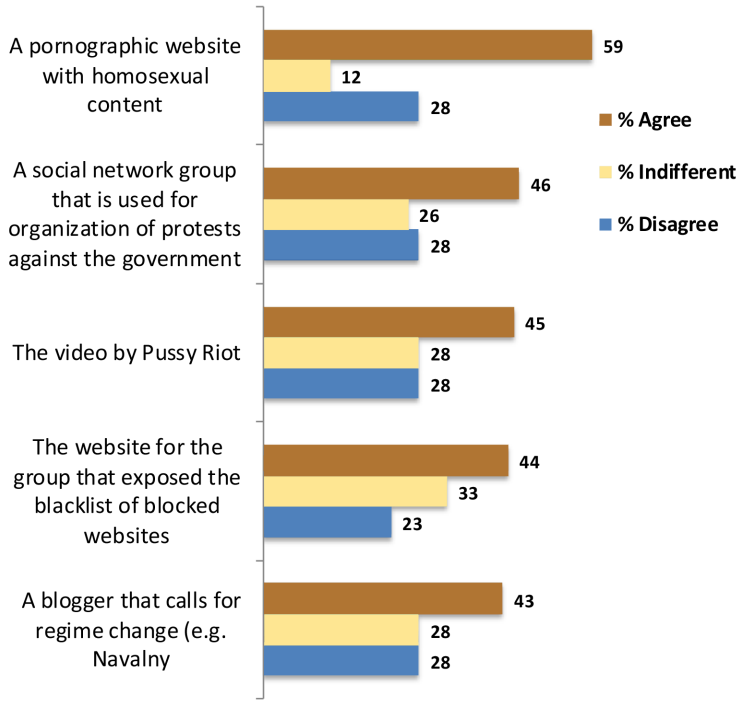

FIGURE 7: PREFERENCES FOR SPECIFC TYPES OF INTERNET CONTENT RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD CENSOR (percentage of total respondents, single reponse)

Russian Attitudes About Internet Regulation & Legislation

Survey respondents were asked to rank their top three institutions or organizations they trusted the most to regulate the Internet, though 6% of respondents refused to rank any organization and institution and replied that no one should regulate the Internet. Sources which garnered at least 10% of responses are featured in Figure 8 with the percentage that selected each institution or organization as their most trusted, second most trusted, and third most trusted regulator of the Internet presented. The Russian government and the Russian security service were virtually tied as the overall trusted regulator of the Internet (42% and 41% respectively), though more Russians ranked the Russian security service (17%) as their most trusted regulator of the Internet as compared to the Russian government (13%).

Researchers (32%) and the President of Russia (30%) were roughly tied for the second most trusted regulators of the Internet, though more Russians cited the presidency (15%) as their first choice as compared to researchers (12%). The Russian Duma (28%) and private industry (26%) were the third most overall trusted set of regulators cited by Russians, followed by 21% citing NGOs and other civil society groups and 10% international organizations without Russian officials (e.g. UN, ICANN). Interestingly, only 2% of Russians trust the international organizations that work with Russian officials, such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), to regulate the Internet (not depicted in Figure 8).

Breaking down by frequency of Internet use Russians' top choices to regulate the Internet reveals significant differences in preferences (see Figure 9). For example, non-users of the Internet as compared to heavy Internet users are substantially more likely to cite government institutions or agencies as their trusted regulators of the Internet such as the Russian government (46% vs. 36%), Russian security service (44% vs. 37%), and the Russian presidency (37% vs. 25%) as compared to heavy Internet users. In contrast, heavy Internet users, as compared to non-users, are substantially more likely to trust regulators of the Internet without official ties to the Russian government such as private industry (32% vs. 18%), NGOs and other civil society groups (27% vs. 14%), and international organizations without ties to Russian officials (12% to 5%).

Beyond whom they may trust to regulate the Internet, survey respondents were also asked several questions about their beliefs and preferences about

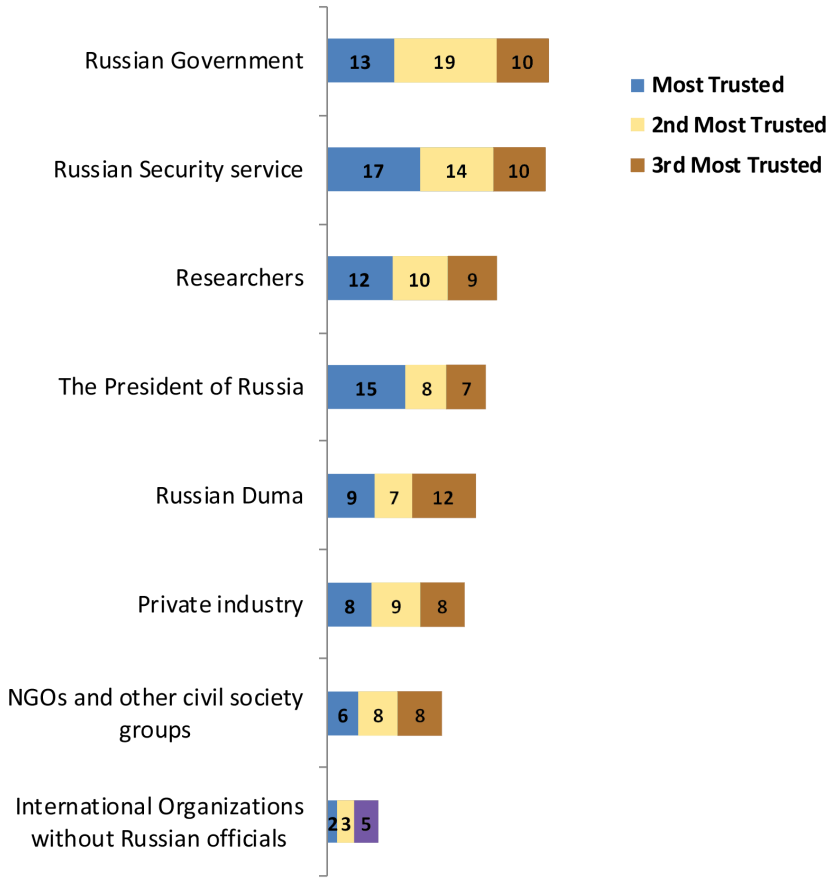

FIGURE 8: MOST TRUSTED INSTITUTIONS & ORGANIZATIONS FOR REGULATING THE INTERNET (percentage of total respondents, multiple reponses)

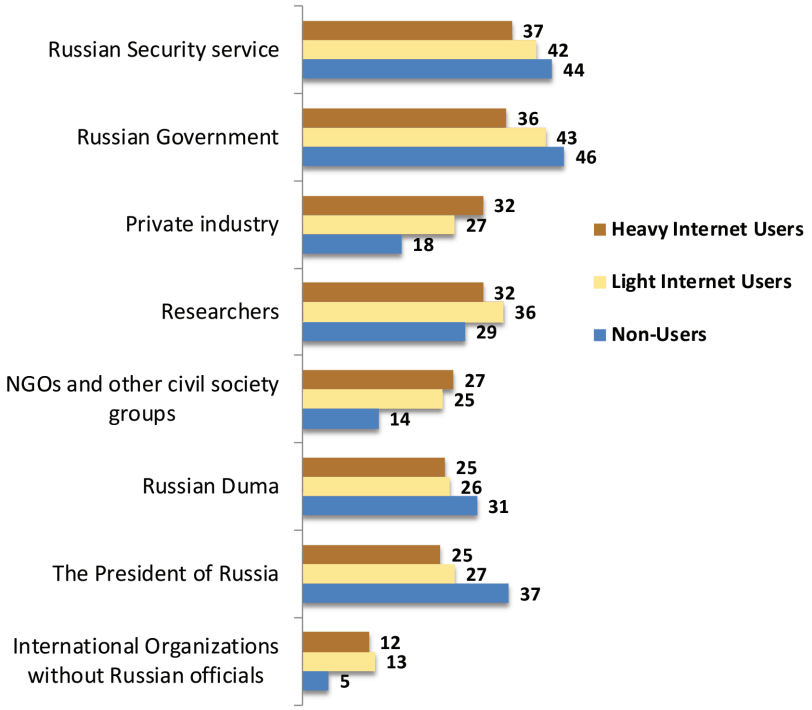

FIGURE 9: TRUSTED INSTITUTIONS & ORGANIZATIONS FOR REGULATING THE INTERNET BY INTERNET USE SEGMENT (percentage of total respondents, multiple reponses)

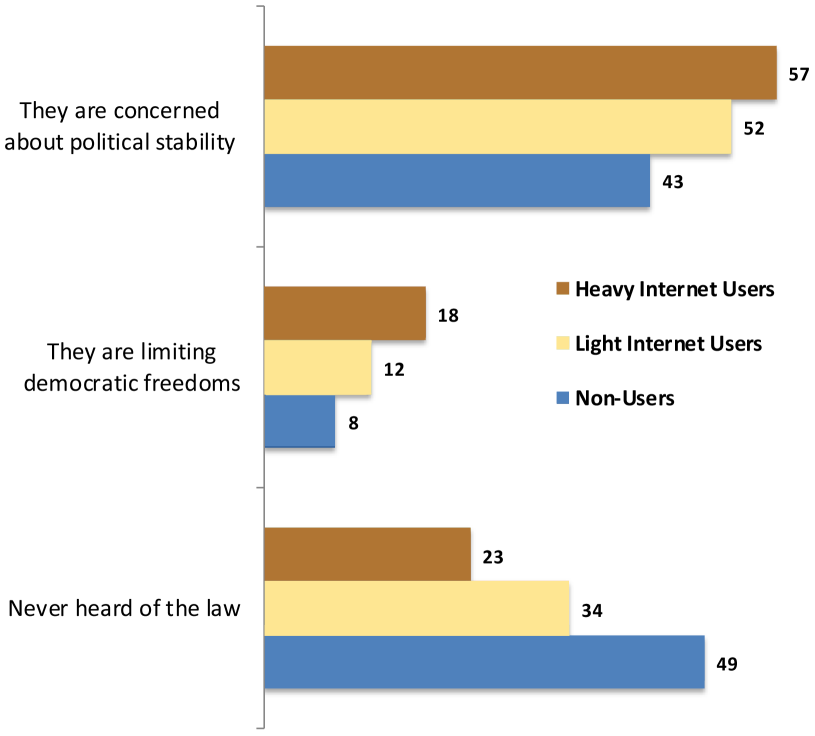

FIGURE 10: GOVERNMENT MOTIVATION FOR BLACKLIST LEGISLATION BY FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of total respondents, single reponse)

regulatory legislation and policy in Russia. For instance, Russians were asked what they believed were the government's primary motivations when they adopted a law creating an official global "blacklist" of international websites and Internet content that is censored in Russia. Figure 10 depicts responses by frequency of Internet use segment.

Overall, 51% of Russians believe the primary motivation of the government in legislating a blacklist of websites is the maintenance of political stability as opposed to 13% of Russians who believe the primary motivation was limiting democratic freedoms. A little over one-third of Russians (35%) had never heard or was unaware of the blacklist law. These percentages varied significantly by frequency of Internet use (see Figure 10 above). Heavy Internet users were more than twice as likely as non-users (18% vs. 8%) to believe the primary motivation was to limit democratic freedoms. In addition, almost half (49%) of non-users had never heard of the law as compared to about one-third (34%) of light users and about one-quarter (23%) of heavy users.

The question of whether public opinion should be taken into account by public bodies when regulating the Internet was also posed to survey respondents. A majority of Russians (56%) believe the state is obliged to consider the public's opinion and see public advice on Internet regulation. About one-third of Russians (36%) believe the state can consider public opinion if it so wishes but in the end may act according to its own preferences and 9% of Russians believe the state should not pay any attention to public opinion when regulating the Internet.

However, as Figure 11 above illustrates, these beliefs also vary by frequency of Internet use. Heavy (62%) and light (58%) Internet users are substantially more likely to believe the state is obliged to consider public opinion and seek public advice

when regulating the Internet than non-users (47%). In contrast, significantly more non-users (43%) than light (34%) and heavy (30%) Internet users believe the state may consider public opinion if it so wishes but may still act as it so chooses.

Russians were also asked via the survey whether personal blogs should be regulated more, the same, less than mass media websites, or not at all (see Figure 12). Overall, a very large percentage of survey respondents had difficulty answering the question, with nearly one out of five (19%) replying that it was too difficult to tell. Out the remaining response options, the plurality of Russians (39%) believe personal blogs should be regulated the same as mass media websites. Otherwise, opinions are about equally split, with 15% of Russians believing personal blogs should be regulated less than mass media websites, 13% believe they should be regulated more, and 14% believe they should not be regulated at all.

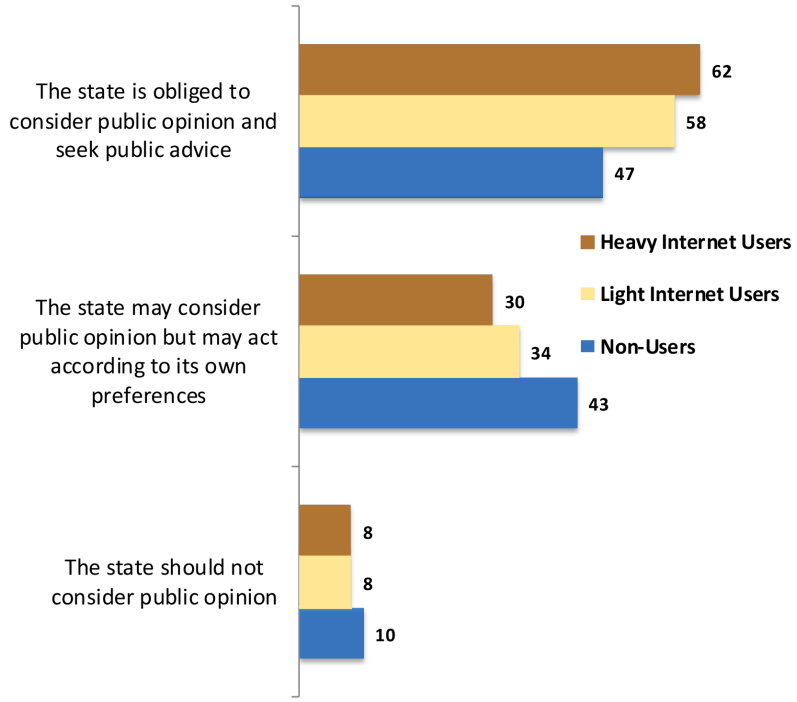

FIGURE 11: REGULATORY ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION BY FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of total respondents, single reponse)

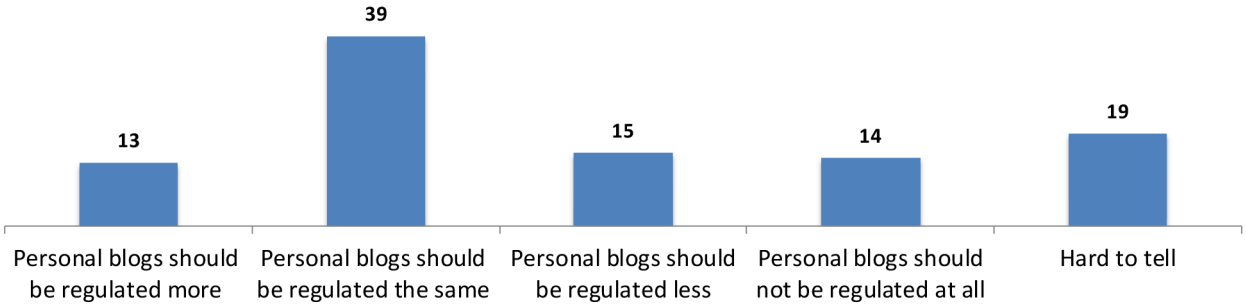

FIGURE 12: BELIEFS ABOUT REGULATION OF PERSONAL BLOGS BY FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of total respondents, single reponse)

Russian Citizen Mobilization and Protest

Russian Internet users (62% of survey respondents) were asked a series of questions about citizen mobilization and protest in furtherance of Internet freedom. Whether Internet users considered themselves personally impacted by Internet regulation was assessed by asking survey respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the statement "the regulation of the Internet affects my personal freedom." A majority of Russian Internet users (59%) disagreed with the statement and felt that they are not personally impacted by Internet regulation while 41% believe that they are impacted by regulation. If there was a possibility of a mass protest or demonstration against government measures to restrict or censor the Internet in their local community was also asked of Russian Internet users. A follow-up question then asked if respondents would personally take part in such mobilization if it occurred.

The results depicted in Figure 13 show that 14% of all Russian Internet users believe protests against Internet censorship in their community are possible with no significant differences between light (12%) and heavy (15%) Internet users. In addition, about one in ten (9%) Internet users reply they would take part in such protests if they occurred, with heavy Internet users (11%) almost three times as likely to protest than light users (4%).

The survey also asked Russian Internet users to select up to three types of Russian government censorship of or restrictions on the Internet that may motivate to them to engage in mass citizen mobilization and protest in defense of Internet freedom. Figure 14 lists their most popular selections that garnered at least 7% of mentions. Russian Internet users (40%) overwhelmingly cited a complete ban on the use of the Internet such as exists within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (i.e. North Korea) as a reason to mobilize and protest. Unfortunately, at the same time, about one-quarter (27%) of all Russian Internet users could not cite any type of Internet censorship or restrictions that would lead them to protest or mobilize in defense of Internet freedom.

All the other reasons for protest were selected by about 11% or less of Internet users. For instance, 11% of Internet users selected a complete ban on the Internet in the workplace and 9% cited the prohibition of the use of the Internet without personal identification as reasons for protest. Four types of Internet restrictions were all mentioned by 7% of Internet users: a) the government being allowed to remove any type of content from the Internet, b) the banning of personal blogs or social media sites of opinion, cultural, or opposition, c) the prohibition of nicknames and mandatory registration in online social networks, and d) temporarily shutting off the Internet in the event of a protest.

Russian Internet users were also asked if they had heard about a new legal requirement that new websites should be registered with the Russian government agency that manages online communications (called the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media, "Roskomnadzor" in Russian). Overall, 18% of Russian Internet users replied that they had heard of the requirement, though heavy Internet users (21%) were almost twice as likely as light Internet users (13%) to be aware of it.

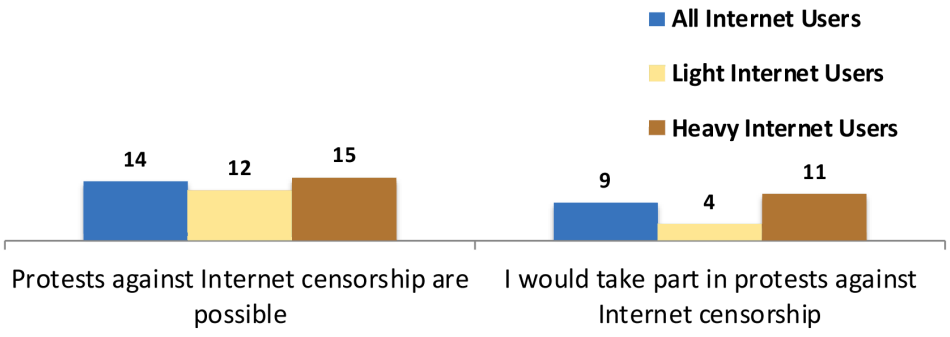

FIGURE 13: BELIEFS ABOUT INTERNET PROTESTS BY FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE SEGMENTS (percentage of Internet users, single reponse)

Out of these Internet users who had heard of the law, a rather large majority (70%) supported the law, a small minority (20%) opposed it, and 10% of Internet Russians did not know either way (see Figure 15). Nearly two out of five (37%) of Internet users who had heard of the law and opposed it (representing 7% of all Internet users) said they were either prepared to

sign an Internet petition against the requirement (26%) or participate in offline protests or rallies (11%).

Russian Internet users were also asked under what circumstance they would or would not support the Russian government temporarily shutting down the entire Internet within Russia. Figure 16 provides the distribution of responses. Overall, 58% of Internet users would be in support of such a shutdown, with the case of a national emergency garnering the most support (48%) followed by 9% of Internet users believing a temporary shutdown would be justified in the case of a mass protest and 1% citing some other reason. In contrast, 42% of Internet users believe the shutdown of the Internet by the Russian government is never justified no matter the situation.

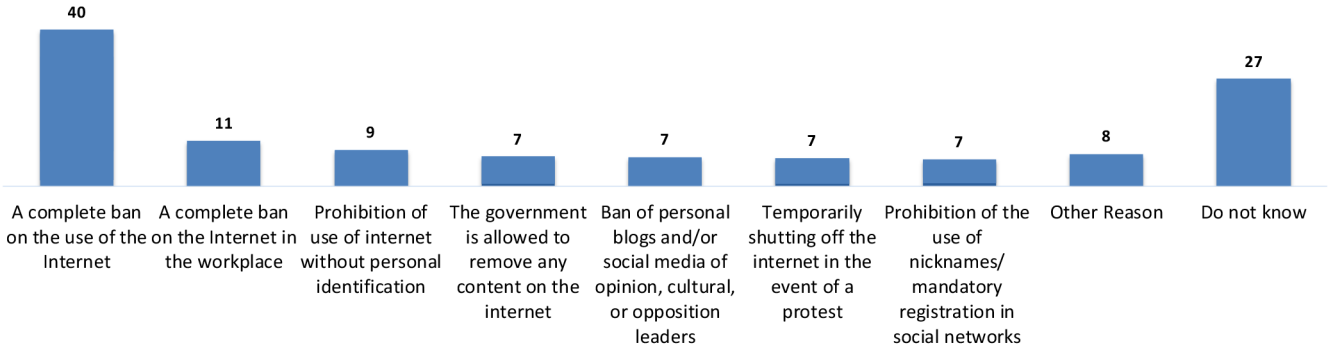

FIGURE 14: TOP REASONS FOR MASS CITIZEN MOBILIZATION IN DEFENSE OF INTERNET FREEDOM (percentage of Internet users, multiple reponses)

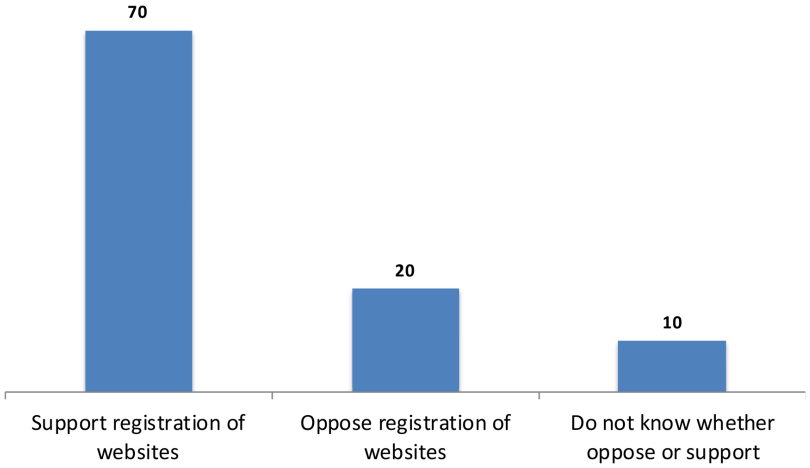

FIGURE 15: SUPPORT FOR REQUIRED FEDERAL REGISTRATION FOR ALL RUSSIAN WEBSITES (percentage of Internet users aware of law, single reponse)

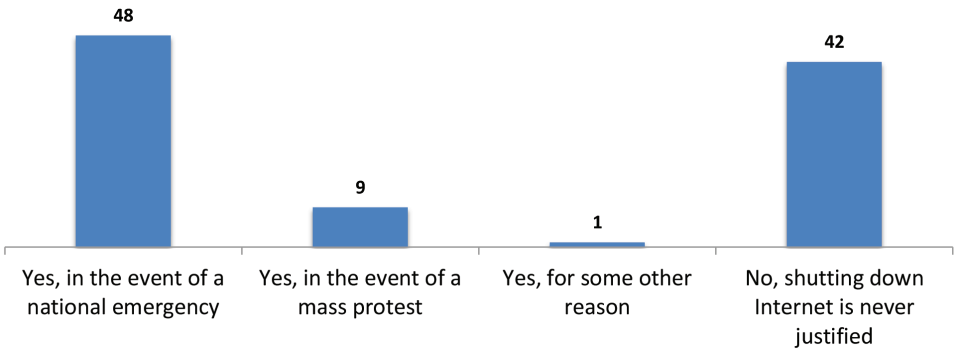

FIGURE 16: SUPPORT FOR RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT TEMPORARILY SHUTTING THE INTERNET (percentage of Internet users, single reponse)

Methodological Notes

The survey population were adults living in the Russian Federation (men and women, 18 years or older). The survey was administered face to face by the VCIOM Russian Public Opinion Research Center located in Moscow, Russia (www.wciom.com). The survey employed a multi-stage stratified territorial random sample that included 80 regions of Russia. Quota sampling within each region at the household level, based on population data from the 2010 Russian census, was employed to ensure the representativeness of the survey sample based on gender, age, level of education, type of settlement, and employment. The response rate for the survey was 57%. The margin of error (MOE) does not exceed +/-3.4% at a 99% confidence level for reported results for the entire population, +/- 3.1% MOE at a 95% confidence level for reported results for Internet users, and +/- 4.0% MOE at a 95% confidence level for reported results of non-users of the Internet.