



## Contemporary Media Use in Russia

### Overview

The media environment in Russia is not only becoming more hostile for international broadcasters but also for independent domestic broadcasters that are not owned or controlled by the Kremlin. In late November 2013, state-controlled energy giant Gazprom bought Profmedia – extending its grip over radio and television. But even those owned by the Kremlin were not spared in 2013 – with President Vladimir Putin dissolving main state news agency Ria Novosti in early December and merging it with radio service Voice of Russia to create a new media agency, Rossiya Segodnya. Ria Novosti itself called the move “the latest in a series of shifts in Russia’s news landscape which appear to point toward a tightening of state control in the already heavily regulated media sector.”

### News Consumption

Russians are keen news consumers. Most (79.0%) access some type of news at least daily, and nearly all (95.4%) do this at least weekly. Nearly all Russians (95.5%) are turning to television – which continues to dominate the media market in 2013 – for their news each week. However, as more Russians get Internet access – seven in 10 have access at home in 2013 – more of them are getting their news online. A majority of Russians (56.4%) now say they get their news from the Internet at least once a week, up slightly from 50.4% in 2012. The Internet outdistances traditional media such as newspapers and magazines (49.8%) and radio (43.8%) as sources for weekly news.

Still, more Russians are getting their weekly news fix from a less technological source – word of mouth. More than seven in 10 say they get their news each week from family members and friends.

Young Russians between the ages of 15 and 24 rely on new media for their news more than any other age group. Nine in 10 Russians aged 15 to 24 (90.0%) say they go online for news at least once a week, versus

about three in four of those aged 25 to 44 (75.6%) and 30.4% of those aged 45 and older. Young Russians are also far more likely than their older counterparts to say they get news from social networking services (62.3%), SMS/text messages (52.0%), and from mobile apps (34.4%) that frequently. They are less likely to get their news from traditional media such as newspapers and magazines (36.0%) than other age groups.

### Traditional Media: Television and Radio

Virtually all Russians (98.4%) have a television in their household, and almost as many (96.7%) say they have watched television in the past week. About half of TV owners (51.3%) get their signal via a terrestrial antenna, while most of the remainder (34.6%) has cable TV. Satellite television remains limited; 19.8% of TV owners have an individual satellite dish, while 3.0% say they have a shared dish. Notably, 6.2% of Russian television owners say they receive their signal through an Internet connection. Not surprisingly, cable service is five times higher among urban (45.7%) than rural (9.1%) residents, while individual satellite dishes are more likely to be found among rural Russians (36.9%) than city-dwellers (12.4%).

Half of Russians (49.9%) have a radio set at home, and roughly as many (48.9%) say they listened to the radio in the past week. FM is the dominant radio spectrum in Russia, with nearly eight in 10 past-week radio listeners (79.7%) saying they used FM during that time. The next most commonly used wavebands are Tochka, the state-wired radio network, used by 11.4% in the past week and AM, used by 10.5%. Fewer than one in 10 weekly listeners used the UKW band (7.8%) or shortwave radio (6.4%).

The majority of those who had listened to the radio in the past week say they had done so using a car radio (51.1%), while 16.5% say they listened to the radio over their mobile phone, and 10.6% say they listened over the Internet. Few say they listened via satellite or cable TV.

### New Media: The Internet and Mobile Phones

Russia is well on its way toward reaching its goal of providing Internet access to 93% of its population by

2018. Seven in 10 Russians (70.2%) report having home Internet access in 2013; this is up from 63.4% in 2012 and nearly triple the 24% in 2008.

More than three in four Russians living in urban areas (76.2%) say they have Internet access at home. Internet access has been slower to reach rural Russia, but the majority of rural residents (56.5%) now report their households are connected. In communities with less than 10,000 residents, Internet penetration is 56.5%, while in communities with 1 million or more residents, it is as high as 83.7%.

But not all access is equal. The majority of Russians with Internet access at home say they have high-speed access (55.8%). More than one-third connect via wireless Internet at home (34.8%) and roughly one-quarter (24%) still has dial-up access. Urban Russians who have home Internet access are twice as likely to have high-speed connections (63.9%) as rural Russians (30.8%), while dial-up is twice as common in rural areas (38.5%) as in urban (19.3%). Rural residents (39.9%) are slightly more likely than urban residents (33.3%) to say this connection is wireless.

The majority of Russians (58.9%) say they have gone online in the past week, up from 50.8% in 2012. Urban residents accounted for more of this increase than rural residents, who were as likely to report weekly Internet use in 2013 (45.1%) as in 2012 (42.5%). Nearly two in three urban Russians (64.9%) used the Internet in the past week in 2013, up from 54.9% in 2012.

Internet use and social networking are still the domain of the young in Russia. More than nine in 10 Russians aged 15 to 24 (92.1%) have used the Internet in the past week; this number falls to 31.3% among those 45 and older. But the age gaps are showing signs of narrowing, with reported use in the past week rising among those 25 to 44 (80.4% in 2013, up from 69.2% in 2012) and those 45 and older (31.3% in 2013, up from 21.4% in 2012).

The majority of past-week Internet users say they have used the Internet in the past week to find out information about a specific topic (77.6%), to send or receive email (64.1%), to find out the latest news (62.4%) or to watch online videos, such as TV programs, news reports, video clips, or movies (53.1%). The least common activities are downloading and watching or listening to podcasts (19.8%) or posting a comment to a blog (19.3%). The youngest users are more likely than older users to engage in most Internet activities, except

they are slightly less likely than 25- to 44-year-olds to have used the Internet to find out the latest news.

### **Mobile Phones: Cellular Phones Everywhere, for Everyone**

Russia's mobile phone market is fairly saturated. More than nine in 10 Russians (91.5%) say they personally have mobile phones. Nearly all Russians between the ages of 15 and 44 (96.3%) have a cellphone; while ownership drops only slightly to 86.6% among those aged 45 and older. Ownership is ubiquitous across both urban areas (93.8%) and rural areas (86.8%).

Three in 10 mobile phone owners (29.6%) say their phones are smartphones, with the ability of accessing the Internet and downloading apps. They are slightly more common among urban (33.4%) than rural mobile owners (20.0%), with percentages dropping off precipitously outside of Moscow (54.2%) and St. Petersburg (44.7%). But a key factor in smartphone ownership is age. The majority of 15- to 24-year-olds who own phones say they have a smartphone (62.9%), while half as many in the 25 to 44 age group (38.4%) and only 9.4% of cellphone owners aged 45 and older say they have smartphones.

Slightly more than one in four (26.7%) mobile phone owners say they used a mobile phone to access the Internet in the past week. Far fewer say they used their phone to download and use a mobile app (13.7%) or download and view a video clip (12.5%) in the past week. Mobile phone owners younger than 25 were the most likely to download an app (35.0%) or a video clip (33.2%) in that time period. The majority of those who used a mobile app have used one that offers news (54.0%).

### **Methodology**

These data are from a nationally representative, face-to-face survey of 5,012 Russians aged 15 and older. The interviewing field period was Oct. 31, 2013 to Nov. 26, 2013. The survey is representative of the views and opinions of approximately 120,540,000 Russian adults. [Source: Population Reference Bureau, 2013].

### **Contact**

For any questions or further information on this data, please contact the Broadcasting Board of Governors at [publicaffairs@bbg.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@bbg.gov) or 202-203-4400. You can follow the BBG on Twitter @BBGgov.