This information bulletin reports on the key changes in the Russian-speaking blogosphere over the past year. This analysis is based on data from Yandex’s Blog Search service.

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1. General information

1.1 Size of blogosphere

According to Yandex Blog Search as of spring 2009, the Russian-speaking
blogosphere has **7.4m blogs: 6.9m personal blogs and more than half
a million communities.** This is almost twice as many as a year ago.¹

According to Technorati as of 2008, there are more than 133m blogs in
the world, 5% of them are in Russian.

**Active blogs** (those with at least five entries and that have been
updated at least once in the past three months) continue to decrease —
currently totaling to 12%. While two years ago every second blog was
getting regular updates, last year only one out of five blogs was regularly
updated. Percentage of active communities is slightly higher at 16%.
Weekly updates occur in only 5% of blogs and communities. However,
despite decreasing percentage of active blogs, their number has gone up
from 760,000 to 890,000 within the past year.

At the start of blogging seven or eight years ago, bloggers were few,
but they were regular contributors to their blogs, and many of them are still
blogging. In the past three years blogging has become fashionable. The
number of bloggers soared, but regular bloggers plummeted (fig. 1).

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**Fig. 1 Number of blogs and active blogs relative to their age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Blogs of this age</th>
<th>Active blogs of this age relative to all blogs of this age, %</th>
<th>Active blogs of this age relative to all blogs, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0—1 year</td>
<td>718 339</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1—2</td>
<td>1 000 774</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2—3</td>
<td>675 769</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3—4</td>
<td>184 691</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4—5</td>
<td>89 908</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5—6</td>
<td>45 727</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6—7</td>
<td>12 941</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7—8</td>
<td>2813</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

yandex.ru/company/yandex_on_blogosphere_spring_2008.pdf
1.2 Blog hostings

As of spring 2009, Yandex Blog Search tracked 128 blog hosting websites — 56% more year-over-year. For comparison: the number of blog hosting websites was increasing approximately 2.5 times each of the three previous years.

70% of all Russian-speaking blogs and 76% of all active blogs are hosted on four web services: LiveJournal.com, Blogs.Mail.ru, Ya.ru and LiveInternet.ru (fig. 2). LiveInternet is leading with a large margin in the number of blogs, but it is hardly the most popular blog hosting service with 96% of its blogs not having seen any updates in the past three months.

Fig.2  Blogs on major blog hosting websites

According to Yandex Blog Search, March 2009

Comparing traffic statistics on each of the large blog hosting websites, one can see a totally different picture. According to TNS, as of March 2009, LiveJournal.com is the most visited blog hosting website with the monthly audience of 8.7 million (fig. 3). LiveInternet with 5.6 million per month takes the second place followed by Blogs.Mail.ru with its 4.7 million per month. Lately, the number of visits to the major blog hosting websites has been increasing rather quickly, but the number of active blogs, however, has been growing extremely slowly. This might mean that an average active blog is attracting more traffic and is becoming more popular.
Top-10 blog hosting services now includes Twitter.com, a website with non-standard blogs. Posts on Twitter are limited to 140 characters, which makes bloggers use the service mostly for sharing their current actions, moods etc. Percentage of active blogs on Twitter at 80% is much higher than on any other blog hosting service.

The number of independent blogs in April 2009 exceeded 190,000 — which is 21 times as many as it was two years ago. 28% of these blogs are active, which is slightly higher than the number of active blogs on LiveJournal, the most “alive” host among common blog hosts.

Blogs.Mail.ru has the highest number of communities (both active and abandoned) (fig. 5). But Privet.ru blog hosting service has the highest concentration of communities: two active communities per three active personal blogs.
1.3 Geography

Geographically, Russian-speaking communities and individual blogs are distributed similarly (fig. 6). Both ratings consist almost entirely of cities on the territories of the former USSR. The only considerable difference is that in the number-of-blogs rating the leading foreign city — London — ranks only 38\textsuperscript{th}, while the number-of-communities rating has London and New York at 11\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} places respectively.

Fig. 6  Geography of Russian-language blogs and communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active blogs</th>
<th>Active communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moscow 49,000</td>
<td>Moscow 7,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Petersburg 37,893</td>
<td>Saint Petersburg 1,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiev 15,740</td>
<td>Kiev 810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minsk 8,399</td>
<td>Minsk 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novosibirsk 4,680</td>
<td>Odessa 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekaterinburg 4,491</td>
<td>Samara 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samara 3,710</td>
<td>Novosibirsk 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almaty 3,425</td>
<td>Ekaterinburg 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odessa 3,022</td>
<td>Riga 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizhny Novgorod 2,888</td>
<td>Nizhny Novgorod 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostov-on-Don 2,720</td>
<td>London 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vladivostok 2,634</td>
<td>New York 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharkiv 2,608</td>
<td>Rostov-on-Don 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelyabinsk 2,527</td>
<td>Kazan 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riga 2,476</td>
<td>Kharkiv 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazan 2,413</td>
<td>Vladivostok 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London 1,053</td>
<td>Chelyabinsk 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York 845</td>
<td>Almaty 69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Yandex Blog Search, March 2009

2. Average blogger

The perennial for the past two years average blogger is a 22 year old Moscow girl. She has 18 friends (13 of them are mutual), she participates in 10 communities and has been blogging for a year and nine months.

 Probably, this girl is blogging on LiveInternet or on Diary.ru — average bloggers on these blog hosting websites look very much like her, albeit slightly younger — they are 20—21 years old. The average blogger on Ya.ru or LiveJournal has, probably, never heard of her — he is a 26 year old man.
3. Content

3.1 Posts and comments

Every day bloggers make about a million blog entries in Russian — about 300,000 posts and about 700,000 comments.⁶

Communities get updated more often than blogs: new posts in communities appear 1.3 times more often and comments 2.1 times more often than in blogs.

The majority of visitors to blogs are readers, they are approximately 30 times as many as active bloggers.⁷ Those visitors who do write fall into two distinct categories: those making only posts (26%) and those making only comments (21%).⁸ These two categories do not overlap. The remaining 53% make both posts and comments.

However, these figures vary greatly depending on the blog host. For example, LiveJournal has an approximately equal number of writers and commentators, while on LiveInternet people who only write are 12 times as many as those who only comment (fig. 7).

Fig.7 Bloggers making only posts, only comments or both (approximately equally with no more than a 5% margin)

According to Yandex Blog Search, April 2009
The average size of a blog post is 101 words. An average heading consists of one or two words. 5.5% entries do not have words at all — this is the largest group of entries based on the number of words in them.

In March 2009 almost half (49%) of all blog posts contained images. In reality, this does not mean that there are many images and photographs in blogs. The majority of these images are, probably, smileys. Some blog hosting websites allow certain graphic combinations to automatically transform into smileys (e.g. semicolon and parenthesis) without most users even noticing this.

Flash objects — videos, as a rule, — are embedded in about 4% of blog entries.

3.2 Spam

Blog spamming consists of posts or comments made automatically to trick a search engine or cheat some ranking system.

Spamming has become a significant problem in blogosphere only recently. Summer 2008 saw a sharp increase in spam blogs. The number of such blogs has grown more than 30 times within the year. As of spring 2009, approximately one third of all blog posts were identified as spam by the Yandex search engine. For example, on the 22nd of January in 2009 the five largest blog hosting services registered 225,000 entries, 75,000 of which have been excluded from the Yandex search results as spam.

Fig. 8 Spam blogs in the Russian blogosphere
Spam blogs, %

According to Yandex Blog Search, April 2009
4. Friends and communities

The majority of blogs have few subscribers. An average personal blog has 18 readers, while an average community has 112 participating bloggers. Only 2% bloggers have more than a hundred friends, and only 0.2% bloggers can boast a fan base of more than 500.

According to Yandex Blog Search, 11 April 2009

The most popular blogs (more than 5,000 friends) with more than 558,000 subscribers, make up 8% of the Russian blogosphere.

Men have more friends than women, as do mature people compared with the younger ones.

Bloggers on LiveJournal have more friends than other bloggers — 30, on average. Bloggers on Mail.ru with only seven friends are the least successful in terms of blogger friendship.

The LiveJournal.com bloggers are the most active writers both in communities and in their personal blogs.

Average number of friends
Men — 21, women — 15.

Bloggers
- 18–22 years old …… 11
- 23–27 …… 16
- 28–32 …… 19
- 33–37 …… 19
- 38–42 …… 27
- 43–47 …… 28
- 48–52 …… 24

Fig. 9 Bloggers and their subscribers

According to Yandex Blog Search, March 2009

Average community participants
- Average for all blog hosts …… 112
- Blogs.Mail.ru …… 144
- LiveJournal.com …… 98
- Ya.ru …… 69
- LiveInternet.ru …… 54

Friends here are web users, whose blogs are followed by other web users, not those who follow a blog.

Fig. 10 Blogger interactions on different blog hosting websites

Number of communities in which an average blogger participates

Number of friends of an average blogger

According to Yandex Blog Search, March 2009
Appendix
Key facts and figures

According to Yandex Blog Search as of spring 2009, the Russian-speaking blogosphere has 7.4m blogs: 6.9m personal blogs and more than half a million communities. This is almost twice as many as a year ago.

Russian-speaking blogs are 5% of the world blogosphere.

Active blogs (those with at least five entries and that have been updated at least once in the past three months) continue to decrease — currently totaling to 12%. The total number of active blogs, however, has gone up from 760,000 to 890,000 within the past year.

70% of all Russian-speaking blogs and 76% of active blogs are hosted on four services: LiveJournal.com, Blogs.Mail.ru, Ya.ru and LiveInternet.ru.

LiveJournal.com is the most visited blog hosting service. LiveInternet takes the second place followed by Blogs.Mail.ru in the third place.

The number of visits to the major blog hosting websites has been growing rather fast lately, while the number of active blogs has been growing extremely slowly. An average active blog is becoming more popular.

Proportion of active blogs on Twitter.com at 80% is much higher than on any other blog hosting service.

The perennial for the past two years average blogger is a 22 year old Moscow girl. She has 18 friends (13 of them are mutual), she participates in 10 communities and has been blogging for a year and nine months.

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