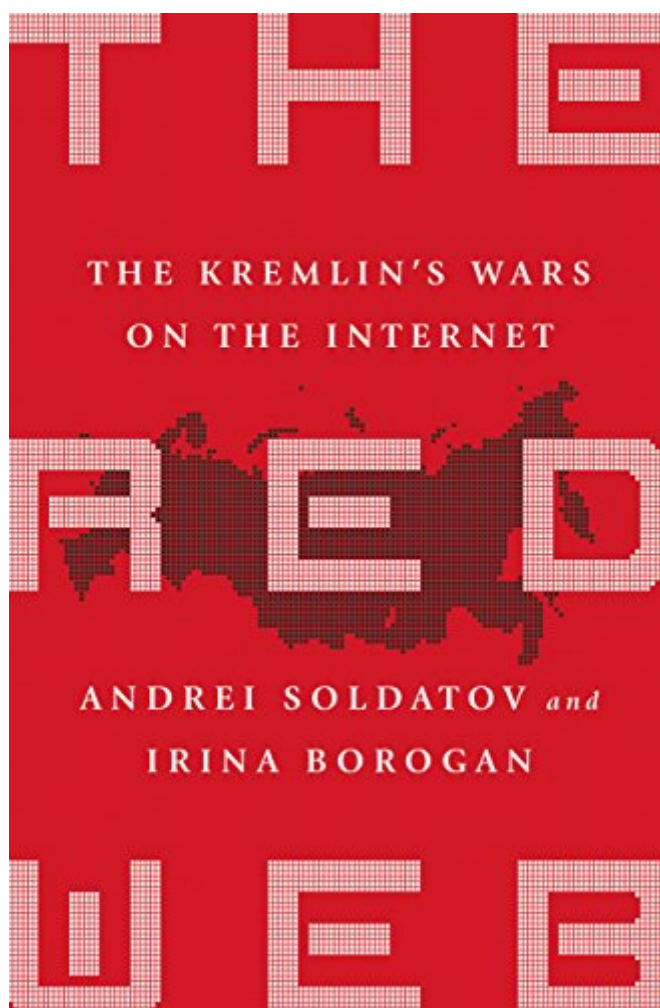The book was found

The Red Web: The Struggle Between Russia's Digital Dictators And The New Online Revolutionaries

THE KREMLIN'S WARS ON THE INTERNET

THE **RED** WEB

ANDREI SOLDATOV *and* IRINA BOROGAN

Synopsis

Half of Russia¢â ¬â„¢s email traffic passes through an ordinary-looking building in an otherwise residential district of South West Moscow. On the eighth floor, in here a room occupied by the FSB, the successor organization to the KGB, is a box the size of a VHS player, marked SORM. SORM once intercepted just phone calls. Now it monitors emails, internet usage, Skype, and all social networks. It is the world¢â ¬â„¢s most intrusive listening device, and it is the Russian Government¢â ¬â„¢s front line for the battle of the future of the internet.Drawn from scores of interviews personally conducted with numerous prominent officials in in the ministry of communications and web-savvy activists challenging the state, Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan¢â ¬â„¢s fearless investigative reporting in The Red Web is both harrowing and alarming. They explain the long and storied history of Russian advanced surveillance systems, from research laboratories in Soviet era labor camps to the legalization of government monitoring of all telephone and internet communications in 1995.But for every hacker subcontracted by the FSB to interfere with Russia¢â ¬â„¢s antagonists abroad¢â ¬â •such as those who in a massive Denial of Service attack overwhelmed the entire internet in neighboring Estonia¢â ¬â •there is a radical or an opportunist who is using the web to chip away at the power of the state at home. Empowered by communication enabled by social media, a community of activists, editors, programmers and others are finding ways to challenge abusive state powers online. Alexei Navalny used his LiveJournal to expose political corruption in Russian, and gained a viral following after attacking Putin¢â ¬â„¢s ¢â ¬Å"party of crooks and thieves.¢â ¬Å• Grigory Melkonyants, deputy director of the nation¢â ¬â„¢s only independent election watchdog organization, developed a visual that tracked and mapped voter fraud across the country. And on December 10th, 2011 50,000 people crowded Bolotnaya Square to protest United Russia and its lawless practices. Twenty-four-year-old Ilya Klishin had used Facebook to spark the largest organized demonstration in Moscow since the dying days of the Soviet Union.The internet in Russia is either the most efficient totalitarian tool or the very device by which totalitarianism will be overthrown. Perhaps both. The Red Web exposes how easily a free global exchange can be splintered coerced into becoming a tool of geopolitical warfare. Without much-needed activism or regulation, the Internet will no longer be a safe and egalitarian public forum¢â ¬â •but instead a site Balkanized and policed to suit the interests and agendas of the world¢â ¬â„¢s most hostile governments.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fascinating read if a little frightening. Great research, fine journalism. From , a very quick delivery.

This was easy to read and informative. It explained Russian interference in citizens' lives clearly and makes it easier to understand where the feelings of mistrust of others comes from.

A must read if you want to know what is happening in Russia on this subject.

Excellent read!

It took me about 24 hours to read the whole book - and when I closed the last page, I felt like, well - I want to read more!It is an in-depth history of the Russian Internet, and the way it has developed since its very first days.Putting aside the even more history about the phone communications interception and monitoring (which, by the way, is also amazing - just search the names of the people, who 'worked' there - Lev Kopelev and Alexander Solzhenitsyn; and you may be surprised to

find out what they did there), the part about the Internet development is quite precise*.The authors have done a number of interviews, and have used public (and obviously some not-so-public) sources of information, and have managed to put them in an order that makes it an intriguing reading, at moments catching the reader's breath.The reader (in particular the reader from the USA) might be also fascinated by the description of Mr. Snowden's adventures in Russia - there are some facts, which were not widely known until this book was published.The American reader will also find more details about the authors of the Russian Internet policy - and these details are much more precise and factual, than similar accounts, shared for example by Richard Clarke in his book Cyber War.Here's a quote from the book, which is among my favorites (p. 304):"[Kolesnikov] insisted that what the authorities had done to the Internet was entirely immaterial: 'Look, did it affect your morning coffee?'"Today, a year after this conversation took place, the Russian Internet continues to change, and develop, and in some cases, it may have affected the morning coffee of some people.I highly recommend this book - you will have fun reading it._____* - I happened to have worked and traveled a lot of times to Russia since 1990s, and especially in the first decade of the XXI century, so I can confirm personally many of the stories that are described in the book as factually well written.** - On the picture - my copy of the book, with preferred food and drink for such a reading.

You need to read this book if you are concerned about government surveillance anywhere, or if you are a student of Russian history. The authors give us a concise history of surveillance both in and out of the former Soviet Union and today's Russia. The treatment of government response to new technology is enlightening and cause for concern.There is nothing nice I can say about the Cheka's newest abbreviation - FSB. It is just a new name for a bunch of thugs wrapped in government titles. Putin is a former intel officer who has maneuvered his way into a dictatorship. I feel sorry for the citizens of Russia who deserve better.This book is a keeper.

The authors provide an interesting discussion of the unique features of Russian Internet censorship that distinguish it from the kind practiced in other countries. I particularly liked the analysis of SORM and its connection with the Soviet past. The thesis of continuity with the past is fascinating: today most international Internet traffic moves through one Internet exchange point (MSK-IX) in a way that is similar to how most telephone calls in Moscow during Soviet times went through one major telephone station. The artificial bottleneck, of course, facilitates control and censorship.My only criticism is that the book often reads like an overly literal translation of an original Russian

manuscript. For example, the authors use the word "perspective research" (perspektivnye issledovaniya) ("This section took orders and research commissions on perspective research from all the agencies ...") when what they really mean is either "prospective" or "future research". They say "fixing" (fiksirovat') ("Nossik also wrote that 'fixing of all incoming and outgoing Internet traffic of 75 million Russian users requires, without any exaggeration, petabytes and exabytes of disk space'") when this verb should almost always be translated as "recording". Other sentences could be rewritten for better diction: "He expressed fear that the Internet was building beyond their control" should be "He expressed fear that the Internet was developing beyond their control." "Andreevsky Flag" disguises the fact that that it is a flag with St. Andrew's cross. The transliteration of Russian names is sometimes inaccurate: "Lev Mishkin" should be "Lev Myshkin" if the Internet handle is supposed to be modeled on the Dostoevsky character. The authors also fail to use an accurate transliteration system for the Russian sources in the footnotes. I translate Russian for a living, and I can say that the book would have benefited from being more carefully proofread by a native speaker.

"The Red Web" is the definitive account of how the Kremlin has thoroughly co-opted the Russian Internet, turning it into an effective tool for the modern surveillance state. It's also a haunting commentary on how the Russian Internet was doomed from the outset, despite all its early promise during the Yeltsin era. As Soldatov and Borogan explain, Russia was locked into an inferior product — an Internet that was only marginally free and expressive — thanks to the way information was viewed by the repressive Soviet state. Where the book gets bogged down is in all the details of the Soviet era -- but it does a great job of outlining the key players in today's digital landscape. If you've been following all the twists and turns of how the Kremlin is trying to get foreign companies to relocate their servers to Russian soil and all the debate over which sites should be censored and why, this book offers a fascinating back story.

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