

LiveJournal Returns in Kazakstan, But Now Facebook is King

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Four years' absence will make it hard for LiveJournal to claw back its fans.

The authorities in Kazakstan have unblocked the LiveJournal blogging website, four years after shutting down access to it.

A government statement on November 11 said the decision was taken after unlawful material – religious and extremist propaganda and information about weapons – were deleted.

LiveJournal is the largest blogging platform for users who write in Cyrillic scripts, including Russian and Kazak.

It was blocked by court order in August 2011.

Commentators suspect that LiveJournal incurred anger because opposition leaders based abroad used it as a platform for attacking the government. One was Rahat Aliev, former son-in-law of President Nursultan Nazarbaev, who went into exile after being prosecuted, and proceeded to publish allegations of wrongdoing by Kazakstan's leaders.

Aliev is no longer a threat to the government – he committed suicide in a Vienna prison in February 2015. (For more, see our [story](#).)

In all likelihood, LiveJournal is no longer relevant since most of its users have shifted to Facebook.

Pavel Bannikov, a Russian-language poet who used to use LiveJournal, recalls how influential it used to be – literary journals would find new content on the site and approach writers to seek permission to print their poetry.

"It's good that LiveJournal has reopened. But in Kazakstan, LiveJournal won't become what it was in 2007, when everyone used it as a news source," Bannikov added. "I've noticed that in the last three years, virtually all the active, engaging users – the ones you'd like to read and hear their views – have gone over to Facebook."

Some people like entrepreneur Iskander Jarylgasov still hope LiveJournal will resume its role as a place where new opinion-makers emerge. The editor-in-chief of the Radiotochka news agency, Bekjan Idrisov, is more sceptical – he thinks LiveJournal is dead in the water in Kazakstan.

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