

Ukraine, Russia, hacking, and misinformation | Columbia Journalism Review

By Mathew Ingram

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As soldiers and civilians in Ukraine continue to resist an invasion by Russian troops, a very different kind of war is being fought on a separate front: the internet. Within hours of Russian troops attacking cities and government facilities in Ukraine, hackers—including some who claimed to be affiliated with the underground group known as Anonymous—went after a number of Russian government sites and systems. While some of these cyber-attacks appeared to be designed just to cause annoyance, others were aimed at shutting down the Russian government’s operational abilities, or revealing what military intelligence officials in Russia might know. The battle has also seen attempts by Russia to hack information networks, by using propaganda and misinformation on social and traditional media.

Some of the cyber-hacking attempts were invited by the Ukrainian government itself. Starting Thursday morning, posts started to appear on a variety of hacker forums, asking for volunteers to protect critical infrastructure and conduct cyber missions against Russia, according to a report from Reuters. The posts call on the “Ukrainian cybercommunity” to “get involved in the cyber defense of our country,” and invite hackers to apply via Google docs. Yegor Aushev, co-founder of a cybersecurity company in Kyiv, told Reuters he was asked by a senior Defense Ministry official to write the posts.

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