Social Media and Russian Studies

Dr. Jacqueline Olich, CSEEEES

World View annual partners program for K-12 educators on August 10, 2011
The Russian Federation, I

- Located in Europe and Asia
- At 6,592,848 sq. miles, Russia is the largest country in the world
- 9 time zones in Russia, more than in any other country

- 142.8 million people (UN, 2011)
- A multiethnic state--over 180 nationalities; (80% of the population ethnic Russian)
The Russian Federation, II

- Russia’s VK (ВКонтакте) is the largest European social network with more than a 100 million active users
- Internet domain: .ru
- There were 62 million internet users in Russia in 2011, representing 45% of the population, according to eMarketer.
President Vladimir Putin

Term: (2000-2008; 2012-??)
Russian Studies

• Exciting time to study Russia—as exciting, one could argue—as when I got hooked in 1991-1992.

• Last twenty years, the majority of Russians were content to focus on what we call the private sphere—their daily lives and livelihoods—in exchange for stability from the Putin regime. But that social contract is changing.
“More and more people from the emerging middle classes are stepping from their private domains into the public square. This is the sea change that we’re witnessing in Russia.”

--Dmitri Trenin, Moscow Centre, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Russia Today

Civil society in Russia is much more vibrant now than two decades ago. Though we may be thousands of miles away, social media provides a tool we can use to better understand what is transpiring in Russia.
Twitter

• The internet, social media and Twitter—a micro-blogging service—represent valuable tools for professional development and lifelong learning

• Particularly with Twitter, information on a variety of topics across the globe comes to you (like Google Alerts but on a broader scale)
You can use Twitter to connect your students to real-world problems and actors.

www.eschoolnews.com/2012/07/13/how-twitter-can-be-used-as-a-powerful-educational-tool

Popular education hash tags:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VelhMDERt4RxrX4rsF8aq8N2tma-gDme8fLpYMip4M0/edit?hl=en#
Tweets limited to 140 characters. You can follow anyone and anyone can follow you. Unlike Facebook, where making "friends" requires approval from both sides, Twitter requires less work to connect with someone.
Twitter

• To set up a Twitter profile, a user selects a username, uploads a picture, and adds a 160-character biography.

• You can link to a website or a blog.
Follow The Leader

American Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul

“Twitter Diplomacy”

@McFaul

Illustration by Riccardo Vecchio
Follow The Leader

- Mikhail Khodorkovsky--Russia’s best-known political prisoner
- Former head of the Yukos oil company; supporter of the liberal opposition
- Serving eight years in Siberia on tax and fraud charges
- Khodorkovsky is not only business-savvy but media savvy
- Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience (May 2011)
- Khodorkovsky Center, [http://www.khodorkovsky.com/](http://www.khodorkovsky.com/)
- @mbk_center
Follower The Leader

• “We all live in Khimki Forest”
• Evgenia Chirikova
• Environmental and protest movement
• @4irikova

http://en.rian.ru/images/16188/95/161889552.jpg
Follow The Leader

• A fascinating and complex character, Alexei Navalny is a lawyer and social activist
• Influential anti-corruption blogger at the center of an anti-Putin protest movement
• @navalny
Twitter and Journalists

- @miriamelder
- @JohnsonRussiaLi
- @ioffeinmoscow
- @shaunwalker7

http://en.rian.ru/images/17040/43/170404369.jpg
“How Can I Follow All of This??”

• How many of you are on Twitter?
• Recommended: Twitter in Plain English tutorial
Additional Resources

• The Economist: http://www.economist.com/topics/russia

• The NYT: http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/russia/index.html

• CREECA: http://www.creeca.wisc.edu/outreach/lessonplans.html

• Julie deGraffenried, Integrating Childhood, Children’s and Youth History into High School History Courses: http://blogs.dickinson.edu/teachinghistory/2012/07/27/julie-degraffenried-teaching-childhood-in-high-school/
UNC Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies

- @jmolich
- @UNC_CSEEES
- @UNC_Global
- UNC RUES Alumni and Friends LinkedIn Group