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**THE VPN TRUST INITIATIVE RESPONDS TO WAR IN UKRAINE REGARDING
ACCESS TO CRUCIAL ONLINE TOOLS**

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The availability of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) provides users digital privacy, security, access to truthful information, and the ability to communicate with less fear of repercussions. VPNs have been crucial digital tools in the face of global threats in the past, and the ongoing war in Ukraine is no different. The VPN industry has been engaged in conversation to determine what role its technology should play. Propaganda, disinformation, internet censorship, and cyber threats have all been part of Russia's attack on Ukraine.

As the industry seeks to respond to the evolving crisis, the Internet Infrastructure Coalition's [VPN Trust Initiative \(VTI\)](#) has convened industry leaders to discuss VPNs' role. The VTI is an industry-led and member-driven consortium of VPN business leaders focused on improving digital safety for consumers by building understanding, strengthening trust, and mitigating risk for VPN users.

Internet Infrastructure Coalition Executive Director Christian Dawson provided the following statement:

“In our talks with VPN providers, they have shared stories of attempts to respond to this crisis in quick and compassionate ways, while also recognizing the tremendous complexity and gravity of the situation. Russia’s well-documented and sophisticated cyber warfare regime maliciously spreads disinformation and takes down sites that oppose government narratives using Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. Russia’s communications agency Roskomnadzor has also blocked websites and services.

“Since Russia attacked Ukraine, courageous journalists and activists on the ground have bravely exposed the truth in this conflict. VPNs have been an important part of their tool kit to ensure those in Ukraine can maintain their privacy and security. Those in Russia have been able to use VPNs to access this truthful reporting not available through state media.

“There’s also been a parallel war of misinformation and disinformation waged by Russia using some of the same Internet technologies.

“No provider of Internet infrastructure technology wants it to be used in cyber attacks. The mere thought that VPN services could be used in this way raises grave concerns around continuing to provide any access in Russia altogether. That being said, it is clear from discussions with providers that the ability to control information is asymmetrical. Russian State actors have numerous technologies and methods to carry out cyber warfare. Individuals lack such tools, and when resources like VPNs are cut off, they are the ones most directly affected.

“Reporters and citizen journalists have used VPNs to show the truth on the ground without their identity or location being intercepted by government officials. VPNs have also allowed average Internet users to bypass state censorship in Russia, giving them access to trusted and verified information as well as unblocked communication channels.

“From the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, members of the VTI, representing the top VPNs in the industry, have individually taken a range of steps to help users, such as: providing free services to journalists and other vulnerable people; ensuring that Russian citizens still have access to VPN services that circumvent state propaganda; and severing business relations with Russian infrastructure providers without impacting user access.

“Even before the invasion of Ukraine, Roskomnadzor blocked many VPN services, effectively creating a separate Russian ‘splinternet’ cutting citizens off from the global Internet and outside information. Steps to limit VPN services will only serve to further Russia’s agenda.

“The VPN Trust Initiative continues to discuss this vital topic. Each VTI member may choose a slightly different path, but they are all seeking to make the right decisions to optimally help citizens of the world in this uncertain time.”

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About i2Coalition’s VPN Trust Initiative

i2Coalition’s VPN Trust Initiative (VTI) is an industry-led consortium that promotes consumer safety and privacy online by increasing understanding of VPNs and strengthening business practices in an industry that already protects millions of Internet users. The VTI leverages first-hand knowledge to advocate, create, vet, and validate guidelines that strengthen trust and transparency and mitigate risk for users.

To learn more about the VTI or to join as a member, please click [here](#).