

Search in different Russian cities

Autumn 2014



Yandex

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This research looks at the internet search behaviour and interests of users in Russian cities and towns of different sizes. Three groups of cities were studied: those with a population of more than 1 million; from 100,000 to 1 million; and less than 100,000 (small cities and towns)¹. Moscow and St. Petersburg were studied separately. The main data were taken from search queries on Yandex from September 2013 to May 2014.

¹ MOSCOW REGION AND LENINGRAD REGION CITIES ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS RESEARCH. SEARCH BEHAVIOUR OF USERS FROM THESE REGIONS IS ASSUMED TO MATCH THAT OF USERS IN MOSCOW AND ST. PETERSBURG.

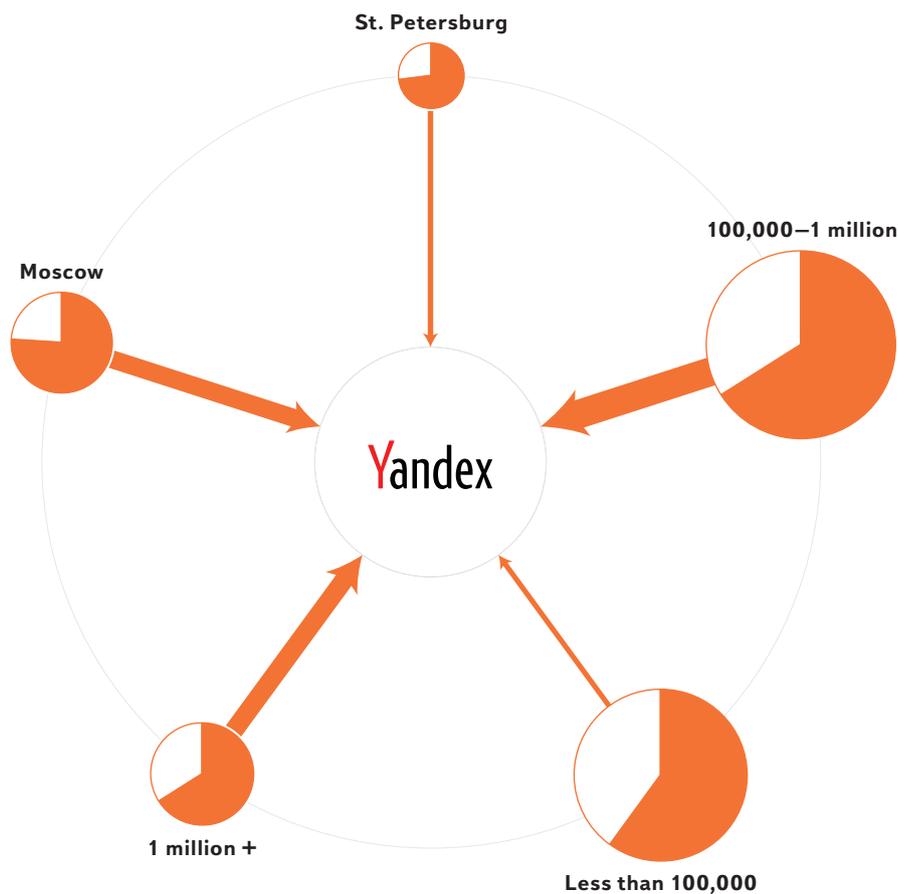
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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SEARCH ACTIVITY

Every month, Yandex's search engine answers about 5 billion search queries from users in Russia¹. This volume is very unevenly distributed between different population centres. More than half of all search queries come from the largest cities — Moscow, St. Petersburg and cities with a population of more than 1 million — although these account for just 20% of the adult population of the country. Meanwhile, almost a quarter of Russia's population lives in small cities and towns, yet they produce only 6%–7% of search queries on Yandex.

SEARCH QUERIES IN CITIES OF DIFFERENT SIZES

The area of each circle is proportional to population size, while the width of each arrow represents the volume of search queries on Yandex. Shading inside each circle indicates the level of internet penetration.



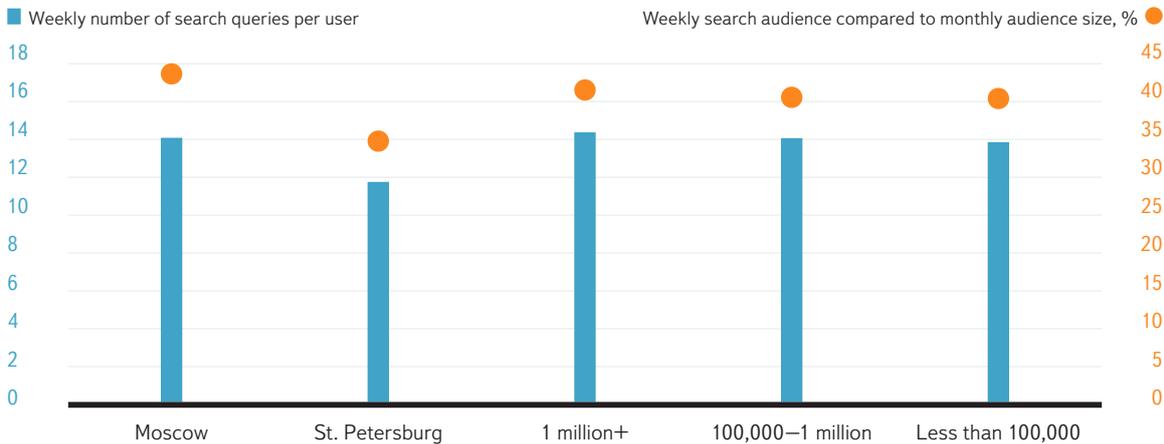
SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 — MAY 2014

¹ ACCORDING TO SEPTEMBER 2014 DATA.

The uneven distribution of search queries cannot be explained solely by differences in levels of internet access: penetration (monthly audience as a percentage of population size) varies little between the groups of differently sized cities. Most likely, users in small cities and towns use the internet to visit favourite sites, but not for searching online.

Those small-town residents who do use search tend to use it as frequently as the populations of the other groups. In search activity, only St. Petersburgers differ substantially: on average, they submit two search queries less per week compared to other users. St. Petersburg also has the lowest level of engagement (weekly search audience compared to monthly audience size)¹.

SEARCH ACTIVITY AND USER ENGAGEMENT



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, APRIL 2014

¹ YANDEX COUNTS THE NUMBER OF USERS BY THE NUMBER OF DEVICES OR BROWSERS FROM WHICH QUERIES ARE RECEIVED. IF ONE PERSON SUBMITS A SEARCH QUERY TO YANDEX FIRSTLY FROM A COMPUTER AND THEN FROM A MOBILE PHONE, THE QUERIES ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE COME FROM TWO DIFFERENT USERS.

POPULAR SEARCH QUERY FORMULATIONS

The assortment of most popular search queries is largely the same in all cities — only their rankings differ. Mainly users search for the names of internet services. Most often, users look for social networks, which account for at least half of the top 10 most popular search queries from each of the different groups.

TOP 10 SEARCH QUERY FORMULATIONS

Names of social networks are highlighted in colour. Queries that were not among the nationwide top 10 are in bold.

	Moscow	St. Petersburg	1 million+	100,000–1 million	Less than 100,000
1	одноклассники odnoklassniki	вконтакте vkontakte	одноклассники odnoklassniki	одноклассники odnoklassniki	одноклассники odnoklassniki
2	вконтакте vkontakte	вк vk	вк vk	вконтакте vkontakte	вконтакте vkontakte
3	вк vk	одноклассники odnoklassniki	вконтакте vkontakte	вк vk	вк vk
4	порно porn	порно porn	порно porn	порно porn	одноклассники моя страница odnoklassniki my page
5	одноклассники моя страница odnoklassniki my page	в контакте v kontakte	одноклассники моя страница odnoklassniki my page	одноклассники моя страница odnoklassniki my page	порно porn
6	в контакте v kontakte	авито avito	в контакте v kontakte	ютуб youtube	в контакте v kontakte
7	яндекс yandex	vk.com	авито avito	в контакте v kontakte	авито avito
8	авито avito	яндекс yandex	ютуб youtube	авито avito	ютуб youtube
9	ютуб youtube	одноклассники моя страница odnoklassniki my page	яндекс yandex	яндекс yandex	игры для девочек games for girls
10	mail	ютуб youtube	переводчик translator	игры для девочек games for girls	яндекс yandex

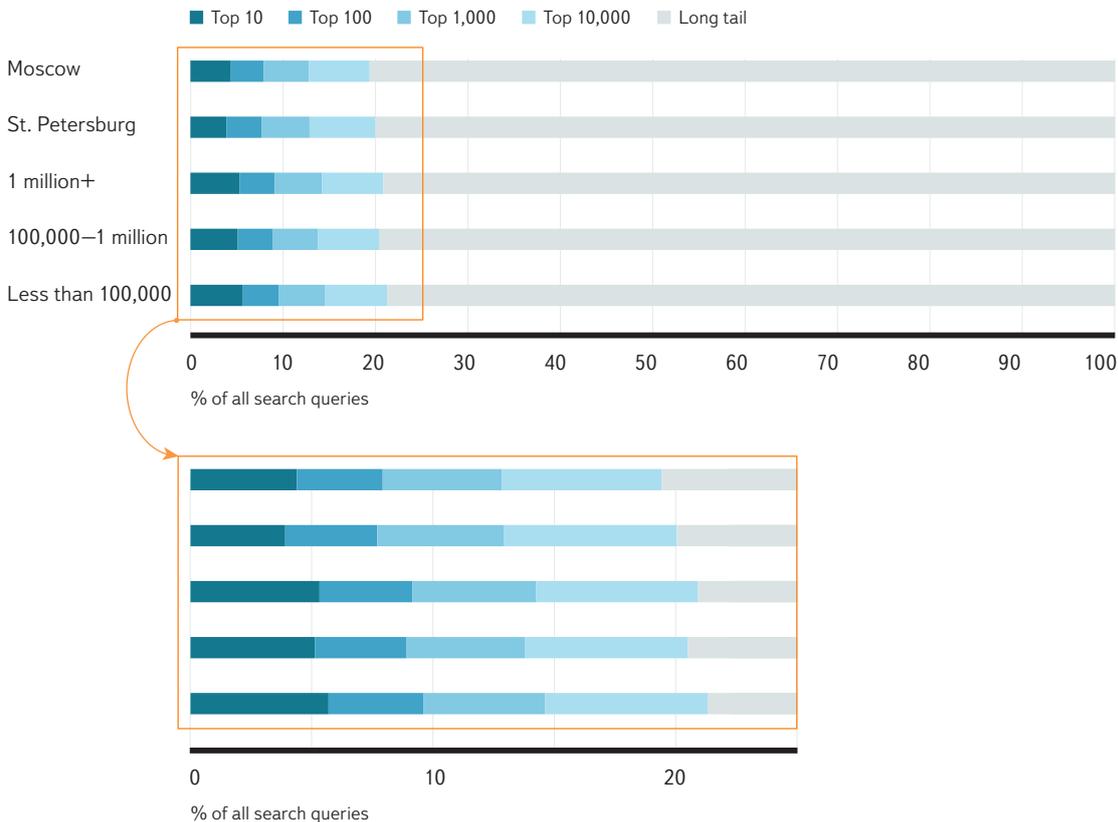
SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, AUTUMN 2013

In almost all researched groups, the volume of search queries about the social networks VKontakte and Odnoklassniki differed little; only in St. Petersburg was VKontakte sought five times more than Odnoklassniki.

The 10 most-sought query formulations accounted for 4% of search traffic from Moscow and St. Petersburg and 5%–6% from other groups, while the 100 most-sought keywords and phrases accounted for 8% and 9% respectively. The majority of queries — on average, about 80% — do not even fall within the top 10,000 and comprise the so-called long tail of search queries. In bigger cities, this tail is longer — local users' queries are more varied.

Since the most popular search query formulations comprise only a small proportion of total traffic, an analysis of search query content should study not the top keywords and phrases, but a random selection. We studied 15,000 randomly chosen queries to get a picture of search interests of users in different groups of cities¹.

LONG-TAIL SEARCH QUERIES



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, AUTUMN 2013

¹ THE SAMPLE SIZE FOR EACH GROUP OF CITIES WAS FROM 2,000 TO 3,000 QUERIES.

SEARCH QUERY GOALS

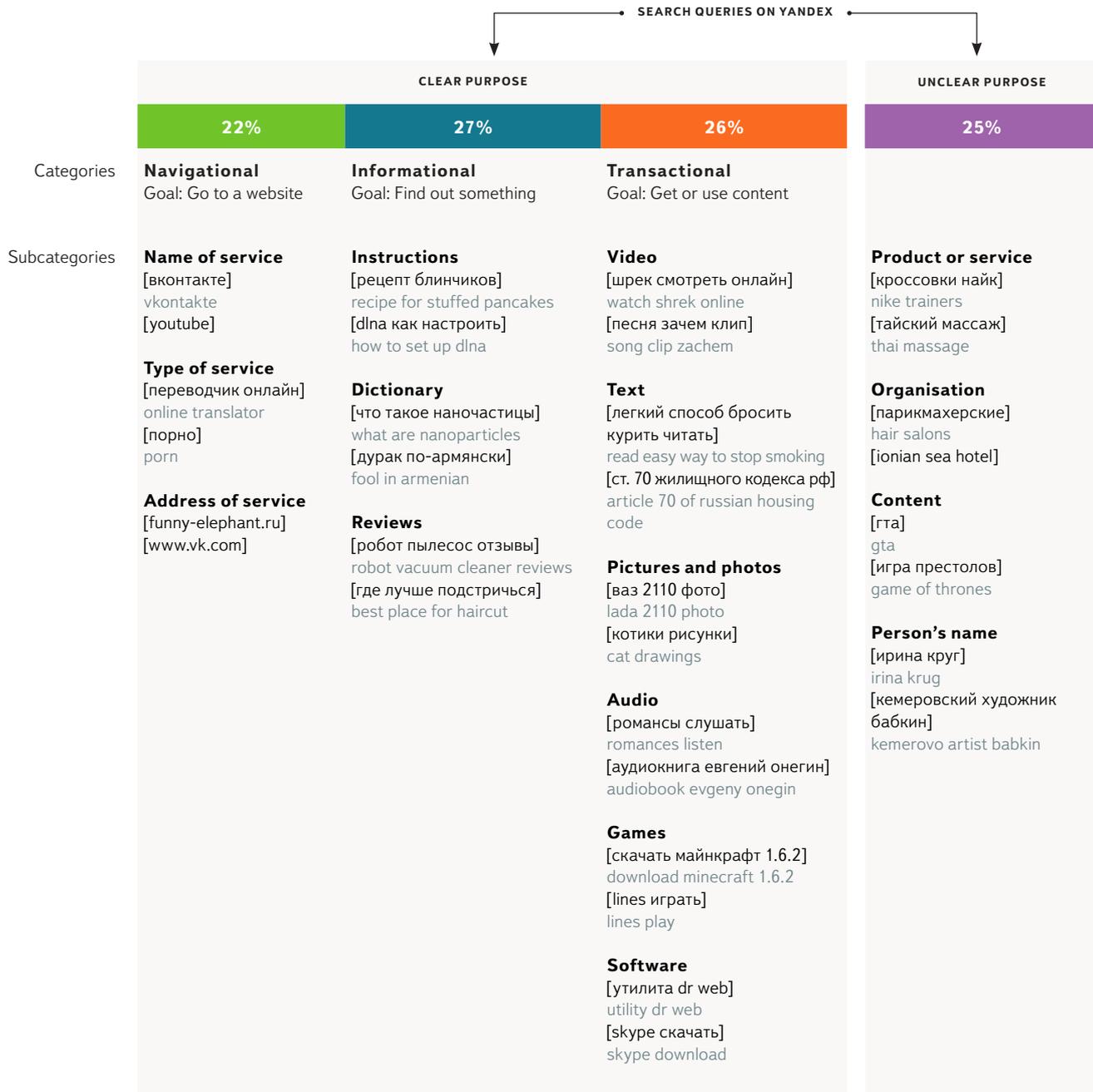
With most search queries, it's possible to determine the purpose, or what the user wants from their interaction with the search system. All queries that we studied were divided into three broad categories depending on their purpose: navigational, informational, and transactional. Navigational queries are those in which the user wants to access some kind of internet resource; informational — theoretical or practical knowledge; transactional — to receive ready content¹.

In each category, subcategories of frequent kinds of queries can be identified. For example, the subcategories of transactional queries may be the different kinds of content that the user seeks: films, music, or software, among others.

¹ QUERIES ABOUT ACTIONS WITH MATERIAL OBJECTS ARE SOMETIMES COUNTED IN THE TRANSACTIONAL CATEGORY ((ПЛЕР КУПИТЬ] BUY A PLAYER, [ЗАКАЗАТЬ ПИЦЦУ] ORDER PIZZA), BUT IN THIS RESEARCH, ONLY QUERIES ABOUT CONTENT WERE COUNTED.

SEARCH QUERY CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

Subcategories accounting for at least 1% of all search queries from Russia, with percentage of total traffic.

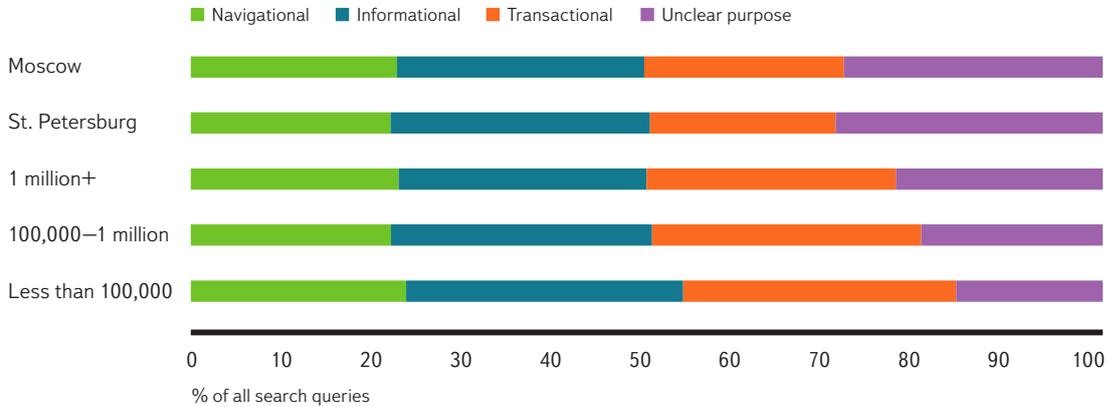


SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

Search in different Russian cities

10

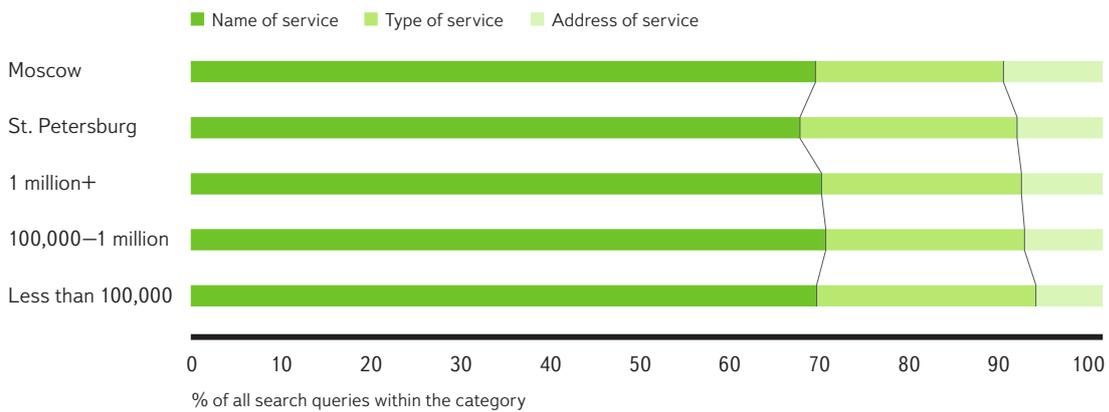
POPULARITY OF CATEGORIES



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

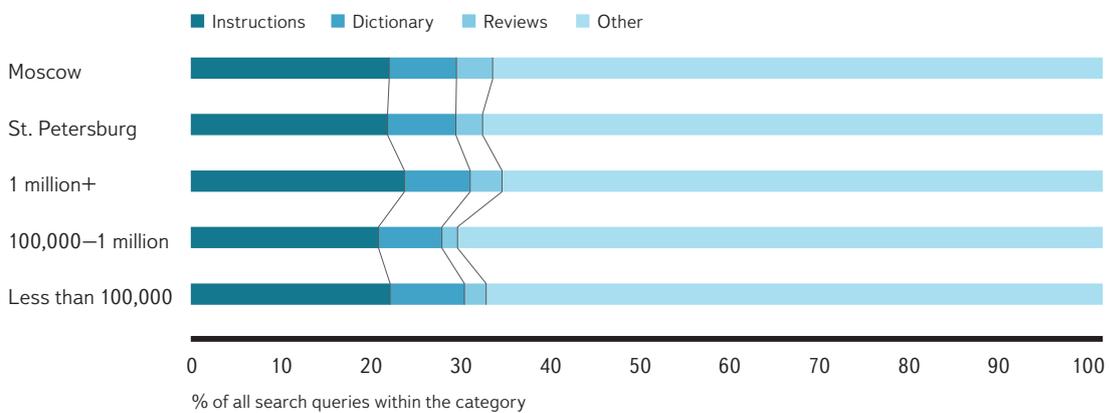
POPULARITY OF SUBCATEGORIES

Navigational queries



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

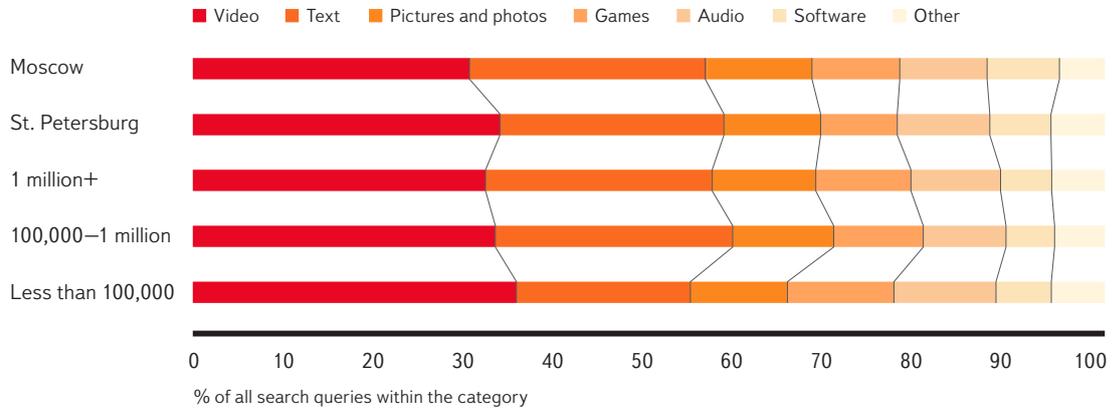
Informational queries



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

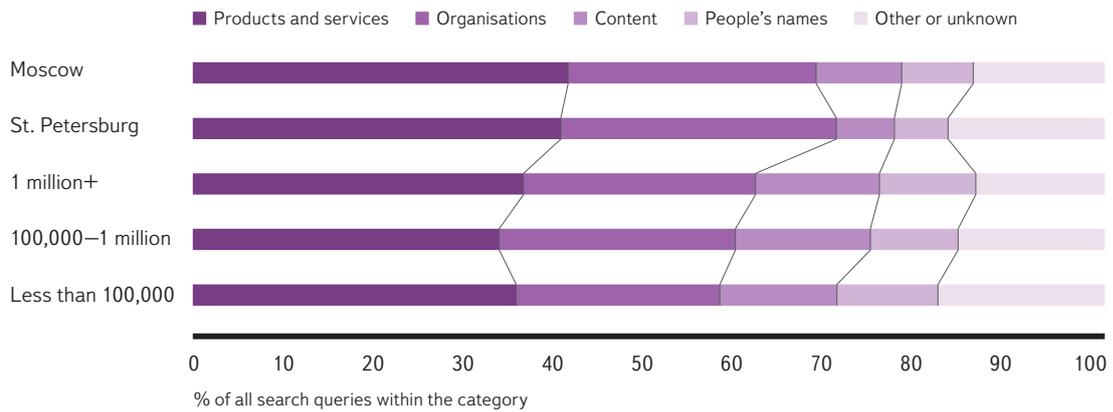
Search in different Russian cities

Transactional queries



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

Queries of unclear purpose



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

The share of navigational search queries is approximately the same in the different cities — 21%–23% of the total. More than two-thirds of navigational queries are names or addresses of specific services ([авито] avito, [www.vk.com]). Types of services ([гадания онлайн] fortune-telling online) are sought a quarter to a third as often: usually users know exactly which site they need.

The popularity of informational queries also differs little. Their share is highest in small cities and towns (almost 30%), and lowest in Moscow (26%). Informational queries are broad in their variety, which is why the three largest subcategories — searches for instructions, dictionary definitions and reviews — altogether draw less than a third of all search queries in the category. In the other 70% of cases, users look for addresses ([авторынок в омске адрес] omsk auto market address), prices ([сколько стоит развод] how much does divorce cost), product specifications ([клиренс пежо 3008] clearance peugeot 3008), weather ([точный прогноз погоды спб] accurate weather forecast spb), sports results ([счет франция чехия] score france czech) and other diverse facts ([экономика сингапура] economy of singapore, [влияние формы носа на успешность человека] influence of nose shape on person's success, [есть ли у комаров зубы] do mosquitoes have teeth).

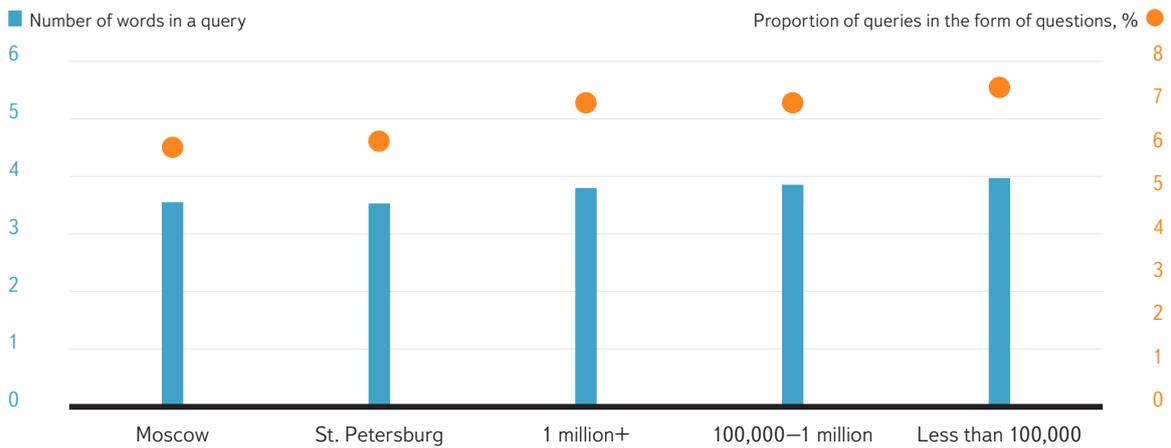
There are noticeably greater differences in the share of transactional queries: from 20% in St. Petersburg to almost 30% in small cities and towns. On the whole, the smaller the town, the more its inhabitants seek content. In all groups of cities, the most popular type of content is video: it is sought 30% more often than texts and about three times more than audio, games or pictures.

In transactional queries, users display a clear desire to download content (clarifying words — “скачать” download and “торрент” torrent) half as often as a clear intention to use it online (clarifying words — “онлайн” online, “смотреть” watch, “слушать” listen, “играть” play, “читать” read).

There are search queries for which it is not possible to determine the search goal with any certainty. For example, if a user entered only the name of a performer — [david bowie] — it is unclear what exactly the user wants: to read a Wikipedia article about the artist (information), to go to his site (navigation) or listen to music (transaction). Most often, such queries are for names and types of products or services ([уаз патриот] uaz patriot, [аренда теплоходов в саратове] motor ship rental in saratov) or organisations ([курьер сервис] courier service, [банки ухты] ukhta banks). Less frequently, they are for content ([star wars], [фильмы 2013] films 2013) or people's names ([анна чапман] anna chapman). Products, services and organisations are most sought in Moscow and St. Petersburg, while content is most sought in other groups. Users of all groups seek people's names with the same frequency.

In small cities and towns, the proportion of search queries with unclear purpose is lower: local users formulate their queries more elaborately (for example, [что делать чтобы компьютер не перегревался] how to stop a computer from overheating, instead of [греется компьютер] computer heats up). This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that in small towns, queries are longer and the proportion of requests in the form of questions is higher. On the other hand, users in big cities are used to how the search engine quickly figures out what they are looking for.

AVERAGE LENGTH OF SEARCH QUERIES AND SHARE OF SEARCH QUERIES EXPRESSED AS QUESTIONS



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, APRIL 2014

SEARCH QUERY TOPICS

In the course of our research, we identified about 100 different search query topics¹. Of course, with such detailed classification, many of them occur very infrequently. For example, queries about *pets* represent just 0.3% of traffic, and queries about *philosophy* are less than 0.02%. The biggest topics account for 5%–6% of search queries. The 10 biggest topics' popularity ranges from less than 40% of search traffic in Moscow and St. Petersburg to almost 50% in the small cities and towns: users' interests are more varied in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

TOP 10 SEARCH QUERY TOPICS

Topics associated with products and services are highlighted blue; entertainment content — red; those that were not among the most popular topics nationwide are in bold.

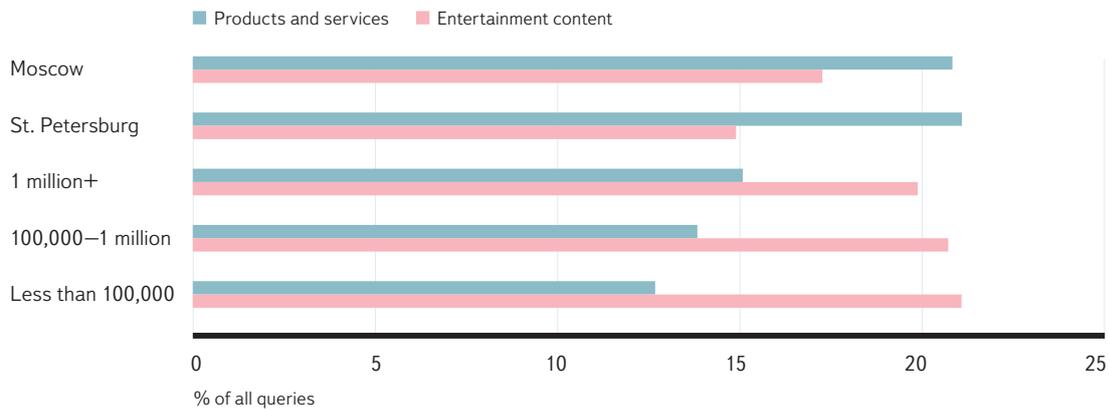
	Moscow	St. Petersburg	1 million+	100,000–1 million	Less than 100,000
1	Social networks	Social networks	Social networks	Games	Social networks
2	Auto	Auto	Games	Social networks	Games
3	Health	Games	Music	Music	Porn
4	Games	Health	School questions	Films	Music
5	Children	Music	Porn	Children	Auto
6	Porn	Electronics and domestic appliances	Health	Auto	Children
7	Music	Films	Films	Porn	School questions
8	Shops	Porn	Children	School questions	Films
9	Electronics and domestic appliances	Shops	Auto	Health	Health
10	Films	Manufacturing and construction	Electronics and domestic appliances	Software	Serials

SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

¹ ONE QUERY MAY CONTAIN SEVERAL TOPICS. FOR EXAMPLE, [КАК ВЯЗАТЬ ТАПКИ КРЮЧКОМ ВИДЕО] HOW TO CROCHET SLIPPERS VIDEO RELATES TO HANDICRAFTS AS WELL AS CLOTHING.

In all groups of cities, a large proportion of the most popular topics relates to products and services (*auto, shops, electronics and domestic appliances*) and entertainment content (*games, music, films, etc.*). Products and services are sought most often in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and entertainment content in other groups.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES VS ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT

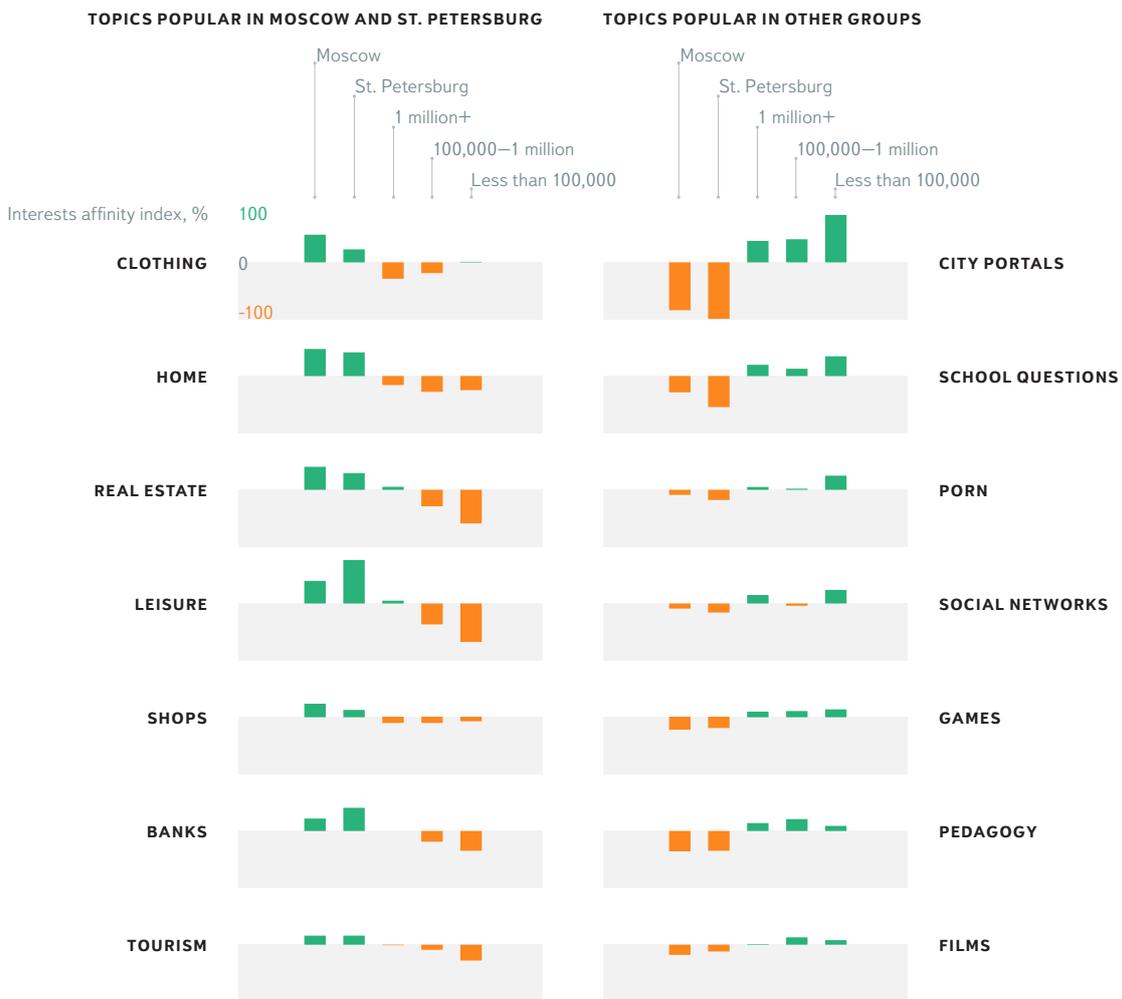


SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

The interests of users in Moscow and St. Petersburg mostly differ from those of users in other groups, as do those of users in large and small cities. These differences can be illustrated using an interests affinity index, which shows the percentage by which the popularity of each topic in a given group is higher or lower than the average for all cities.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg, users are more interested in products and services, tourism, city entertainment, and also commercial organisations. In other groups, users more often search for local city sites, entertainment content and anything associated with education.

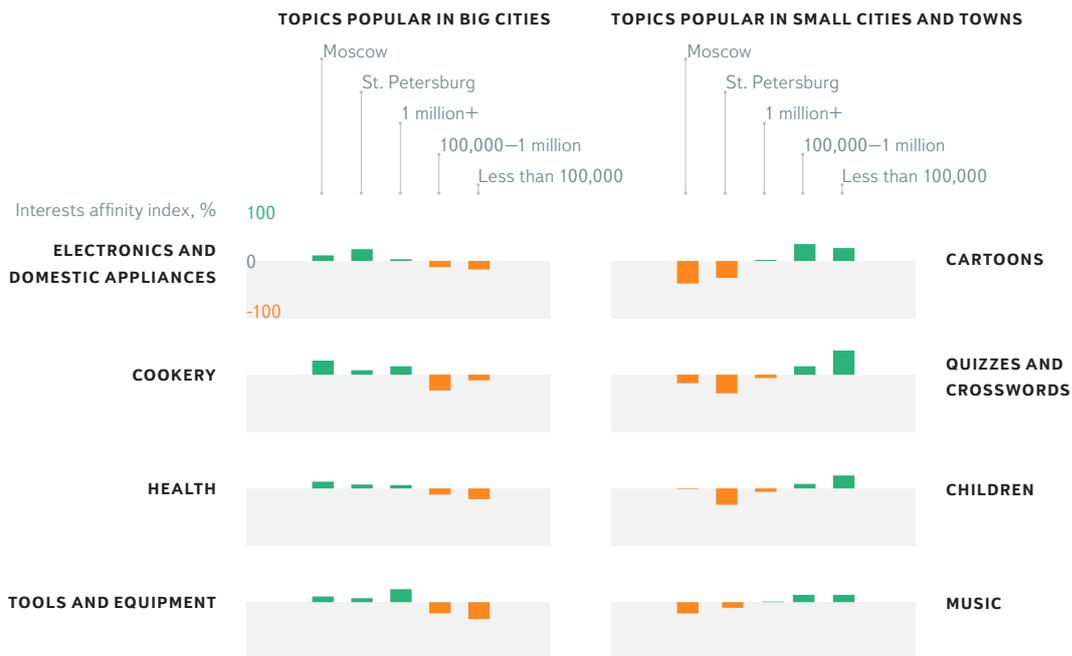
TOPICS THAT ARE POPULAR ONLY IN MOSCOW AND ST. PETERSBURG OR ONLY IN OTHER GROUPS



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

In the big cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg and the 1 million+ cities), users more frequently search for domestic appliances and professional tools and equipment, cookery and health. In the small cities and towns, there is a larger share of search queries associated with children.

TOPICS THAT ARE POPULAR ONLY IN LARGE CITIES OR ONLY IN SMALL CITIES AND TOWNS



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

There are also topics that are particularly popular or unpopular in just one of the groups. For example, Muscovites look for news more often than users in other cities, and less for funnies. Users in small cities and towns are more interested in weather, and less in art and beauty.

TOPICS THAT ARE PARTICULARLY POPULAR OR UNPOPULAR IN ONE GROUP OF CITIES



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

SPHERES OF LIFE IN SEARCH QUERIES

Most people's life can be divided into four spheres that overlap little: personal affairs, rest and recreation, work, and education. At every moment in time, a person is either working, or resting, or studying, or dealing with personal matters. To more clearly represent the difference between search interests of users from different cities, all search queries that we studied were divided into large groups corresponding to these spheres.

Personal affairs — a diverse range of everyday concerns: from going to the gym to getting a car repaired, visiting a doctor or enrolling a child in kindergarten. Falling within this category are more than 90% of queries about *weather, tourism, home, beauty* and *health*, and also those associated with finding products or services — *shops, clothing, classified ads*, etc.

Rest and recreation — everything associated with leisure and entertainment. Search queries for entertainment content (*serials, films*, etc.), and also *quizzes and crosswords, funnies, social networks*, and *celebrities*, fall primarily into this category.

The **work** category includes all queries about professional activity and employment. The most work-related topics are *job vacancies, administrative questions, manufacturing and construction*, and *pedagogy*.

Education — everything to do with study and expanding one's horizons. It includes various dictionary queries and *school questions*.

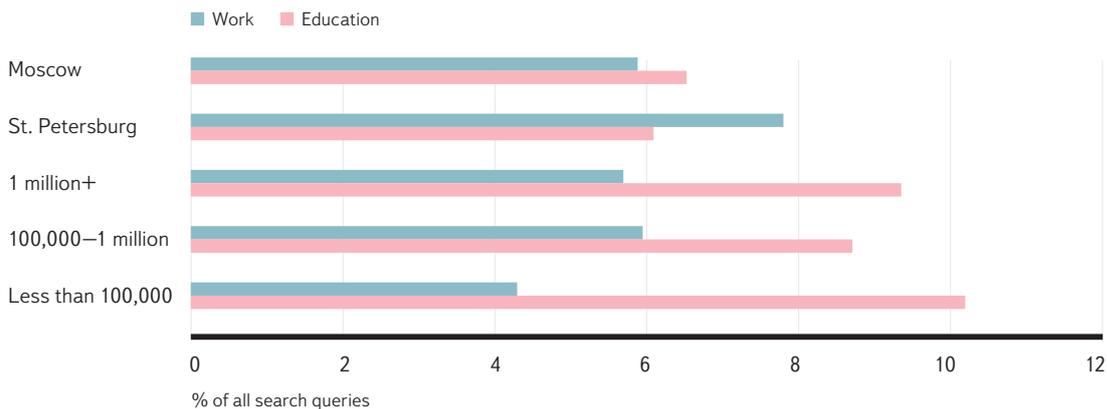
SPHERES OF LIFE IN SEARCH QUERIES

Personal affairs vs rest & recreation



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

Work vs education



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, SEPTEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

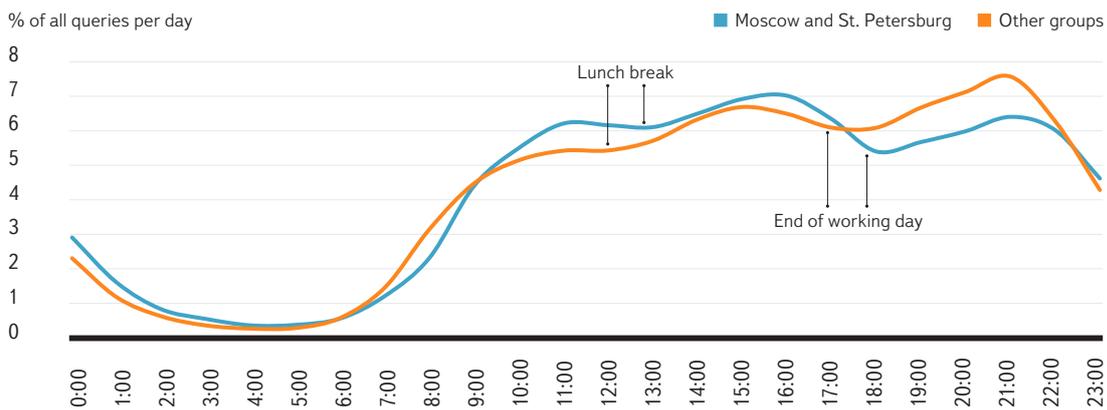
Muscovites and Petersburgers use search most for personal tasks: they submit more search queries about products and services, look for organisations' contact details, inquire about domestic matters. Outside Moscow and St. Petersburg, search is mostly used for leisure — first and foremost, to find entertainment content.

Big-city users most frequently ask about different places — organisations, addresses, geographical objects, etc. For example, in St. Petersburg, the share of such search queries is more than 20%, compared to just 13% in cities of less than 100,000 people. Small-town residents know where things are located.

Muscovites and Petersburgers are also the most frequent users of search in their work. This is clearly visible on the graphs of search activity over a timeframe of 24 hours and in the course of a week: users in Moscow and St. Petersburg submit a larger proportion of search queries on weekdays and in the daytime.

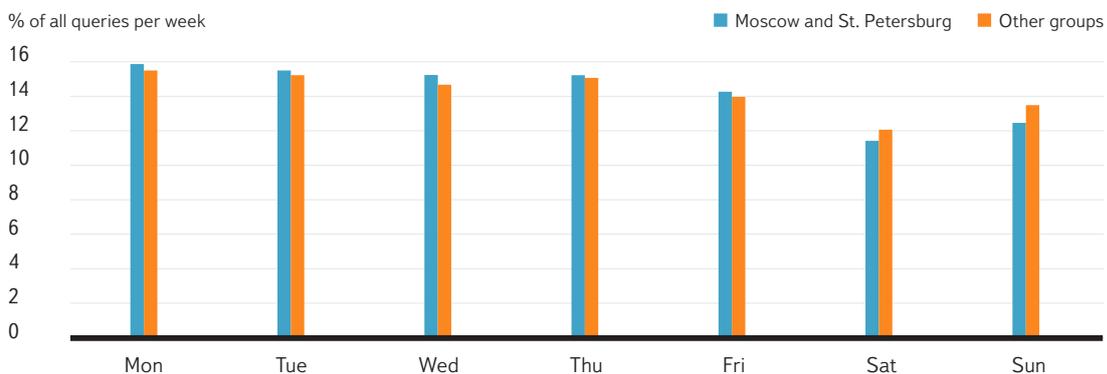
SEARCH ACTIVITY BY TIME AND BY DAY

Search queries over 24 hours



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, APRIL 2014

Search queries by days of the week

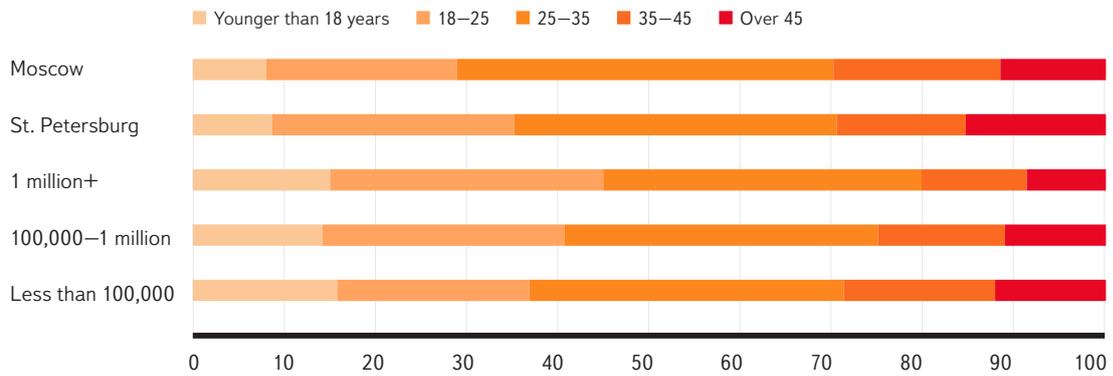


SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, APRIL 2014

Judging by the search dynamic on weekdays, in Moscow and St. Petersburg the working day finishes later than in other groups.

The volume of search queries about education is on average a third lower in Moscow and St. Petersburg than in other groups. This difference is directly connected to the age composition of the groups: Moscow and St. Petersburg have noticeably fewer users of school age.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF USERS FROM DIFFERENT CITIES



SOURCE: YANDEX SEARCH DATA, APRIL 2014

MAIN FACTS AND FIGURES

Twenty-five percent of Russia's population and 30% of its internet audience lives in small cities and towns, accounting for just 6%–7% of search queries submitted to Yandex. This is likely to be because local populations use the internet to visit favourite sites, and not for searching online.

The 10 most popular search queries represent about 4% of search traffic from Moscow and St. Petersburg and 5%–6% from other groups, while the top 100 queries account for 8% and 9% respectively. In all groups of cities, names of social networks comprise at least half of the top 10.

Search is used for three main purposes. Firstly, as an online navigator — to visit sites. Secondly, as an encyclopedia or reference service — to get various information. Thirdly, as a universal television — to look for content. All three functions are in approximately equal demand.

Users from small cities and towns formulate their search queries with more detail and more words. Big-city users submit shorter queries: they're already used to how the search engine quickly figures out what they're looking for.

In all groups of cities, a large proportion of the most popular topics consists of products and services and entertainment content. Products and services are sought most in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and entertainment content in other groups.

In large cities, users more often inquire about various organisations: banks, shops, recreation spots, tourist attractions. Small-town users know where things are located.

Search interests of users from Moscow and St. Petersburg are more varied; people are accustomed to using the internet not only for entertainment but also for performing everyday tasks, as well as work-related ones. In other groups, the sphere of internet use is narrower, and local users' interests are concentrated mostly on leisure and education.

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