



# REPORT

## **WEB INTERNATIONALIZATION: RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES 2017-2018**

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This report is the result of a new stage in the research of the online English-language resources on the websites of Russian universities and is a follow-up to the initial report produced by the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) entitled «Web Internationalization: Russian Universities» in 2015. This issue provides a new ranking as of 2017–2018. The authors developed a methodology for assessing the English-language websites of universities and analyzed online resources of 65 universities. The results of the study are presented in the form of a ranking of the English-language websites of Russian universities. An analysis of common problems and a list of recommendations have also been provided.

The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of RIAC.

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## Executive Summary

One of the central challenges for Russian universities today is strengthening their competitive positions in the global educational services market. The development of the Internet and social media and the growing popularity of the English language make it important for universities to improve their English-language web resources, one of today's main tools for international marketing of higher education. The efficiency of the use of electronic resources is becoming an important factor in the export of educational services and increasing the attractiveness of Russian higher education abroad.

*The main task of a university's English-language website* is to develop substantive communication with target groups abroad. Such groups include applicants, students, alumni, researchers, scientists, partners, potential and working scientific and pedagogical staff, institutional partners, international rating agencies, and the media.

*The main objective of the report*, as in previous stages of the study, is to help Russian universities increase their attractiveness abroad and their effectiveness as exporters of education. Recommendations prepared on the basis of the results of the study can be used by Russian universities to develop the content of their English-language resources and increase international traffic to their websites.

To assess the content of English-language online resources of 65 Russian universities, RIAC developed a methodology based on the allocation and analysis of individual semantic blocks of university websites. These blocks include information on university enrollment, curricula, science and research, libraries, employment opportunities, etc. These semantic blocks, on the one hand, reflect various aspects of the functioning of the university. On the other hand, they reflect the needs of target groups using university websites and accounts in social networks to obtain the necessary information.

The obtained data are summarized in the form of the University Web Internationalization Index underlying the ranking of the universities.

The rating reflects the leading positions of National Research University Higher School of Economics. In general, universities show a more dynamic development compared to previous years. A number of universities increased their performance by more than 20 points. Among them are the Novosibirsk State University, National Research Nuclear University (MEPhI), Baltic Federal University (IKBFU), and Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N.Tupolev.

The basic semantic blocks on the websites of the "catch up" universities have been developed the most in recent years, while the development of such blocks as "Departments and Institutes," "Educational Programs," and "Social Life" show a negative trend, which may negatively affect the tendency of attracting foreign students to study in this group of universities.

As in 2017, regional higher education institutions achieved more significant results than did Moscow universities.

It is noteworthy that the potential of a number of large and well-known universities is poorly reflected on their English-language websites. A relatively low position in the rating of such famous universities as, for example, Bauman Moscow State Technical University (BMSTU), which made minor changes to its website, is evident. While Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), St. Petersburg State University, Moscow State Linguistic University, having shown a drop in scores in previous years, increased their rates, this did not strengthen their positions in the university ranking.

The report also analyzed two groups of universities: universities participating in the project on maximizing the competitive position of a group of leading Russian universities in the global research and education market, the “Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100”, and universities participating in the “Export of Education” project.

Only 23.8% of the universities’ English-language websites, according to the Russian Academic Excellence Project 5-100, meet the aims of the project, including promotion of research services and the attraction of foreign students and young scientific and pedagogical staff. The overwhelming majority of the universities analyzed provide only basic information about the university on their English-language websites. These websites provide insufficient information about departments/faculties and educational programs for foreign applicants and students; about scientific and educational divisions, information on employment, current employees of the university and their research work for scientific and pedagogical personnel; and about current partners, joint projects, and available exchange programs for students and teachers.

More than half of the universities participating in the “Export of Education” project do not have English-language websites, or have practically no information for target groups on their existing English-language websites. Often, this is general information about the university and contact details.

An analysis of Russian universities’ social media accounts shows that although 64% of Russian universities do have English-language accounts on social media, in most cases there are no links to them on the universities’ English-language. In addition, only 7.7% of Russian universities publish daily information on their accounts, and the level of user feedback remains extremely low: only 18.5% of the university accounts receive feedback from foreign audiences.

RIAC continues to perform analysis of the English-language websites of Russian universities and offers a training program developed by RIAC for the modernization of universities’ English-language websites in order to develop the content of their English-language resources. The program includes: 1. Assessment of the current state of the website, given the tasks set by universities, and its strengths and weaknesses, providing recommendations for its development; 2. Training of university staff through best international practices and creation of a plan for the development of the university’s website based on the tasks of the university.

# Introduction

One of the central challenges for Russian universities today is strengthening their competitive positions on the global educational services market. The goal is the basis for major projects supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, such as “The project on maximizing the competitive position of a group of leading Russian universities in the global research and education market” (hereinafter referred to as “Project 5-100”), launched in 2013, and the priority project “Development of the export potential of the Russian education system” (hereinafter – “Export of Education”).

Improving the positions of leading Russian universities in world rankings, increasing the attractiveness of Russian educational programs for foreign citizens, improving the conditions for their stay while studying in Russia, and increasing the recognition and status of the Russian educational brand in the international education market is impossible without internationalization of universities.

In recent years, a lot of work has been done in this area both at the government level through the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and at the university level. Nevertheless, is still to be done to increase the export of Russian education. Russian universities are mainly focused on the domestic market and are more reliant on state funding than they are self-sufficient, including the export of educational services.

Lack of resources has been the main hurdle to the integration of Russian universities into the world educational and scientific community since the 90's. However, the emergence of large federal and research universities and their support from the state solved this issue. Several dozen universities have been formed whose resources allow them to seriously focus on internationalization and export of educational services. They are complemented by universities that have traditionally focused on and directed significant human potential, scientific potential, and material capacities toward external audiences or international affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Successful internationalization of Russian universities, their promotion in Western university rankings (such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), THE – Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), and QS World University Rankings University Rankings (QS)), and fruitful competition for educational services export markets are closely connected to effective international marketing, which requires consideration of two important factors.

Firstly, the Internet and social media play a decisive role in international communication. All target audiences of the university, including applicants, parents, students, graduate students, and young scientists, find information via the Internet and social media. Russian universities can be proud of their achievements, scientific base, educational programs, and so on, but if this information is not reflected on the Internet, it will be difficult for the target audience to find it.

<sup>1</sup> For example, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (MGIMO MFA of Russia), Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN)

Secondly, English has become a means of global communication as the language of international business and scientific exchange. Today English-language digital resources play a key role in attracting foreign target audiences. Even Russian-taught educational programs require English-language marketing to be competitive and successful.

In connection with these two factors, proper English-language online resources are becoming one of the main conditions for a successful university model international engagement and educational services export.<sup>2</sup> Other factors, such as qualified staff, a clearly structured university management system, an impressive list of educational programs (including international ones), cutting-edge teaching methods, a wide range of student activities, and a high-quality research environment are extremely important, but only effective work in the global Internet space can guarantee long-term success.

When analyzing the development of the English-language versions of university websites, we assess the meaning and timeliness of the websites' content, not its design and technical characteristics. International online marketing of a university is primarily content marketing. In this report, we will focus not on the technical features, but on the content of the universities' English-language websites and social media accounts, keeping in mind the main target groups.

This report is the result of a new stage of research on Russian universities' online English-language resources and is a follow-up to the reports produced by the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) entitled "Web Internationalization: Russian Universities" (2015) and "Web Internationalization: Russian Universities" (2016-2017).

Taking into account the ambitions of a number of Russian universities to be ranked in the top 100 universities worldwide, as well as a large-scale state program aimed at supporting the export of Russian education, we performed separate analyses of the English-language websites of universities participating in the "5-100" and "Export of Education" projects to identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations for the development of their English-language online resources.

The main objective of the report, as in the previous stages of the study, is to assist Russian universities in increasing their attractiveness abroad and their efficiency as exporters of education. The recommendations provided on the basis of the research can be used by Russian universities to develop the content of their English-language resources and increase international traffic on their websites.

<sup>2</sup> Felix Maringe, Paul Gibbs. Marketing Higher Education: Theory and Practice. Buckingham: Open University Press, December 2008

# Methodology

The methodology<sup>3</sup> developed by RIAC to audit the content of English-language online resources of Russian universities was based on the allocation and analysis of individual semantic blocks of university web portals. On the one hand, these semantic blocks reflect different aspects of the functioning of the university. On the other hand, they reflect the needs of target audiences using the university website and social media accounts as well as the websites and social media accounts of faculties, departments, etc.

An earlier study showed that the amount of content and the complexity of the university as a system makes it counterproductive to search for an “ideal” website and subsequent adjustment to it. It would be more efficient to search for the best practices through analysis of individual components of the website designed to address specific problems and meet the specific needs of each target audience.

The following target groups of English-language websites and social media accounts were identified during the preparation of the first report “Web Internationalization: Russian Universities”:

*Target Group 1.* Foreign applicants who want to study for Bachelor’s, Master’s, and doctoral degrees, attend summer or winter school, or take part in preparatory courses and other education programs.

*Target Group 2.* The parents of applicants or those who will finance their study and want detailed information about the educational services offered.

*Target Group 3.* Foreign students who already study at the university.

*Target Group 4.* Foreign students who have already completed an educational program at the university.

*Target Group 5.* Potential employers, representatives of foreign and Russian companies, and head-hunting agencies that recruit university graduates.

*Target Group 6.* Potential or current university staff members and instructors. Foreign candidates for teaching, research, or administrative positions.

*Target Group 7.* Foreign researchers and instructors from other universities. Scientists who would like to know more about the university’s scientific achievements and establish professional ties with its members.

*Target Group 8.* Foreign institutional partners: universities, research organizations, associations, funds conducting or seeking to conduct partnership programs with the university and act as its sponsors.

*Target Group 9.* International rating agencies and experts gathering information about the university.

<sup>3</sup> In this paper we give only a brief summary of the research methodology. The full version is presented in the basic report. See I.N. Timofeev, T.A. Makhmutov, A.L. Teslya, E.S. Chimiris, A.Yu. Kuznetsova. Web Internationalization: Russian Universities. Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). Moscow: Spetskniga, 2015. URL: <http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/RIAC-University-Report24.pdf>

*Target Group 10.* Foreign journalists representing foreign media outlets preparing materials about the university or about news created by the university.

In the course of the study, main content blocks of the universities' English-language website needed by these target groups were identified as follows:

**Block 1. About the University.** Comprehensive and succinct information on this university's features and advantages as compared to other universities and why this university should be chosen over others.

**Block 2. History of the University.** This block contains information on the foundation of the university, its development, its past achievements, and outstanding historical figures associated with the university. Such information is often included in Block 1, but our pilot study singles out the importance of text about history. Both Western and Eastern cultures attach a great amount of significance to the history of a university. For Western users, this is a question of the "portfolio" – the university's achievements, triumphs, etc. For Eastern universities, it is a question of tradition, the continuity of generations, native roots, etc. Information on university history is something like its "credit history," one of the grounds on which it can be trusted.

**Block 3. University Admission.** This block contains information on the admission test requirements for certain programs, a list (or online versions) of the required documents (including those concerning immigration and visa issues), information on logistics and accommodation at the time of enrollment.

**Block 4. Educational Programs.** This section describes the profiles of educational programs, the range of courses offered, curricula and competencies acquired. As a rule, this block is closely linked with, but is not confined to, Block 3 because it can be used by applicants as well as by other target groups.

**Block 5. Departments and Institutes.** Information on the main teaching and research divisions: faculties, institutes, and departments. Descriptions of their staffing and study programs. The block is also closely linked to educational programs but, again, is not limited to them.

**Block 6. Library.** A catalogue that can be navigated in English where one can order books and access full-text articles, including resources of partners of the university library.

**Block 7. Science and Research.** This block includes information about divisions (laboratories, centers, etc.), or the scientific activities of departments and institutes, the results of their research, current projects and programs, and science publications.

**Block 8. Mission and Strategic Goals.** The definition and explanation of the mission, goals, and tasks of the university.

**Block 9. Management and Staff.** The human resource potential of the university. Provides information on the rector and vice rectors and the areas under their direct supervision; introduces the heads of the teaching, research and administrative divisions and their staff; provides biographical information and research

profiles; contains information on vacancies and formal aspects of employment for foreigners; and gives an idea of the university's human resource policy.

**Block 10. University News.** Contains press releases and news about the university and its divisions.

**Block 11. Alumni.** Contains information on graduates and the graduate community, a gallery of outstanding alumni, and a list of endowments.

**Block 12. Careers.** Presents employment opportunities for university graduates, possible vacancies, recommendations on optimal advancement in the labor market.

**Block 13. University Social Life.** Information on extracurricular activities: sports, culture, social events, clubs, associations, movements, and communities.

**Block 14. Key Figures.** Key figures of university development in the form of tables, charts, and explanations. It can be integrated with the block titled "About the University," but is not the same.

**Block 15. Information for Foreign Partners.** Information on the university's partnership projects with foreign organizations, both higher education institutions and state and business structures, as well as possible programs and options for potential partners.

**Block 16. Contact Details.** Contact information of the university, its divisions, and key areas of the university's activity.

The result of overlapping target groups of English-language university portals and the semantic blocks of English-language websites is the determination of which blocks might present the greatest interest for specific target groups (see Appendix. Table 1. Conjugation of Semantic Blocks with Target Audiences). Our pilot studies gave the following results:

**Applicants.** The University Admission block presents the mechanism for submitting documents for admission to educational programs. The Educational Programs block helps applicants choose the right program. Just as relevant is the Divisions and Departments block: the applicant chooses the specific faculty or area of study in addition to the university. The History of the University is also essential. The Careers section can influence the applicant's choice with an eye to future work. The Alumni section, especially the "Outstanding Alumni" gallery, may also influence an applicant's decision. The Social Life section plays a similar role. As a rule, the Contacts block is tied in with the Admission and Educational Programs sections. What matters here is the availability of contacts and their real working state, i.e., a telephone that someone answers, mail that works, and a functional system for giving feedback.

**Parents.** The university staff believes that parents are interested in the same range of information as applicants. However, there are some differences. For example, this target group looks for information about the cost of tuition, the cost of living in the city where the university is located, and the possibilities of obtaining a student loan (something that is practically non-existent in Russia).

Their children's Careers prospects may be even more of a motivation to them than to the applicants themselves, and the names of famous alumni may make a bigger impression than any advertising slogans. Parents need information on the university's social life: what kind of people will their children be? And what will they do after classes? On the whole, parents may turn out to be more thoughtful consumers of information than the applicants themselves.

**Students.** This group is interested in the services connected with current studies and university life. They frequently visit the interactive Library section, which enables them to order books and access documents, articles, and other materials. This group needs information on educational programs and faculties (timetables, syllabi, contact information, and teacher profiles). The Social Life section helps students to become part of the university's informal life. The Careers section is used as an instrument to search for vacancies, internships, and career guidance. The Science section may be in demand among young postgraduate researchers who are working towards a Master's, or even Bachelor's, degree. This is particularly relevant for research universities, where the results of scientific work are directly linked to the study process. Students may also be interested in current news, especially if it is on the news streams of departments or other educational divisions.

**Alumni.** Graduates are most interested in the Alumni section. Ideally, this section should provide information and offer opportunities for feedback. This block may be connected, for example, to groups of alumni on popular social media. In some universities, alumni have access to the library and the university's social infrastructure. For foreign students, the former is potentially more important, as it gives them access to constantly updated information regardless of their location (if the library can provide remote access to its resources). Alumni may also need information on instructors with whom they often want to stay in touch after graduation. The Alumni section may have a news ticker. Recent graduates can use the Careers section or try to find work at the university.

**Employers.** This group is interested in recruiting graduates. The Careers section is the most interesting section for them, assuming it allows job vacancies and internships to be posted or provides access to the CVs of students and graduates. Ideally, the Careers section is a permanent venue for promoting graduates in the labor market. Employers can also use the alumni catalogue in the Alumni section. They may also be interested in information about the university and its performance indicators (Key Figures).

**Potential and current university staff.** Potential university employees may look towards the Employment section, which provides them with information on possible vacancies and forms of work. Both potential and current members of staff use information on the university's departments, study programs, research centers, and human resources. Ideally, university staff must edit their profiles on the university website or on social media themselves (subject to quality control). Along with students, university staff and instructors use the library and social infrastructure and are consumers of university news. And, of course, potential employees need information on the university, its history, profile, contacts, and personnel policy.

**Researchers and lecturers from foreign universities.** The key section for this group is Science, which describes research projects at the university. It also contains information on individual research and educational departments, which helps establish professional contacts, and detailed data on lecturers and researchers and their work. Researchers often combine scientific work with teaching. They are also interested in the university's library, repository (collection of publications), and its scientific publications. They may wish to use the university's research publications for their teaching programs.

**Institutional partners.** The main block for this group is Partners, which often has information on partnership projects that are already under way. This target group may also be looking for information on possible formats and varieties of partnership: open research projects, student exchange programs, scientific information, etc. Institutional partners are interested in information about the university and its departments, because partnerships are usually established in connection with concrete research or educational projects. Information on the university's chief administrators and members of the staff, who can provide entry points for communication with the university, is also important to them.

**International rating agencies.** This target group gathers different types of information. Quantitative information can be summed up in the Key Figures section. It is important to supply detailed information about the indicators. It is still difficult for us to assess the direct connection between a particular indicator and a university's position in various ratings. However, it is safe to assume that sheer amount of detail attests to an established tradition of international activities. Leading universities provide more detailed information on their work in every functional area (science, education, human resources, etc.).

**Journalists.** University press services usually contribute massively to the preparation of news and press releases in English and consider journalists to be their target audience in this respect. In their articles, journalists often provide information on the university and the key indicators of its work. Their news is often personalized, which means that they require information about the top management, key staff and famous alumni. Foreign journalists also need more detailed information, because they know less about the university compared to their Russian colleagues. The working contacts of the press service are also important for this target group.

So, to audit the content of the English-language online resources of Russian universities, as mentioned above, the system of 16 semantic blocks developed by RIAC was used, each of them is segmented into certain content parameters/questions (three to twelve) reflecting the presence of: information in this block, an option for the target audience (for example, to share materials or leave feedback), or presentation of information (photo, video, etc.). A questionnaire for each university surveyed contains 108 variables with "Yes" or "No" answers. Each "Yes" answer was awarded a value of 1 and each "No" answer was awarded a value of 0. All of the questions have the same weight. Thus, the maximum possible score is 108, and the minimum score is 0. Scores can be calculated for each of the 16 blocks.

The “Web Internationalization: Russian Universities” ranking in 2018 represents 65 universities, 18 of which are new universities that have not previously participated in the study. The ranking includes federal universities, science and research universities, and universities participating in the “5-100” and “Export of Education” projects, supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

As in previous studies (2015-2017), the universities analyzed were divided into three groups. First Group contains the “Leaders,” those universities whose English-language websites score at least 67%. In other words, these are the universities who scored more than 72 points out of 108 possible. Second Group contains the “Average Performers,” universities whose websites score between 34% and 66% (37-72 points). Universities that are included in the Third Group, the “Underperformers,” have websites that score up to 33% (0-36 points).

This report separately analyzes two groups of universities: universities participating in the “5-100 Project” and universities participating in the “Export of Education” project. Each of the two project groups will receive specific recommendations based on this detailed separate analysis.

In addition, the 2018 report not only analyzed the English-language websites of Russian universities, but also assessed the universities’ English-language social media accounts, an important communication tool in promoting educational products and services in the foreign market. The results of this social media account analysis are compared with the results of 10 foreign universities from the QS Top 100 World Universities ranking for whom English is also not the main language of instruction (universities of France, Switzerland, Amsterdam, Germany, China, South Korea, Japan, Sweden, Argentina).<sup>4</sup> They are assessed by the same conditions as Russian universities.

<sup>4</sup> École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne), Tsinghua University, University of Tokyo, University of Amsterdam, The University of Hong Kong, Lund University, Seoul National University, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, École normale supérieure in Paris, University of Buenos Aires.

## English-Language Websites of Universities in Russia: Development Trends

The 2018 “Web Internationalization: Russian Universities” ranking includes 18 new universities:

- Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet
- Gerasimov State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK)
- Trubilin Kuban State Agrarian University
- Chaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory
- Surikov Moscow State Academic Institute of Arts
- Moscow Polytechnic University
- Novosibirsk State Technical University
- Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
- Gnessin Russian Academy of Music
- Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA)
- Russian State Agrarian University – Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy
- Russian Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS)
- Moscow State University of Railway Engineering
- Saratov State Vavilov Agrarian University
- Siberian State Medical University
- Tambov State University named after G. R. Derzhavin
- Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation
- Tyumen State University

Thus, a total of 65 universities were analyzed. The full ranking of universities is represented in Table 2. Rating of the English-Language Content of Russian University Websites in 2017–2018. (see Appendix)

The first stage of analysis was the ranking of university websites by the total points they scored. We call this parameter the University Web Internationalization Index. According to the data, the majority of universities continue to actively develop their websites. Out of 47 universities whose English-language websites have been subject to analysis since 2017, 27 universities (57.6%) have improved their performance indicators. The maximum score in 2018 was 103 points (out of 108 possible), while in 2017 the maximum score was 92, and in 2015 – 88 points. A number of universities improved their performance by more than 20 points.

Novosibirsk State University, National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (IKBFU), and Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N. Tupolev are among them.

At the same time, the analysis showed that 16 universities (34%) saw their scores decrease. However, it is important to consider that the drop is temporary, in most cases, and is caused by the transition of the website to a new design or layout, or by late update of the information on the English version of the website (for example, information on enrollment, annual reports, statistical information, etc.).

In general, the analysis of the data allows us to conclude that the development potential for the websites of the majority of Russian universities remains unfulfilled. Only 9.23% of Russian university websites are 67% complete, 50.77% of university websites are 34-66% complete, and 40% are less than 33% complete. These data indicate that English-language websites, one of the main tools of international marketing of Russian universities, are not used to their fullest extent.

If you take a general look at the completeness of the website sections (see Appendix 3. *Table 3. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities from the Ranking*), you will see that the most complete sections are “Contacts” (68.92%), “Information about the University” (66.15%), “News” (58.97%), and “Admission” (57.23%). The following sections remain incomplete: “Figures” (29.54%), “Educational Programs” (28.08%), “Library” (23.96%), “Alumni” (14.95%), and “Careers” (3.5%). These data show that the sections of the English-language websites that do not require serious work with the structural units of the university and the management of educational programs are better developed. At the same time, poor development of such sections as “Educational Programs” and “Figures” suggests that Russian universities are not oriented toward the external market. They are even less focused on foreign alumni and employers, since both of these target groups are interested in such sections as “Alumni” and “Careers,” and on international rating agencies that use the data from the “Figures” section in their analysis.

As mentioned above, the universities analyzed were divided into three groups. There are 6 universities in the first group, 33 universities in the second group, and 26 in the third group (see Appendix. *Table 2. Rating of the English-Language Content of Russian University Websites in 2017–2018*).

### **First Group – the “Leaders”**

The Top 6 universities scored from 75 to 103 points. The average degree of completeness of all sections is 77.2%. The National Research University Higher School of Economics remains the overall leader (103 points). It is noteworthy that HSE continues to develop its digital resource, given its leading position in the ranking; over the past year, the university improved its score by 11 points. Saint Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics, and Optics (ITMO) holds second place in the ranking and has increased its score to 87 points (from 85 points in 2017). Third place is shared by the higher

education institutions and RIAC corporate members National Research Tomsk State University (TSU) and Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin (UrFU), both scoring 76 points. Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech) and National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU) close out the group of leaders in fourth place with 75 points.

Special attention should be paid to the position of Tomsk higher educational institutions. National Research Tomsk State University (TSU) retained third place, while National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU), having improved its score by 12 points, has made a breakthrough from eighth to fourth place.

Universities in the first group have competitive websites whose content is more than 77% complete. The sections “Mission” (100% complete), “Contacts” (100%), “Science and Research” (97.5%), “Library” (94.3%), “News” (93 %), “Management and Staff” (88%), and “Admission” (86%) should be given special attention (see Appendix 3. *Table 3. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities from the Ranking*). These sections are filled by more than 80 percent.

The “Library” and “Science” sections deserve particular attention, as well, having received significant development over the past year. Such changes likely indicate a desire on the part of universities to attract new foreign target audiences – not only foreign applicants, but also foreign researchers and professors.

Meanwhile, such sections as “History,” “Departments and Faculties” “Alumni,” “Careers,” “Figures,” and “Partners” remain an average of 56% complete.

It is noteworthy that the universities included in the first group improved their indicators in all semantic blocks, especially in the “Mission,” “Contacts”, “Science and Research”, “News”, and “Library” sections (see Appendix. *Diagram 1. Completeness of Website Sections of Leading Russian Universities in the First Group in 2016 and 2017*). This suggests that the top-ranking universities actively work both with relatively simple sections, and with those that require significant time and labor.

## **Second Group – The “Average Performers”**

The second group includes universities that scored between 37 and 72 points. In 2016-2017, this group was characterized by a small gap between universities and a rather narrow points range. The development of this group’s English-language websites was not very noticeable, and the universities improved their positions mainly by completing the basic sections, such as “Educational Programs,” “Admission,” and “About the University.”

By 2018, this situation has changed dramatically. A number of universities have significantly improved their web presence and transformed their English-language web content. The biggest movers were Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N.Tupolev, which gained 27 points to rise from 32nd to 21st place; National Research Nuclear University MEPhI with an increase of 25 points, jumping to 6th place from 20th place; Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal Uni-

versity (IKBFU), scoring 22 points more to move from 27th place in 2017 to 13th place in 2018; and Novosibirsk National Research State University (NSU), which increased its score by 20 points, improving its rank from 17th place in 2017 to 6th place in 2018.

However, not all changes benefited the universities. There are some universities that, having switched to a new layout, have not yet had time to update the information on their websites, thereby losing a significant number of points. These include Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (State University) (MIPT), Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod – National Research University (UNN), and Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU), among others.

In the second group, 18 universities (58% of the total, excluding 2 new universities) improved their positions, 2 universities (6.5%) had no changes, and 11 universities (35%) saw a decrease in their points. It is worth noting that some of the universities that fell into the second group used to be in the third group in 2016-2017.

The websites of the universities in the second group are average 45% complete on average.

As for the content of particular sections, only some sections are more than 70% complete: “About the University” (74.53%), “News” (74.2%), and “Contacts” (74.71%) (see Appendix. *Table 3. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities from the Ranking*). These sections are easier to fill out, less labor-intensive, and do not require constant cooperation with various subdivisions of the university.

The least complete sections (less than 35 percent) are “Departments and Faculties” (34%), “Educational Programs” (33.82%), “Library” (23.95%), “Alumni” (18.91%), and “Careers” (6.72%). Universities from the second group may lose a significant number of potential foreign applicants due to underdevelopment of the “Educational Programs,” “Departments and Faculties,” and “Careers” blocks, all of which are of great interest to foreign applicants. Information about educational programs helps potential students choose the right area of studies, and information about the faculties and departments is no less relevant for applicants. The “Alumni” section facilitates the decision-making process in favor of a particular university. The “Careers” section can significantly affect the choice of the applicant who is thinking about post-graduation career prospects.

Within the second group, such basic sections as “Management and Staff” (41.47% complete), “Partners” (50.49%), “History” (44.12%), “Key Figures” (38.82%), and “Library” (23.95%) have been the most developed sections in recent years. Some sections – “Departments and Faculties” (34%), “Educational Programs” (33.82%), and “Social Life” (63.53%) – are still underdeveloped, which may negatively impact the prospects of attracting foreign students to study in this group of universities (see Appendix. *Diagram 2. Completeness of Website Sections of Leading Russian Universities in the Second Group in 2016 and 2017*).

### Third Group – The “Underperformers”

The third group includes 26 universities. Of these, 16 universities are new universities that were not previously included in RIAC survey. These are mostly universities selected within the framework of the “Export of Education” project by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The remaining 10 universities made little or no changes to their online English-language content (with the exception of Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), whose Web Internationalization Index improved by 6 points, and Moscow State Linguistic University, whose Index increased by 13 points).

Kazan National Research Technical University (KNITU) and Ogarev Mordovia National Research State University (MSU) improved their scores by 1 point, rating 26th and 27th respectively. Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU) and Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), who improved their scores by 13 and 6 points compared to 2017, did not change their position in the rating and were unable to move to the second group. They ranked 31st and 30th.

Websites of the universities in this group are an average of 19.41% complete. Most of the information is presented in the blocks “About the University” (47% complete) and “Contacts” (52% complete). The blocks “Library,” “Graduates,” “Careers,” and “Key Figures” are completed to less than 10% (see Appendix. *Table 3. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities from the Ranking*).

Websites of such Russian universities as Gerasimov State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK), Surikov Moscow State Academic Institute of Arts, Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, and Tambov State University named after G.R. Derzhavin have no English-language version.

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Several conclusions can be made through this analysis regarding the English-language versions of Russian university websites:

- In 2018, the development of English-language versions of Russian university websites is more dynamic. Of the universities ranked, 57.6% improved their performance, increasing the maximum score as compared to the previous year. A number of universities improved their scores by more than 20 points, including Novosibirsk State University, National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, and Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N. Tupolev;
- In 2018, the universities in the first group, despite their high positions in the ranking, continue to develop and improve all blocks of their websites, especially the “Mission”, “Contacts”, “ Science and Research”, “News”, and “Library” blocks;
- While the absolute leader of the rating is NRU Higher School of Economics (NRU HSE), other universities in the first group still work hard on the development of their websites;

- The second group of universities is demonstrating rapid growth in 2018. Of the universities in the second group, 58% improved their positions in the ranking and 12% improved their websites by more than 20 points;
- In the second group of universities, the basic blocks have received the greatest development in recent years, while such blocks as “Departments and Faculties”, “Educational Programs”, “Social Life” are still underdeveloped. This may negatively impact the prospects of attracting foreign students to study at this group of universities;
- There are new universities in the third group, many of which do not have English-language versions of their websites despite being selected as part of the “Export of Education” project supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- The third group of universities is characterized by the development of just two basic blocks (“About the University” and “Contacts”) and a very low degree of completeness of such blocks as “Library”, “Alumni”, “Careers”, “Key Figures”;
- As in 2017, regional higher education institutions achieved better results than did Moscow universities;
- The English-language websites of a number of large and high-profile universities do not adequately reflect their potential. The relatively low position in the ranking of such famous universities as Bauman Moscow State Technical University and Moscow State Institute of International Relations (run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation) reflects minor changes made to their websites. Lomonosov Moscow State University, St. Petersburg State University, and Moscow State Linguistic University, who showed a drop in scores in previous years, increased their scores, but were not able to improve their positions in the university ranking.

# Web Internationalization of the Universities Participating in “The Project on Maximizing the Competitive Position of a Group of Leading Russian Universities in the Global Research and Education Market”

As part of the study, RIAC analyzed the English-language websites of those universities participating in the “Russian Academic Excellence Project,” launched by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia in accordance with Vladimir Putin’s Decree No. 599 on May 7, 2012. The goal of the project is to “maximize the competitive position of a group of leading Russian universities in the global research and education market.”<sup>5</sup>

These universities were divided in order to determine the development trends for each of the three groups.

Five universities (23.8%) take leading positions: National Research University Higher School of Economics (NRU HSE), Saint Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics, and Optics (ITMO), Tomsk State University (TSU), Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin (Urfu), and National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU).

The average completeness of the website blocks is quite high at 77.22%. The blocks “About the University” and “Mission” are 100% complete. The sections promoting research services are well developed (“Library” and “Science” are 85.71% and 95% complete, respectively), as are the blocks attracting foreign post-graduate students and young scientific and pedagogical staff, including “Admission” (88%), “Social Life” (92%), and “Management and Staff” (86%).

The underdeveloped blocks include “Careers” (51.43%), “Departments and Faculties” (51.43%), and “Alumni” (45.71%) (see Appendix. *Table 4. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the “5-100” Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation*).

The rest of the universities on the list (with the exception of Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, which has earned only 10 points out of 108 possible for the past several years) joined the second group. Their English-language websites are an average of 53% complete. Some basic blocks are about 80% complete: “About the University”, “Contacts”, “Mission”, and “News”. However, universities pay insufficient attention to the main target audiences: foreign students (“Educational Programs”, “Departments and Faculties”, “Library”, “Alumni”, and “Careers” are less than 30% complete on average), potential foreign employees (“Departments and

<sup>5</sup> Russian Academic Excellence Project “5-100”. URL: <https://5top100.ru/universities>

Faculties” – 40% complete, “Management and Staff” – 55.33%, “Science and Research” – 60.83%, “Library” – 28.57%), and foreign partners (“Foreign Partners” only 51.1% complete).

The lack of information in these blocks of the English-language websites suggests that most universities in the “5-100” project are not promoting their research projects and latest scientific achievements in the world scientific and educational market. Educational programs for students and employment opportunities for foreign scientific and academic staff are poorly represented.

## **Conclusions:**

- Judging by the state of English-language websites, only 23.8% of universities participating in the “5-100” project manage to attract foreign students and young scientific and pedagogical staff, including through the promotion of research services;
- Of the universities participating in the “5-100” project, 71.42% provide only basic information about the university on their English-language website;
- The blocks of interest to the main target audiences are not sufficiently developed. Much information is poorly presented on these websites, including information about departments, faculties, and educational programs for foreign applicants and students; scientific and educational divisions, information on employment, and university staff and their research work for scientific and pedagogical personnel; and information on current partners and joint projects with them, university staff and their research, and available exchange programs for students and teaching staff for potential foreign partners;
- Of the universities participating in the “5-100” project, 71.42% present only 60% of their scientific research units, scientific research result, scientific publications, and scientific potential in general on their English-language websites.

# Web Internationalization of the Universities Participating in “Development of the Export Potential of the Russian Education System” Priority Project of the Government of Russian Federation

The Protocol of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Council under the President of the Russian Federation on Strategic Development and Priority Projects as of May 30, 2017, No. 6 approved the priority project “Development of the Export Potential of the Russian Education System.”<sup>6</sup> That the priority project on the export of Russian education is included in the portfolio of the Government of the Russian Federation demonstrates the importance of increasing the competitiveness of Russian education on the international educational services market. The project implementation period is May 2017 to November 2025.

The key objective of the project is to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of Russian education on the international educational services market and thus increase non-primary exports of the Russian Federation. The project’s implementation should increase the attractiveness of Russian educational programs for foreign citizens, improve the conditions for their stay during their education in Russia, and increase the recognition and status of the Russian education brand in the international education market, increasing revenues from the export of educational services by several times as a result.<sup>7</sup>

Increasing the international competitiveness of Russian education can only be possible with the development of English-language Russian university websites, as well as with competent content management based on the needs of various target audiences.

Often, Russian universities have a huge export potential: they have programs available in English, strong chairs, world-renowned professors, and well-equipped scientific centers. Unfortunately, this information is not always available to foreign audiences, since it is not available on the English version of the website.

As part of the study, RIAC conducted analyzed the English-language websites of 39 universities participating in the “Export of Education” project.

These universities were divided into three groups. According to the results of the analysis, only 4 universities from the “Export of Education” project (10.26% of the total number) had English-language websites that were more than 67% com-

<sup>6</sup> “Development of the Export Potential of the Russian Education System” Priority Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia. URL: <https://минобрнауки.рф/проекты/экспорт-российского-образования>

<sup>7</sup> Passport of the priority project “Development of the Export Potential of the Russian Education System” of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia URL: [https://минобрнауки.рф/проекты/1355/файл/9551/pasport\\_-\\_opublikovannyi.pdf](https://минобрнауки.рф/проекты/1355/файл/9551/pasport_-_opublikovannyi.pdf)

plete: NRU Higher School of Economics, National Research Tomsk State University, National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, and Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin. That these universities are in the first group is natural; all of them are also participants in “The project on improving the competitiveness of Russian universities among leading world educational and research centers,” implemented in 2012 by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

The content of all blocks is well developed: blocks “About the University”, “Mission”, “Student Life”, “Contacts”, and “News” are more than 90% complete, while blocks “Admission”, “Educational Programs”, “Library”, “Science”, and “Partners” are 60% to 90% complete. However, such blocks as “History”, “Careers”, “Departments and Faculties”, and “Alumni” are only 39% to 55% complete (see Appendix. *Table 5. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the “Export of Education” Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation*).

The second group includes 15 universities, which makes 38.46% of the total number:

- Belgorod National Research State University
- Far Eastern Federal University
- Kazan (Volga) Federal University
- Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University)
- Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
- Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (State University)
- National University of Science and Technology (MISIS)
- National Research Nuclear University MEPhI
- Russian State University for the Humanities
- Gubkin Russian State Oil and Gas University (National Research University)
- Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia
- Peter the Great St. Petersburg State Polytechnic University
- Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration
- South Ural National Research State University
- Southern Federal University

These universities’ websites are 48.83% complete on average. This is much lower than the average degree of completeness among the universities in the first group. The universities in the second group show rather high results in such sections as “About the University”, “Admission”, “Mission”, “News”, “Student Life”, and “Contacts”. These sections are an average of 74.7% complete. The sec-

tion “Educational Programs” is 38.3% complete, the section “Management and Staff” – 43.3% complete, and the sections “Library”, “Alumni” and “Careers” are far behind in degree of completeness.

The third group is the largest in number and consists of 20 universities (51.28% of the total number). Websites of these universities are less than 33% complete.

The following universities are in this group:

- Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet
- Gerasimov State Institute of Cinematography
- Kazan National Research Technological University
- Trubilin Kuban State Agrarian University
- Chaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory
- Surikov Moscow State Academic Institute of Arts
- Bauman Moscow State Technical University
- Lomonosov Moscow State University
- Moscow Polytechnic University
- Novosibirsk State Technical University
- Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
- Gnessin Russian Academy of Music
- Russian Institute of Theatre Arts
- Russian National Research Medical University named after N.I. Pirogov
- Moscow State University of Railway Engineering
- Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy
- Saratov State Vavilov Agrarian University
- Siberian State Medical University
- Tambov State University named after G. R. Derzhavin
- Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation

The average degree of completeness of website sections among these universities is 17.78%. The Web Internationalization Index of any given section is below 50%.

This means that more than half of the universities participating in the “Export of Education” project do not have English-language websites, or information on the existing English-language versions is so poorly represented that it is actually absent for target audiences.

Often, the represented information is general, about the university and contact details (these sections are 41% and 48% complete, respectively). But to attract foreign students, teachers, scientists, and partners, this data is not enough. The information in the “Admission” section is only 35% complete, “Educational programs” – 9.17% complete, “Science” – 16.25% complete. “Library” – 6.43% complete, “Alumni” – 2.14% complete, and “Careers”– 0.71% complete. (see Appendix. *Table 5. Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the “Export of Education” Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation*).

### **Conclusions:**

- Among the universities of the first group, the “Careers,” “Departments and Faculties” and “Alumni” blocks remain underdeveloped – less than 55% complete;
- Among the universities of the second group, the sections related to the promotion of educational programs in the international market remain incomplete, even though this promotion is the main objective of the “Export of Education” Project. These sections include “Educational Programs” (38.3% complete), “Management and Staff” (43.3%), “Library” (28.57%), “Alumni” (16.19%), and “Careers” (7.62%);
- Most of the universities participating in the “Export of Education” project have either incomplete or no English-language websites.

## English-Language Social Media Accounts of the Russian Universities

In 2018, a separate survey was conducted to analyze social media accounts. Social media has become an increasingly important tool not only to promote the educational services of the university, but to communicate with foreign students. The availability of web resources for foreign students is vital for Russian higher education institutions seeking to keep pace with modern realities.

In the study, 65 social media accounts of Russian universities on Facebook, Vkontakte, and Twitter were analyzed and assessed. The assessment was carried out according to such basic criteria as the availability of a university page in the network, translation of information into English, publication frequency, and feedback from foreign audiences. Feedback on Twitter was not assessed.

According to the results of the survey, only 42 universities (64% of total surveyed universities) do have accounts, fully or partially (2/3) translated into English, in at least one of the social networks under consideration. The greatest degree of internationalization is observed on Facebook: 39 out of 65 universities (60%) have English-language pages in this network. However, not all of them are regularly updated with new information. Public accounts of some universities haven't published any new posts in a year.

Only 7.7% of universities publish daily information in their accounts. The level of feedback remains extremely low: only 18.5% of accounts receive feedback (comments under posts) from foreign audiences.

The following universities fully comply with the given criteria of social networks: Saint Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics, Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin, Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech), and Perm State National Research University. Only 4 universities (6%) have English-language accounts on Vkontakte: Saint Petersburg State Electrotechnical University LETI named after V.I. Ulyanov (Lenin), Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), National University of Science and Technology, and Novosibirsk State Technical University. Only one of them publishes at least five posts a week. At the same time, since the Vkontakte audience consists mainly of residents of Russia and the CIS countries, posting information in English will not greatly influence the influx of foreign students to Russian universities. English-language accounts on Twitter are available for 13 universities out of 65 (20%), but only four of them (Saint Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics, and Optics, Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin, Kazan (Volga) Federal University, and Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet) publish posts at least five times a week.

Saint Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics, and Optics and Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin take the lead in social media presence.

There are a few aspects of social media accounts that could affect the attractiveness of Russian universities for foreign students. First of all, it is worth noting the different degrees of availability of English-language accounts. The easiest way to get to the page you are looking for on a particular social network is by clicking on the link from the official website of the university.

However, only 21 universities have working links to their English-language Facebook pages on their official websites. Often, the links posted on the English version of the website lead to a Russian-language page.

Sometimes the links do not work, and some universities have no links to social networks on their websites at all. In this situation, a potential foreign applicant might not be able to find the necessary English page of the university, which can negatively affect his/her intention to apply for that educational institution.

One of the objectives of the research was to compare the Russian experience of managing social media accounts with the experience of foreign universities. For this purpose, 10 foreign universities from the QS Top 100 World Universities ranking, for whom English is also not the main language of instruction,<sup>8</sup> were selected. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of internationalization of the accounts of these educational institutions – that is, the availability of information published for foreign users who speak English.

When comparing Russian and foreign indicators, the difference in sample sizes should be taken into account: a small number of foreign universities surveyed allows for identification of certain trends, but is not completely representative of the whole multitude of foreign universities. Not all universities have English-language pages in social networks, either in the Russian or in the foreign sample: only 64% among Russian and 80% among foreign universities, respectively (see Appendix. *Figure 4. Completeness of “Facebook” and “Twitter” Social Media Accounts by Russian and Foreign Universities.*). On Facebook, 60% of Russian and 70% of foreign universities manage English-language pages. The level of feedback in social networks among foreign universities is much higher than among Russian universities at 60% (compared to 17% for Russian universities). As for Twitter, English-language posts are published by 20% of Russian universities and by 80% of foreign universities.

## Conclusions:

- Of the Russian universities surveyed, 64% have English-language social media accounts;

<sup>8</sup> École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne), Tsinghua University, University of Tokyo, University of Amsterdam, The University of Hong Kong, Lund University, Seoul National University, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, École normale supérieure in Paris, University of Buenos Aires..

- Official English-language websites of the surveyed universities in most cases do not have links to social media accounts;
- The main platform for the promotion of Russian universities in English is Facebook, as the level of content and activity is much higher than on Twitter or Vkontakte. For comparison, foreign universities use Facebook and Twitter to almost the same extent;
- Only 7.7% of Russian universities publish daily information on their accounts, and the level of feedback remains low: only 18.5% of accounts receive feedback (comments under posts) from foreign audiences;
- By measure the level of publication frequency and commenting, the above mentioned foreign universities certainly outperform the Russian universities.

# Recommendations

This research work carried out leads to a number of practical recommendations:

1. The leaders of the ranking of English-language Russian university websites should focus on the development of the blocks “History”, “Alumni”, “Careers”, “Key Figures” and “Partners” and also create more detailed web pages or separate websites for faculties, departments, and other structural units. In particular, such work could include:
  - 1.1. “History” block navigation by key dates or events, presentation of data in the form of quantitative indicators using infographics. It is recommended that information be supplemented with quotations by management or people whose names are associated with the university’s history.
  - 1.2. Description of the most successful examples of employment of foreign alumni in the “Careers” block, a database of internships and vacancies, a similar base for employers, profiles of partner companies, and interactive tools on career guidance.
  - 1.3. Creating an English-language database of foreign alumni, setting up a gallery of outstanding alumni, making it possible to join the alumni association online, providing descriptions of current research projects and how alumni can contribute to them (to the endowment, as an expert advisor, etc.), and developing a tool that allows people to contribute to the university’s endowment in the “Alumni” section of the website. This information can also be included in the “Partners” section.
  - 1.4. Making the websites of university departments and other subdivisions unified in terms of their look and feel. Providing information on their profiles, educational courses, publications, and staff.
2. Russian universities from the second group should also pay attention to sections “Library”, “Alumni”, “Careers,” which are less than 30% complete. Particular attention should be paid to the section “Educational Programs”, which is only 33% complete. The lack of information on educational programs can have serious negative consequences when trying to attract potential foreign applicants. Improvements to the “Educational Programs” block could include:
  - 2.1. Segmenting the information on educational programs by main target audiences (admission to bachelor’s programs, master’s programs, professional development courses, etc.);
  - 2.2. Enabling navigation of programs by at least two parameters (assigned degree, specialty, faculty or institute, department, etc.);
  - 2.3. Structuring information uniformly, such that descriptions of all programs are presented in a unified style;

- 2.4. Including information on training courses (curriculum) in the form of a title and annotation in the description of each educational program, as well as on the staff (names, short biographies, list of publications);
  - 2.5. Including in the program description information on the competencies, knowledge, and skills that a foreign student will gain, as well as information about alumni, their feedback, and quotes;
  - 2.6. Providing annotations of programs and Russian language courses in English, as many applicants would like to study on Russian-language programs in the long term, but at the time they are choosing a university their level of language is not high enough to understand the peculiarities of the program.
3. Russian universities in the third group should complete the “basic” blocks, as the minimum task is to establish communication with the main target group, i.e. foreign applicants. For this purpose it is necessary to complete the sections “About the University”, “Admission”, “Educational Programs” (see paragraph 2), “News”, and “Social Life”. A quality translation of these sections into English is needed. These sections require less labor and time costs compared to other sections.

In the course of this work, several aspects should be noted:

- 3.1. An English-language video presentation of the university should be included in the section entitled “About the University”, along with additional materials (annual report, informational brochure, etc.).
  - 3.2. Potential students should be able to submit documents online in the “Admission” section. This section should also include information about the costs and possible sources of financing, as well as details about accommodations, university life, etc.
  - 3.3. The “University News” section should be synchronized with the news feeds of subdivisions, departments, and educational programs. The “News” page should include the name of the person who wrote the text or who is responsible for the material published. The main text should include links and references.
4. Leading universities participating in the “Export of Education” project need to pay attention to the sections “History” (see 1.2), “Careers”, “Departments and Faculties” (see 1.5), and “Alumni” (see 1.4). These sections are less than 55% complete.
- 4.1. The “Careers” section should include the most successful examples of employment of foreign alumni, a database of internships and vacancies, a similar base for employers, profiles of partner companies, and interactive tools on career guidance.
5. Other universities participating in the “Export of Education” project need to update information on educational programs (see section 2). The “Educational Programs” blocks are 38.3% complete. The sections “Management and Staff”,

“Departments and Faculties”, “Library”, “Alumni” (see 1.2), and “Careers” (see 4.1) must also be completed.

- 5.1. The “Library” section should have an electronic catalog providing access to full-text databases, as well as an English-language repository and the option to work and order books online;
- 5.2. The “Management and Staff” section should contain accurate information on the staff of faculties and training programs. Present information about employees on the website. The easiest way is to do so is with the following layout: name and surname, a brief summary, a list of scientific publications, contacts, photos. Delegate employees to update this information via their accounts.
- 5.3. The “Departments and Faculties” section should give a brief description of activities at faculties, institutes, other departments of the university, information about the faculty, and a list of available courses. Each faculty should have a news page.
6. A number of universities participating in the “Export of Education” project should create an English-language version of their websites.
7. Universities participating in the “5-100” project should pay more attention to the sections aimed at presentation and promotion of the university’s scientific achievements: “Library” and “Science.”
8. Key indicators of visits made to the university’s English-language website by various groups of foreign visitors should be tracked. It is important to compare these figures with the numbers of applications for admission and the demand for other university services.
- 9 Each university needs detailed segmentation of foreign target audiences and key sections of the website need to be oriented towards these audiences. The English-language website should take into account the needs of these groups of visitors rather than mechanically copying the Russian-language website.

# Appendix

**Table 1.** Conjugation of Semantic Blocks with Target Audiences

	Applicants	Parents	Students	Alumni	Employers	Staff and Candidates	Researchers	Partners	Agencies	Journalists
University	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
History	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Admission	X	X								
Educational Programs	X	X	X			X		X		
Departments and Faculties	X	X	X			X	X	X		
Library			X	X		X	X	X		
Science			X			X	X	X		
Mission	X	X				X		X		
Management and Staff			X	X		X	X	X		X
News			X	X		X		X		X
Alumni	X	X	X	X	X					X
Careers	X	X	X	X	X					
Social life	X	X	X	X		X				
Key Figures	X	X			X	X		X	X	X
Partners								X		
Contacts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Table 2.** Rating of the English-Language Content of Russian University Websites in 2017-2018

Name of University	Score			Ranking		
	2018	2017	Change	2018	2017	Change
NRU Higher School of Economics (NRU HSE)	103	92	+11	1	1	=
Saint Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO)	87	85	+2	2	2	=
National Research Tomsk State University (TSU)	76	78	-2	3	3	+7
Ural Federal University named after the First President of Russia Boris Yeltsin (UrFU)	76	61	+15	3	10	+7
Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech)	75	72	+3	4	4	=
National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU)	75	63	+12	4	8	+4
Siberian Federal University (SibFU)	70	62	+8	5	9	+4
Novosibirsk National Research State University (NSU)	67	47	+20	6	17	+11
National Research Nuclear University MEPhI (Moscow Engineering Physics Institute)	67	42	+25	6	20	+14
Peter the Great St. Petersburg State Polytechnic University (SPbPU)	66	71	-5	7	5	-2
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN)	65	60	+5	8	11	+3
Kazan (Volga) Federal University	61	54	+7	9	13	+4
Northern (Arctic) Federal University (NArFU)	59	50	+9	10	15	+5
Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU)	58	65	-7	11	7	-3
Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (State University) (MIPT)	54	66	-12	12	6	-6
Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod – National Research University (UNN)	54	62	-8	12	9	-3
National University of Science and Technology (MISiS)	54	51	+3	12	14	+2
Saint Petersburg State Electrotechnical University LETI (ETU)	53	56	-3	13	12	-1
Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (IKBFU)	53	31	+22	13	27	+14
Plekhanov Russian University of Economics	52	51	+1	14	14	=
Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University (NEFU)	51	47	+4	15	17	+2
Gubkin Russian State Oil and Gas University (National Research University)	51	46	+5	15	18	+3

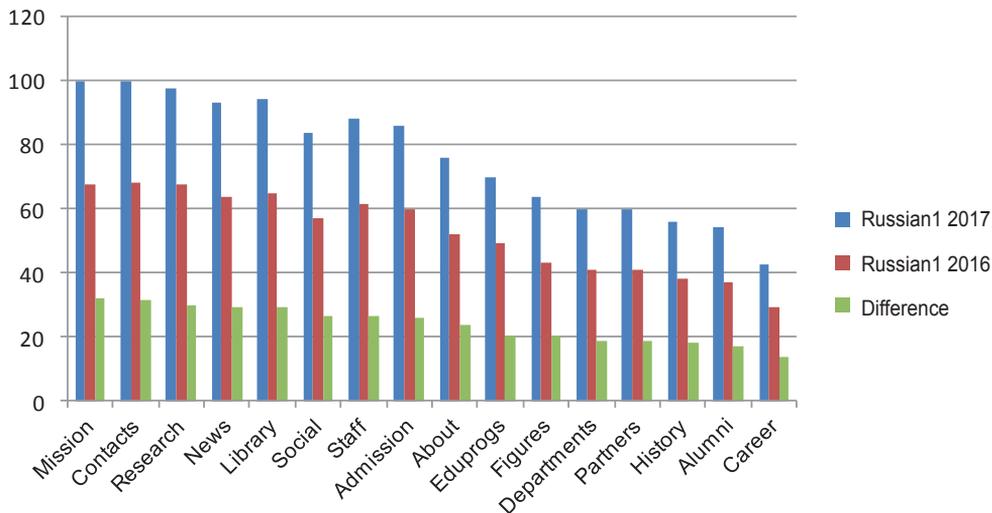
**WEB INTERNATIONALIZATION:  
RUSSIAN UNIVERSITIES 2017-2018**

Name of University	Score			Ranking		
	2018	2017	Change	2018	2017	Change
Southern Federal University (SFedU)	49	49	0	16	16	=
Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University) (MAI)	49	40	+9	16	21	+5
South Ural National Research State University	49	37	+12	16	23	+7
Korolev Samara National Research University	47	45	+2	17	19	+2
Perm National Research Polytechnic University (PSTU)	45	42	+3	18	20	+2
Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA)	45	new		18	new	
National Mineral Resources University (Mining University)	44	49	-5	19	18	-1
Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (MGIMO MFA of Russia)	43	47	-4	20	17	-3
Tyumen State University	43	new		20	new	
Moscow National Research State University of Civil Engineering (MGSU)	41	35	+6	21	24	+3
Kazan National Research Technical University named after A.N.Tupolev	41	14	+27	21	32	+11
Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH)	40	46	-6	22	18	-4
Belgorod National Research State University	40	40	=	22	21	-1
Moscow National Research Power Engineering Institute	39	40	-1	23	21	-2
St. Petersburg State University	39	30	+9	23	28	+5
Chernyshevsky Saratov State University	38	40	-2	24	21	-3
Perm State National Research University (PSU)	37	39	-2	25	20	-5
Kazan National Research Technological University, (KNRTU)	36	35	+1	26	24	-2
North-Caucasus Federal University	35	35	=	27	24	-3
Ogarev Mordovia National Research State University	35	34	+1	27	25	-2
Siberian State Medical University	35	new		27	new	
Novosibirsk State Technical University	33	new		28	new	
Bauman Moscow State Technical University (BMSTU)	32	33	-1	29	26	-3

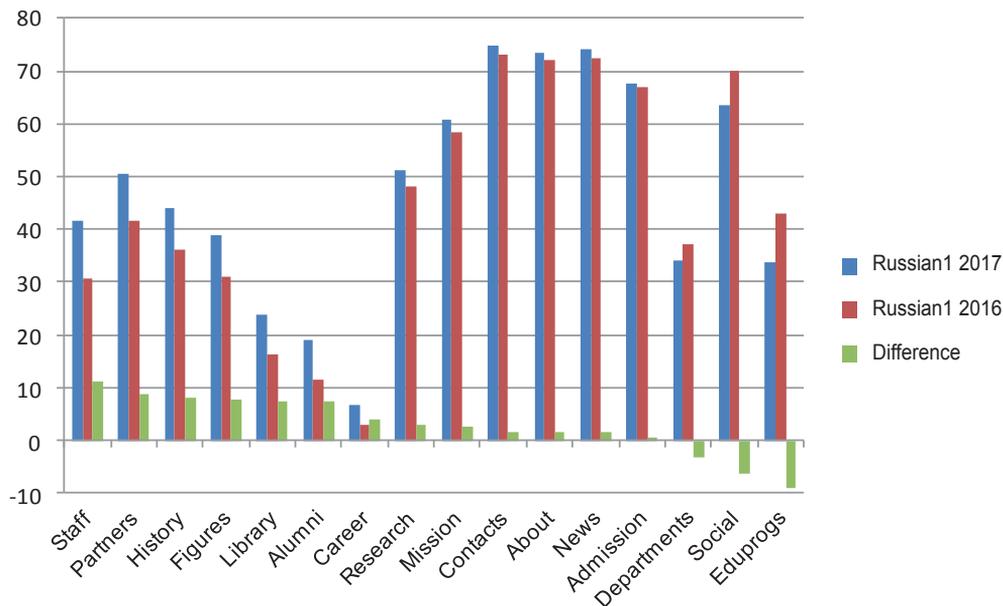
Name of University	Score			Ranking		
	2018	2017	Change	2018	2017	Change
National Research University of Electronic Technology (MIET)	31	33	-2	30	26	-4
Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU)	31	25	+6	30	30	=
Moscow State Linguistic University, The Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages	27	14	+13	31	32	+1
Moscow Polytechnic University	27	new		31	new	
Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation	25	new		32	new	
Irkutsk National Research Technical University (ISTU)	23	27	-4	33	29	-4
Moscow State University of Railway Engineering	22	new		34	new	
Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet	21	new		35	new	
Trubilin Kuban State Agrarian University	21	new		35	new	
Russian National Research Medical University named after N.I. Pirogov	20	23	-3	36	31	-5
Saratov State Vavilov Agrarian University	20	new		36	new	
Russian Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS)	19	new		37	new	
Chaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory	16	new		38	new	
Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy	16	new		38	new	
St Petersburg National Research Academic University of the Russian Academy of Sciences	10	10	0	39	33	-6
Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	10	new		39	new	
Gerasimov State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK)	0	new		40	new	
Surikov Moscow State Academic Institute of Arts	0	new		40	new	
Gnessin Russian Academy of Music	0	new		40	new	
Tambov State University named after G. R. Derzhavin	0	new		40	new	

**Table 3.** Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities from the Ranking (in %)

	<b>English-Language Website Section</b>	<b>Completeness of Website Sections</b>	<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>
1.	About	66,15	76	73,53	46,92
2.	History	36	56	44,12	20
3.	Admission	57,23	86	67,65	34,62
4.	Eduprogs	28,08	70	33,82	10,26
5.	Departments	31,65	60	34,03	21,43
6.	Library	23,96	94,29	23,95	8,24
7.	Science and Research	42,31	97,5	51,10	16,83
8.	Mission	46,67	100	60,78	14,1
9.	Staff	35,54	88	41,47	14,62
10.	News	58,97	93,33	74,02	28,85
11.	Alumni	14,95	54,29	18,91	2,2
12.	Careers	3,5	4,86	6,72	0,55
13.	Social	48,92	84	63,53	19,23
14.	Figures	29,54	64	38,82	6,92
15.	Partners	43,85	60	50,49	29,49
16.	Contacts	68,92	100	74,71	52,31



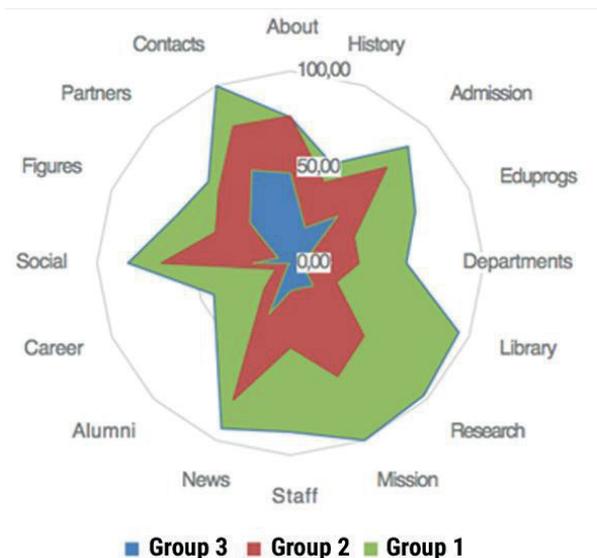
**Diagram 1.** Completeness of Website Sections of Leading Russian Universities in the First Group in 2016 and 2017 (in %).



**Diagram 2.** Completeness of Website Sections of Leading Russian Universities in the Second Group in 2016 and 2017.

**Table 4.** Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the “5-100” Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (in %)

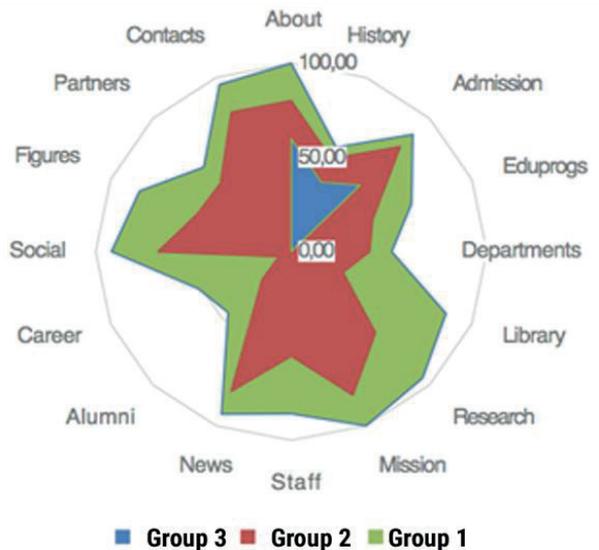
Website Section	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Web Internationalization Index	77,22	53,15	9,259259	46,54
About	100,00	80,00	60	80,00
History	60,00	53,33	40	51,11
Admission	88,00	78,67	50	72,22
Eduprogs	66,67	45,00	0	37,22
Departments	51,43	40,00	0	30,48
Library	85,71	28,57	0	38,10
Science and Research	95,00	60,83	0	51,94
Mission	100,00	82,22	0	60,74
Staff	86,00	55,33	0	47,11
News	93,33	80,00	0	57,78
Alumni	45,71	20,95	0	22,22
Careers	51,43	6,67	0	19,37
Social	92,00	68,00	0	53,33
Figures	84,00	52,00	0	45,33
Partners	63,33	51,11	0	38,15
Contacts	96,00	80,00	0	58,67



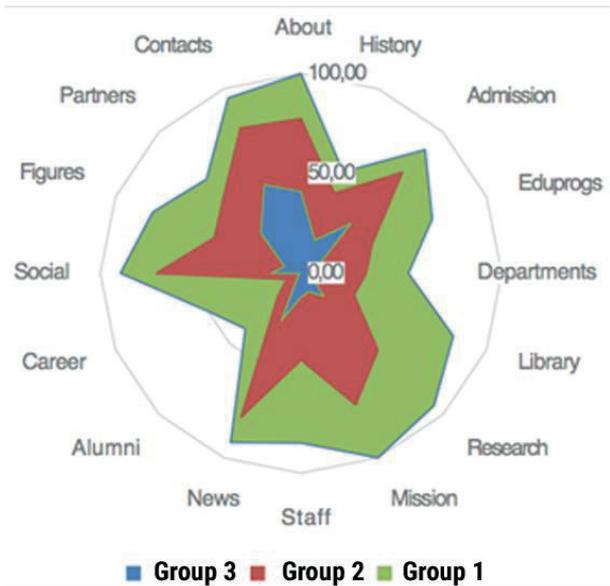
**Figure 1.** Completeness of Website Sections by the three Groups of Russian Universities.

**Table 5.** Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the “Export of Education” Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (in %)

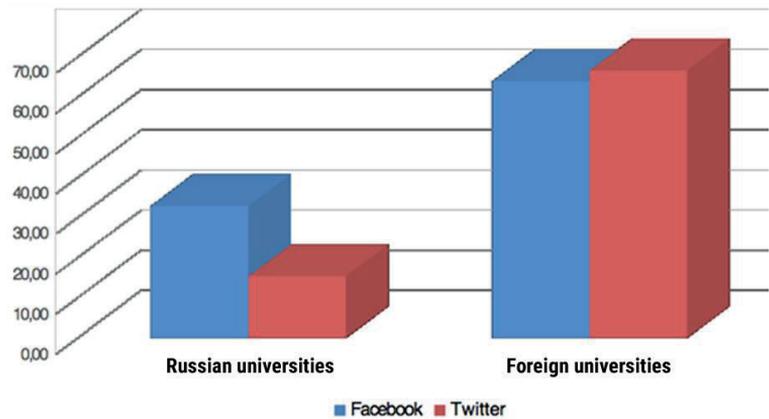
Website Section	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Web Internationalization Index	76,39	48,83	17,78	47,66
About	100,00	77,33	41,00	72,78
History	55,00	43,33	18,00	38,78
Admission	87,50	71,33	35,50	64,78
Eduprogs	70,83	38,33	9,17	39,44
Departments	53,57	32,38	18,57	34,84
Library	82,14	28,57	6,43	39,05
Science and Research	93,75	54,17	16,25	54,72
Mission	100,00	71,11	10,00	60,37
Staff	85,00	43,33	12,00	46,78
News	91,67	77,78	25,83	65,09
Alumni	39,29	16,19	2,14	19,21
Careers	50,00	7,62	0,71	19,44
Social	90,00	72,00	15,00	59,00
Figures	80,00	46,67	9,00	45,22
Partners	66,67	54,44	28,33	49,81
Contacts	95,00	78,67	48,00	73,89



**Figure 2.** Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the Project on Maximizing the Competitive Position of a Group of Leading Russian Universities in the Global Research and Education Market”.



**Figure 3.** Completeness of Website Sections of Russian Universities Participating in the “Export of Education” Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.



**Figure 4.** Completeness of Facebook and Twitter Social Media Accounts by Russian and Foreign Universities.

# About the Authors

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## **Russian International Affairs Council**

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a Russian non-profit organization focusing on development of practical policy recommendations to Russian organizations, ministries, and agencies involved in foreign policy activities.

Along with analytical work, RIAC organizes educational activities with the aim of forming a stable community of young professionals in foreign policy and diplomacy.

The Council is an active participant in public diplomacy, presenting the Russian vision by addressing key issues of global development at international venues.

RIAC members are leading representatives of the Russian foreign policy community: diplomats, businessmen, scientists, public figures, and journalists.

Igor Ivanov, RIAC President, RAS Corresponding Member, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in 1998–2004, Secretary of the RF Security Council in 2004–2007.

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