

Filtering Foreign Media Content: How Russian News Agencies Repurpose Western News Reporting

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Abstract: During the ongoing conflict with Ukraine, the Kremlin has limited and distorted the substance of Western media reports. State-run web portals dedicated to translating the foreign press claim to mirror Western reporting about Russia. In this article, I argue these portals filter the foreign press, selecting articles for translation that confirm and reinforce a stereotype of Western reporting about Russia as tendentious, opinionated, and irrationally hostile. I analyze output from two sites: *RIA Novosti's InoSMI*, and, to a lesser degree, *RT's InoTV*. In the first part of this article I explore a tension between two strands of research: many scholars emphasize the low quality of *InoSMI's* translations, yet some Russian researchers draw on *InoSMI's* translations as a data source for analysing the Western press. In the second half, I draw on quantitative methods and diverse data sources to analyze which Western texts were and were not translated during moments of high international tension, at the time of the Crimean referendum (March 2014), and the downing of flight MH17 (July 2014).

1 Introduction: Translations as a Data Source

In 2011 Tat'iana Kovaleva, a master's (*magistr*) student at Tomsk State University, won a prize for her text "Strategies of Manipulation in the Information War". Kovaleva's article, published in the journal