facebook

INSTITUTE *for*
STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

ONLINE
CIVIL
COURAGE
INITIATIVE

THE ONLINE CIVIL COURAGE INITIATIVE (OCCI) INFORMATION PACK ON COUNTERSPEECH ENGAGEMENT

THE OCCI AIMS AND MOTIVATIONS

This information pack aims to give beginning steps and practical advice for NGOs and civil society activists who are looking to challenge and counter hate speech and extremism online. For further information on developing and creating counterspeech or targeted counter-narrative campaigns, please visit the Counter Narrative Toolkit website www.counternarratives.org. Or find examples from the OCCI Facebook page www.facebook.com/onlinecivilcourage.

What is the OCCI?

The Online Civil Courage Initiative (OCCI) is a European initiative challenging hate speech and extremism online. The OCCI was founded in Berlin, by Facebook, and is being led by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) alongside a range of grassroots organisations.

What is the OCCI mission?

The OCCI mission is to promote the civil courage displayed by organisations and grassroots activists carrying out valuable counterspeech work online. We believe that engagement is more powerful than censorship in reforming prejudiced and bigoted opinions and voices, and are committed to amplifying campaigns which encourage positive dialogue and debate.

The OCCI aims to achieve its goals by:

1. Providing online support to European NGOs and activists working to counter online extremism and hate speech;
2. Developing the best methods for NGOs and civil society to respond to online extremism and hate speech;
3. Assisting research into the relation between online speech and offline actions to better understand how counterspeech can be most effective.

The OCCI was founded as a partnership between the ISD, the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), and the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, working together with Facebook. The OCCI brings together these different sectors utilising the expertise of NGOs, civil society, the creative sector and academia, to promote new partnerships and positive campaigns.

Why now?

We understand that a range of extremist groups use social media to find, radicalise, recruit and mobilise new members. We strongly believe in a sense of duty to respond to this, and in the need to disrupt the routes which extremists use to reach people who are vulnerable to their propaganda. The pervasiveness of hate speech and violent extremist activity in

many different forms across Europe has made civil society's response a matter of urgency.

What is counterspeech?

The term *counterspeech* refers to responses or content that is created to counter a range of extremisms and hate speech online. Within the counterspeech spectrum, a counter-narrative is a tool to challenge the ideologies, narratives and stories of violent extremists. The purpose of a *counter-narrative* is to discredit, deconstruct and demystify extremist messages. They can do this by using logical or factual arguments or using satire and humour. They can be as specific or nuanced, as direct or indirect, as the person or group creating them wants to make them.

PLANNING A COUNTERSPEECH CAMPAIGN

A counterspeech campaign plan can be constructed by answering four questions:

- Who is the audience the campaign is looking to reach?
- What is the core message of the campaign?
- How will this message be presented?
- Who will be the messenger or voice of the campaign?

Audience: Campaigns can attempt to reach more than one audience. However, it's important they are not too ambitious and try to reach everyone. Campaigns with a more specific audience will have a clearer focus, and increase the opportunity of achieving positive engagement and impact.

Message: Once the audience is chosen the campaigns needs a "story" to tell them. Effective messages offer something to think about and reflect on. There are multiple message types campaigns can use e.g. factual, emotional, satirical or positive.

Messenger: The audience must find the messenger credible. Campaigns need to consider who the audience is likely to trust, be inspired by or listen to e.g. former extremists, survivors of extremism, respected organisations or charities, projects relevant to the audience, or influential and respected faith, community or youth leaders and activists.

Medium: Once a message has been decided, the content of the campaign needs to be created. The medium of the content should reflect the interests of the audience i.e. if the audience uses Facebook, then video content is a great way of capturing their interest. Counterspeech campaigns could be made up of one or more mediums e.g. videos, text, images, online literature, audio recordings or comics.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Setting achievable goals and objectives help focus a campaign, and provide an opportunity to evaluate the impact the campaign has. **Goals** guide the campaign and keep it focused on its original purpose i.e. to persuade people not to join far-right or Islamist extremist groups. **Objectives** explain how the goals will be met, and provide targets to aim for i.e. reach 1,000 people online at risk of radicalisation with counterspeech content, and conduct two educational public workshops focused on countering extremist propaganda.

RESPONDING AND ENGAGING DURING A CAMPAIGN

Responding to people who engage with a campaign can be important in encouraging conversation, and increase the opportunity of a campaign being shared organically to the right people.

Knowing how to classify people's comments on campaign content can help campaigners choose which type of response is required. Possibilities include engagement, ignoring, hiding or deleting comments or posted material, depending on the type of comment. A useful method is to categorise comments into four types: supportive, constructive, negative, and antagonistic comments.

These types are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and a comment may transcend more than one of them. The table below outlines possible responses depending on which category, or categories, a comment falls under. The 'X' indicates the type of category that a comment fits under. The types of engagement are qualified as: like comment, ignore comment, positive response, informative response, forcefully informative response, and hide or delete comment.
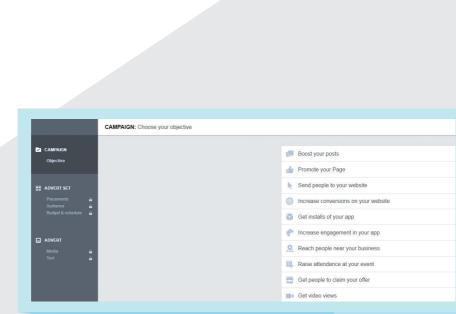
CATEGORY OF COMMENT

SUPPORTIVE	NEGATIVE	CONSTRUCTIVE	ANTAGONISTIC	ENGAGEMENT
X	o	o	o	Like or Ignore
X	o	X	o	Positive
o	X	X	o	Informative
o	o	X	o	Positive und informative
o	o	X	X	Forcefully Informative
o	X	o	X	
o	o	o	X	Ignore, Hide or Delete

To accompany the categorization of comments, it can be useful to produce a set of pre-written responses for questions about the campaign or challenges to its message. These can be particularly useful for campaigns that receive a lot of attention; or for organisations or activists with limited capacity.

What results can be expected from Facebook advertising?

With correct targeting and support, an organisation can expect to reach a broader audience of new individuals interested in an organisation. Depending on the objective of the organisation advertising can be tailored to raise awareness for the organisation and its campaigns, or increase engagement on the organisation's content.

CAMPAIGN: Choose your objective

CAMPAIGN
Objective

ADVERT SET
Placements
Audience
Budget & schedule

ADVERT
Media
Text

Boost your posts
Promote your Page
Send people to your website
Increase conversions on your website
Get installs of your app
Increase engagement in your app
Reach people near your business
Raise attendance at your event
Get people to claim your offer
Get video views

What is a 'targeting criteria'?

The 'targeting criteria' are the characteristics of a member of the audience a campaign would like to reach with an advertisement. It includes criteria such as: age, gender, location, language, people who like specific pages and interests. The more detailed the criteria the smaller the potential audience, but, the higher the chance of reaching people likely to be interested in the advertisement. Rather than aiming an advertisement at all 16-year olds living Berlin, a campaign could aim it at all 16-year olds living in Berlin, who speak German and who like the pages of a specific organisation.

OCCI Support

As part of the OCCI initiative, Facebook support aims to scale up the support of European NGOs and activists conducting online campaigns on a limited budget. Organisations working to counter extremism online should get in touch by messaging the OCCI Facebook page directly www.facebook.com/onlinecivilcourage. As OCCI develops its network we aim to work closely with counterspeech activists, to promote their work. We hope to boost this work on the OCCI page, to dramatically increase its awareness and impact.

EVALUATING YOUR COUNTERSPEECH

This is a guideline for evaluating the success of an online counterspeech campaign in achieving its goals and objectives. Understanding how an audience responded to a message, medium and messenger will help inform new ideas and campaigns.

There are three fundamental criteria that form the basis for this evaluation. These are: **awareness**, **engagement** and **impact**. These criteria are made-up of metrics available for quantitative and qualitative analysis. Combining numerical data with testimonial evidence allows for a comprehensive evaluation process for counterspeech campaigns.

Awareness Evaluation Criteria

The awareness criterion is necessary to assess the success of the campaign in reaching its target audience. Successfully reaching a specific audience with content is a challenging process. Evaluating the targeting criteria of an advertisement is needed if organisations are to prove effective at counterspeech campaigning. The metrics to measure awareness are:

Reach: the number of individual users who were shown the campaign content
Impressions: the number of times each user were shown the campaign content

Engagement Evaluation Criteria

Evaluating the engagement from users indicates whether the content was resonating with the reached audience. Assessing the quantity of engagement provides an opportunity to analyse the success of paid advertising in increasing user engagement with the organisation, which can inform future advertisements. The metrics to measure engagement are:

Comments: when a user writes a response to a post or piece of content
Likes: when a user likes a post, video, image or profile page
Shares: when a user shares a post or piece of content to their own Facebook friends and followers
Messages: when a user directly messages the organisation

Impact Evaluation Criteria

Assessing the success of a campaign designed to counter online extremism is a difficult process. Identifying when and how users have been affected by the content is vital in understanding how and why a campaign can work to counter violent extremism. The metrics to measure impact are:

Sustained Constructive Engagement: when a user comments or messages more than once in a positive or constructive manner
Sustained Antagonistic Engagement: when a user comments or messages more than once in a negative or dismissive manner
Comment coding: categorizing comments and messages into supportive, negative, constructive, antagonistic and unrelated

The OCCI looks forward to working with NGOs and grassroots activists to help promote their existing and developing work, to challenge hate speech and extremism online. If you would like us to be aware of your work, or want to know more about the initiative, please contact us on the OCCI Facebook page **www.facebook.com/onlinecivilcourage**.

Video Views: the number of times video content was watched
Video Viewer Retention: the length of time viewers watched video content for

Institute for Strategic Dialogue

The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is an independent 'think and do tank' working with leaders in government, business, civil society and academia to develop cross-border responses to the major geo-strategic, social and security challenges of our time.

Combining research and policy advisory work with innovative delivery programmes, specialised task forces, cross-sector partnerships and networks, ISD works to counter global extremism, bridge inter-communal divides, and enhance Europe's capacity to act effectively in the global arena.

International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence

The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ISCR) is an independent and non-partisan organisation. It produces research to educate the public and help policymakers and practitioners find more intelligent solutions in dealing with radicalisation and political violence.

Amadeu Antonio Foundation

The Amadeu Antonio Foundation is an independent NGO working to strengthen democratic civic society and eliminate neo-Nazism, bigotry and hate in Germany. Since its founding in 1998, the Foundation has funded more than 850 projects and campaigns in pursuit of this goal. It brings direct support to victims of hate-based violence, and promotes alternative youth cultures and community networks to weaken the social structures that intolerance and racism need to survive.

THE ONLINE CIVIL COURAGE INITIATIVE (OCCI)
INFORMATION PACK ON COUNTERSPEECH ENGAGEMENT

facebook

INSTITUTE *for*
STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

ONLINE
CIVIL
COURAGE
INITIATIVE