

Spin Cycle: Information Laundering on Facebook

Chloe Colliver
Mackenzie Hart
Eisha Maharasingam-Shah
Daniel Maki

About This Report

This report presents the findings of an investigation conducted by ISD ahead of the US Presidential election in November 2020. The investigation analysed a series of Facebook groups and pages exhibiting suspicious, potentially coordinated and inauthentic activity. This network of groups and pages were being used to promote divisive political content to primarily US-based audiences.

The findings suggest a form of information laundering may be taking place on Facebook, in which suspect content is posted by small, seemingly disparate groups and pages and then subsequently seeded into online communities composed of real Facebook users. The report speaks to one of the enduring challenges faced by technology companies, civil society organisations, researchers and policymakers: how to determine what constitutes illegitimate, deceptive behaviour on platforms such as Facebook.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Carl Miller and Natasha Bach for their helpful feedback and revisions, and Elise Thomas for her research support over the course of the investigation. Any mistakes or omissions are the authors' own.

Beirut | Berlin | London | Paris | Washington DC

Copyright © Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2020). Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is a company limited by guarantee, registered office address PO Box 75769, London, SW1P 9ER. ISD is registered in England with company registration number 06581421 and registered charity number 1141069. All Rights Reserved.

www.isdglobal.org

Executive Summary

The coronavirus pandemic has driven more of our political and electoral discussion online than ever before. Amid the twin dramas of a highly contentious election cycle in the United States and a deadly global pandemic, it is as important as it has ever been to detect and expose efforts to divide societies, spur political and social division and disrupt information flows online. The year to date has borne witness to both severe disinformation crises and ever-more sophisticated efforts to research, report and respond to such incidents.

In June 2020 the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) started an investigation into a series of Facebook groups and pages exhibiting suspicious, potentially coordinated activity promoting divisive political content, including QAnon conspiracy theories and pro-Trump messaging. The intended targets of this effort were primarily US-based users in groups and pages showing support for President Trump, with some international right-wing audiences caught in the same net.

ISD's findings suggest a form of information laundering may be taking place on Facebook, in which suspect content is posted by small, seemingly disparate groups and pages and then subsequently seeded into online communities composed of real Facebook users. Though ISD has been unable to attribute the network (or networks) at the centre of this investigation to a particular individual, entity or nation state, its analysis illustrates how spam-like networks on Facebook can be used to distribute potentially harmful content across the platform at scale. Moreover, the findings indicate how such content can be targeted at specific political or ethnic communities, with the likely aim to sow discord and stoke partisan division along political and cultural fault lines around elections.

This investigation speaks to one of the enduring challenges faced by technology companies, civil society organisations, researchers and policymakers: how to determine what constitutes illegitimate, deceptive behaviour on platforms such as Facebook. Defining what illegitimate coordination means and looks like is far from straightforward. There remains little consensus in the research sector studying these threats. For example, how does one separate illicit or covert forms of coordination from legitimate online discussion and support? Moreover, while the report

identifies potential signals that a social media entity is being deceptive or misleading, how many of these signals must be exhibited in order to make a confident assessment of veracity? In other words, what is the threshold beyond which an account, profile, group or page's attributes and behaviour can be deemed inauthentic? On a larger scale, how can authenticity be reliably determined within algorithmically controlled information systems that curate, promote and target information with little transparency?

These are thorny, complicated issues rife with unanswered questions and grey zones. Currently, the only apparent constant connecting disparate, orchestrated online activity seems to be its target: real, human social media users. In the wake of an election where online campaigning largely replaced real-world events and gatherings, it is imperative to better understand these kinds of online deception. Ultimately, this report seeks to raise awareness of the need for new models, methodologies, techniques and tactics for identifying and combating deceptive activities on Facebook and other social media platforms.

Key Findings

- **ISD identified a total of 29 Facebook pages and groups suspected of being part of one or more coordinated networks operating inauthentic identities to promote divisive and targeted partisan content.** Signals of coordination included shared page/group administrators, the use of tumblr redirect links to cloak the direction of users to external clickbait sites, temporal proximity in posting and identical post content.
- **While 18 of the 29 pages and groups referenced above have now been removed, the rest appear to have evaded detection or action from Facebook.** On multiple occasions, ISD observed removed groups or pages reappearing in the form of newly created pages and groups with nearly identical characteristics. This apparent 'regeneration' may speak to the strength and durability of this particular network, despite steps taken by Facebook to curb such activity on its platform.

- **Members (or individual Facebook accounts) shared content created by these likely coordinated groups and pages**, posting it to seemingly authentic and well-established public Facebook groups and pages. **ISD identified a total of 247 Members that appeared to be active in this network.**
 - **ISD identified 1,472 Community groups and pages that were the targets of this information laundering.** The 1,472 Community entities in our network are made up of **1,414 groups** and **58 pages**.
 - **Content from this network of likely coordinated pages and groups had the potential to reach an audience of ~27,574,449 Facebook users.** This is the total number of page likes and group members for our 1,472 Community entities.¹
 - **1,472 total Community entities**
1,414 groups
58 pages
 - **1,457 records found on CrowdTangle**
1,401 groups
56 pages
 - **27,574,449 Facebook accounts reached**
26,156,099 group members
1,418,350 page likes
 - **Broadly speaking, the targets of this information laundering appear to be users in groups and pages focused on topics such as: US right-wing politics, right-wing politics in other countries such as the Philippines and Canada, and political wedge issues like Hawaiian independence.** Additional clusters of Community groups and pages appear to cater to specific demographic or ethnic groups in the US, such as women, Latinos and Russian speaking Americans, almost all of whom are members of groups labelled as supportive of President Trump or right-wing political causes.
 - The nature of this laundered content falls into the following categories: anti-Democrat (specifically anti-Hillary Clinton and anti-Ilhan Omar); pro-Republican (excluding specifically pro-Trump entities, e.g., pro-Sean Hannity and pro-Mike Pence); pro-Trump; content about COVID-19; and discussion of George Floyd (including content supportive of the protests following Floyd's death, content supportive of police actions and content attacking Floyd). **The politically partisan nature of these posts suggests there was an effort to further polarise existing partisan communities on Facebook ahead of the US election in November 2020.**
-

Glossary

Conspiracy Theory

In line with US political scientist and academic Joseph Uscinski, ISD defines a conspiracy theory here as an “explanation of past, ongoing, or future events or circumstances that cites as a main causal factor a small group of powerful persons [...] acting in secret for their own benefit and against the common good”.²

Coordinated Behaviour

A set of online entities—individual accounts, groups or pages—operating together towards a shared goal or purpose, which can, but do not have to be, managed by the same actor(s).

Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour (CIB)

This is a term used by Facebook to define groups of pages, groups or accounts that work together covertly to mislead users about who they are or what they’re doing. The platform’s definition of CIB requires that activity to involve a group of more than one affiliated social media entity (individual accounts, channels, groups, pages) that are exhibiting a set of characteristics of inauthentic identity and behaviour, managed together by one actor or set of actors.

Disinformation

In line with the Council of Europe’s Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan, ISD defines disinformation as false information that is deliberately created or disseminated with the express purpose to cause harm. Producers of disinformation typically have political, financial, psychological or social motivations.³

Far-Right

In line with Dutch political scientist and far-right expert Cas Mudde, ISD defines the far-right as groups and individuals exhibiting at least three of the following five features: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy or strong state advocacy.

Hyper-Partisan

This term is used to describe a piece of content, media source or actor that discusses politics from a single partisan point of view, often sensationalising and vilifying political opponents.

Inauthentic Behaviour

A set of behaviours suggesting an online entity might be operating under a false or misleading identity. These behaviours include: a mismatch between geolocation and topic; poor use of stated language (misspellings, grammar mistakes etc.); little or no evidence of human activity in photos; profile photos or interactions; stock photographs used for profile photos; sudden dramatic changes in posting volume; topic or language or both without explanation; repetitive posting or sharing patterns. Signals used to detect potential inauthentic behaviour are constantly evolving, based on the changing tactics of actors using such approaches to deceive audiences online.

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)

In line with national security expert Mark M. Lowenthal, ISD defines OSINT as: “Any and all information that can be derived from overt collection: all types of media, government reports and other documents, scientific research and reports, commercial vendors of information, the Internet and so on. The main qualifiers to open-source information are that it does not require any type of clandestine collection techniques to obtain it and that it must be obtained through means that entirely meet the copyright and commercial requirements of the vendors where applicable”.⁴

QAnon

A wide-ranging conspiracy theory that claims that an elite group of child-trafficking paedophiles have been ruling the world for a number of decades and that President Trump has a secret plan in place to bring this group to justice.

Sock Puppet

A sock puppet is a social media account or profile belonging to an undisclosed actor and operating for a certain purpose while masquerading as a real individual.

Spree-Posting

The same individual Facebook account posting identical content from Link Source entities to two or more Community groups or pages in under one minute.

Introduction

Amidst an ongoing global pandemic and what was a contentious election cycle, disinformation crises have become an unfortunate constant. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) has sought to research and report on such incidents in order to further public understanding of deceptive information practices targeting the public in the lead-up to the US Presidential election in November 2020. As part of this research, ISD conducted an investigation into a series of Facebook groups and pages exhibiting suspicious, potentially coordinated activity promoting divisive political content and disinformation related to US politics and the 2020 Presidential election.

Research Findings

This investigation, which began in early June 2020, examined a set of groups, pages and accounts on Facebook that were effectively laundering divisive or polarising content. Content posted by small, seemingly inconsequential groups and pages masquerading as international “gaming video creator” groups is shared in rapid-fire patterns by specific accounts into real online communities.

ISD identified three types of Facebook entities involved in this disinformation cycle: pages, groups and individual accounts. A set of pages and groups (“Link Source entities”) appeared to act in concert, exhibiting numerous signals of potentially fraudulent identity. Individual Facebook accounts (“Members”) then shared the content created by Link Source entities with large, legitimate Facebook groups and pages (“Communities”). While some of the individual Facebook accounts sharing this content exhibited signs of inauthenticity, others appeared to be real. This investigation illustrates the complex make-up of this network or set of networks. To shed light on how this kind of information operation affects the content real users see and interact with, the report centres on two case studies. In both instances, ISD mapped out the movement of potentially harmful content, from its apparent inception in purpose-built pages and groups to its downstream presence in real communities on the platform.

ISD’s findings provide evidence that inauthentic, coordinated networks on Facebook were being used to target specific demographics and political groups

ahead of the election, including minority ethnic groups and right-wing political communities in the US and abroad. When viewed in combination with the platform’s own reports of similar orchestrated efforts designed to target US users, the findings present an uneasy picture of covert influence efforts in the run-up to the election.⁵ While many of the Facebook groups and pages active in this network or set of networks have been removed by the platform, others have evaded detection or removal. Amidst increasing action taken by Facebook against incidents of platform manipulation, deceptive networks are proving their resilience.

ISD was ultimately unable to attribute the network to a particular actor (state, organisation or individual). That said, the findings provide a useful window into how false identities on Facebook can be used to distribute disinformation and other forms of harmful content designed to stoke partisan division within specific communities. This report seeks to compel the research sector to further its efforts understanding, identifying and responding to the orchestrated spread of polarizing content on Facebook.

Setting the scene: Facebook and inauthentic networks

Over the past two years, Facebook has published transparency reports detailing the actions it has taken regarding Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour (CIB), an activity prohibited under its “Inauthentic Behaviour” policy. Facebook’s understanding of CIB was outlined by Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook’s Head of Cybersecurity Policy, in a video posted by the platform in 2018.⁶ Gleicher stated:

“Coordinated inauthentic behaviour is when groups of pages or people work together to mislead others about who they are or what they’re doing.”

First published in July 2018, these reports provide some information about the types of CIB Facebook has identified and removed on its platform. They also suggest this type of activity is prevalent across Facebook. Between July 2018 and July 2020, the platform removed 23,608 individual social media assets (pages, groups and accounts), spanning a total of 78 CIB networks.⁷

Facebook broadly defines “inauthentic” behavior as covert, deceptive and deliberately misleading. “Coordinated” is defined as activities involving the use of “multiple Facebook or Instagram assets...in concert” to engage in inauthentic behaviour.⁸ Beyond these broad details, the specifics of what, exactly, constitutes CIB on Facebook remain somewhat cloaked in mystery.

There are real challenges in openly professing the details of detecting and defining CIB, including the risk of making evasion easier for those seeking to do harm. But as incidents of CIB continue to proliferate, it is increasingly important to clarify these grey zones, both for the company itself and for external researchers.

Facebook’s parameters for identifying activity that violates its CIB policies provide important context for investigations like the one covered in this report. The signals identified by Facebook in confirmed CIB operations can shed light on the tactics being used by bad actors to deceive users on the platform. As these prior incidents of CIB disclosed by Facebook show, CIB can involve groups, pages and individual user accounts that spread benign, harmful or false content. It can also involve a mixture of spam-like activities, managed human accounts and purchased or hacked online identities. Amidst this variation and complexity, there is one constant: the target of CIB incidents are legitimate, real communities on Facebook.

For the purposes of this report, ISD refrained from using Facebook’s definition of CIB to delineate between legitimate and illegitimate online activity. Instead, ISD simply catalogued deceptive and misleading practices encountered during the course of analysing a large network of pages, groups and accounts.

Methodology

- The original network: initial detection methodology
 - Inbound link analysis
 - A residue of the original network
 - Snowball methodology: expanding the network
 - Member analysis
 - Member profile identification
 - Detecting time patterns in posting: spree-posting
 - Target analysis
- The signals were:
- An abrupt, simultaneous transfer of control from one group of administrators to another set of administrators.
 - A significant uptick in identical content and post times within groups.
 - The use of redirect methods (typically a Tumblr link) to cloak links to spam or disinformation clickbait sites.¹⁰
 - New administrators of largely US-focused groups located outside of the US, for example in Macedonia, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

The original network: initial detection methodology

Through an ongoing open-source intelligence (OSINT) analysis of conspiracy theories and threats levelled against the US contact tracing programme H.R.6666, ISD was able to identify a collection of Facebook groups and pages that appeared to exhibit signs of covert coordinated activity.⁹ ISD identified these suspicious signals in four Facebook groups: **Your Admin**, **Flip It Red California**, **Fall of the Cabal** and **Over The Target**.

ISD used these signals to identify a further 11 groups and pages. These were identified by open source analysis of groups managed by the same administrators as the original entities (see Table 1).

Apart from **Fall of the Cabal**, all 11 of these groups and pages were removed by Facebook as of 7 July 2020. Facebook's actions suggest some form of policy violation occurred, supporting ISD's initial assessment of these pages and groups. **Fall of the Cabal** was subsequently taken down by Facebook in the week of 14 July 2020.¹¹

Table 1. Initial Facebook entities (the original network)

Entity name	URL	Type
Fall of the Cabal	https://www.facebook.com/groups/201018304650249	Group (public)
Over The Target	https://www.facebook.com/OverTheTarget	Group (public)
Flip it Red	https://www.facebook.com/FlipItRedCalifornia	Page
Your Admin	https://www.facebook.com/pg/reporthere	Page
SGT Report	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1073208116202622	Group (public)
Recall Gavin Newsom	https://www.facebook.com/groups/2622968877719502	Group (public)
Trump Train 2020	https://www.facebook.com/groups/886183141884780	Group (public)
Republicans of Coto de Caza	https://www.facebook.com/groups/255913422195204	Group (public)
Donald Trump Supporters	https://www.facebook.com/groups/846069605754164	Group (public)
Ring Wing Conservatives	https://www.facebook.com/groups/rightwingconservatives	Group (public)
X22 Report Fanpage	https://www.facebook.com/groups/x22fanpage	Group (private)

Inbound link analysis

Without access to the removed groups and pages, ISD queried CrowdTangle for Facebook posts that linked to any of the flagged groups or pages since 1 January 2020. As of 7 July 2020, the search criteria identified 4,457 posts containing links to the original 11 entities.

A residue of the original network

ISD manually coded all 4,457 posts using three prominently represented topics within the dataset:

- Anti-Democrat
- Pro-Republican
- Pro-Trump

During this coding exercise, ISD discovered a page with content identical to that shared by the original, removed network. The page, **Beautiful TV** posted a video with the accompanying text, “OMAR TO BE STRIPPED OF ALL PRIVILEGES AFTER PLEADING GUILTY TO DAMNING COURT CHARGES”. The same video and accompanying caption had been posted by a number of original, since-removed groups.

Analysts assessed **Beautiful TV** using the same signals of inauthenticity and coordination used to classify the original groups:

- Administrators: **Beautiful TV** did not share the same administrators as the original entities.
- Location of administrators: The page was being run from Vietnam and the Philippines, matching the original network’s location of administrators.
- Page transparency data: The page was listed as a “gaming video creator” on Facebook despite posting media stories about US politics.

Snowball methodology: expanding the network

ISD used **Beautiful TV** to build out a list of Facebook groups and pages that shared similar characteristics with the page, as well as the original removed network. ISD used a snowballing methodology, consisting of:

- A manual analysis of similar groups and pages for Beautiful TV recommended by Facebook
- A qualitative assessment of these entities based on their posting history and transparency data, including:
 - creation date
 - name changes
 - shifts in content subject matter
 - the location of their administrators
 - any connected entities
- Text-based queries via the CrowdTangle API, which identified additional groups and pages posting identical text to that already shared by the existing list (not shares of content, but original identical posts). This tactic is referred to as CopyPasta.¹²

Using its snowballing methodology, ISD compiled a list of 29 Facebook groups and pages exhibiting signs of coordination and inauthenticity.

Content coding

ISD used CrowdTangle to gather the post history of these 29 groups and pages. After a manual assessment of the content, ISD qualitatively coded each post using the following themes:

- Anti-Democrat (specifically anti-Hillary Clinton and anti-Ilhan Omar);
- Pro-Republican (excluding specifically pro-Trump entities, e.g., pro-Sean Hannity and pro-Mike Pence);
- Pro-Trump;
- COVID-19;
- George Floyd (both support for the protests following Floyd’s death and support for police actions and attacking Floyd).

Member Analysis

Member profile identification

Content coding analysis identified a number of individual Facebook accounts exhibiting suspicious behaviour in the form of high-volume posting.

ISD undertook a manual investigation of open-source data to identify signs the accounts (Members) might be sock puppets or inauthentic accounts.¹³ These actions included:

- Reviewing account profile pictures and biography, looking for attributes of a unique individual;
- Looking for dramatic increases in posting volume, abrupt changes in subject matter focus and sudden shifts in language.

While many of the accounts appeared suspicious, ISD's reliance on open-source data meant it could not confidently confirm whether these accounts were inauthentic or not.

Detecting time patterns in posting: spree-posting

Upon an investigation of the Member accounts active in this network, ISD identified patterns in posting behaviour that suggested a form of spree-posting was taking place. Spree-posting, in which an individual Facebook account posts identical content from the list of 29 Link Source pages and groups to two or more Community groups or pages in under one minute, is an example of potential coordinated behaviour displayed by the Member accounts in the network.

ISD detected and analysed spree-posting using the following steps:

1. Gathering the post history of Link Source pages using CrowdTangle;
 2. Qualitatively coding a post's content using the following general categories:
 - Political wedge issues
 - Support for conservative US political issues
 - Conspiracies theories
 - Minority communities
 3. Coding posts a second time, dividing them into more granular themes. For example, ISD looked for mentions of specific individuals, locations or media agencies. During this exercise, multiple unique posts with identical text were discovered, an activity known as "copypasta", as noted earlier. Identical text was identified through the use of the same random capitalisation, poor grammar and incorrect punctuation.
 4. Selecting examples of these repeat posts and using CrowdTangle to search Facebook for additional posts—excluding shared versions of other posts—that contained identical text.
 5. Manually visiting each post, noting the account responsible for reposting content from Link Source groups and pages.
-

A number of the same individual Facebook accounts were responsible for multiple instances of “spree-posting”.¹⁴ While this is a signal of inauthentic behaviour, it is important to note that the individual accounts engaged in spree-posting may belong to real individuals.

Target analysis: community groups

The final stage of the investigation sought to identify the targets of this coordinated post-sharing activity. ISD identified the pages and groups into which Link Source content had been posted. This resulted in a list of 1,472 groups and pages labelled Community groups. A manual coding exercise revealed that the subject matter focus of the Community groups and pages in the network is diverse, but generally revolved around support for conservative and right-wing politics.

For the purposes of this investigation, the coding of Community entities in each case study below have been divided into four broad themes:

- Political wedge issues
 - e.g. Secure Texas Borders
- Support for conservative US politics
 - e.g. Trump Supporters for Political Truth
- Conspiracies theories
 - e.g. QARMY WORLDWIDE "WWG1WGA"
- Minority communities (racial, ethnic, geographic, generational)
 - e.g. Russian Speaking Americans for Trump 2020¹⁵

Findings

Information laundering activities: structure and function

Three distinct types of Facebook entities appear to comprise the assets and targets of a likely coordinated network: **Link Source groups and pages, Community groups** and **pages and Members**. These entities are used in tandem to spread controversial, polarising or divisive content, including the spread of disinformation to public groups and pages on Facebook.

The process appears to take place through the following relatively simple steps.

1. Link Source groups and pages (or Link Source entities) post identical polarising content onto Facebook, creating original posts containing video and unique text.

Link Source groups and pages that appeared to be part of the network or set of networks were identified by a number of shared characteristics. Some of the signals of inauthenticity and coordination listed below are stronger than others, meaning that a group or page exhibiting only one of these signals did not qualify as a Link Source entity. For example, posting

a large quantity of videos is, on its own, a weak signal of inauthenticity, but when observed in tandem with a recent change in a page's name or subject matter, it becomes increasingly relevant. Signals of inauthenticity and coordination included:

Signals of inauthenticity:

- Being listed under the Facebook category of "video game creator", despite posting content related to US politics/current events;
- Sharing a large number of videos, including live videos;
- Having a disproportionate ratio of likes to followers (e.g. 715 likes vs. 15,936 followers);
- Having administrators listed as located outside of the US, including in Vietnam, Thailand or the Philippines;
- Lacking any significant posting history or having a posting history that recently changed names and subject matter;
- Posting text that contains misspelled words, incorrect punctuation or random or over-use of capitalisation.

Figure 1. Visual of network function

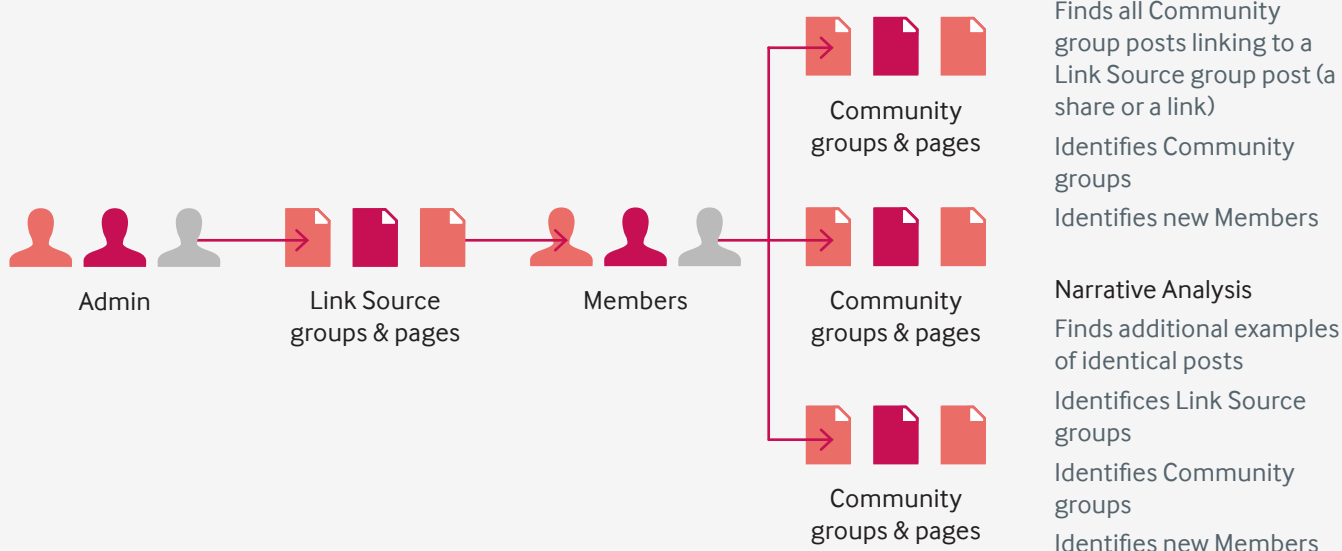


Figure 2. Examples of signals of inauthenticity shown by Kayleigh McEnany Latest



Rodrigo Duterte - We Need You, changed its name to **Kayleigh McEnany - We Need You**. Despite this change, the group continued to be managed by pages associated with the Philippines, and to host content associated with Filipino President Duterte.

ISD identified 29 Link Source groups and pages that exhibited signals of inauthenticity and coordination. 18 of these 29 Link Source entities have since been removed by Facebook.

2. Members (or individual Facebook accounts) share this content, posting it to what appear to be authentic, well-established public Facebook groups and pages with a large number of followers (Community groups and pages).

A subset of Members engage in spree-posting, which suggests a level of coordinated and potentially inauthentic behaviour. (Posting at this rate would require the use of an automated tool, something that Facebook does not allow for non-group moderators or page administrators). ISD identified 247 Members active in its network.

Additionally, some Member accounts appear either to be sock puppets, hacked/hijacked or otherwise repurposed (i.e. the individual owning the account has sold it or is being paid to post specific content). Suspicious and possibly inauthentic Member accounts shared the following characteristics:

Signals of coordination:

- Having an identical or nearly identical name as previously identified Link Source Groups/Pages that have been removed from Facebook;
- Posting content with text identical to that of other Link Source entities;
- Posting content with the same subject matter to that of other Link Source entities—such as discussions of controversial political figures or posts containing disinformation.

For example, on 23 July 2020, a group that had previously focused on Filipino politics under the name

Signals of inauthenticity:

- Profile pictures consist of identical images, edited with different filters or stickers to create “unique” photos;
- The individual in the profile picture is obscured—wearing a mask, blurred, etc.;
- Instead of showcasing an individual’s face, profile pictures feature generic images of animals, art, cartoon characters, celebrities, etc.;
- Poor use of English, including grammatical and spelling errors;

- Signs of genuine activity with an abrupt change of focus to conservative politics, far-right narratives and/or conspiracy theories.

Signals of coordination:

- Posts identical content on their account timeline;
- Engages in spree-posting

3. Community groups and pages (or Community entities) are the targets of the coordinated network behaviours identified in this investigation, hosting the content initially posted by Link Source groups and pages and making it accessible to a wide audience of Facebook users.

The Community groups and pages that acted as repositories for content created by Link Source entities shared similar attributes. Most Community entities appeared to be authentic and well-established, with a large number of members/followers. In general, the Community groups and pages in this network were concerned with US politics, specifically pro-Trump and pro-Republican politics. This focus on conservative politics extended beyond the US to include Facebook groups and pages dedicated to the political right in countries like the Philippines and Canada.

Other clusters of Community groups and pages were associated with political wedge issues, such as the Hawaiian independence movement or support for former South African President Jacob Zuma. These communities often included specific demographic or ethnic groups, such as women, Latinos and Russian-speaking Americans. Another prominent cluster of groups and pages were affiliated with the conspiracy theories, notably QAnon.

ISD identified 1,473 Community groups and pages in the network, some of which received multiple pieces of content originating from Link Source groups and pages over the period of analysis.

International affiliation

There were a number of signals that suggested the entities involved in the network had connections to international management outside the US. For example, many Link Source entities had moderators or administrators from Vietnam, Indonesia or the Philippines. Frequently, these groups and pages exhibited dramatic shifts in language, abruptly transitioning from non-English to English content.

While the majority of content posted by Link Source groups and pages was about US politics, ISD observed some posts about Filipino politics and individuals, as well as subjects unrelated to politics and not geographically restricted. The case studies also revealed that a number of Link Source groups and pages were affiliated with the media website **teeadonis.news**, which is registered in Vietnam.

While most of the Community groups and pages focused on specific communities within the US, they also included groups in Canada, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Australia, etc. Some of the names of these entities were in languages other than English:

Examples of international Community entities:

- Canada-Proud of My Country, Ashamed of My Government!
- CHAT FIJI
- Dutch Patriots
- Q-Anon SLOVENIJA
- Quality Jamaican Politics¹⁶

Examples of non-English language Community entities:

- De nasjonalkonservative (Norwegian)
- Destul e destul ! Ajunge! (Grup de lucru) (Romanian)
- Kilusang Bagong Bansa (Filipino)
- ธรรมะดี มีไว้แบ่งปัน (Thai)¹⁷

ISD was unable to identify the actors behind this set of Link Source pages and groups or Member accounts. However, the connections outlined above suggest, in many cases, the groups had some form of international affiliation. Aspects of the network(s) resembled that of the inauthentic Chinese network removed by Facebook on 22 September 2020. In partnership with Facebook, network-mapping company Graphika provided a detailed report¹⁸ on this Chinese-run network, outlining its growth, shifts in subject matter and targets between 2016 and 2020. These target issues and audiences were:

1. **2016-2017:** Taiwan; anti-President Tsai Ing-Wen; **Chinese Navy**
2. **2018 (early):** Philippines; pro-President Rodrigo Duterte; pro-Chinese-Filipino relations; South China Sea; **Chinese Navy**
3. **2018 (late):** Indonesia; pro-President Joko Widodo; **Chinese Navy**
4. **2019-2020:** US Presidential Elections; pro-Trump; pro-Biden; pro-PeteButtigieg; **Chinese Navy**

ISD observed similar changes in the network it analysed, as groups and pages switched from discussing Filipino to US politics. However, in its US “phase”, the Chinese network produced both pro-Trump and pro-Biden messaging, while ISD’s network(s) created exclusively pro-Trump and anti-Democrat messaging. Importantly, the network also lacked any discussion of the Chinese Navy or China in general.

One network or many networks?

ISD was not able to determine whether the identified Link Sources consisted of a single network, or if they were aspects of multiple networks. Across the set of pages and groups, signals of coordination included shared page/group administrators, the use of tumblr redirect links to cloak the direction of users to external clickbait sites, temporal proximity in posting and identical post content. Some pages and groups exhibited all these signals, while others (including the redirect link tactic) were present only in the initial set of 11 entities.

The original 11 entities appeared to operate out of Macedonia, Pakistan and Vietnam, while the expanded list included groups and pages run from Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. Both the old investigation and the new list of pages and groups produced content about US politics despite appearing to operate outside of the US.

Case studies

To help illustrate how this network functions, ISD identified two case studies: “G.eorge.Soros” and “Candace Owens EXPLODES...”. Both are examples of Facebook posts containing poor grammar, incorrect punctuation and random use of capitalisation. Each of these posts originated on Link Source groups and pages in the network. They were then shared by Member accounts to Community groups and pages.¹⁹

Case Study 1: “See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros”

This case study demonstrates the function of the network through the spread of a native video about George Soros, a frequent target of conspiracy theories propagated by QAnon and right-wing extremist communities.

Background

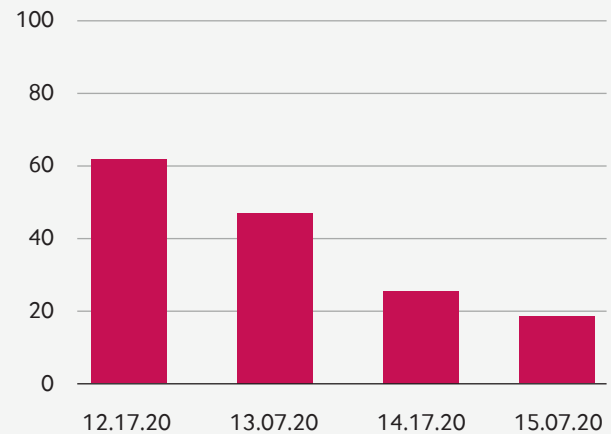
The video, which was shared with the caption text “See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros”, was posted to Facebook by three Link Source entities, all of which have since been deleted from the platform. The video itself has also been removed, leading ISD to engage in OSINT research to shed light on the video’s content. Google searches for the video’s caption “See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros” return multiple results, but no live videos. Digging further into the context of the deleted video’s caption, ISD searched for 2020 news headlines containing the keywords “supreme court” and “Soros”.

On 29 June 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its latest ruling in a series of cases going back to 2003 regarding the constitutionalism of the Anti-Prostitution Pledge imposed on non-governmental organisations receiving funding under the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act.²⁰ In this instance, the Supreme Court ruled to uphold the requirement “that foreign organizations must have policies opposing prostitution and sex trafficking in order to receive funding from the federal government”.²¹ Among the plaintiffs in the case is the Alliance for Open Society International, Inc. (Open Society International), an organisation founded and chaired by George Soros.²² Open Society International is a charity that provides grants to “independent groups working for justice, democratic governance, and human rights”.²³ The organisation issued a public statement following the Supreme Court’s decision arguing that “the Anti-Prostitution Pledge demonstrates how the U.S. government plays politics with public health at the expense of organisations that are providing critical HIV services and the vulnerable groups they reach”.²⁴

As the video shared in these posts has been removed, ISD was only able to make inferences about its content by analysing the captions and comments of posts linking to deleted the video. The red text in Table 2 lists posts with other text in addition to “G.eorge.Soros”. In addition to the discussion of “sex trafficking” and “social morals and values”, the video appears to have mentioned President Obama’s \$170 million donation to “SOROS FOUNDATIONS”.

These allegations are easy to dispel. While Obama has donated to a variety of charitable causes, the amount is far less than \$170 million; (for context, from 2009-2015, the majority of his time in office, Obama donated just \$1.1 million).²⁵

Figure 3 Posts per day - “G.eorge.Soros”



The spread of “G.eorge.Soros” on Facebook

ISD used the CrowdTangle API to search public groups and pages on Facebook for posts containing the text “See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros” from 1 October 2019 to 8 August 2020. The search returned a total of 151 posts, which were uploaded between 12 and 15 June 2020. The post first appeared on 12 June; that day, 61 posts matching the original text were uploaded to Facebook. In the following days, more posts were uploaded, although the volume dropped off, declining to 19 posts on 15 June before stopping altogether.

Table 2. Posts containing text in addition to “See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros”

OBAMA \$170 DONATE MILLIONS TO SOROS FOUNDATIONS..OUR TAX.MONEY..

See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros

\$170 MILLIONS..OBAMA?! See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros

Soros og sex trafficking. See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros

The world will be much better off when this man no longer infects the earth and drags down social morals and values.

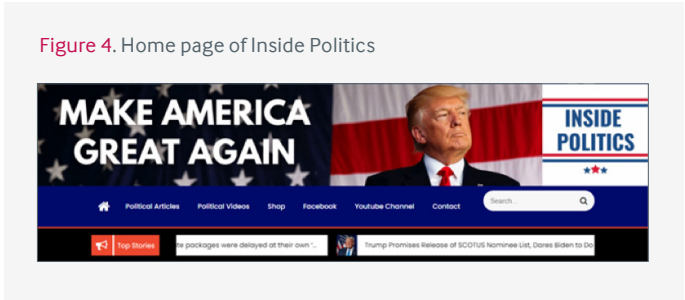
<https://www.facebook.com/News.Teeadonis/videos/333191117695803/>

See What S.upreme.Court Just Did To G.eorge.Soros

Table 3. Original post URLs— G.eorge.Soros	
1.	https://www.facebook.com/BreakingNews.Teeadonis/videos/332501251098123/
2.	https://www.facebook.com/News.Teeadonis/videos/332501871098061/
3.	https://www.facebook.com/News.Teeadonis/videos/332783397736575/
4.	https://www.facebook.com/News.Teeadonis/videos/332992871048961/
5.	https://www.facebook.com/News.Teeadonis/videos/333191117695803/
6.	https://www.facebook.com/News.Teeadonis/videos/333824897632425/
7.	https://www.facebook.com/TrumpForPresident.2020A/videos/332501511098097/

These 151 posts could all be traced back to seven original posts, all of which contained an embedded video with the text “G.eorge.Soros”. These seven posts originated from three different Facebook pages: **News.Teeadonis**, **BreakingNews.Teeadonis**, and **TrumpForPresident.2020A** (see Table 2). Of these, **News.Teeadonis** was the most active, creating five original “G.eorge.Soros” posts. (Each of these pages was identified as a Link Source Page, and has since been removed by Facebook).

A web search for the term “teeadonis” pulled up **www.teeadonis.info**, a website which domain registration records indicate was set up with GoDaddy in Vietnam on 5 June 2020, without a corresponding registrant name or contact information.²⁶ **teeadonis.info** is the domain for a website calling itself **Inside Politics**, a pro-Trump media source hosting an array of political articles and videos. At the time of ISD’s investigation, the Facebook and YouTube buttons on the website’s homepage did not link to a specific channel. Similarly, searches for “teeadonis” and “inside politics” on YouTube and Facebook did not return any relevant results. Not only are the external links on **teeadonis.info** broken, the website itself has been wiped of content.



ISD was unable to verify if the Facebook button on **teeadonis.info** linked to any of the three Facebook pages responsible for creating the original “G.eorge.Soros” posts. Given its existence, however, it is likely the videos once hosted on the website were shared on Facebook. All Link Source entities in our network, **News.Teeadonis**, **BreakingNews.Teeadonis** and **TrumpForPresident.2020A**, posted embedded videos and text featuring relevant content, which was then shared by individual Members to Community groups and pages.

Table 4. Posts from 14/07/2020. (Examples of spree-posting highlighted.)

Time	Facebook Group/ Page	Poster
00:03:39	Some Friends Of Raymond	fb-user-1
05:07:57	Patriots For America USA	fb-user-2
05:08:05	FIRST OFFICIAL CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	fb-user-2
05:44:44	KEEP AMERICA GREAT! GOD BLESS THE USA!	fb-user-2
05:47:00	KEEP AMERICA GREAT ! GOD BLESS AND PROTECT PRESIDENT TRUMP	fb-user-2
07:48:01	TRUMP2020 ELECTION RALLY	fb-user-3
12:57:35	99% United Commonwealth of nations...Achieving Peace Through Sovereignty <3	fb-user-4
12:58:20	TRUTHERS OF THE WORLD UNITE	fb-user-4
13:14:37	Dan Bongino Show Fan Club	fb-user-5
13:14:41	Liz Wheeler / Tipping Point on OAN Fans Group	fb-user-5
13:14:43	Trey Gowdy For President 2020	fb-user-5
13:22:26	99% United States "It's us and them"	fb-user-6
15:05:06	TrumpMania	fb-user-7
15:39:03	Woke Society	fb-user-8
21:39:06	Swamp Drainers	fb-user-9
21:58:00	PolitiChatter Support Group	fb-user-9
21:58:52	Trump Strong	fb-user-9
22:00:04	My America, My Home	fb-user-9
23:48:18	üáŕüáŕŕTRUMP 2020 - KEEP AMERICA GREATüáŕüáŕŕ	fb-user-10
23:48:49	Right Wing Political News Group	fb-user-10
23:52:03	PolitiChatter Support Group	fb-user-10
23:52:30	Americans United To Support 45	fb-user-10
23:53:03	TRUMP2020 ELECTION RALLY	fb-user-10
23:55:11	Right Wing Political News Group	fb-user-10
23:55:55	üáŕüáŕŕTRUMP 2020 - KEEP AMERICA GREATüáŕüáŕŕ	fb-user-10

Community groups and spree-posting

The seven original Facebook “G.eorge.Soros” posts were spread to Community groups and pages by individual Member accounts. Analysing the posting time and accounts responsible for these posts revealed signs of inauthentic behaviour, notably spree-posting. While it is possible this was organic posting behaviour, the frequency suggests a concerted effort to share the content across multiple groups and pages as quickly as possible. According to Facebook’s terms of service, administrators of Facebook Groups and Pages can employ automated posting algorithms, while individual group members or page followers cannot. As none of the spree-posts made to the Community groups and pages in our network were created by administrators, ISD concluded these accounts were not using Facebook’s scheduled posting function.

On each of the days that new “G.eorge.Soros” posts were uploaded, ISD found instances of spree-posting. Table 4 includes all posts made on 17 July 2020 — spree-post candidates are highlighted. Posts uploaded that day originated from 10 individual Facebook accounts, with seven instances of spree-posting. This behaviour is most clearly illustrated in the posts made by **fb-user-10**. From 23:48:18 to 23:55:55, a period of 7 minutes and 37 seconds, **fb-user-10** uploaded seven posts to seven different Community groups and pages. These can be broken down into three examples of spree-posting.

Link Source “G.eorge.Soros” posts were shared by individual Facebook accounts to 125 Community groups and pages. Sixteen of these entities received more than one post, including **The Rush Limbaugh Facebook Group**, which received seven (see Table. 4). Among the most posted-to Community groups and pages are other entities dedicated to conservative personalities like Dan Bongino and Candace Owens.

Table 5. Community groups and pages receiving more than 1 post of “G.eorge.Soros”

Facebook Group/Page	# of Posts
99% United Commonwealth of nations... Achieving Peace Through Sovereignty <3	3
Canada Needs A Leader Like Trump	2
Chasing The White Rabbit - Q ANON ARMY (no post approval)	3
Collective Action Against Bill Gates. We Wont Be Vaccinated!!	2
Dan Bongino Show Fan Club	2
Democrat is the new Communist	3
FIRST OFFICIAL CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	3
Hold Trudeau Accountable Group	2
Patriots of Canada	2
PolitiChatter Support Group	2
QAnon AUSTRIA üá¶üáπ	2
Right Wing Political News Group	2
The Rush Limbaugh Facebook Group	7
TRUMP2020 ELECTION RALLY	3
WWG1WGA üá@üá¶	2
üáfüá¶TRUMP 2020 - KEEP AMERICA GREATüáfüá¶	2

In order to gain further information about the 125 Facebook communities exposed to the George Soros video, ISD coded them using the following categories:

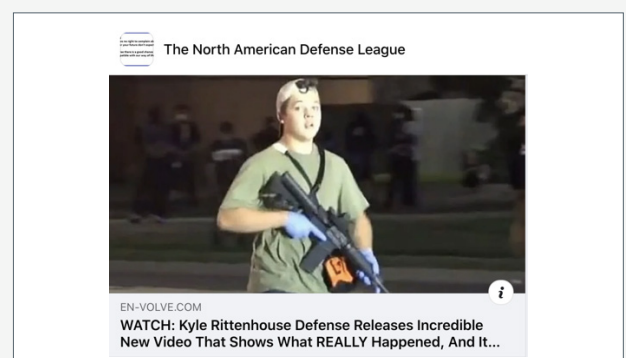
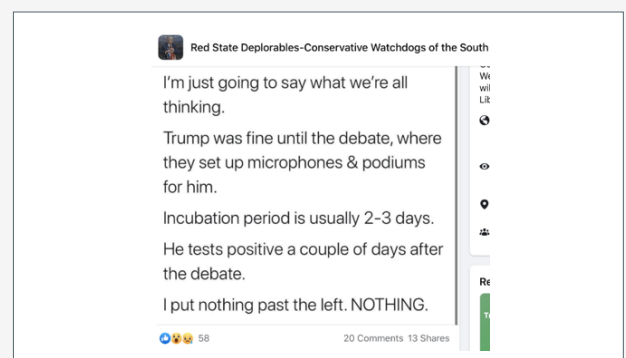
- Political wedge issues
- Support for conservative US politics
- Conspiracies theories
- Demographic or ethnic communities
 - racial
 - ethnic
 - geographic
 - generational

As a whole, these Community groups and pages overwhelmingly represented issues relating to Conservative politics. Of the 125, 38 contained keywords associated with President Trump, including mentions of “MAGA” or well-known Trump slogans like “drain the swamp”.

At least 28 of the 125 entities were affiliated with conspiracy theories, including: QAnon, anti-5G and anti-vax communities. Thirteen group names included references to distinct demographic or social groups, such as **Latinos for Trump**, **Women United For Trump** and **Russian Speaking Americans for Trump 2020**. Eleven entities, meanwhile, mentioned specific locations in the United States—towns, cities or states, while nine mentioned international locations including Australia, Austria and Fiji. Canada is the most mentioned country aside from the US; five group names specifically referenced Canada or Canadian politicians.

While these Community groups and pages are not explicitly affiliated with hate or extremist groups, they hosted posts that included hateful, extremist and conspiratorial content, such as anti-LGBTQ+, anti-Muslim and pro-Kyle Rittenhouse content.²⁷ Specifically, this includes allegations that the Democrats intentionally infected Trump with COVID-19 during the Presidential debate, as well as an image containing the text “it’s okay to be white, abortion is murder...” (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Fig. 5 Examples of posts from Community Groups and Pages - “G.eorge.Soros”



Case Study 2: “Candace Owens EXPLODES...”

This case study reveals how the network is able to recycle content from conservative influencers and suspicious Facebook groups in order to target specific online communities. The video accompanying the text “Candace Owens EXPLODES On Nancy Pelosi, Gets a Standing Ovation”, is an excerpt from Candace Owens’ speech at the Young Black Leadership Summit, in which she introduced President Trump, describing him as the saviour of Black Americans and liberal Democrats as their oppressors.

The video begins in the midst of Owens’ speech, with her telling the audience of Black youth that “we have been told to fear white supremacy, when in fact it is liberal supremacy that is harming our communities”.²⁸ She argues that while Democrats have used African American votes to gain power, the party has given them “positively nothing in return for [their] blind allegiance”.²⁹ She claims that instead of support, Democratic politicians have removed fathers from Black American families, forcing Black children to look for idols among rappers and professional basketball players. According to Owens, the party’s welfare policies have only served to victimise the Black community. In contrast, she paints Donald Trump as the only person with “both the audacity and the spine to save Black America”. According to Owens, Trump is responsible for calling out “crooked Black Democrat politicians who have received billions, billions in aid from our government and effectively stolen it from the cities that they represent”.³⁰ The video concludes with the claim that Black Americans are now “winning” because of Trump’s actions. Despite its name, Nancy Pelosi is never mentioned in the video.

During ISD’s investigation, Facebook removed 200 accounts operating as part of a CIB network affiliated with Turning Point USA (TPUSA).³¹ Tactics included paying American teenagers to create fake Facebook accounts and leave pro-Trump and anti-Biden comments on Facebook posts made by individual accounts and media agencies.³² While ISD was unable to find any clear links between the TPUSA network and the network investigated in this report, they both share similar audiences and messaging.

The first Facebook post: Where did “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” originate?

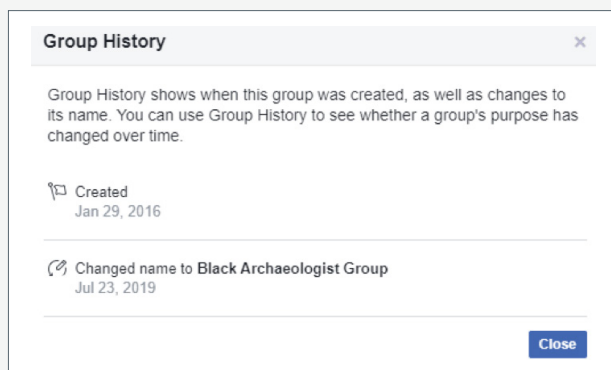
ISD used the CrowdTangle API to search public groups and pages on Facebook for posts containing the text “Candace Owens EXPLODES On Nancy Pelosi, Gets A Standing Ovation” between 1 October 2019 and 8 August 2020.

The first piece of Facebook content containing the text “Candace Owens EXPLODES On Nancy Pelosi, Gets A Standing Ovation” was posted on 7 February 2020 to the public group **Black Archaeologist Group**.³³ Created on 28 January 2016, its “Group History” states that it changed its name to **Black Archaeologist Group** on 23 July 2019. No previous names are listed (see Fig. 7).

Figure 6 C-Span video of Candace Owens’ TPUSA speech



Figure 7 Facebook group history - Black Archaeologist Group



As of 14 September 2020, **Black Archaeologist Group** had 36,859 members. According to the group's description, it was created to "share black historical knowledge... especially to black people" (see Fig. 8). The description also says the group is connected to the Facebook page Black Archaeologist Fan Page, as well as a corresponding Twitter account and website.³⁴ A Facebook page with the name Black Archaeologist Fan Page could not be found, although **Black Archaeologist Group** is run and administered by the page **Black Archaeologist**.³⁵

The Black Archaeologist refers to a series of animated videos about Black history, created by Michael and Ray Lambert ("the Lambert Brothers").³⁶ DVDs of these videos are available for purchase from **blackarchaeologist.com**, and can also be viewed on YouTube.³⁷ The Lambert Brothers also run an Etsy shop and are authors—their two books, *Black History Boy* *The Boy Who Loved Black History* and *The Things We Do in Timbuktu: The Golden Age of Timbuktu*, are available for purchase on Amazon.³⁸ Through these various online platforms, Black Archaeologist has built a following outside of Facebook: 5.27k YouTube followers, 46 Etsy sales, and 963 followers on Twitter.

Dig into Black Archaeologist's online presence and questions regarding the business operation's legitimacy and reliability quickly begin to surface. For example, a user comment on **blackarchaeologist.com** complained about never receiving an order (see Fig. 9). While most other comments on the site—such as asking for instructions on placing orders and payments—received replies from Ray Lambert, there was no response in this instance. Similarly, reviewers of *Black History Boy* on Amazon accuse the hard copy of the book of being "a tripe" and "a rip off" (see Fig. 9), with one reviewer referring to the book as "more of a pamphlet with some horrible illustrations than a book" and demanding their money back.

While suspicious, the creators of Black Archaeologist and its online presence beyond Facebook are not the crux of this story. Instead, they simply provide evidence that the public Facebook group responsible for sharing the first "Candace Owens EXPLODES..." post is connected to a potentially suspicious business operation. On Facebook, **Black Archaeologist Group** has become a hub for content containing polarising narratives, disinformation and hate.

Figure 8 About This Group - Black Archaeologist Group

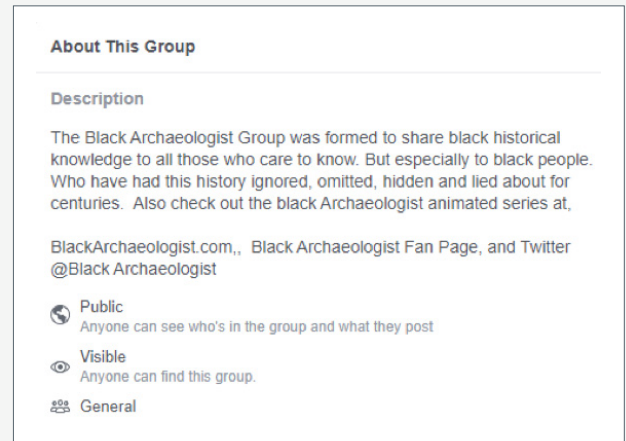
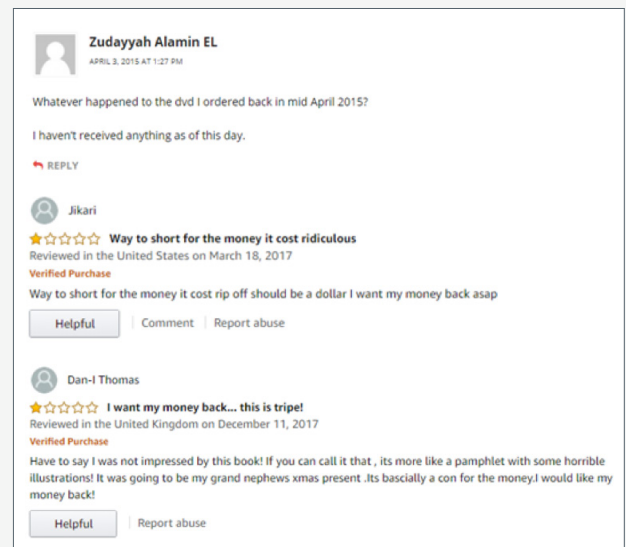


Figure 9 Amazon Reviews of Black History Boy



On 20 February 2020, a member of **Black Archaeologist Group** posted a link to a YouTube video along with the text "Candace Owens EXPLODES On Nancy Pelosi, Gets A Standing Ovation Candace Owens DESTROYS Nancy Pelosi In an Epic Speech, Gets a standing Ovation Candace Owens DESTROYS Nancy Pelosi In an Epic Speech, Gets a standing Ovation" (see Fig. 10).³⁹ The YouTube video and the account that posted it have since been removed from the platform. As a result, ISD was unable to trace the source or verify that it contained the same content as the video described above.⁴⁰

Figure 10 First post of “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” made to Black Archaeologist Group

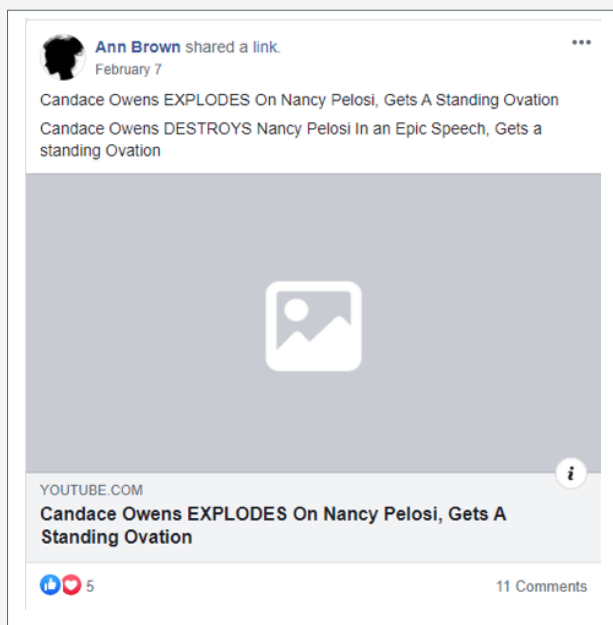
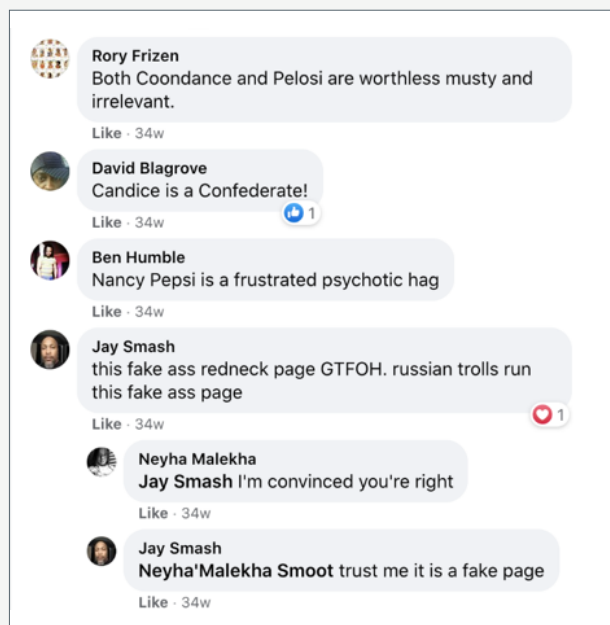


Figure 11 Comments on the first post of “Candace Owens Explodes...”



Comments on the post are critical of both individuals mentioned in the text. One comment describes Nancy Pelosi as “a frustrated psychotic hag”, while another uses a racial slur to refer to Candace Owens (see Fig. 11). Importantly, some of the comments on the post reveal that members of **Black Archaeologist Group** are sceptical of the post’s purpose and origin. Comments in the group also question the authenticity of the group as a whole. The most recent comment on the post accuses Black Archaeologist Group of being fake and run by Russian trolls (see Fig. 11). This comment received two replies, each supporting this statement. Other recent posts continue this trend, while also engaging in anti-LGBTQ+ and antisemitic speech, as well as disinformation.

Recent posts to **Black Archaeologist Group** include criticisms of the Black community. For example, a post from 13 September 2020, highlights the hypocrisy of Black Americans who are willing to fight and die for the white supremacist military, yet unwilling to risk their lives fighting white supremacy (see Fig. 12). Perhaps even more alarming is a post from 30 August 2020, containing an image of a tweet alleged to have been posted by the aunt of Jacob Blake’s ex-girlfriend.⁴¹

The tweet claims that Blake is guilty of rape and therefore “should have been [shot] 50 times” (see Fig. 14). The fact-checking organisation Snopes exposed this tweet as a fake, created by a “grown man from St. Louis”.⁴²

Other recent posts on **Black Archaeologist Group** contain anti-LGBTQ+ and antisemitic content, including a video that describes a crosswalk painted with the LGBTQ+ flag as “abominable” (Fig. 15). On 28 August 2020, an image of the Star of David was posted to the group, along with text arguing it should be called the Star of Moloch or the star of Satan (see Fig. 15).

Black Archaeologist Group’s recent post history is a repository of content designed to spread disinformation, hate and polarising narratives (see Appendix for further examples). This is the context in which the video and unique text “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” was first posted.

Figure 12 Example of content posted to Black Archaeologist Group



Figure 14 Example of disinformation posted to Black Archaeologist Group



Figure 13 Anti-Kamala Harris content and comments posted to Black Archaeologist Group

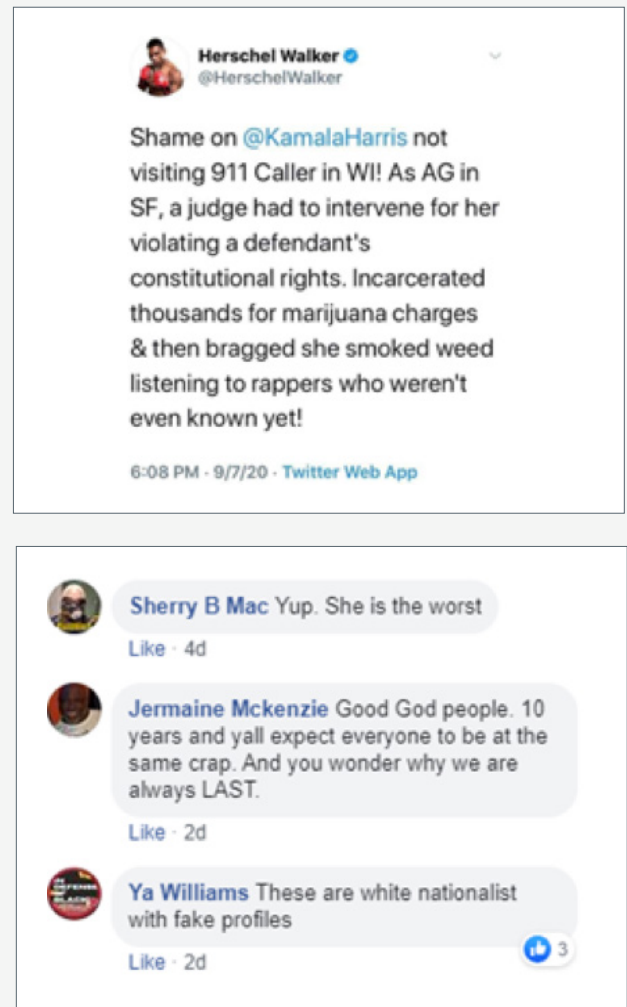
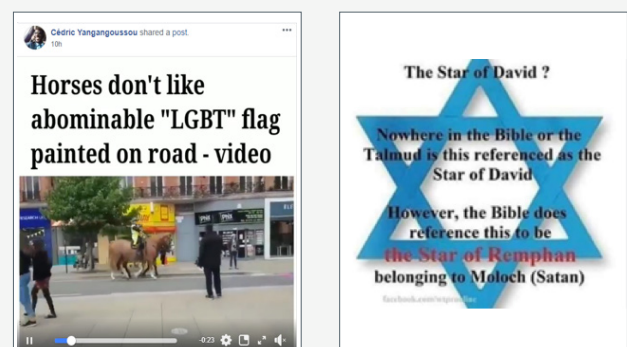


Figure 15 Anti-LGBTQ+ and antisemitic content posted to Black Archaeologist Group



Beyond Black Archaeologist: the spread of “Candace Owens EXPLODES...”

Following the initial post to **Black Archaeologist Group** on 7 February 2020, three additional posts containing the text “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” were uploaded between 8 and 9 February 2020 (see Fig. 16) by Conservative Views with President Trump, The Talk of Port Clinton (uncensored) and Real Eyes Realize Real Lies.⁴³ Two of these posts linked to a now-deleted YouTube video shared on **Black Archaeologist Group**. Meanwhile, the post on **The Talk of Port Clinton (uncensored)** contains an embedded video that is still live. All three posts are unique, meaning they are not shared from **Black Archaeologist Group**, but are new posts created by group administrators or members. Interestingly, the content posted to these groups resembles the content posted to **Black Archaeologist Group**, i.e. posts meant to spread disinformation and engage with conspiracy theories.

Recent posts to these groups compare Barack Obama to Hitler, discuss Kamala Harris and Joe Biden’s supposed ties to the Soros family, and allege the existence of an Obama and Hunter Biden orchestrated coup against Donald Trump (see Appendix for more examples of content).

The first major spike in posts containing the text “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” occurred on 10 February 2020, three days after the original post was first shared on **Black Anthropologist Group** (see

Fig. 17). On 10 February 2020, 92 Facebook posts containing identical text surfaced. The first post, uploaded at 4:24 am, appeared on the official Facebook Page for Jordan Rachel.⁴⁴ The embedded video is virtually identical to the video shared on the group **The Talk of Port Clinton (uncensored)**.

As of 16 September 2020 the **Jordan Rachel** Facebook page had 78,998 likes and 121,152 followers. According to Rachel’s website, she is “one of the youngest known political commentators in America” and has an engagement rate on social media “equating to and even sometimes surpassing major television news networks”.⁴⁵ On 14 September 2020, Rachel announced on Twitter that she had officially joined TPUSA as a contributor.⁴⁶ Among her first posts on TPUSA is an article entitled, “BLM is a domestic terrorist organisation”.⁴⁷ Candace Owens also has connections to TPUSA, having served as its communications director until May 2019.⁴⁸

The 417 posts in the data set that contain links to the Candace Owens video originated from 14 different sources. These can be divided into three categories: hyper-partisan conservative sites, YouTube and Link Source groups and pages.⁴⁹ Jordan Rachel’s Facebook page is the main source of these links; 289, or 69% of the posts in the dataset contain links from her page. Indeed, from 10 February to 7 July 2020, Jordan Rachel’s page recycled identical posts a total of 18 times, suggesting a concerted effort by its operators to push these videos on Facebook, sustaining views and engagement levels.

Figure 16 Posts per day - “Candace Owen EXPLODES”

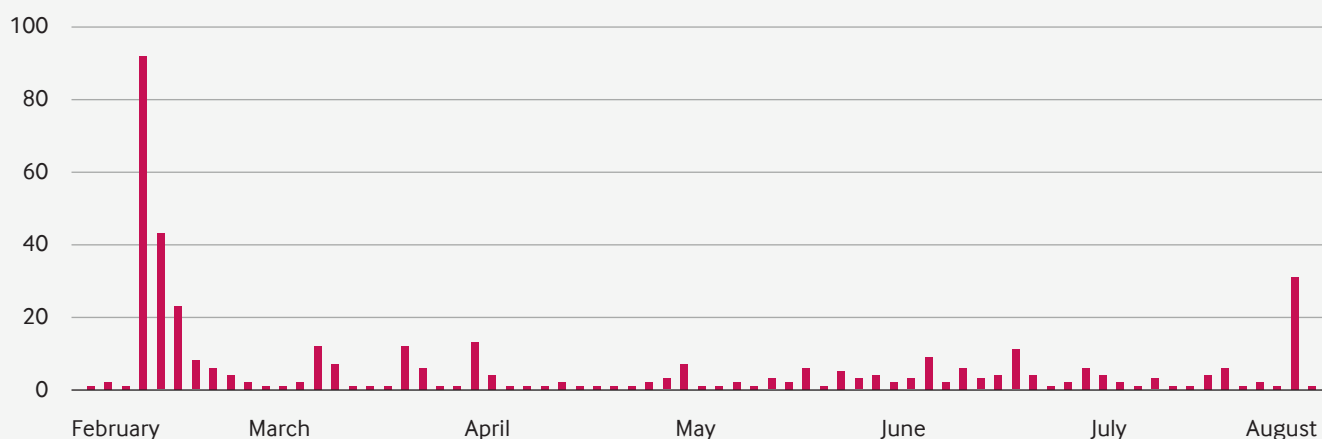


Figure 17 Examples of content posted to initial groups sharing "Candace Owens EXPLODES"

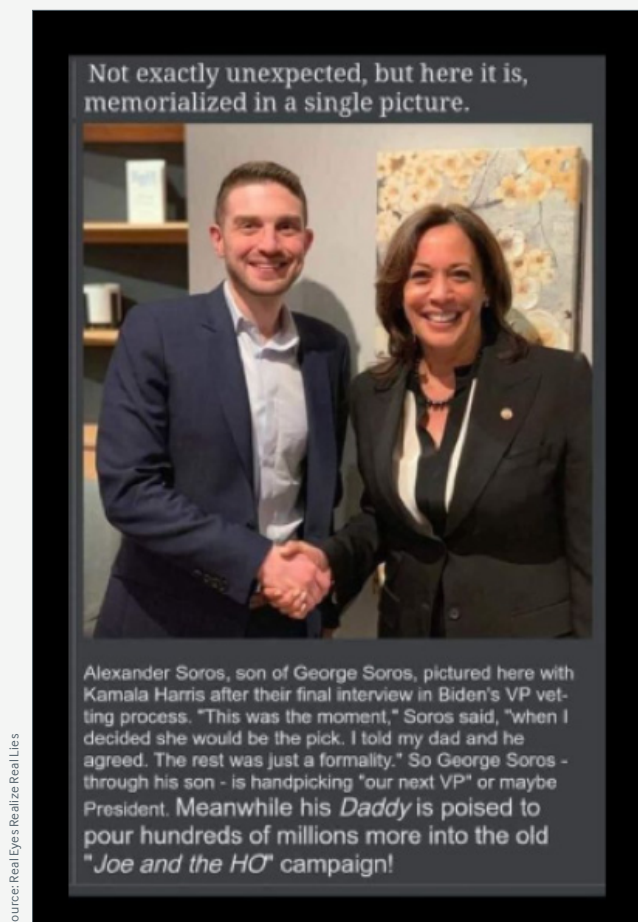
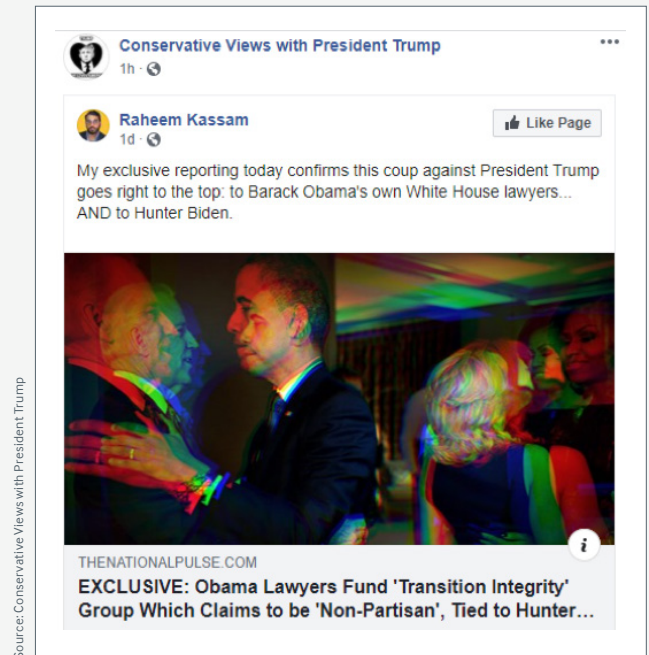


Figure 17 Examples of content posted to initial groups sharing "Candace Owens EXPLODES"



Nine of the 14 original Link Sources are associated with hyper-partisan discussions of conservative politics. This category includes the Facebook group **Conservative Politics Today**; all of the articles on **Conservative Politics Today** appear to be authored by the same individual—Howard Roark.⁵⁰ A Google search for “howard roark conservative politics today” does not return any relevant results, but does reveal that Howard Roark is the name of the main character in Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead*.⁵¹

Following this trend, Facebook groups **Trump2020Voters** and **RealJackMurphy** post content almost exclusively from conservative media source **trendingpolitics.com**.⁵² **Trending Politics** focuses on pro-Republican content and features a “Partners” section with the message “We offer partnerships to help you generate revenue with your social media pages”.⁵³ Finally, most of the content posted in the **UnitedDeplorablesOfAmerica** group comes from **breakingfirst.com**, which again focuses on pro-conservative content.⁵⁴

Link Source groups and pages

The first post containing a link originating from one of the network’s Link Source groups and pages occurred on 2 June 2020. The two posts that day both come from the since deleted group, **News.Teeadonis**. The posts on 10, 11, and 30 June originate from unnamed Link Source entities that have since been deleted.⁵⁵

The second largest source of links to the video and text is the Facebook group **Kayleigh McEnany OFFICIAL**, the most represented of the network’s Link Source groups and pages. All 31 posts of “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” on 1 August contain links originating from **Kayleigh McEnany OFFICIAL**. The timing of these posts suggests a level of coordinated inauthentic behaviour.

Table 6 shows all 30 “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” posts uploaded from 1 August 2020, all of which were created by seven individual Facebook users. The Facebook user **fb-user-4** created more than half of these posts, uploading them between 16:02:18 and 16:03:04—an extreme example of spree-posting. In addition to **fb-user-4**’s posts, three other instances of spree-posting occurred on 1 August.

Figure 18 Original URLs containing links to “Candace Owens EXPLODES...”

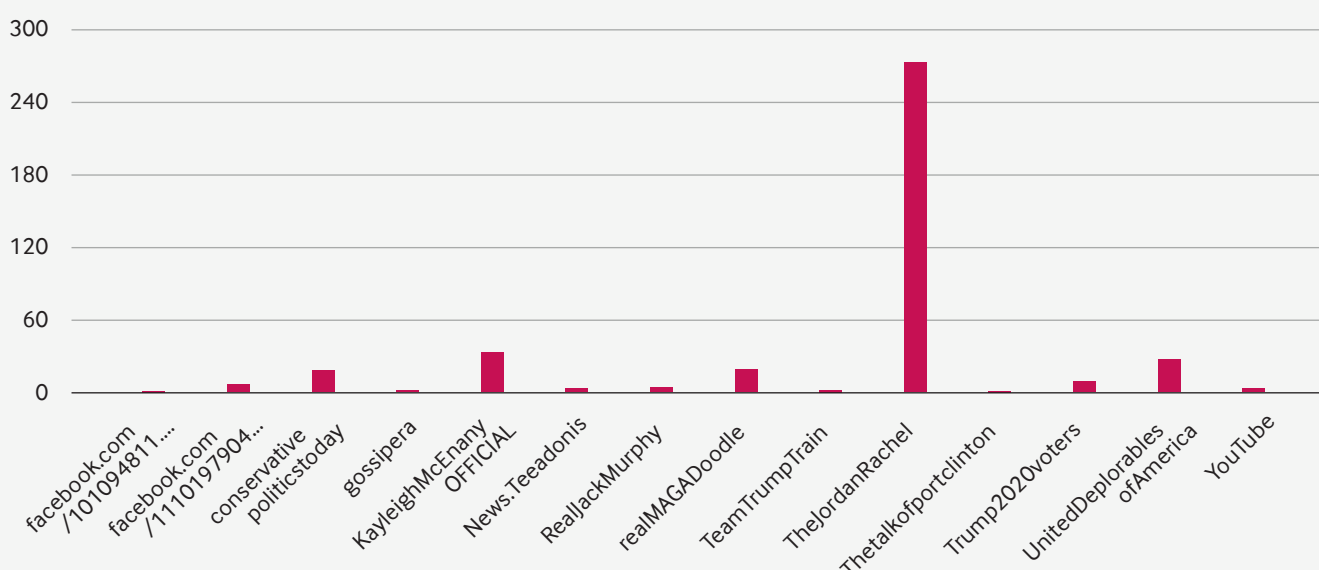
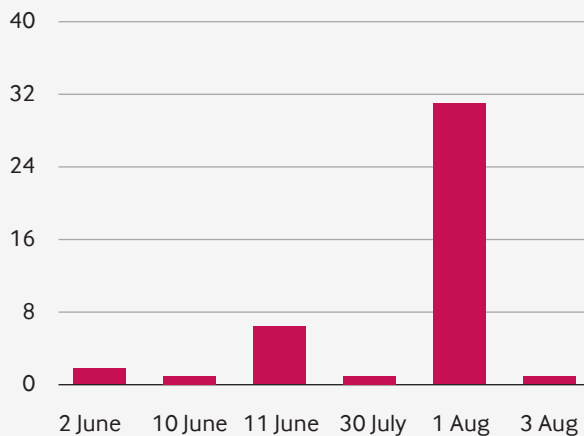


Figure 19 Posts of “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” originating from Link Source groups and pages



These spree-posts were spread across 41 Community groups and pages in ISD’s network (see Appendix). While most of these Community entities received a single “Candace Owens EXPLODES...” post, three groups—**CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB**, **FOX NEWS with Tucker Carlson**, and **Latinos For Trump - California Group**—received two. While the focus and subject matter of the 41 Community groups and pages were diverse, they shared some commonalities.

On a macro level, these groups and pages were dedicated to US conservative politics, such as **Friends Supporting Donald J. Trump** and **The Patriot Wagon-USA**.⁵⁶ More specifically, Community groups and pages targeted particular communities, including: racial minorities, women, local interest groups and conspiracy supporters. Racial and ethnic groups in ISD’s dataset included three groups dedicated to Latinx Trump supporters and a group dedicated to Italian Trump supporters. Three groups mentioned women in their names, while five listed specific cities or states. Only one of the Community groups and pages presented in this case study related to the QAnon conspiracy theory; however, the full list of Community entities in the network included a large number of Q-focused accounts.

Table 6. Posts from 01/08/2020. (Examples of spree-posting highlighted.)

Time	Facebook Group/ Page	Poster
13:03:46	Trump 2020: Make Liberals Cry Again	fb-user-1
13:03:51	Donald Trump President of the United States - Team Trump 2020	fb-user-2
13:03:52	Celebrities For Trump	fb-user-2
13:08:54	Trump 2020 - If You Can't Handle The Truth Move Along Snowflake!	fb-user-2
13:09:04	Understanding Serial Brain 2 ...	deleted post
15:04:50	FIRST OFFICIAL CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	fb-user-2
15:05:11	Friends Who Like Judge Jeanine Pirro	fb-user-3
16:02:18	Colorado Women for Trump 2020	fb-user-4
16:02:21	The Patriot Wagon-USA	fb-user-4
16:02:24	Flip US Red	fb-user-4
16:02:31	1 Million Supporters for Donald Trump	fb-user-4
16:02:33	TRUMP TRAIN (Official)	fb-user-4
16:02:34	ALL ABOARD THE TRUMP TRAIN	fb-user-4
16:02:35	Trump's America	fb-user-4
16:02:38	Trump Women Landslide 2020	fb-user-4
16:02:41	President Trump Supporters	fb-user-4
16:02:42	MA 4 Trump	fb-user-4
16:02:43	America First Grassroots	fb-user-4
16:02:47	Friends Supporting Donald J. Trump	fb-user-4
16:02:50	Keep America great Trump Pence 2020 !	fb-user-4
16:02:57	Americas Voice News	fb-user-4
16:02:58	CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	fb-user-4
16:02:59	Italians For President Donald J Trump	fb-user-4
16:03:04	Virginia Women For Trump	fb-user-4
16:20:58	#QanonWarriors	deleted post
17:45:17	NM 33 COUNTIES UNITE âœŽ°œŽ†	fb-user-5
17:45:32	deplorable Trump supporters	fb-user-6
17:45:51	FOX NEWS with Tucker Carlson	fb-user-6
17:46:03	Team Trump	fb-user-7
17:46:07	Latinos For Trump.	fb-user-7
19:48:17	Republicans for Trump, Keep The Senate, and Take Back the House In 2020	fb-user-7

Conclusion

Deception has become part and parcel of online information systems. The low cost of entry for large-scale information manipulation still appears to outweigh the friction in place on platforms like Facebook. In this investigation, politically divisive and partisan content was funneled at scale to potentially interested or vulnerable communities on the platform through a combination of likely coordinated pages, groups and accounts. There are signals to indicate that this coordination may have been managed from outside the US.

Of the 29 Link source entities (pages and groups) identified, only 18 have been removed by Facebook to date. ISD reported the remainder to Facebook during the course of its investigation, but has yet to receive a response from the platform. Despite Facebook's internal efforts to tackle what it terms "CIB" on its platform, this report highlights just how sophisticated and complex these networks can be, and how they continue to evade detection or takedown efforts.

The serpentine nature of this network, as well as ongoing responses from Facebook, make it particularly difficult to discern its scope, strategy and reach. A specific challenge lies in determining which individual accounts were part of the network and, of those accounts, which were organically spreading content posted by seemingly coordinated groups and pages. Such challenges highlight a critical issue at the heart of detecting and responding to some of the most insidious kinds of deceptive behaviour on Facebook. Arguably, the most successful inauthentic networks enmesh themselves in real, authentic networks and communities online, often posting or sharing verifiable and legitimate information. This makes disentangling real from fake a difficult and contentious task.

Such complexity is exacerbated by the absence of any verifiable datasets of this kind of activity on Facebook. None are as yet available to researchers outside of a small core of Facebook partners. Without the ability to test hypotheses, it is nearly impossible for independent researchers to learn more about the previous behaviours that have distinguished episodes of inauthentic or coordinated behaviour from legitimate, licit activity. There are ways to share such data responsibly and fairly: researchers can be key

partners to support the ongoing efforts made by the platform to recognise and remove offending accounts.

In the wake of the US Presidential election, this single example of inauthentic pages, groups and accounts illustrates the relative ease with which bad actors are able to develop sophisticated networks to spread polarising content and disinformation into specific target communities on Facebook. The work of other research organisations, as well as the transparency reports from Facebook's own actions in this area, shed light on the parallel efforts underway to deceive users globally and to stoke division and chaos using online information systems.⁵⁷ It is imperative that Facebook support the wider research community in tackling the raft of platform manipulation underway on its services. Beyond platform responsibility, democratic governments must recognise, come to terms with and begin to address these new forms of interference and duplicity targeting electorates. The combination of stronger deterrence measures, increased friction and removal action on platform services can help reduce the risk of targeted manipulation reaching real users.

APPENDIX 1. Community groups and pages - "G.eorge.Soros". (Highlighted groups and pages received more than one post.)

Row Labels	# of Posts	Row Labels	# of Posts
#ReOpenOC	1	Conservative Eagles of Faith	1
#TrumpsRedHatArmy ,Äî,Äî #Trump2020	1	Conservative Freedom	1
17 1141514 5:5 Use Logic Lab	1	Conservative New Mexico	1
5G Rebellen	1	Conservative Pro Trump Political Memes	1
99% United Commonwealth of nations... Achieving Peace Through Sovereignty <3	3	Conspiracy	1
99% United States "It's us and them"	1	CULT 45 DEPLORABLE AMERICANS FOR TRUMP	1
America	1	Dan Bongino Show Fan Club	2
America First For Donald Trump	1	Democrat is the new Communist	3
Americans for M.A.G.A. THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH	1	Donald J Trump: Zen And The Art Of The 45th American President	1
Americans Not Suffering from TDS	1	Donald Trump - 2020	1
Americans United To Support 45	1	Earth United	1
Anons Worldwide Wwg1Wga	1	FindtheTruth-with17	1
Are You afraid of the Truth	1	FIRST OFFICIAL CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	3
Avoim Tilannehuone ,Äî Kadonneen totuuden mets√§st√§j√§t	1	Grew Up In Fall River, MA	1
B√°rgerinitiative "Wir Gemeinsam"	1	Hispanics for Trump 2020	1
Black+White America United MAGA	1	Hispanos Republicanos y Patriotas	1
BOBLA	1	Hold Trudeau Accountable Group	2
Boomers for Trump2020	1	Hood Republicans	1
California Republicans Make Our Votes Count	1	Irish Americans	1
Canada Needs A Leader Like Trump	2	John James - U.S. Senate - Michigan People,Äôs Grassroots Campaign1	1
Chasing The White Rabbit - Q ANON ARMY (no post approval)	3	Just My 8 Sense^Q,Äöd1	1
CHAT FIJI	1	KEEP AMERICA GREAT ! GOD BLESS AND PROTECT PRESIDENT TRUMP	1
Check on yo folks	1	KEEP AMERICA GREAT! GOD BLESS THE USA!	1
Citizens Unite UK #wakeup	1	Lee Republican Women Federated	1
Collective Action Against Bill Gates. We Wont Be Vaccinated!!	2	Lewis County Sirens	1
Columbia County Republicans Forum - Oregon	1	Liz Wheeler / Tipping Point on OAN Fans Group	1
Common Sense Reps FOR the People	1	Love My President! Donald Trump, The Trump Family & All Trump Supporters!	1
		MA 4 Trump	1

APPENDIX 1. Community groups and pages - "G.eorge.Soros". (Highlighted groups and pages received more than one post.)

Row Labels	# of Posts	Row Labels	# of Posts
Making America Greater Together	1	Right Wing Political News Group	2
Mark Levin For US Supreme Court	1	Rise Up America!	1
Michigan Conservatives	1	RT auf Deutsch - Öffentliche Gruppe	1
Mopar Lovers & Trump Supporters	1	Russian Speaking Americans for Trump 2020	1
Moreno Valley's Politics Matter	1	Shifty Schiff	1
My America, My Home	1	Some Friends Of Raymond	1
Open Russian Speaking Minnesota	1	Support Donald Trump 45 Group	1
Patriot Nation	1	Swamp Drainers	1
Patrioti Italiani Di Destra Q 17 üöüáÆüáπ,ù\$ÔΠè	1	TeaParty Patriots Of Michigan	1
Patriotic Catholics for President Trump ,ù\$ÔΠ	1	Ted Cruz Nation "Exposing the Establishment and informing fellow Patriots"	1
Patriots For America USA	1	The "Real" Trump Army	1
Patriots of Canada	2	The Deplorables 2.0	1
PATRIOTS UNITING CANADA	1	The Great AwaQening WWG1WGA	
PATRIOTS WITH RIGHT COMMUNITY STANDARDS	1	We Are Generation Q	1
Pierre Poilievre for Prime Minister	1	The Jaramillo Report	1
PolitiChatter Support Group	2	The New Conservative Eagles of Faith!!!	1
PRZECIWN! N. W. O.	1	The North American Defense League	1
Q Anon Decoder Ring	1	The Rush Limbaugh Facebook Group	7
Q ANON HRVATSKA	1	The Sage's Sanctuary	1
Q SEEK TRUTH QUESTION EVERYTHING WWG1WGA	1	The Silent Majority Group	1
Q The Greatest Story Ever Told	1	The Trump solution {God, Country, and It's people}	1
QAnon AUSTRIA üáüáπ	2	THE TRUMPERS!!!	1
Real Lexit	1	Trey Gowdy For President 2020	1
Recall Gavin Newsom	1	Trump 2020: Make Liberals Cry Again	1
Recall Gretchen Whitmer	1	Trump Strong	1
Red State Deplorables-Conservative Watchdogs of the South	1	TRUMP TRUTHERS	1
Republicans for Trump, Keep The Senate, and Take Back the House In 2020	1	TRUMP2020 ELECTION RALLY	3
Republicans of California (Statewide)	1	TrumpMania	1
Right Wing Courier	1	Trump-Pence 2020	1
		Trumps Army	1

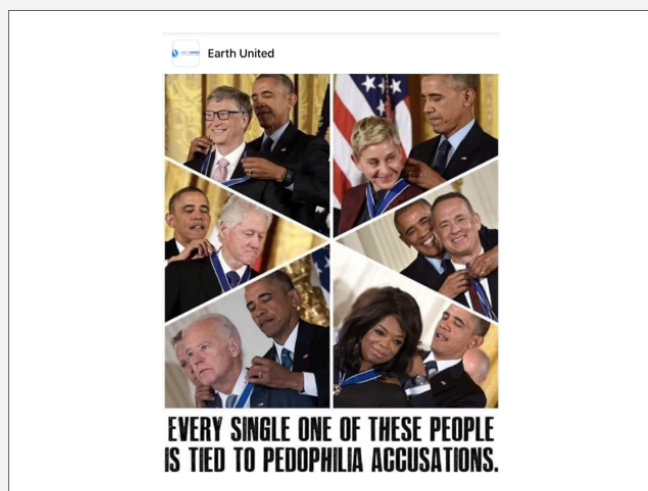
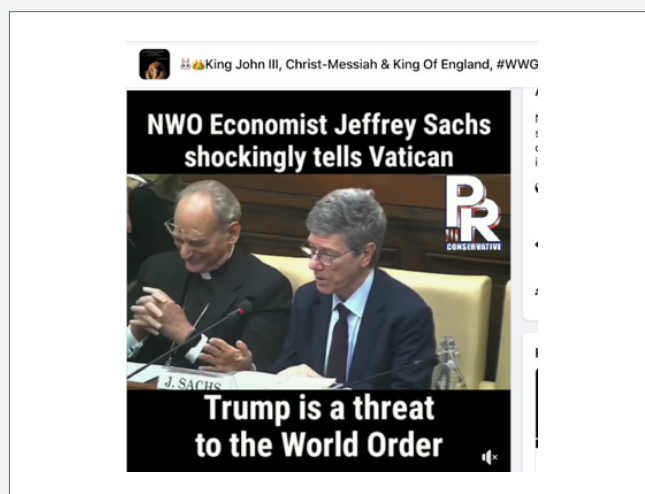
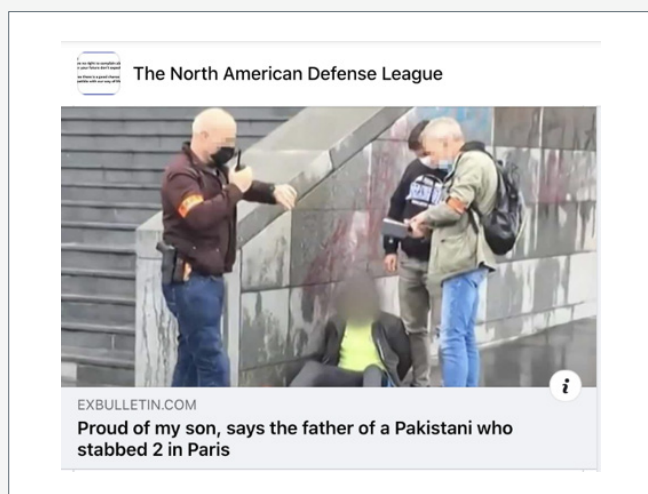
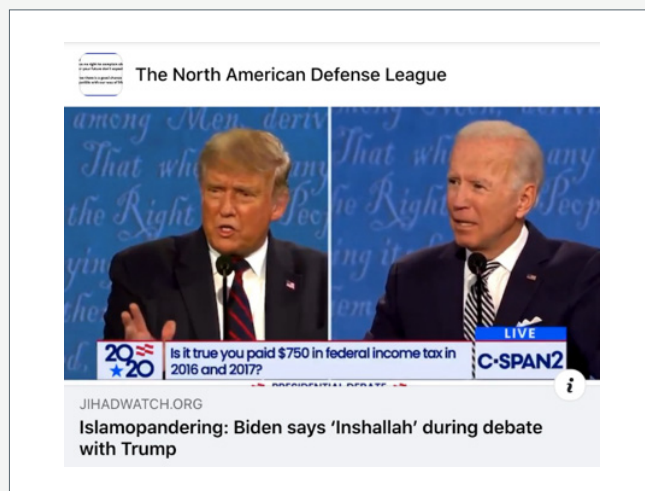
APPENDIX 1. Community groups and pages - "G.eorge.Soros". (Highlighted groups and pages received more than one post.)

Row Labels	# of Posts
Trump's New Generation	1
TRUMPS vision, and OBSTRUCTIONIST	1
Truth Revolution	1
TRUTHERS OF THE WORLD UNITE	1
VOTE TRUMP ONLY - THE AMERICAN PARTY RISING	1
Woke Society	1
Women United For Trump	1
WWG1WGA üá@üá¶	2
Zero Hedge Community	1
üá¶üá¶TRUMP 2020 - KEEP AMERICA GREATüá¶üá¶	2
üê∞üëëKing John III, Christ-Messiah & King Of England, #QAnon,#WWG1WGAü§¥üäëüêá	1
üëÅÔ¶è BEYOND THE TRUTH üëÅÔ¶è	1

1. Community groups and pages - "Candace Owens EXPLODES...". (Highlighted groups and pages received more than one post.)

Community Groups and Pages	# of Posts	Community Groups and Pages	# of Posts
#QanonWarriors	1	Team Trump	1
1 Million Supporters for Donald Trump	1	The New Kent Ohio Page	1
ALL ABOARD THE TRUMP TRAIN	1	The Patriot Wagon-USA	1
America First Grassroots	1	Trump 2020 - If You Can't Handle The Truth Move Along Snowflake!	1
Americas Voice News	1	Trump 2020: Make Liberals Cry Again	1
California Republicans Make Our Votes Count	1	TRUMP TRAIN (Official)	1
CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	2	Trump Women Landslide 2020	1
Celebrities For Trump	1	Trump's America	1
Colorado Women for Trump 2020	1	Understanding Serial Brain 2 ...	1
deplorable Trump supporters	1	Union Of Global Conservatives	1
Donald Trump President of the United States - Team Trump 2020	1	Virginia Women For Trump	1
FIRST OFFICIAL CANDACE OWENS FAN CLUB	1		
Flip US Red	1		
FOX NEWS with Tucker Carlson	2		
Friends Supporting Donald J. Trump	1		
Friends Who Like Judge Jeanine Pirro	1		
Friends Who Like Rush Limbaugh	1		
Italians For President Donald J Trump	1		
Keep America great Trump Pence 2020 !	1		
Latinos For Trump - California Group	2		
Latinos For Trump.	1		
LatinosForTrump Make California Great Again	1		
Les peul du monde entier	1		
MA 4 Trump	1		
NM 33 COUNTIES UNITE âœƒðŸ†°ðŸ†°	1		
Patriots Against Illegal Immigrants	1		
President Trump Supporters	1		
Recall Mayor Eric Garcetti	1		
Republicans for Trump, Keep The Senate, and Take Back the House In 2020	1		

2. Content posted to Community groups and pages - "G.George.Soros"



3. Examples of content posted to Black Archaeologist Group



Josie Dean was live.
3d · Public
Stand your ground in America



27

3 Comments 13 Shares

Jay Mack shared a link.
1d · Public

False Information
Checked by independent fact-checkers

[See Why](#) [See Link](#)

M.BEFOREITNEWS.COM
The Government Has Released Their Initial Plans To Force a Vaccine on EVERYONE | Survival | Before It's News

141

91 Comments 110 Shares



Black Archaeologist Group

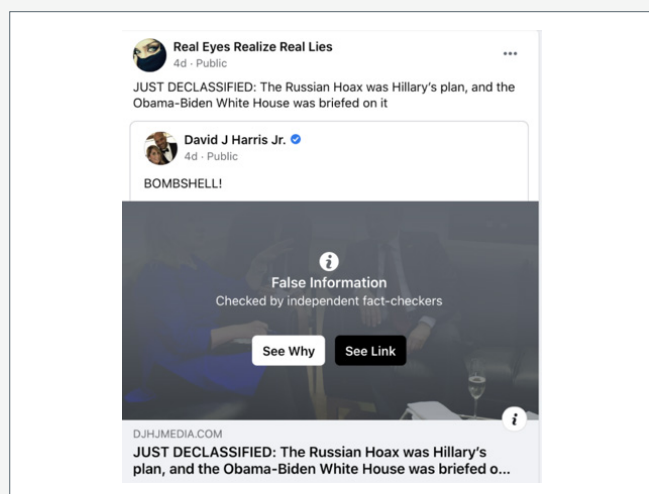
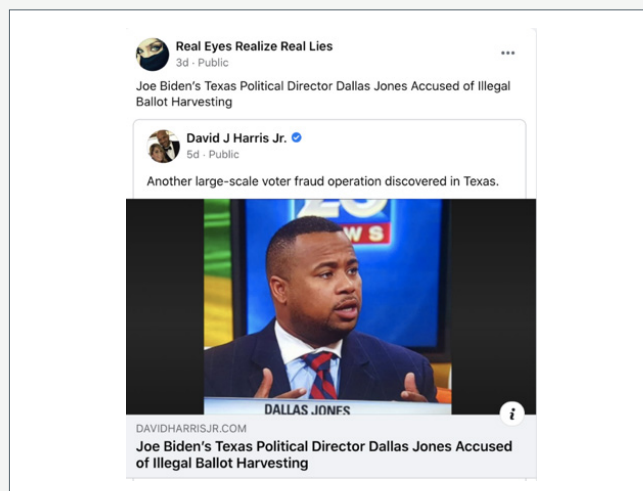
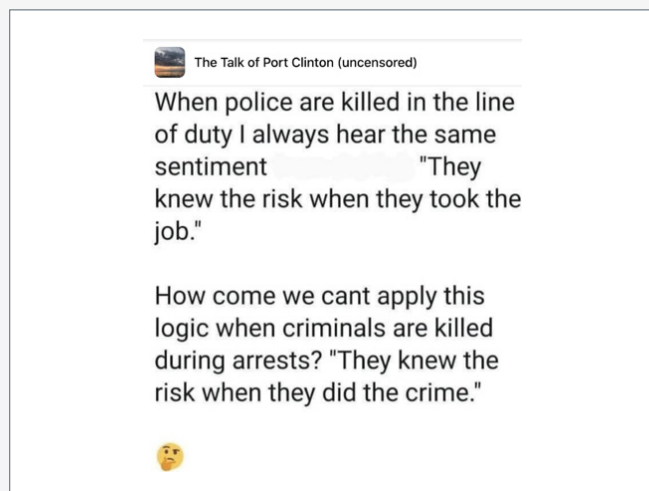
NYPOST.COM
How Trump — not Biden — has helped make black lives better

57

52 Comments 10 Shares



4. Examples of content posted to: Conservative Views with President Trump, The Talk of Port Clinton (uncensored), and Real Eyes Realize Real Lies - "Candace Owens EXPLODES..."



Endnotes

- 01 This search returned results for 1,457 entities — 1,401 groups and 56 pages. The 15 entities that ISD were unable to access were removed in October 2020, likely as a result of Facebook's takedown action against QAnon-affiliated groups and pages. It is important to note that the number of Facebook users reached by this network is an estimate. It is possible that Facebook users are members of or like multiple Community groups and pages, meaning that the total number of users reached would be less. In addition, being a member of a Facebook group or liking a Facebook page does not guarantee that these users were exposed to Link Source content.
- 02 R. Deller, 'Book Review: Conspiracy Theories and the People Who Believe Them edited by Joseph Uscinski', LSE Blog, 13 June 2019, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2019/06/13/book-review-conspiracy-theories-and-the-people-who-believe-in-them-edited-by-joseph-uscinski/>
- 03 C. Wardle and H. Derakshan, 'INFORMATION DISORDER: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making', Council of Europe, 27 September 2017, <https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-towardan-interdisciplinary-framework-for-researc/168076277c>
- 04 M.M. Lowenthal (2003), 'Open-Source Intelligence: New Myths, New Realities' in R.Z. George and R.D. Kline Intelligence and the National Security Strategist: Enduring Issues and Challenges, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004
- 05 September: <https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/September-2020-CIB-Report.pdf>
August: <https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/August-2020-CIB-Report.pdf>
July: <https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/July-2020-CIB-Report.pdf>
- 06 N. Gleicher, 'Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour Explained', Facebook, 6 December 2018, <https://about.fb.com/news/2018/12/inside-feed-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior/>
- 07 C. Colliver, E. Maharasingam-Shah, and J. King, 'Hoodwinked: Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour on Facebook', ISD, 28 October 2020. <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/hoodwinked-coordinated-inauthentic-behaviour-on-facebook/>
- 08 Facebook, 'Inauthentic Behaviour', Community Standards, 2020, https://m.facebook.com/communitystandards/inauthentic_behavior/
- 09 E. Thomas and C. Gatewood, 'COVID-19 Disinformation Briefings No. 4', ISD, 5 June 2020, <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/covid-19-disinformation-briefing-no-4/>
- 10 This use of Tumblr redirect links to cloak the direction of users to clickbait disinformation or spam sites is a tactic that has not been referenced directly in research on information operations on Facebook to date, as far as ISD is aware. However, ISD was not able to investigate the tactic further as the groups using this technique were removed by Facebook in the course of the investigation and no post-hoc data has been made available.
- 11 Without further information available from Facebook on the nature of these removals, it is impossible to provide a clear explanation and there is no available data for a retrospective review of their activity.
- 12 'Copy-paste' refers to text which is directly copied and pasted from its original source without any modifications. Definition taken from: <https://www.govtech.com/question-of-the-day/Question-of-the-Day-for-08312020.html>
- 13 Due to the amount of time it takes to gather this data, as well as wanting to ensure data was gathered within Facebook's terms, ISD did not collect an exact number on individual accounts.
- 14 Due to the time needed to manually gather this data, ISD was only able to analyse the individual accounts in the two case studies included in this report.
- 15 Secure Texas Border: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/258496227675564>
Trump Supporters for Political Truth: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/338984993477701>
QARMY WORLDWIDE "WWG1WGA": <https://www.facebook.com/groups/965989806933383>
Russian Speaking Americans for Trump 2020: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2795899973865850>

- 16 Canada-Proud of My Country, Ashamed of My Government!: <https://www.facebook.com/768587823307744>
 CHAT FIJI: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/391561351280234>
 Dutch Patriots: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/885736278556176>
 Q-Anon SLOVENIJA: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3283894274977310>
 Quality Jamaican Politics: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1097524833612120>
 - 17 De nasjonalkonservative: <https://www.facebook.com/1593335304295669>
 Destul e destul ! Ajunge! (Grup de lucru): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/131090557671906>
 Kilusang Bagong Bansa: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2004511076480818>
 ธรรมะคือ มีไว้แบ่งปัน: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/951904684931961>
 - 18 B. Nimmo, C. S. Eib and L. Ronzaud, 'Operation Naval Gazing: Facebook Takes Down Inauthentic Chinese Network', Graphika, September 2020, https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_naval_gazing.pdf
 - 19 CrowdTangle does not allow data pertaining to individual Facebook users to be collected. The observation of Member accounts in our network were made through the qualitative assessment of posts made to public Facebook groups and pages. Any discussion of individual Facebook users and accounts have been anonymised to ensure security and privacy. Only publicly available data is used and included in this report.
 - 20 Supreme Court of the United States, 'AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ET AL. v. ALLIANCE FOR OPEN SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL, INC., ET AL.', [supremecourt.gov](https://www.supremecourt.gov), October 2019, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/19-177_b97c.pdf
 - 21 J. Erlich, 'Supreme Court upholds funding requirement for foreign organisations', CNN, 29 June 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/29/politics/usa-id-supreme-court-first-amendment/index.html>
 - 22 Supreme Court of the United States, 'AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ET AL. v. ALLIANCE FOR OPEN SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL, INC., ET AL.', [supremecourt.gov](https://www.supremecourt.gov), October 2019, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/19-177_b97c.pdf
 - 23 Open Society Foundations, 'Who We Are', <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/who-we-are>
 - 24 Open Society Foundations Press Release, 'Open Society Says Supreme Court Ruling will Hurt Fight against HIV/AIDS', 29 June 2020, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/newsroom/open-society-says-supreme-court-ruling-will-hurt-fight-against-hiv-aids>
 - 25 D. Alexander, 'Obama Donated Over \$1 Million to Charity As President. Here's Where The Money Went', Forbes, 2 June 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danalexander/2017/02/06/obama-donated-over-1-million-to-charity-as-president-heres-where-the-money-went/#67e2a3b8459e>
 - 26 <https://viewdns.info/whois/?domain=teeadonis.info>
 - 27 BBC, 'Kyle Rittenhouse: Who is US teen accused of Kenosha Wisconsin protest murders?', BBC News, 28 August 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-53934109>
 - 28 <https://www.facebook.com/TheJordanRachel/posts/793604387814491>
 - 29 Ibid.
 - 30 Ibid.
 - 31 A. Robertson, 'Facebook bans troll accounts linked to conservative group Turning Point USA', The Verge, 8 October 2020, <https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/8/21507822/facebook-turning-point-usa-coordinated-inauthentic-behavior-troll-farm-ban-election-trump>
 - 32 Ibid.
 - 33 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/104173366635256>
 - 34 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TechNubian1>; Website: <https://www.blackarchaeologist.com/>
-

- 35 <https://www.facebook.com/BlackArchaeologist/>
- 36 Online accounts traced back to Michael Lambert are: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-lambert-69013ba9>; <https://www.facebook.com/michael.d.lambert.33>. Online accounts and the email address traced back to Ray Lambert are: lambert333@hotmail.com; <https://www.facebook.com/raymond.lambert.359>; <https://www.kweli.tv/authors/ray-lambert>
- 37 <https://www.youtube.com/c/TechNubian1>
- 38 <https://www.amazon.com/Black-History-Boy-Who-Loved-ebook/dp/B01NBUFUKI>, <https://www.amazon.com/Things-We-Do-Timbuktu-Golden-ebook/dp/B07P8TJLKB> and <https://www.etsy.com/ca/shop/TechNubian1>
- 39 Posted by: <https://www.facebook.com/ann.brown.121>
- 40 Link to now-removed YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/d-8M0s1FYPc>
- 41 BBC, 'Jacob Blake: What we know about Winsconsin police shooting', BBC News, 31 August 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-53909766>
- 42 D. Macguill, 'Did Jacob Blake's Ex-Girlfriend's Aunt Denounce Him on Twitter?', Snopes, 4 September 2020, <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/lifeisasoph-jacob-blake-ex/>
- 43 Conservative Views with President Trump: <https://www.facebook.com/663191423851974>
The Talk of Port Clinton (uncensored): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/460728084026385>
Real Eyes Realize Real Lies: <https://www.facebook.com/387156134629337>
- 44 <https://www.facebook.com/TheJordanRachel/>
- 45 <https://jordanrachel.com/about>
- 46 <https://twitter.com/TheJordanRachel/status/1305613166101975040>
- 47 <https://www.tpusa.com/jordanrachel>
- 48 A. McNamara, 'Candace Owens Steps Down as Turning Point USA Communications Director', The Daily Beast, 2 May 2019, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/candace-owens-steps-down-as-turning-point-usa-communications-director>
- 49 All YouTube links are now dead and no further analysis can be done.
- 50 <https://conservativept.com/>
- 51 J. Freedland, 'The new age of Ayn Rand: how she won over Trump and Silicon Valley', The Guardian, 10 April 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/apr/10/new-age-ayn-rand-conquered-trump-white-house-silicon-valley>
- 52 <https://trendingpolitics.com/>
- 53 <https://trendingpolitics.com/partners/>
- 54 <https://breakingfirst.com/>
- 55 <https://www.facebook.com/101094811567641/videos/296560474897721/>
and <https://www.facebook.com/111019790429999/videos/2937489866299773/>
- 56 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1072038376223219>
and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ThePatriotWagonUSA>
- 57 B. Nimmo, C. S. Eib and L. Ronzaud, 'Operation Naval Gazing: Facebook Takes Down Inauthentic Chinese Network', Graphika, September 2020, https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_naval_gazing.pdf; B. Nimmo, C. François, C.S. Eib and L. Ronzaud, 'IRA Again: Unlucky Thirteen', Graphika, September 2020, https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_ira_again_unlucky_thirteen.pdf; L. Harding, 'Facebook removes Africa accounts linked to Russian troll factory', The Guardian, 30 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/oct/30/facebook-removes-africa-accounts-linked-russian-troll-factory-yevgeny-prigozhin>; E. Dvoskin and C. Timberg, 'Facebook takes down Russian operation that recruited U.S. journalists, amid rising concerns about election misinformation', The Washington Post, 1 September 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/09/01/facebook-disinformation-takedown/>



Beirut | Berlin | London | Paris | Washington DC

Copyright © Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2020). Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is a company limited by guarantee, registered office address PO Box 75769, London, SW1P 9ER. ISD is registered in England with company registration number 06581421 and registered charity number 1141069. All Rights Reserved.

www.isdglobal.org