

## **DENY, DECEIVE, DELAY VOL. 2: EXPOSING NEW TRENDS IN CLIMATE MIS- AND DISINFORMATION AT COP27**

**ISD and the Climate Action Against Disinformation (CAAD) coalition launch a new flagship report outlining mis- and disinformation trends and charting a course ahead, resulting from analysis of online activity before, during and after the 2022 climate summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt (COP27).**

A geopolitically unstable year, 2022 created a fertile environment for mis- and disinformation. A [new report from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#), authored by ISD's Head of Climate Research, [Jennie King](#), in collaboration with 15 global partners, builds on our monitoring work during COP26 and the [seven recommendations](#) we set out to combat the issue at the scale and speed required earlier last year.

**Deny, Deceive, Delay Volume 2** is the culmination of research by the COP27 Intelligence Unit, synthesising work across the summit to track, expose and counter anti-climate attacks. The intelligence gained will drive CAAD's ongoing work and advocacy goals, including: engagement with big tech to craft a proportionate, systemic response to climate disinformation on social media; public education and 'pre-bunking efforts' at the grassroots; and work with multilateral institutions like UNFCCC to formalise the response to disinformation as part of broader climate policy.

### **Key findings from Volume 2 include:**

- **Climate denialism narratives are back and top the charts on Twitter (and it's not clear why).** The hashtag 'ClimateScam' spiked on Twitter in July and by December had accrued over 362k mentions (including retweets) from 91k unique users. It has been promoted by an array of highly followed and verified accounts. Shockingly, the term 'Climate Scam' is being actively recommended by Twitter for organic searches of 'climate'— often as the top result— despite data showing more activity and engagement on others climate-related hashtags, and flagging by CAAD to the platform. Its prominence cannot be explained and re-emphasises the need for transparency on how and why platforms surface content to users.
- **Big tech is financially benefiting from the appeal of climate mis- and disinformation.** Meta specifically was found actively hosting 3,781 ads from fossil fuel-linked entities, who spent \$3-4M between 1 Sept to 23 Nov 2022 on Facebook and Instagram. Popular techniques in ads included emotional messaging around livelihoods, national security and sovereignty in relation to fossil fuels. The phrase 'energy independence' was the most common (1925 ads) in Meta's Ad Library, followed by 'American energy' (1558 ads).

- **CAAD identified five key narratives surrounding climate in the run up to, duration and aftermath of COP 27: Cost of living crisis, culture wars & conspiracism, loss & damage, anti-green tech, necessity of fossil fuels.** These narratives— all prone to mis- & disinfo on climate— generated 267,000 original posts matching our keywords, produced by 139,889 unique actors. This content was shared 1,284,969 times from 29 Oct to 27 Nov. Conspiracy themes like 'the Great Reset' and 'New World Order' were intertwined in messaging, framing climate action as part of a plot by 'global elites' to exert control. **Messaging generally aligned with broader right-wing talking points around the economy, civil liberties and Big Government.**
  - New narrative of 'wokewashing', the adoption of 'progressive' rhetoric to oppose climate action, gained traction. Such framing spanned a range of arguments, including the false claim that green technology is as bad or even worse than fossil fuels, or that climate action is a form of 'neo-colonialism'.
- **A small cohort of 'Culture Warriors' claim the spotlight.** For COP27, we identified 12 actors who were most prolific within the 5 battleground topics monitored (Fossil Fuel Necessity; Anti-Green Tech; Cost of Living Crisis; Culture Wars; Loss and Damage). These 'misinfo influencers' garnered more than ~344k shares on 388 climate-themed posts around COP27. Nine of the 12 are verified accounts, with follower counts ranging from 65k to 1.9m.

COP27 broke records for the presence of industry lobbyists at the summit, with official delegates rising more than 25% on the previous year - and this upwards trend shows no sign of stopping this year. This should be a clear sign of the need for greater scrutiny into the information warfare delaying climate action; who funds it, who drives it and where is it most successful.

In 2023, nations will complete a 'global stocktake' of progress on the Paris agreement, assessing whether targets and commitments are making progress in mitigating the worst impacts of climate change. The results will form a core part of the COP28 summit, to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, one of the largest oil producers in the world, in December 2023.

CAAD is committed to researching and exposing the playbook of inaction in as many contexts as possible, from outright disinformation to greenwashing, online manipulation and state-sponsored propaganda. Stay on top of activity via our [website](#).

Interviews with Jennie King are available on request. The report is available for download on the [ISD website](#).

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