Data Briefing – January to August 2024
Online Domestic Extremism in Canada

This briefing paper details analysis of Canadian domestic extremists' online activity. It explores the platforms they are active on, the topics which galvanize them, and the ways in which they target communities in Canada. It is part of a multi-year study which will provide ongoing insight into Canadian domestic extremist activity through the ongoing delivery of analytical briefs.

Key Findings

Account Analysis

- ISD identified 341 domestic extremist social media accounts in Canada which published 1,022,427 posts. This includes 143 on Facebook, 109 on X, 72 on Telegram, 52 on Gab, 18 on YouTube, 17 on Instagram, 17 on TikTok.

- ISD identified 114 ethnonationalists (368,201 posts), 105 anti-government extremists (286,275 posts), 100 anti-Muslim extremists (318,229 posts), 83 white supremacists (249,795 posts), 42 Neo-Nazis (67,313 posts), 27 extreme right accelerationists (47,112 posts), 23 Christian Nationalists (39,362 posts) and 18 male supremacists (13,678 posts).

Key Narratives

- Key topics of discussion among Canadian domestic extremists were the psychologist and author Jordan Peterson, opposition to immigration, anti-Trudeau narratives, racism, anti-Vax claims, the anti-Muslim British activist Tommy Robinson and anti-Government sentiments.

Hate Speech

- Of 1,022,427 posts by the domestic extremist accounts, 13,055 (1.4% of the total) were classified as containing hate speech. Key events leading to a spike in hateful posts included pro-Palestine protests and the Southport riots in the United Kingdom.

- 4,577 posts targeted Jewish people, 4,382 migrants, 2,656 Muslims, 1,957 Asian Canadians, 1,279 Blacks, 1,252 First Nations communities and 218 Arab Canadians.

Note on Terminology

ISD used its definition of domestic extremism (see Annex) to decide if accounts should be included. This definition states that Extremism can be pursued through violent or non-violent means, thereby complementing efforts addressing political violence and terrorism by considering the broader risks to democracy, rights, and social cohesion posed by non-violent extremist ideologies, as well as aiming to highlight the continuum of ideologies and activities that inspire harm and illuminate pathways to radicalization and violence.

ISD analysts categorised all accounts included into the following sub-categories: White supremacist, Ethnonationalist, Christian Nationalist, Anti-Muslim Extremists, Male Supremacism, Anti-Government Extremism. For white supremacists, ISD additionally coded for two sub-categories, Neo-Nazi and extreme right accelerationists (i.e. all Neo-Nazis are coded as white supremacists though not vice versa). Accounts could also be ethnonationalist and Christian nationalist. Otherwise, accounts have been assigned to one sub-category.

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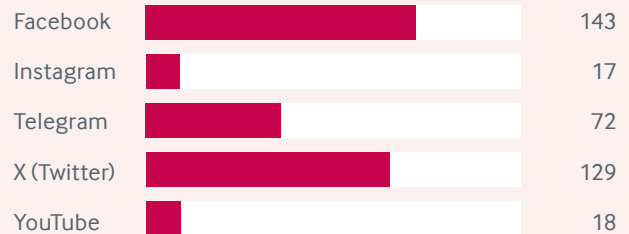## Contents

1   Account Analysis

Overall, ISD has so far identified 341 social media channels associated with domestic extremism in Canada across social media platforms. This initial list will be regularly expanded over the next four years through an account discovery exercise, (detailed in the Annex below).

This includes 143 on Facebook, 109 on X (formerly known as Twitter), 72 on Telegram, 52 on Gab, 18 on YouTube, 17 on Instagram, 17 on TikTok. Using the API's provided by these platforms, ISD collected 1,022,427 posts from 341 domestic extremist accounts (see Annex for ISD's definition of domestic extremism) in Canada between 1 January and 31 August 2024. This included 659,819 posts on X, 182,884 on Telegram, 174,173 on Facebook, 2,906 on YouTube and 2,645 on Instagram. While there is currently no systematic data access for TikTok, future briefings will include qualitative analysis focused on domestic extremists on TikTok.
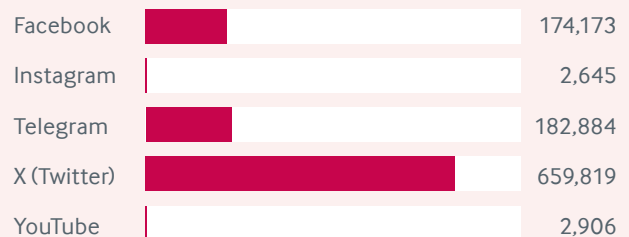
Of these channels ISD analysts identified 114 as ethnonationalists (368,201 posts), 105 as anti-government extremists (286,275 posts), 100 as anti-Muslim extremists (318,229 posts), 83 as white supremacists (249,795 posts), 42 as Neo-Nazis (67,313 posts), 27 as extreme right accelerationists (47,112 posts), 23 as Christian Nationalists (39,362 posts) and 18 as male supremacists (13,678 posts). Definitions for these categories are provided in the Annex of this report.

While more than 70% of Neo-Nazi and nearly half of white supremacist as well as extreme right accelerationist accounts are active on Telegram, anti-government and

Bar graph & corresponding tabular view showing total active accounts per platform

Facebook		143
Instagram		17
Telegram		72
X (Twitter)		129
YouTube		18

Bar graph & corresponding tabular view showing total posts per platform

Facebook		174,173
Instagram		2,645
Telegram		182,884
X (Twitter)		659,819
YouTube		2,906

	Posts	Active accounts	Total engagement
Accelerationists	47,112	27	570,787
Anti-Government Extremists	286,275	105	13,407,928
Anti-Muslim Extremists	318,229	100	68,457,313
Christian-Nationalists	39,362	23	1,221,990
Ethno-Nationalists	368,201	114	79,664,597
Male Supremacists	13,678	18	25,699,783
Neo-Nazis	67,313	42	1,266,209
White Supremacists	249,795	83	4,317,641

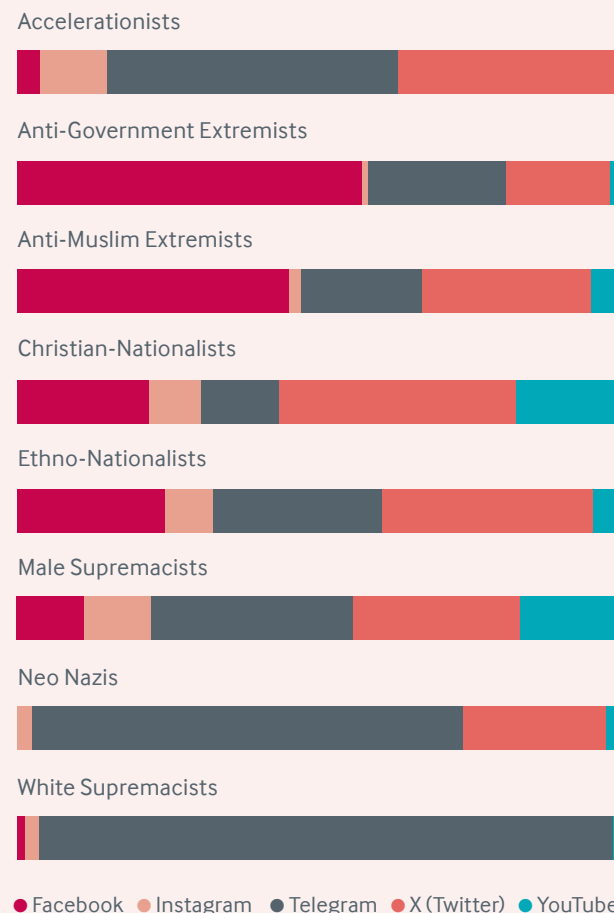# Data Briefing – January to August 2024
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anti-Muslim extremists have a greater presence on Facebook. X is an important platform across ideological sub-communities, especially among white supremacists, ethnonationalists, Christian Nationalists and Extreme Right Accelerationists.
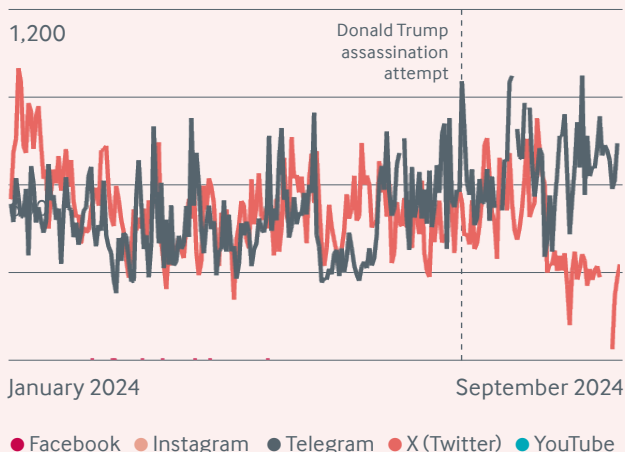
Further deep dives into the volume over time of posts made by these channels, broken down by ideological sub-community, help to highlight key events driving conversation among different domestic extremists online. For example, white supremacist discussions on Telegram peaked on the 13th July, the day of the first assassination attempt on US presidential candidate Donald Trump, as well as the 20th July, when Trump held his first rally since the assassination attempt, highlighting the importance of events beyond Canada for domestic extremist communication online (previous ISD research from 2021 had already identified discussions of US politics with a particular focus on Trump as key area of conversation for Canadian extremists). Posts on these days frequently contain speculation and conspiracy theories about the events being a plot by leftist elites.

By contrast, ethnonationalist discussion on X peaked on January 9, with accounts praising Elon Musk for attacking the Trudeau government for allegedly suppressing the free press after Rebel News journalist David Menzies had been arrested after being falsely accused of attacking a Police Officer.
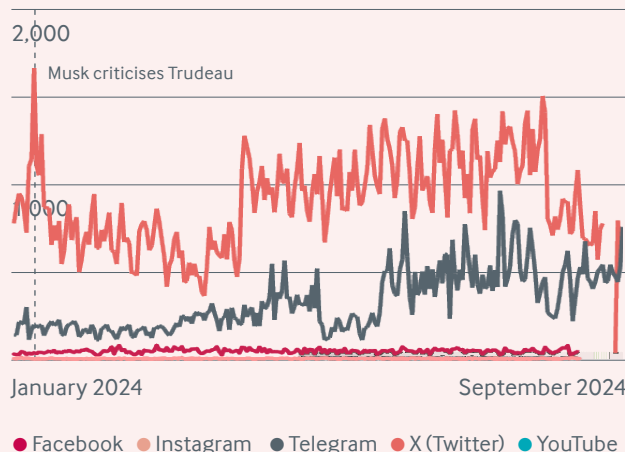
Stacked 100% bar chart showing the % of accounts per platform per ideology

Accelerationists

Anti-Government Extremists

Anti-Muslim Extremists

Christian-Nationalists

Ethno-Nationalists

Male Supremacists

Neo Nazis

White Supremacists

● Facebook ● Instagram ● Telegram ● X (Twitter) ● YouTube

Volume over time graph showing the total number of posts by white supremacist accounts per platform

1,200

Donald Trump assassination attempt

January 2024   September 2024

● Facebook ● Instagram ● Telegram ● X (Twitter) ● YouTube

Volume over time graph showing the total number of posts by ethno-nationalist accounts per platform

2,000

Musk criticises Trudeau

1,000

January 2024   September 2024

● Facebook ● Instagram ● Telegram ● X (Twitter) ● YouTube

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Among the small Canadian extreme right accelerationist community identified by ISD two influencers - Jeremy Mackenzie and Tyler Russel - are driving conversation, accounting for all top-10 posts with most likes among accelerationists. MacKenzie created the Diagolon concept, around which an an extremist network of affiliated Canadian live streamers and activists who promote extreme right accelerationist, conspiratorial and white nationalist worldviews. Russel is a young vlogger and former associate of Diagolon and a current content creator for Nick Fuentes' Cozy TV streaming platform. Whilst much of the content created by these influencers will not be relevant from a national security perspective, the Diagolon network has been identified as ideologically motivated violent extremist (IMVE) movement. For example, two Diagolon patches were reportedly found in the possession of individuals who had been prepared to engage police forces in a gun fight and were arrested at the Coutts border crossing during the February 2022 convoy protest.
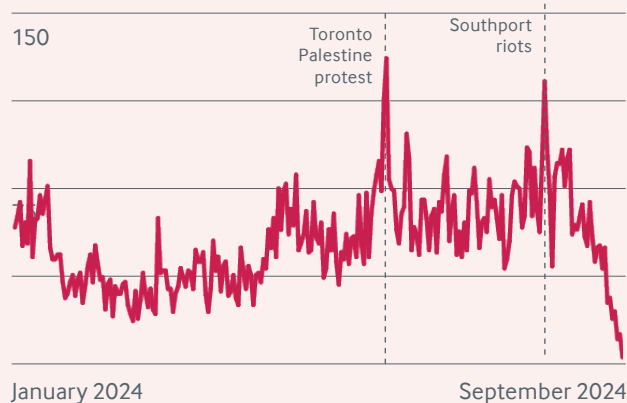
2   Hate speech

To better understand the ways domestic extremists target different communities we used Natural Language Processing to classify hate speech in the messages gathered targeting Jewish people, migrants, Muslims, Asian Canadians, Black people, First Nations communities and Arab Canadians.[1] A full breakdown of the methodology employed can be found in the technical Annex.
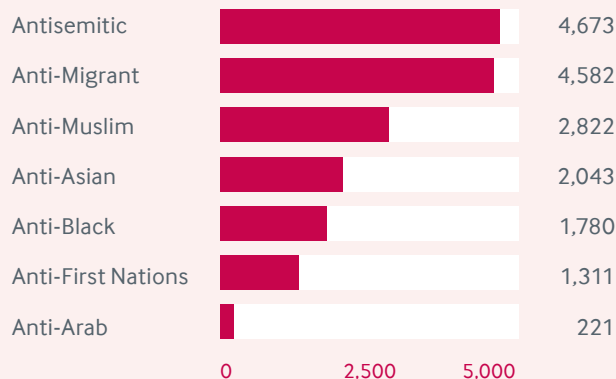
Of the 1,022,427 posts by the domestic extremist accounts between 1 January and 31 August, 13,055 (1.4% of the total) were classified as containing hate speech. Key events leading to a spike in hateful posts targeting Jewish people, migrants and Muslims in particular included pro-Palestine protests in the city of Toronto on 27 May. Previous ISD analysis of 23,667 antisemitic and 19,255 anti-Muslim comments on popular Canadian YouTube channels has found that Canadian anti-Muslim and antisemitic hate speech mirrors global trends by animating well-trodden hateful tropes and narratives, such as portraying Muslims as violent, or Jews as having disproportionate and insidious power and influence.

While some of these narratives may be below the threshold for illegal hate speech, some messages identified wilfully promoted hatred against an identifiable

Volume over time graph showing the total number of posts classified as hateful

Bar chart showing the number of posts classified as hateful per group

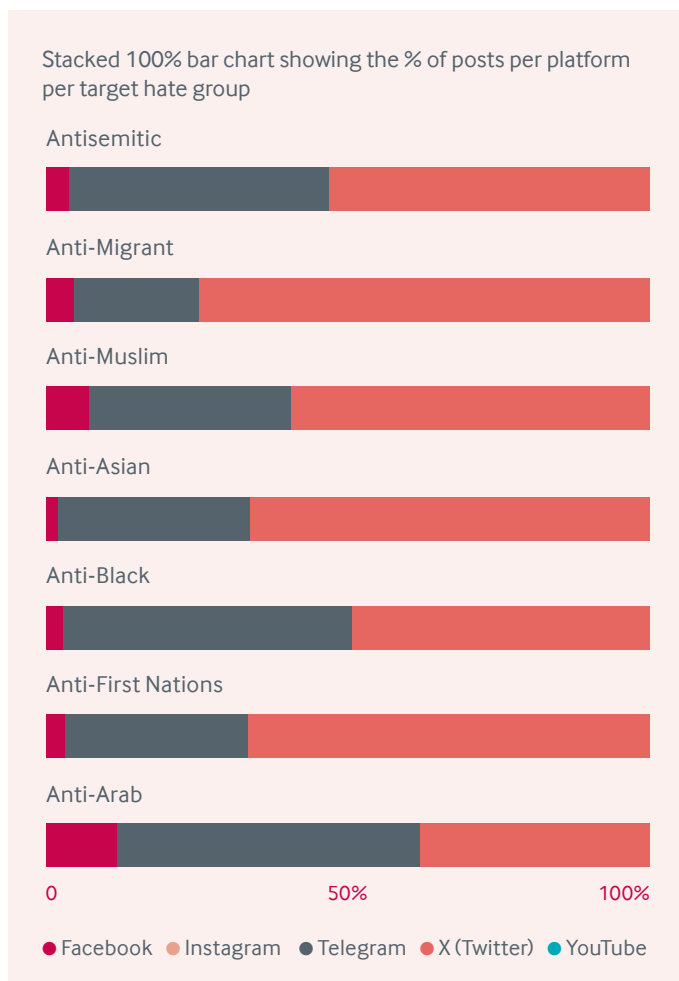group and may fall under the relevant sections under the Canadian Criminal Code.

Another spike in domestic extremist activity online occurred on 30th July, which marked the beginning of the Southport riots in the United Kingdom, which led to a rise in online hate against migrants and Muslims in particular. The impact of the riots highlights the internationalisation of extremist online networks, where events and narratives in small towns across the world can trigger an immediate response by extremists in another country.

Of these hateful posts, 4,577 were targeted at Jewish people, 4,382 at migrants, 2,656 at Muslims, 1,957 at Asian Canadians, 1,279 at Black people, 1,252 at First Nations communities and 218 at Arab Canadians.

Of the 13,055 hateful messages identified by ISD, 8,038 were posted on X, followed 4,547 on Telegram, 464 on Facebook, 4 on Instagram and 2 on YouTube. For most types of hate speech, X was the platform with the most content, though anti-black an anti-Arab hate speech were more common on Telegram.

Stacked 100% bar chart showing the % of posts per platform per target hate group

White supremacists, ethnonationalists, and anti-Muslim extremists were the most prolific in terms of promoting hate speech. While white supremacists published the most antisemitic (2,464 posts), anti-black (1,020 posts) and anti-First Nations (637 posts) messages, Ethnonationalists led all sub-communities in terms of hate speech against migrants, Muslims and Asians.
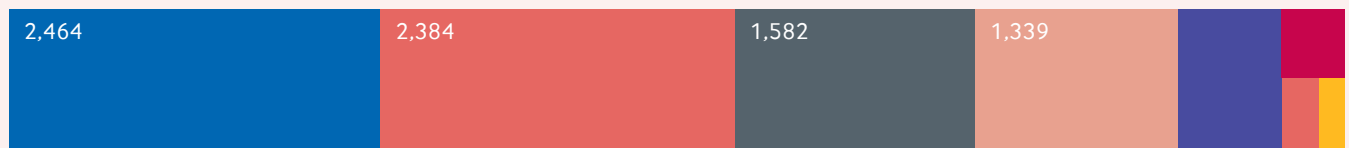
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Treemaps showing the number of posts per ideology per target hate group
Please note that ideology annotations are non-mutually exclusive - i.e. an account (and hence, any posts created by that account) can belong to multiple ideologies. Hence, figures within each per-hate target group treemap do not necessarily sum to the overall, un-broken-down, count for that target group.
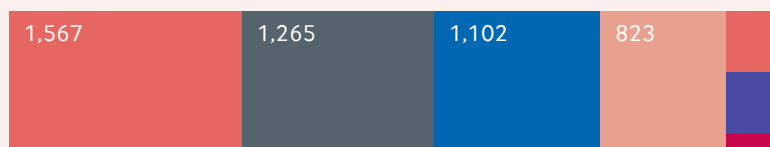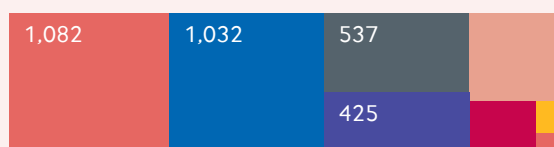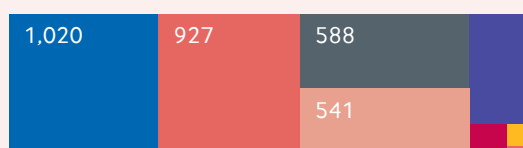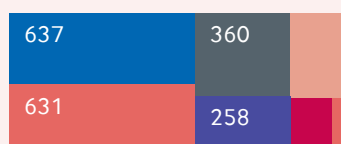
Antisemitic

Anti-Migrant

Anti-Muslim

Anti-Asian

Anti-Black

Anti-First Nations

Anti-Arab

● Accelerationist
● Anti-government extremist
● Anti-Muslim extremist
● Christian-Nationalist
● Ethno-Nationalist
● Male Supremacist
● Neo-Nazi
● White Supremacist

3   Key Narratives

The following section outlines the findings of ISD's qualitative analysis of key narratives among Canadian domestic extremists between 1 January and 31 August identified through LLM assisted automated topic modelling (outlined in detail in the Annex).

The results of this analysis suggest that Canadian domestic extremists combine discussions of common grievances associated with domestic extremist movements in Europe and North America such as immigration and perceived cultural decline, with attack on politicians and discussions of international affairs from a nationalist perspective that frequently ventures into attacks on disliked minority communities and conspiracy theories. It should be highlighted that while much of the discussion among domestic extremists may be offensive, most of it is very unlikely to cross any criminal thresholds.

Jordan Peterson
The theme with most posts centred around discussions of the controversial academic and author Jordan Peterson. Most of the content mentioning Jordan Peterson is supportive of his work and opinions; for example, he is described as a "hero of humanity", "Socrates reincarnate" and "doing God's work". Peterson is also praised for not being afraid to be controversial and for standing up to the "woke agenda". While most of the content is supportive of Peterson, some domestic extremist users argue that Peterson has become a conspiracy theorist or been brainwashed. It is noteworthy that Peterson garners such significant interest from Canadian domestic extremists that the topic modelling approach identified his work as public commentator as a key theme.

Anti-Immigration
The second-most prominent theme centred around anti-immigration narratives. Notably, this was the theme that received most engagement. As highlighted in the previous section, migrants were the second-most common target group for hate speech by domestic extremists. In alignment with typical domestic extremist tropes, immigrants are described as invaders, and crimes perpetrates by non-white immigrants are highlighted. Canadian domestic extremists argue that immigrants are bringing the "third world" to Canada. For example, misinformation about Indian immigrants defecating on

Number of posts per ideology

Ideology	Posts
Jordan Peterson	3,936
Anti-Immigration	3,892
Anti-Trudeau	3,776
Racism	2,853
Anti-Vax	2,717
Tommy Robinson	2,449
Peterson Academy	2,201
Anti-Government	1,913

Total engagement per theme

Theme	Engagement
Jordan Peterson	601,836
Anti-Immigration	909,159
Anti-Trudeau	598,869
Racism	307,206
Anti-Vax	186,616
Tommy Robinson	95,646
Peterson Academy	25,157
Anti-Government	74,551

Wasaga Beach in Ontario is frequently shared and discussed. Anti-immigration narratives also overlap with anti-government discussion. For example, domestic extremist users argue that the housing crisis is made worse by immigration and that the Government of Canada is willing to support new immigrants with subsidized housing and meals, while leaving Canadian citizens to become homeless and starve.

Anti-Trudeau
Discussion of Trudeau centres around how he and the Liberal government have allegedly "destroyed" Canada. Trudeau is described as anti-Canadian, importing refugees and denying the existence of a Canadian identity and culture. In the same vein, Trudeau is also labelled as pro-China, working to forward Chinese interests both internationally and domestically. In addition to the

corruption in the Liberal party/ current government, Canadian domestic extremists believe that Justin Trudeau and the entire Trudeau family are personally corrupt.

Racism
This topic was centered around discussions of "anti-white racism", combined with anti-black and anti-Asian comments. The comments claimed that there was an anti-white double standard in how different groups are treated. Many users promoted white identitarian and at times supremacist views, pride in white heritage, and called for unity among white people. Users expressed disbelief about the validity of Black grievances around racism and discrimination.

Anti-Vax
The comments in this topic reflected anti-vaccine sentiments, distrust of pharmaceutical companies and Canadian health authorities, and concerns about societal impacts stemming from COVID-19 and related policies. Many comments promoted conspiracy theories, including claims that organizations like the WHO and influential figures like Bill Gates are involved in harmful activities. Other posts even expressed a general lack of trust in government and health institutions.

Tommy Robinson
The comments in this topic predominantly express support for the actions and beliefs of the British anti-Muslim extremist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), who was detained in June 2024 for an alleged immigration offence while travelling in Canada for several planned speaking engagements. Many comments praise him for his efforts to expose "Muslim grooming gangs" in the UK and portray him as a hero defending Western civilization. Other messages express concern for his safety, and complain about Robinson allegedly being silenced for speaking uncomfortable truths.

Peterson Academy
This topic also centred around Jordan Peterson, with a specific focus on discussing his Peterson Academy online education platform. Most comments praise Peterson for his intelligence, courage, and ability to challenge mainstream ideas, while others critique his overly assertive debating style. Some comments even include humorous remarks about his fashion sense and personality. This topic received comparatively little engagement.

Anti-Government
Most of the anti-government posts showed a lack of trust in the Canadian Government, expressing distrust in governmental institutions and officials. Many comments complained about perceived corruption and blamed the government for societal issues. There's a recurrent theme of disillusionment with democracy in Canada with references to the government failing to protect freedoms or prioritize citizens' needs. Several comments also criticized media influence and the alleged erosion of personal rights, especially regarding gun ownership.

Methodological Annex

Definitional Framework and Thresholds for Inclusion
Often, extremism has been narrowly framed around security threats related to terrorism and violent extremism. By contrast, ISD has sought to conceptualise extremism as an ideology centred around social identity that promotes supremacy of an in-group, justifies discrimination of out-groups and therefore runs counter to the very idea of universal human rights. This definition complements efforts focused on political violence and terrorism, and considers the broader risks to democracy, rights and social cohesion presented by the non-violent promotion of extremist ideologies. At the same time, the definition draws a key distinction between radical critiques of the status quo that do not promote supremacist or authoritarian societies and extremist ideologies which do.

- **ISD's Definition of Extremism is** the advocacy of political and social change in line with a system of belief that claims the superiority and dominance of one identity-based 'in-group' over an 'out-group.' Extremism advances a dehumanising 'othering' mind-set incompatible with pluralism and universal human rights and can be pursued through violent or non-violent means.

These quarterly data briefings focus specifically on domestic extremism. ISD has developed a definition of **domestic extremism** that is rooted in our definition of extremism and informed by complementary work led by Professor Barbara Perry and right-wing extremism expert Cas Mudde.

Domestic extremism is a belief system that is characterised by its reference to racial, ethnic, cultural supremacy which advocates a system of

belief in inequality based on an alleged difference and the perceived threat posed by out-groups. This extremism is often framed in terms of white power and commonly exhibits nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, misogyny, hate against minority communities, and strong state advocacy.

This definition is necessarily broad and captures a range of extremist subcultures and harmful activity, which is reflective of the diversity of groups and trends within domestic extremism. It should be noted that our definition is not limited to illegal content and behaviour but overlaps and intersects with several existing legal categories. Our definition of extremism encapsulates a spectrum of activity and related frameworks which are relevant to different stakeholders. This is intentional, as it is hoped that our analysis will demonstrate the continuum of ideologies and activity which inspires different types of harm, and evidence pathways to radicalization and violence.

Legal but harmful	Criminal	National security
Conspiracy theories	Hate crime	IMVE
Mis/ disinformation	Illegal hate speech	PMVE
Hate speech below criminal threshold	Online abuse	RMVE
	Harassment	
	Property destruction	
	Incitement to violence	

Account Discovery
These quarterly data briefings draw on analysis across the digital ecosystem occupied by domestic extremists, including quantitative insights from Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X and Telegram, as well as qualitative insights from platforms that do not offer API access.

ISD identified a list of seed accounts belonging to Canadian domestic extremists. These were identified through a three-step process:

- ISD drew on existing lists of domestic extremists from previous projects analysing right-wing extremism in Canada, as well as an extensive review of existing research and reporting on extremist mobilisation in Canada.

- With its technology partner CASM, ISD conducted an automated account discovery analysis to identify accounts that were recommended by or engaged with known Canadian right-wing extremists.

- ISD analysts then reviewed these accounts against our definitional thresholds for domestic extremism.

ISD and CASM will replicate this exercise on a quarterly basis to identify newly emerging accounts missed or non-existent during the initial set-up phase

Categorisation of accounts
ISD drew on its definition of domestic extremism to guide its' decisions about if a group, individual or community should be classified as domestic extremist. Decisions were made based on if an account or channel analysed:

a. Are clearly based in Canada, or are movements with transnational adherents known to have an impact on Canada (e.g. Terrorgram)

b. Explicitly self-identify as right-wing extremists (or as "domestic extremists")

c. Can be clearly characterised as such based on existing literature and previous research

d. Can be clearly characterised as such based on a review of a sample of content they have produced.

In the latter case, ISD ensured that the group, individual or community has posted 5 or more pieces of content that clearly promote features such as nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy or strong state advocacy. ISD analysts recorded a rationale in the coding document with relevant screenshots.

To account for the ideological heterogeneity within domestic extremism, ISD additionally identified ideological sub-categories. ISD analysts have therefore categorised the following sub-categories:

- **White supremacist**: White supremacists believe in the superiority of whites over people of colour and advocate that white people should be politically and socially dominant over people of colour. This can extend to a belief in the need for violence against, or even the genocide of, people of colour.

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Sub-Categories of white supremacists[2]:

- **Neo-Nazi**: A movement promoting National Socialist ideology and symbols.

- **Extreme Right Accelerationist**: 'Accelerationism' is a term used by white supremacists and other extremist groups to refer to "their desire to hasten the collapse of society as we know it". Generally, acceleration is used in the context of white genocide conspiracy theories, which believes white people are under threat and are being systematically targeted through e.g. immigration and other means. A collapse of modern societal structures and political systems is seen as the only means through which to stop these perceived injustices against white people. Indeed, many accelerationist groups desire this collapse and call for replacing modern society.

- **Ethnonationalist**: Ethnonationalism is a form of nationalism where the nation is defined in terms of ethnicity. Central to ethnonationalism is the belief that nations are tied together by a shared heritage and culture that is based on ethnicity. Ethnonationalists are often marked by implicit rather than explicit racism, and rarely promote overt supremacism.

- **Christian Nationalist**: According to US academic Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Christian Nationalism is based on the proposition that your country 'is and should remain a Christian nation and that Christianity should be prioritized by the state.' Christian Nationalists therefore explicitly reject the separation between the Church and the state.

- **Anti-Muslim Extremists**: The anti-Muslim movement is a loose network of groups and individuals who share the fear that Western cultures are threatened by an 'Islamic takeover'. Anti-Muslim groups are marked by their opposition to Islam as an ideology, and Muslims as a people.

- **Male Supremacism**: The manosphere is a loose collection of movements marked by their overt and extreme misogyny. Movements include 'incels', Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) and men's rights activists (MRAs).

- **Anti-Government Extremism**: Sovereigntists are marked by their and militia groups rejection of court and state authority. Joining these groups together is the rejection of the authority of the federal state, and commonly adherence to a range of conspiracy theories. In some instances, sovereigntists may mobilise as militia.

Hate speech

ISD used keywords to filter each message in the overall dataset of 1,022,427 posts gathered across platforms: a message that did not have any keywords and phrases was marked as not hateful, the rationale being that hate speech needs a recognisable target.

All the messages were subsequently run through a version of Llama 3.1 8B parameters- 'grimjim/Llama-3.1-8B-Instruct-abliterated_via_adapter' using an LLM-based prompt.[3] This is a jailbroken version and can be found on huggingface.

This gave every message a hateful classification and a confidence score. ISD then trained a classifier using a mix of labelled data and data from hateful datasets (evaluated on just ISD data) to give the final classification to any messages that made it through the filters.

Topic Modelling

ISD collected 1,022,427 posts from 341 domestic extremist accounts in Canada across X, Facebook, Telegram, YouTube and Instagram between 1 January and 31 August 2024.

The research then employed a topic modelling technique called semantic mapping, a clustering approach for analysing the textual content of posts. The process of semantic mapping involves (1) computing numeric representations of messages that capture semantics of the text, (2) clustering message representations to identify groups of semantically similar messages, and (3) manual coding of clusters to create a thematic taxonomy of themes and subthemes.

For textual embedding, we utilised "bge-m3", a popular general purpose pre-trained model. For clustering, we employed a widely adopted process of first applying UMAP to the embeddings, which simplifies the complex numerical representations into a lower-dimensional space, and further applied HDBSCAN to identify dense

areas in this reduced space, forming clusters. We utilised the BERTopic package to encapsulate this process and facilitate the generation of cluster keyword summaries.

Due to the large size of the dataset and the computational limitations associated with semantic mapping, it was necessary to reduce the data to a manageable size. We generate a suitable dataset for analysis by taking a random sample of 304,012 messages across the dataset. We further applied standard preprocessing techniques, (1) removing all hashtags, user mentions, emojis, and URLs from the messages, and (2) removing any subsequently empty messages. This resulted in 293,539 messages for semantic mapping.

Semantic mapping resulted in 179 distinct clusters, with 50.9% (149,436) of the messages remaining unassigned to any cluster (assigned to an 'outlier' category). The outlier category acts as a bucket for messages that HDBSCAN doesn't consider similar enough to any of the identified dense clusters, and due to the noisy nature of social-media data is quite typical to be around half the dataset. This left us with 144,103 messages categorised into 179 clusters. These 179 different clusters were subsequently manually assessed by analysts based on a random sample of 10-20 related comments and qualitatively grouped into themes. The 8 most popular themes are analysed in the key narratives section above.

Endnotes

1   Please note that hate speech targeting other groups, including anti-LGBTQ+ speech and misogynistic speech will be added into future quarterly briefings.

2   While all accounts coded as Neo-Nazi or accelerationist were also coded as white supremacist, not all white supremacists were also coded as Neo-Nazis or accelerationists.

3   '''You are an AI language model trained to identify and classify comments that SPECIFICALLY contain egregious hate speech.

   Egregious hate speech means CLEAR and EXPLICIT I hate speech, if there is doubt then it is not egregious hate speech.

   Comments are NOT egregious hate speech if they are merely rude, offensive or distasteful.

   Respond with 1 if the comment contains egregious hate speech.

   Respond with 0 if the messages do not meet the criteria of the 1 classification.

   For each of the ^ comments in the provided text you will return a breakdown of your classification in a json format with the classification, followed by a confidence score ranging between 0 to 1 based on how likely you think the classification is correct, followed by an explanation for the classification:

   {«Comment Number»: «Classification»:, «Confidence score»:, «Explanation»:}

   You MUST respond to EXACTLY ^ comments only in this format and provide no additional text outside this format,

   Please classify the following ^ comments:›››

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