

« New Knowledge

# SSCI Research Summary

December 1, 2018

An assessment of the Internet Research Agency's U.S.-directed activities in 2015-2017 based on platform-provided data

# Internet Research Agency Content Analysis

For years, Russia has leveraged social media to wage a propaganda war. Their information operations initially targeted their own citizens and immediate geographical sphere of influence. In 2014, they increased the breadth of those operations to include sowing societal and political divisions in the United States. The scale of their operation was massive — they reached 126 million people on Facebook, posted 10.4 million tweets on Twitter, uploaded 1,000+ videos to YouTube, and reached over 20 million users on Instagram. This manipulation of U.S. political discourse continues in 2018.

The Internet Research Agency disinformation campaign touched all major players in the social network ecosystem: the presence of manipulated content on Facebook, Twitter, and Google is now well-documented. In the case of Google, YouTube, G+, Gmail, and Google Voice were all leveraged to either host content or to support personas. Reddit, Tumblr, and Medium have publicly confirmed that their platforms were misused as well. Evidence in this data set confirms activity on Vine and Meetup. Games and music apps were created and pushed to teenagers to download. Even popular game Pokemon Go was incorporated into the operation. Outside of social platforms, a number of sites were created to host original written content and articles. Social network manipulation for the purposes of disseminating propaganda and conducting influence operations is a systemic problem.

In late 2017, ahead of a series of hearings, Facebook, Twitter, and Google (YouTube) gave Congress data sets of tweets, images, and other content determined to be linked to the Internet Research Agency. This analysis is an investigation of what was provided in the data set to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.



# Themes

The IRA had a roster of social issues that they emphasized and reinforced across their Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube content. On Twitter they discussed these topics but included many others – they participated in real-time conversations and hashtag games focused on unfolding events. There was also longform blog content with a geopolitical focus, such as the GI Analytics page promoted via Google AdWords, that laid out nuanced positions on a variety of topics:

"Our purpose and mission are to provide high-quality analysis at a time when we are faced with a multitude of crises, a collapsing global economy, imperialist wars, environmental disasters, corporate greed, terrorism, deceit, GMO food, a migration crisis and a crackdown on small farmers and ranchers. We are in a desperate need of truth and of hard-cutting analysis, especially now, when we are being betrayed by our elected representatives and the corporate media." – GI Analytics

- Black culture/community issues
- Police brutality/Black Lives Matter
- Pro-police/Blue Lives Matter
- Anti-refugee/immigration & border issues
- Texas culture
- Southern culture (Confederate history)
- Separatist movements
- Muslim issues
- LGBT issues
- Meme culture/Red Pill
- Gun rights/2nd Amendment
- Pro-Trump/Anti-Clinton
- Pro-Bernie or Stein/Anti-Clinton
- Patriotism/Tea Party
- Religious rights
- Native American issues
- Veterans Issues
- Local News/Journalism/Media

# Key Takeaways

- The comprehensive dataset included 10.4 million tweets, 1107 YouTube videos, 116,205 Instagram posts, and 61,483 unique Facebook posts.\*
- There is still what appears to be active content and ongoing efforts on several platforms.
- The majority of the content focused on societally divisive issues, most notably race.
- The greatest effort on Facebook and Instagram appears to have been focused on developing Black audiences. There was significant and extensive integration into the Black community, particularly on Facebook, via the creation of a dedicated media ecosystem, the sharing and cross-promotion of legitimate media content, and ongoing attempted development of human assets. The degree of integration was not replicated in the Right-leaning content.
- Substantial portions of the political content was anti-Hillary Clinton on both the right and left-leaning pages. There was no pro-Clinton content aside from a public rally in which Muslims were asked to support her. The bulk of the Muslim page content was still anti-Clinton.
- There appeared to be a strong and consistent preference for then-candidate Donald Trump, beginning in the early primaries. There was unfavorable content about a wide range of Republican candidates and leaders, including Sens. Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Lindsay Graham, John McCain, and then-candidate Dr. Ben Carson.

\*there was a substantial amount of cleaning and de-duping required to prepare the data sets

# Key Takeaways II

- Messaging tactics and topics varied by platform: Facebook and Instagram focused on creating persistent messaging and reinforcing themes. They created strong ties by posting a majority of content designed to generate in-group approval and camaraderie, then posted occasional content that was either designed to sow division from out-groups, explicitly partisan and election-related, or focused on a theme that Russia cared about (Syria). Twitter content, meanwhile, was much more reactive to current events and topics, and less focused on group dynamics.
- Gun rights (including a dedicated page for Black audiences) and immigration received extensive attention.
- There were instances in which the same article was shared to two different Pages simultaneously, with each taking the opposite point of view.
- There were several variants of suppression narratives, spread both on Twitter and on Facebook. These included malicious misdirection (text-to-vote scams deployed on Twitter), support redirection ('vote for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party!'), and turnout suppression ('stay home on Election Day!').
- The IRA shifted a majority of its activity to Instagram in 2017; this was perhaps in response to increased scrutiny on other platforms, including media coverage of its Twitter operation.
- Instagram engagement outperformed Facebook; this may be an indicator of the platform being more ideal for memetic warfare (it offers features and a culture that are a hybrid of Facebook and Twitter). It may also indicate the IRA used click farms to boost their numbers.

# IRA: run like a digital marketing shop

The Internet Research Agency created media mirages – interlinked ecosystems that surrounded targeted audiences. They built their content using digital marketing best practices, even evolving Page logos and typography over time. Here's an example of the social-ecosystem-wide effort for one of their midsize media “brands”, Black Matters.

Website: Blackmattersus.com

Tumblr: SKWAD55

Google+: Blackmatters

Google Ads: 31 ads

YouTube: 95 videos

Facebook: 2 pages, fb.com/blackmatters, fb.com/blackmatters.mvmt

Facebook Ads: Yes.

Facebook Stickers: Yes, of little panthers.

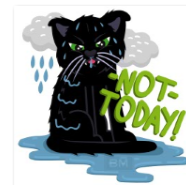
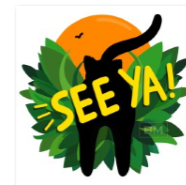
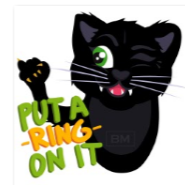
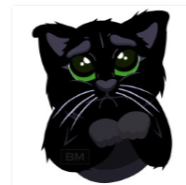
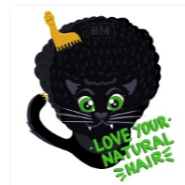
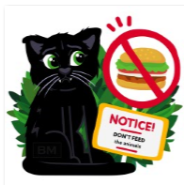
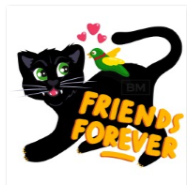
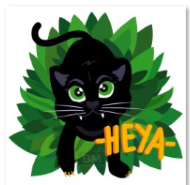
Instagram: Yes. 28,466 followers.

Twitter: Yes. 5841 followers. Promoted by many accounts.

Soundcloud: Yes, “SKWAD 55”

Meetup: Yes

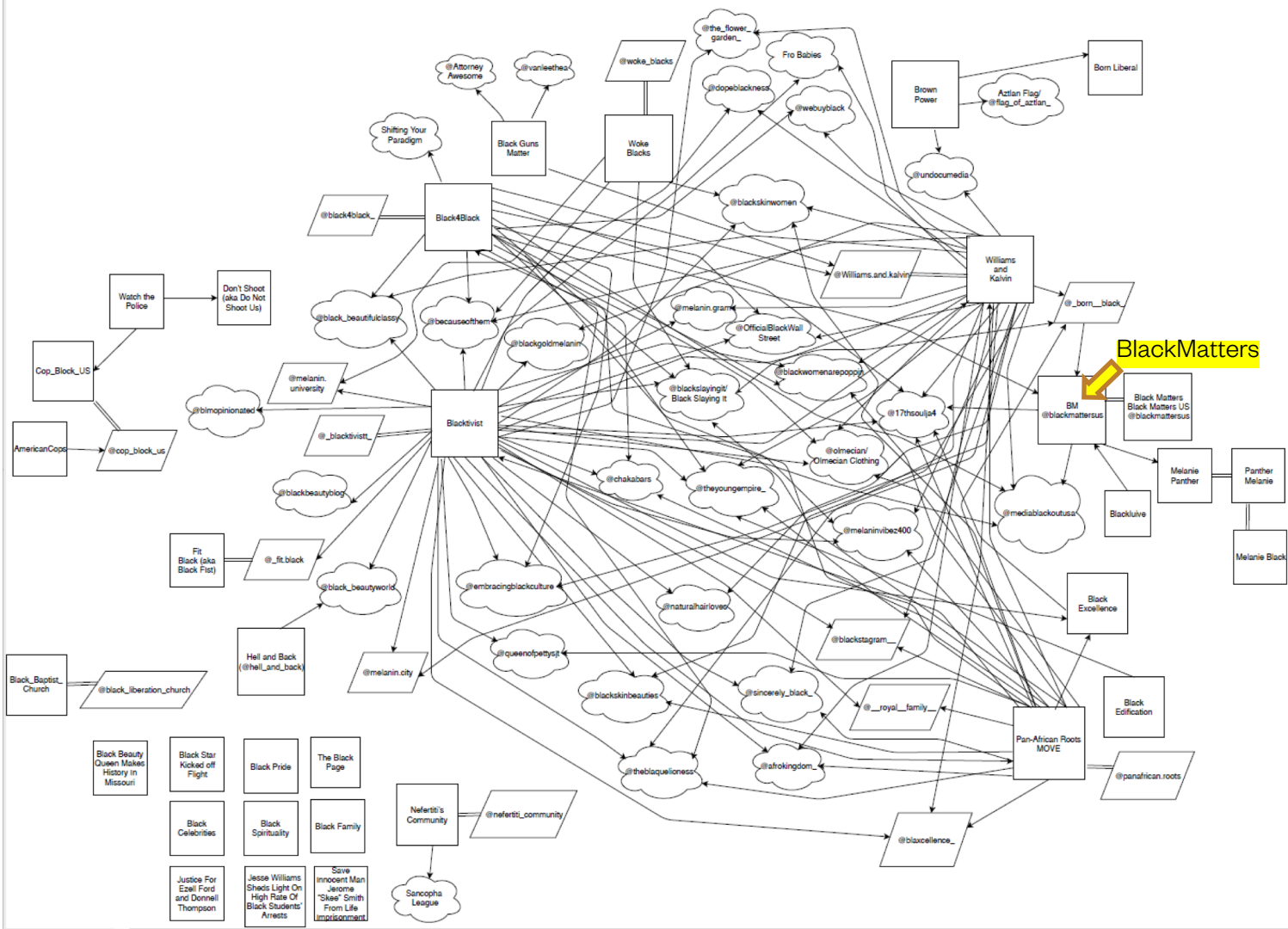
Content was posted to Reddit and Pinterest by other IRA accounts for SEO, discovery, and audience growth purposes.



# The Media Mirage

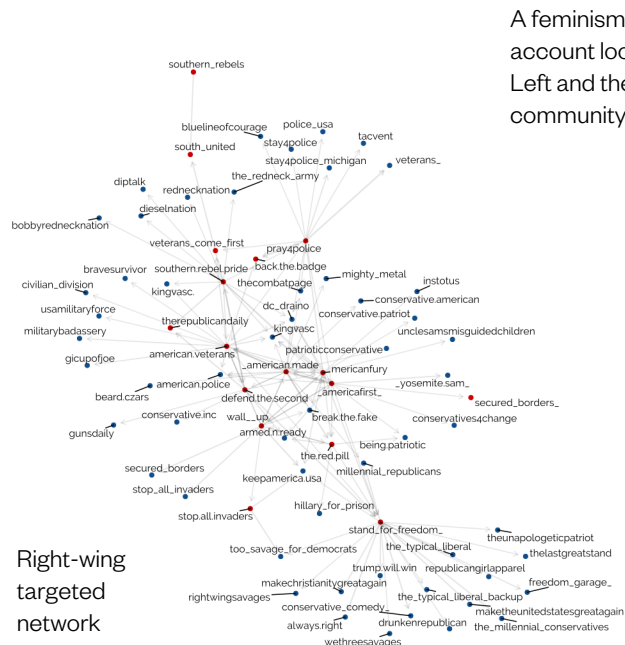
Contextualizing the prior slide: Black Matters was a multi-platform effort and yet still a very small part of the black-targeted IRA operation. This is a connections diagram of the media ecosystem created by links and shares that appeared on the black-targeted Facebook pages (squares). This shows the extent to which the Black community IRA accounts were interlinked with each other, and with authentic Black media. This degree of interconnection is not reflected in the left or right-targeted Facebook content.

The parallelograms are IRA Instagram accounts. The clouds are unattributed, though mostly legitimate, Black media accounts that had >10 shares. Several were suspended but not acknowledged by Facebook.

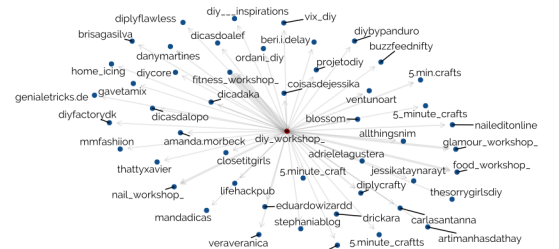
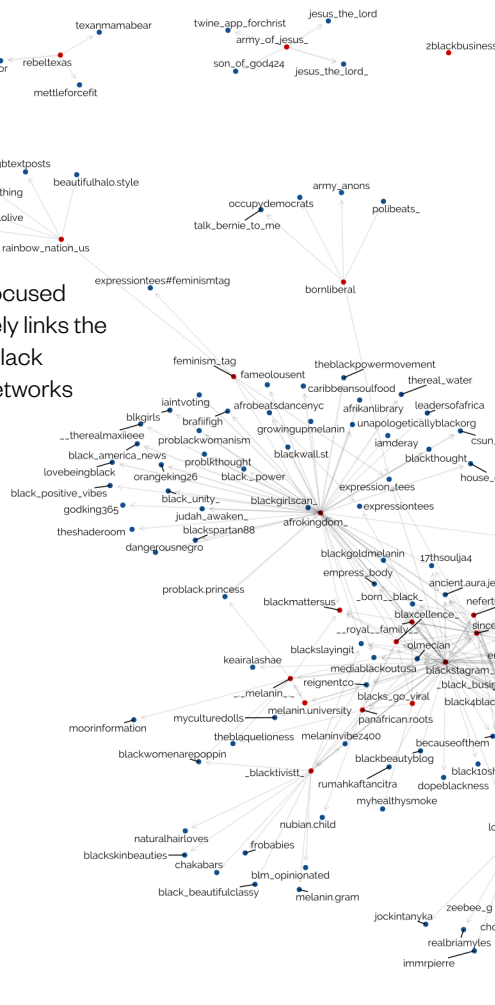


# The Media Mirage

This analysis is a network of Instagram account mentions or regrams (>10), and reveals the distinct communities. There was more interlinking of right-wing content on Instagram than Facebook.



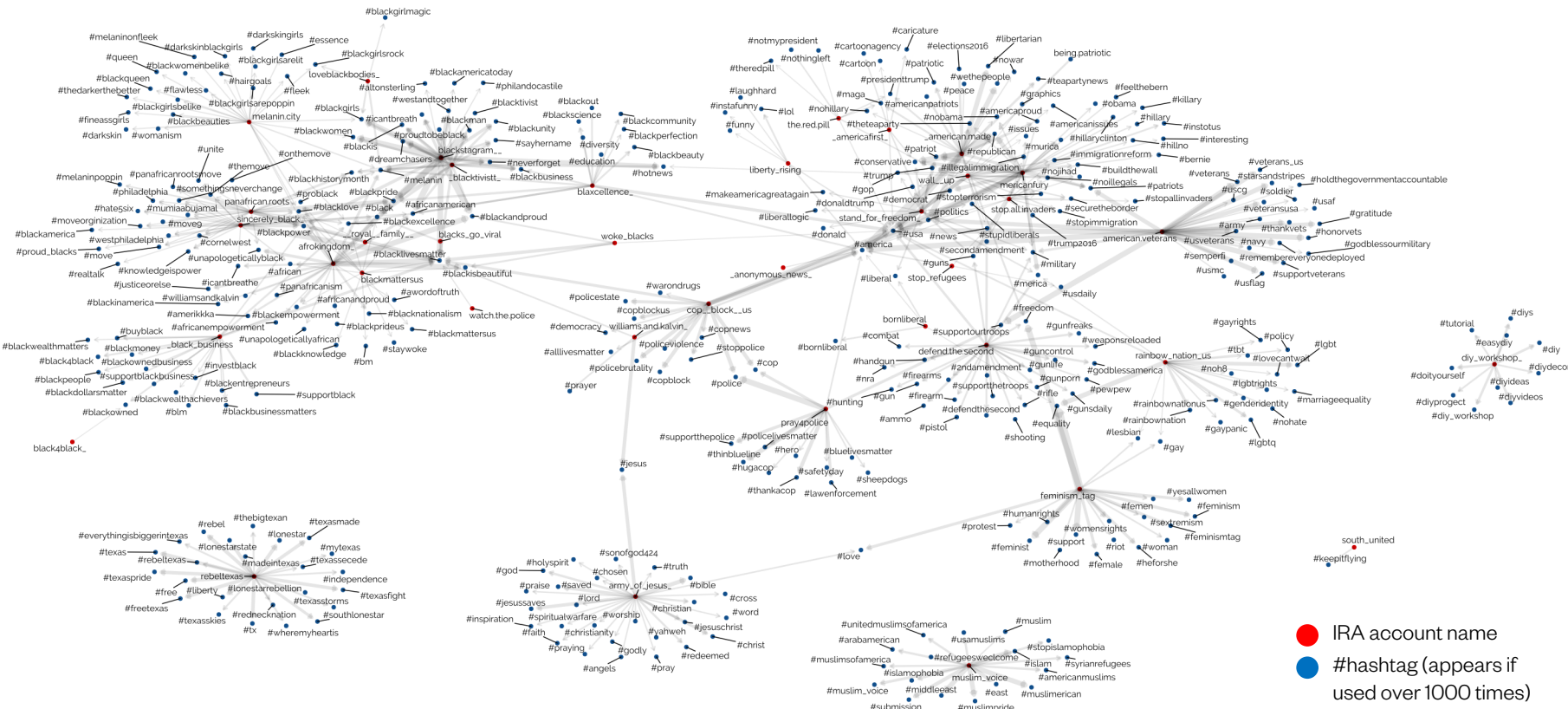
A feminism-focused account loosely links the Left and the Black community networks



IRA account name  
Non-IRA account mentioned

# Hashtags Link Communities

Here we show the hashtags mentioned in the Instagram posts. These hashtags bridge the Right, Left, and Black communities – they are the points of contention. The same police-term hashtags, for example, were used to both support and oppose the police. Some of the same hashtags were used to promote very different ideas about immigration, freedom, liberalism, guns, war and veterans.



Currently Visible  
or Active Content



# Recently-Active Content: Facebook

Friends of Russia is [a FB page that is still active](#). The page was found when we observed that an IRA-linked Twitter handle, AsdiqaRussiya, had been cited numerous times in Russian language articles [such as this one](#).

The article not only links to tweets (since deleted) but to a video posted to a FB page with the same name (AsdiqaRussiya roughly translates into "Friends of Russia", the same title as the page).

The Facebook Page last posted on May 12 and has 9,000 Likes.

Update 9/24/18: the page was suspended in August.

Friends of Russia (أصدقاء روسيا)

Like Follow Share ...

Write a post...

Write a post...

Photo/Video Tag Friends Check in ...

Photos

that is one Heckofa joke

See All

Videos

global economic inequality

Community

Community

9,631 people like this

9,651 people follow this

About

Send Message

Community

Suggest Edits

Related Pages

Россия (Russia) Society & Culture Website

أصدقاء المغرب (Morocco Friends) Public Figure

Russia Friends-POCC... Personal Blog

Pages Liked by This Page

Die Verschwörungsth... (The Conspiracy Theory...)

Alex Jones

InfoWars

# Still-Active Content: Twitter

Some of the IRA accounts provided appear to have been bots purchased/repurposed from several different existing commercial botnets, suggesting that the IRA procures or rents accounts at times rather than creating their own from scratch. Some had 2013 tweet histories full of spam content. Many bots from the same botnets appear to still be active, and are relatively easy to find w/ the Twitter public API. These accounts, for example, have similar patterns to bots that are in the provided data:

- [https://twitter.com/Elsa\\_Aben](https://twitter.com/Elsa_Aben) - dormant
- [https://twitter.com/Florrie\\_Schamel](https://twitter.com/Florrie_Schamel) - dormant
- [https://twitter.com/fitness\\_craving](https://twitter.com/fitness_craving) - active
- <https://twitter.com/besttattooing> - active
- <https://twitter.com/becca51178> - active

Though these bots are not doing anything malicious now, they are available to be repurposed for future malicious use.

# Still-Visible Content: Facebook & Twitter

Shares of content from IRA-linked domains remain on Facebook and Twitter. The Facebook Page for GI Analytics (7,000 Likes) itself came down recently, sometime after May 30th. The Twitter handle for the account remains active at <https://twitter.com/gianalytics>.

It is unclear whether still-active Facebook pages (for example, “Russia Truth”) and Groups that regularly shared GIANalytics content did so knowingly, or whether those pages have been investigated for possible IRA links.

GI Analytics contributors include Americans; it is unclear whether they knew who they were writing for. Several individuals on the masthead were recently identified as authors for newly-launched IRA propaganda property USAREally. A few contribute to known Russian propaganda outlets and think tanks such as Katehon.


**The Liberty Pledge 2.0**  
December 16, 2017 at 4:49 PM · 🌐

<http://gianalytics.org/en/1037-what-will-happen-when-brainwashed-middle-class-americans-lose-it-all>

**What will happen when brainwashed middle class Americans lose it all?**  
[gianalytics.org](http://gianalytics.org)

👍 3 1 Comment 3 Shares

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**SyrianGirl**  
June 6, 2016 · 🌐

[Like Page](#) \*\*\*

The Race to Raqqa - Why Syria Must crush I-S-I-S before Kurdish & US Forces do. My latest Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKZqu61lbFI>


Most of what i say in this video is referenced in this article <https://gianalytics.org/690-why-a-kurdish-enclave-in-syria-...> have a read if you want more details.

**The Race to #Raqqa - Why Syria Must crush ISIS before Kurd & US Forces do**  
The Syrian army must defeat ISIS and hold Raqqa before the...  
YOUTUBE.COM

👍❤️👎 230 38 Comments 111 Shares

[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#) [Buffer](#) [...](#)

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**Vladimir Golstein**  
April 8, 2016 at 3:55 AM · 🌐

Dostoevsky on how the myopic sympathy for the underprivileged and slavish following of the shallow slogans of multiculturalism prevents us from... [See More](#)

**Angela Merkel – the Angel of Political Correctness: Part Two**  
[gianalytics.org](http://gianalytics.org)

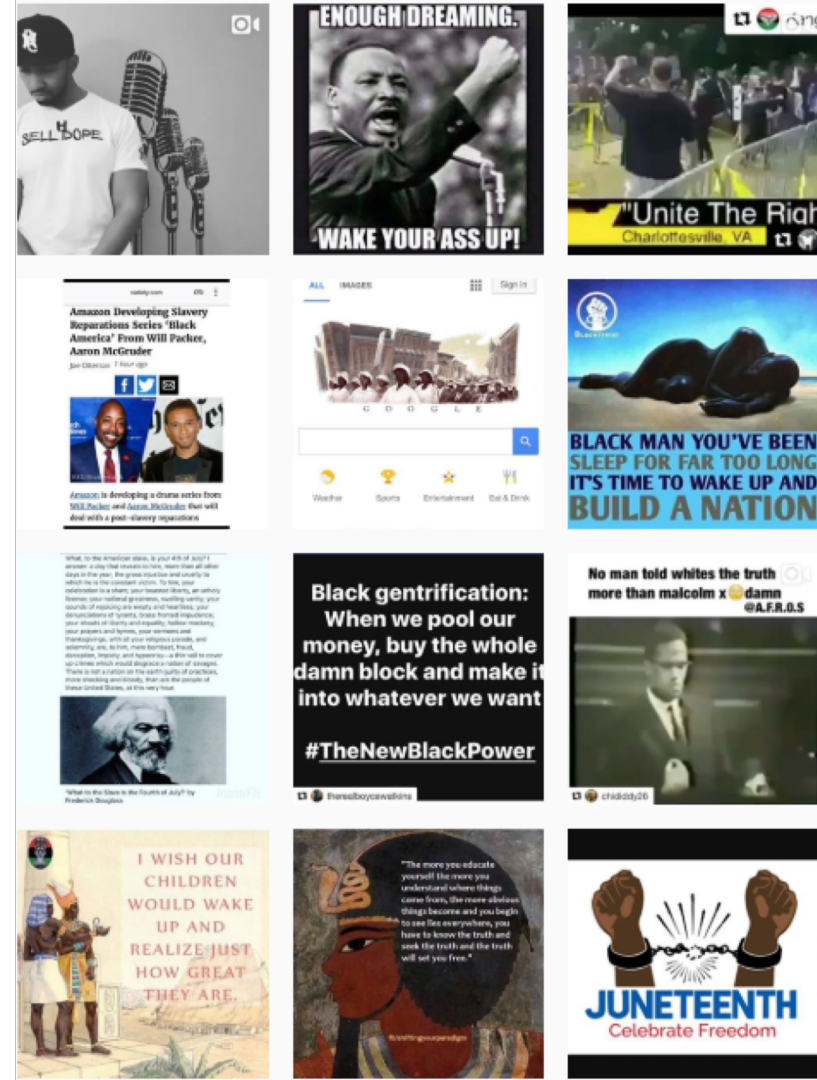
👍❤️👎 78 43 Comments 35 Shares

# Sharing of IRA-attributable memes in targeted communities is ongoing

When we talk about “impact”, most conversations focus on whether the IRA operation swayed voters and impacted Election 2016.

That is a somewhat narrow definition, since the operation started prior to 2015 and since the explicitly political content was a small percentage.

These memes continue to be spread within the communities they were targeting, particularly the content by the lesser-known or quietly-removed pages. A type of impact that merits further research is the extent to which the memes continue to shape culture and conversation.

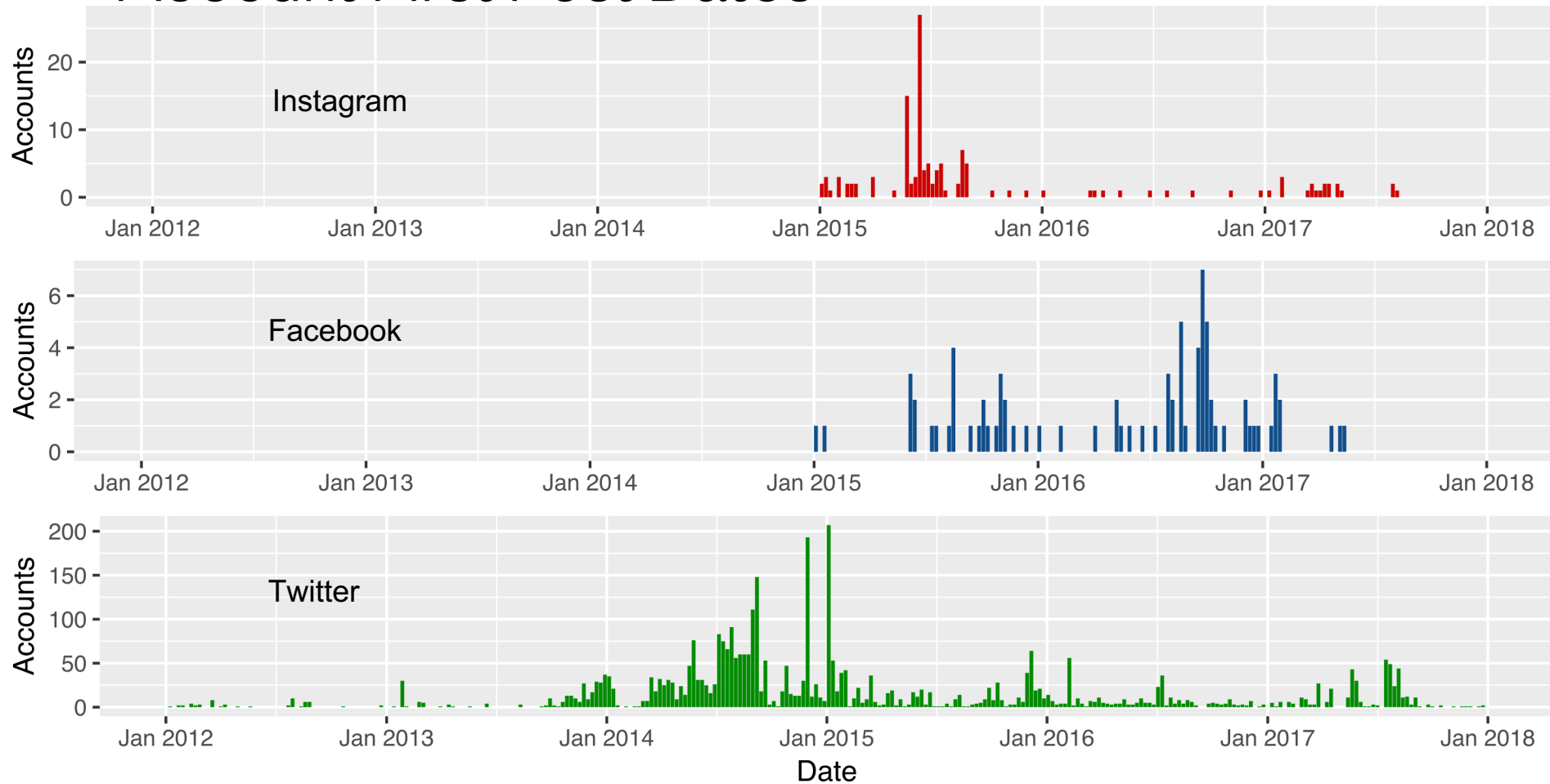


# Summary Statistics

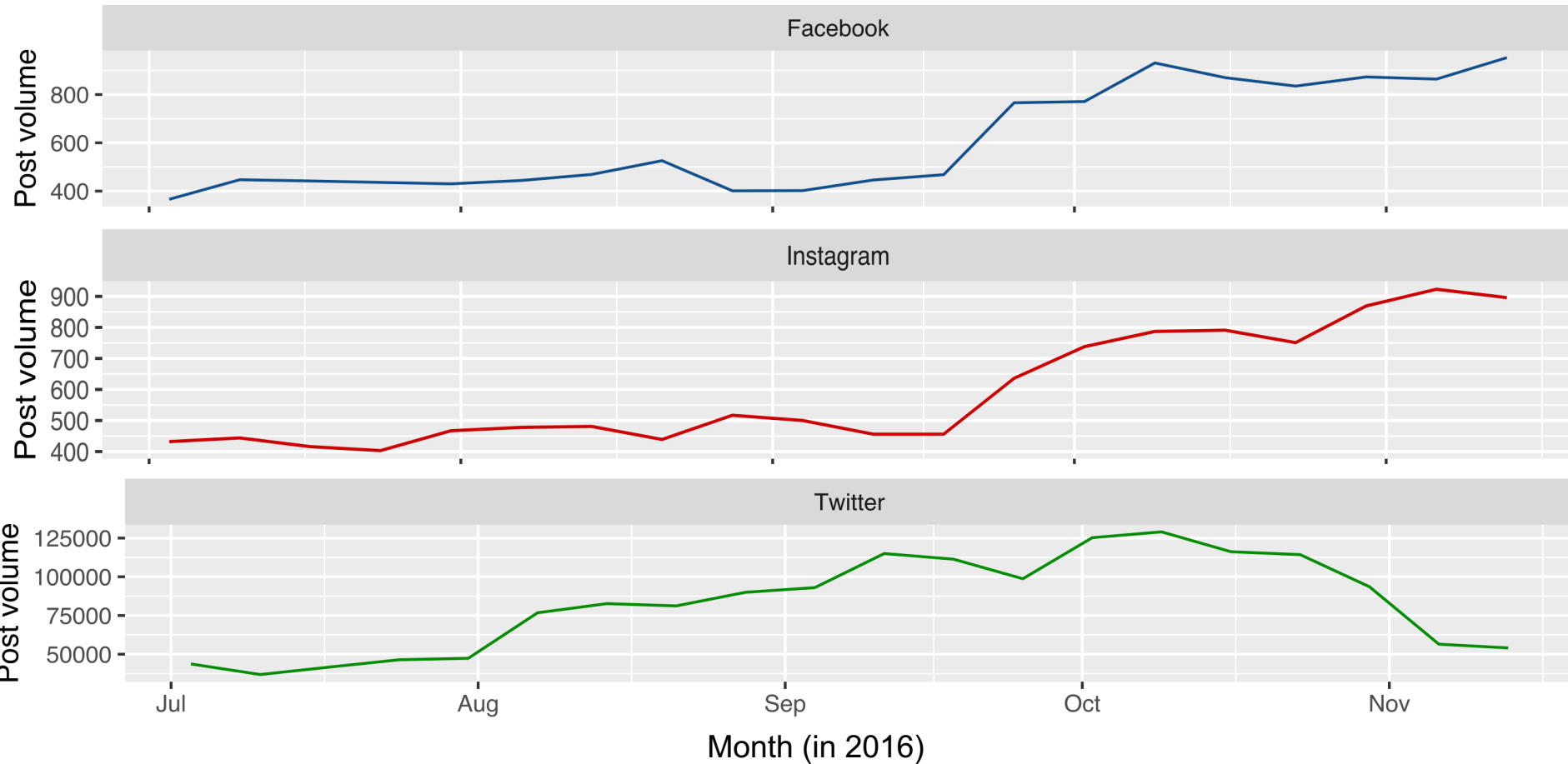
# Attributed Domains

- blackvswhite.info
- dntshoot.com
- donotshoot.us
- blackmattersusa.com
- blackmattersus.com
- blacktivist.info
- blacktolive.org
- blacksoul.us
- proudtobeblack.org
- black4black.info
- patriotsus.com
- butthis.com
- dudeers.com
- imsanbernardino.info
- blackfist.pro
- reportsecret.com

# Account First Post Dates

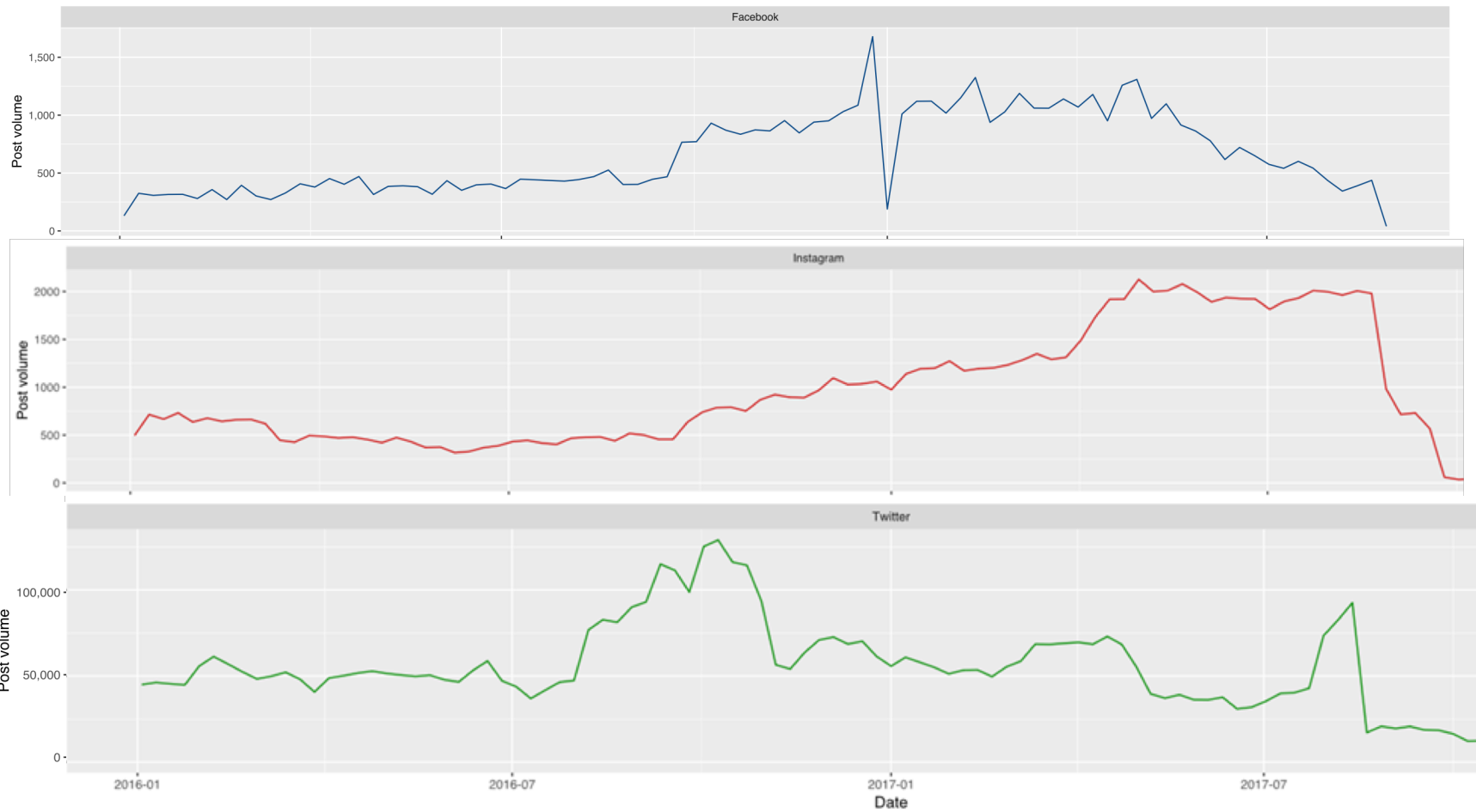


# Weekly Post Volume, Through Election 2016





# Post Volume, 2016-2017 (2017 Instagram increase)



# Summary statistics: Clinton & Trump mentions

- Roughly 6% of tweets, 18% of Instagram posts, and 7% of Facebook posts mentioned Trump or Clinton by name (including nicknames like “Shillary”, which the IRA often used to reference Clinton).
- Trump was mentioned roughly twice as often as Clinton on most platforms.
- Instagram contained a much higher proportion of insult names like “Shillary” or “Hitlery”.

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
<b>Total posts</b>	61,483	116,205	10,401,029
<b>Clinton posts</b>	1,777	7,915	198,123
<b>Clinton share</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
<b>Trump posts</b>	2,563	13,106	430,185
<b>Trump share</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

# Summary statistics: external sites and engagement

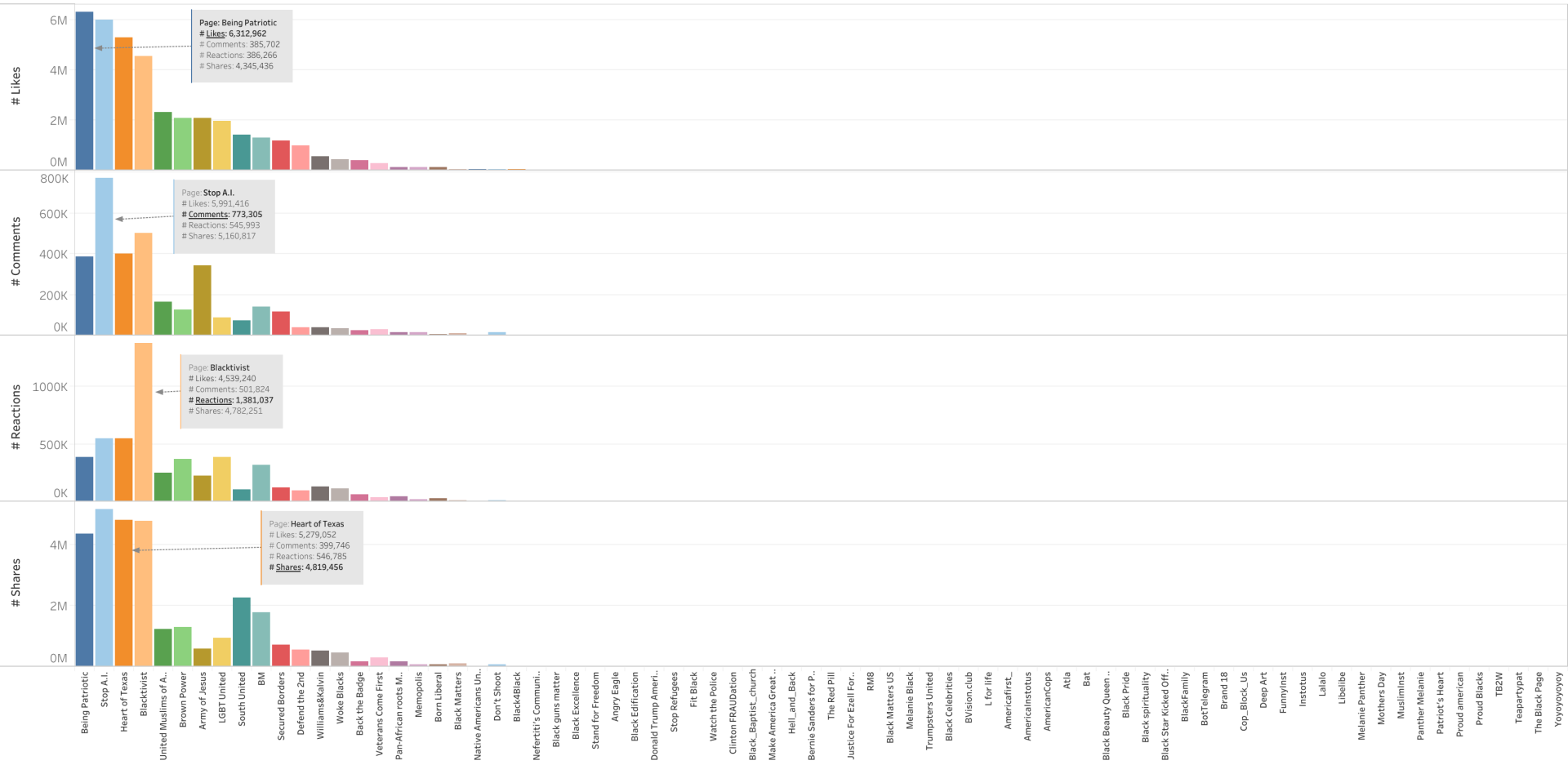
- The most-posted domains in the IRA content on [Facebook](#) were their own sites; these also generated the most engagement.
- The highest share count was blackmattersus.com, which targeted African-Americans.
- A second popular cluster of shares featured both real right-wing partisan news sites and an IRA creation, patriotsus.com. There were more engagements per share on the right-wing content.
- The IRA shared Whitehouse.gov petitions on topics including gun rights and whether Hillary Clinton should be allowed to run for President.

Domain	Posts	Engagements
<b>blackmattersus.com</b>	1219	301484
<b>patriotsus.com</b>	92	48300
<b>breitbart.com</b>	64	17317
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	13	16176
<b>petitions.whitehouse.gov</b>	8	5268
<b>dailycaller.com</b>	16	3299
<b>ny1.com</b>	1	2734
<b>usherale.com</b>	2	2616
<b>youtube.com</b>	100	2513
<b>salamerica.com</b>	3	2510
<b>angrypatriotmovement.com</b>	2	2398
<b>represent.com</b>	13	2215
<b>ihavethetruth.com</b>	1	2166
<b>pinknews.co.uk</b>	11	2097
<b>yesimright.com</b>	1	1983
<b>bluelivesmatter.blue</b>	3	1800
<b>washingtonexaminer.com</b>	10	1780
<b>americanmilitarynews.com</b>	6	1596
<b>conservativedailypost.com</b>	3	1595
<b>ktxs.com</b>	1	1583

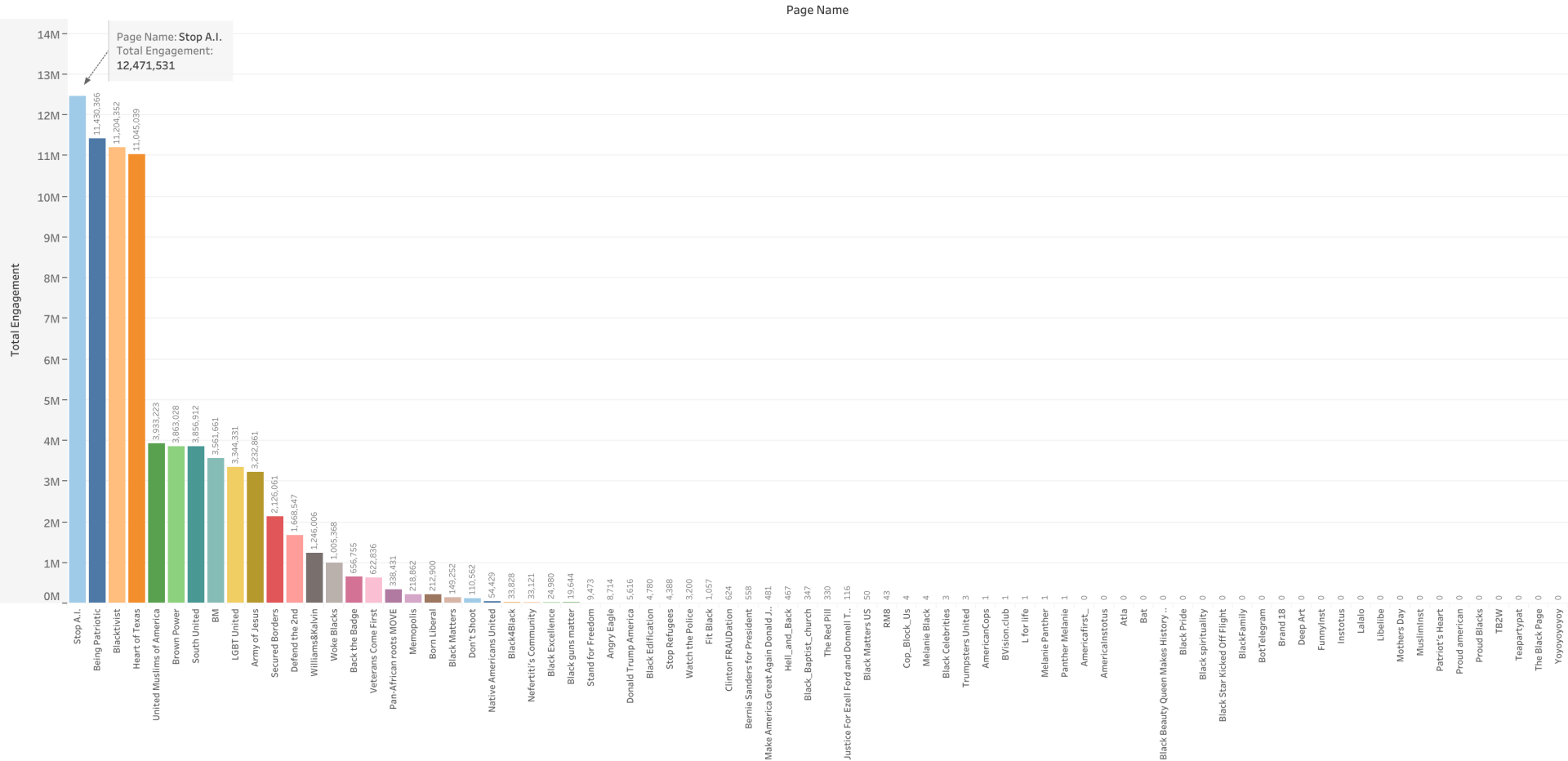
# Top 20 Domains Shared, by Engagement (Facebook)

Domain	Shares	Likes	Reactions	Total Engagements
<b>blackmattersus.com</b>	100092	142923	58469	301484
<b>patriotsus.com</b>	6577	33296	8427	48300
<b>breitbart.com</b>	3554	9790	3973	17317
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	4694	10054	1428	16176
<b>petitions.whitehouse.gov</b>	532	4395	341	5268
<b>dailycaller.com</b>	742	1898	659	3299
<b>ny1.com</b>	638	1918	178	2734
<b>usherale.com</b>	617	1663	336	2616
<b>youtube.com</b>	629	1352	532	2513
<b>salamerica.com</b>	0	2286	224	2510
<b>angrypatriotmovement.com</b>	503	1670	225	2398
<b>represent.com</b>	265	1775	175	2215
<b>ihavethetruth.com</b>	622	1456	88	2166
<b>pinknews.co.uk</b>	204	1046	847	2097
<b>yesimright.com</b>	431	1385	167	1983
<b>bluelivesmatter.blue</b>	134	1154	512	1800
<b>washingtonexaminer.com</b>	354	1009	417	1780
<b>americanmilitarynews.com</b>	269	1186	141	1596
<b>conservativedaily.com</b>	296	1015	284	1595
<b>ktxs.com</b>	0	1406	177	1583

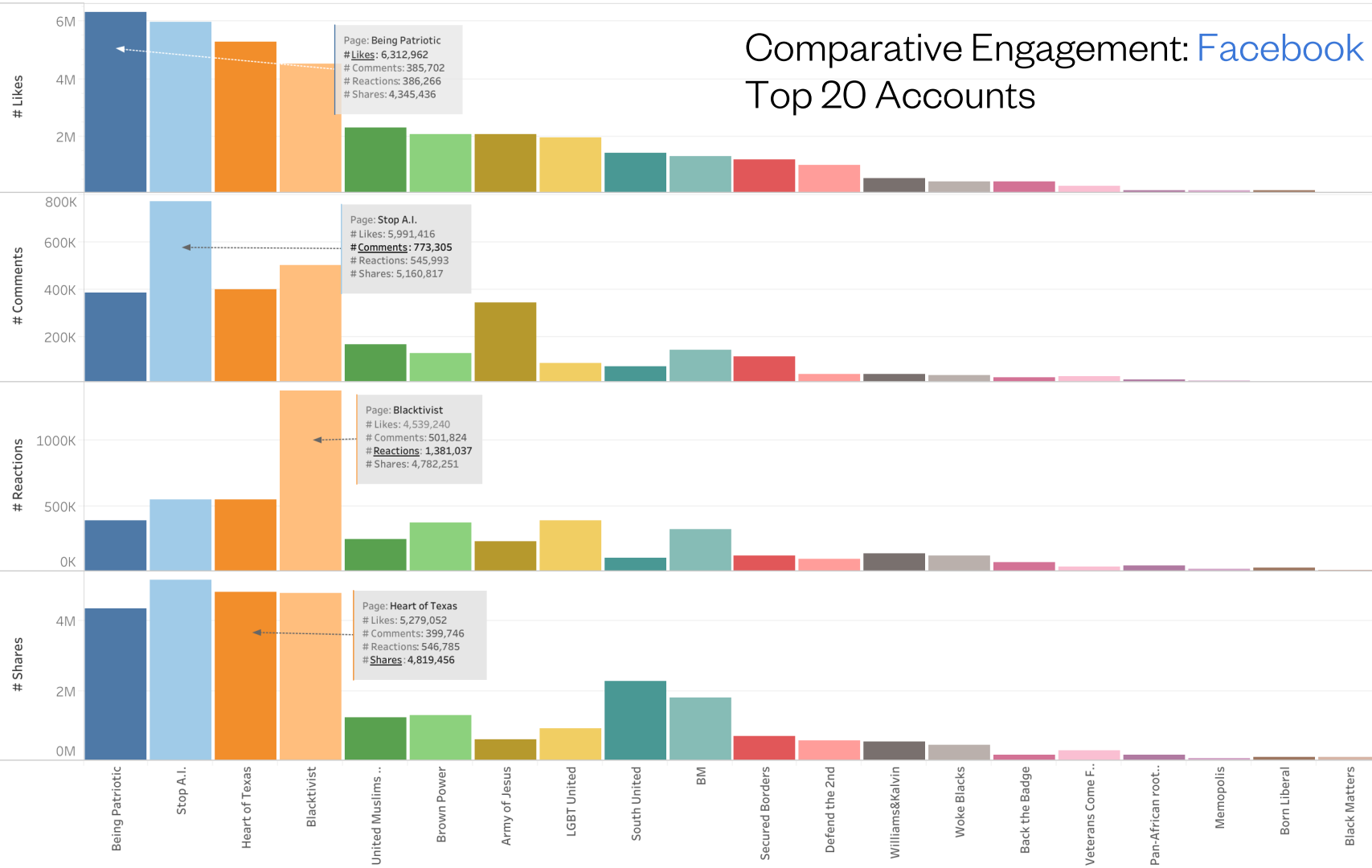
# Comparative Engagement: Facebook Accounts by Engagement Type



# Comparative Engagement: Facebook Total Engagement, All Accounts

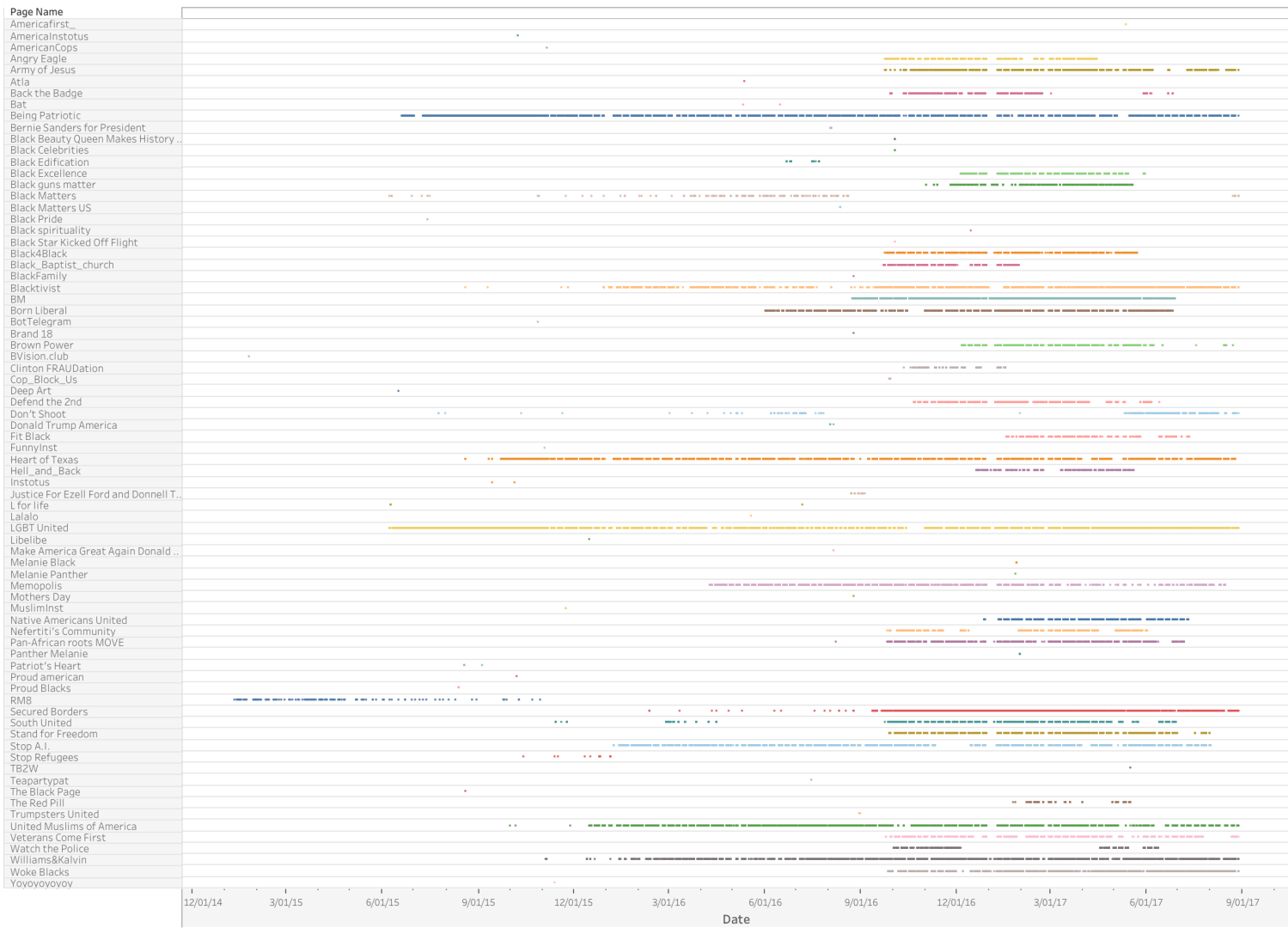


# Comparative Engagement: Facebook Top 20 Accounts



# Top Performers: Facebook Timing of Posts, by Page

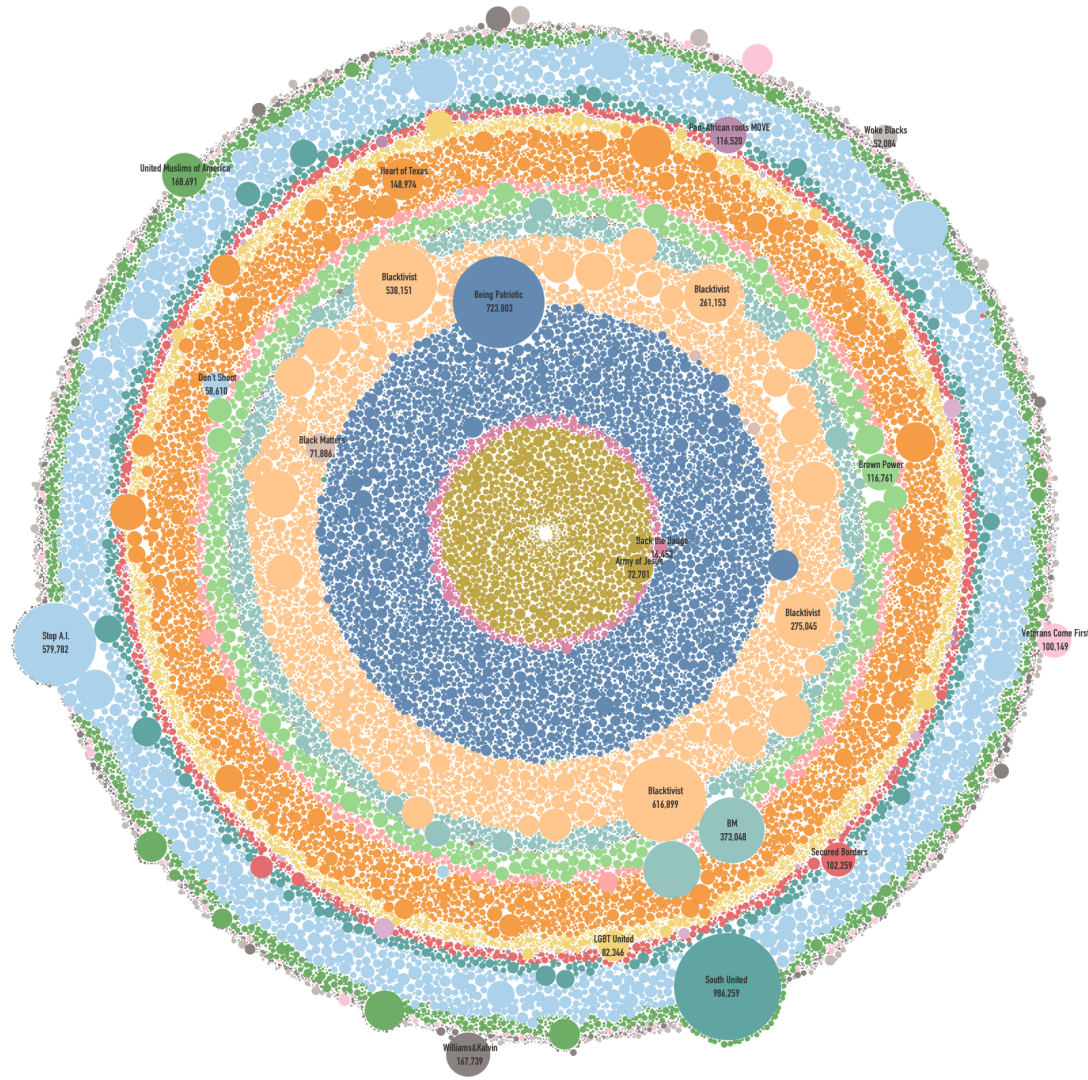
Each line represents  
a distinct IRA  
Facebook page, and  
each dot is a post.  
The Y axis  
represents time.





Facebook

Each colored ring is a distinct IRA Facebook page, and each circle represents one Facebook post. The size of the circle reflects the relative number of total interactions for the post. The largest circles are the posts that could be considered “breakout hits.”



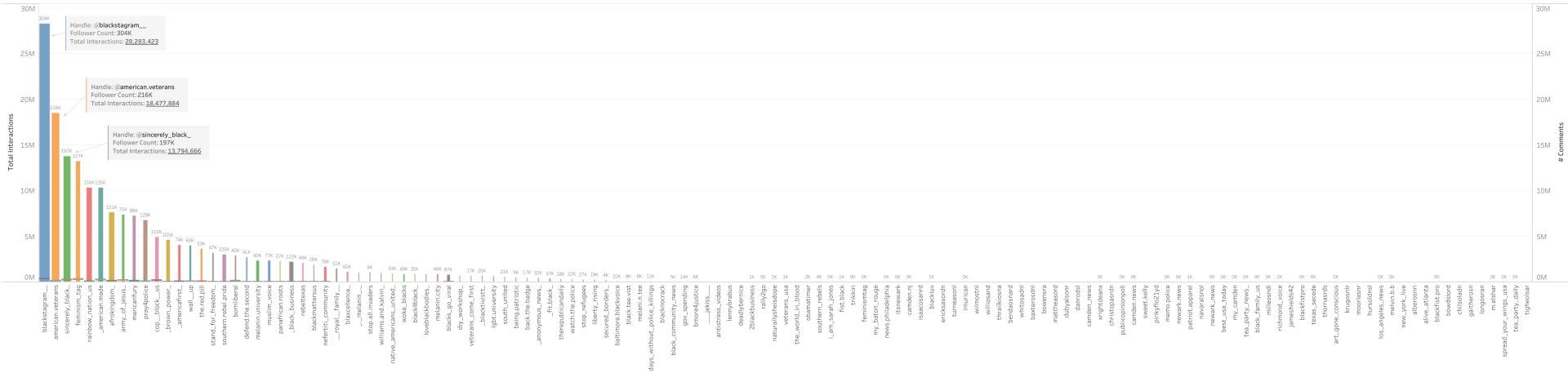
# Account Follower Counts

This chart shows all 133 IRA Instagram accounts, sized by follower count

The colors are consistent across all charts throughout the Instagram section



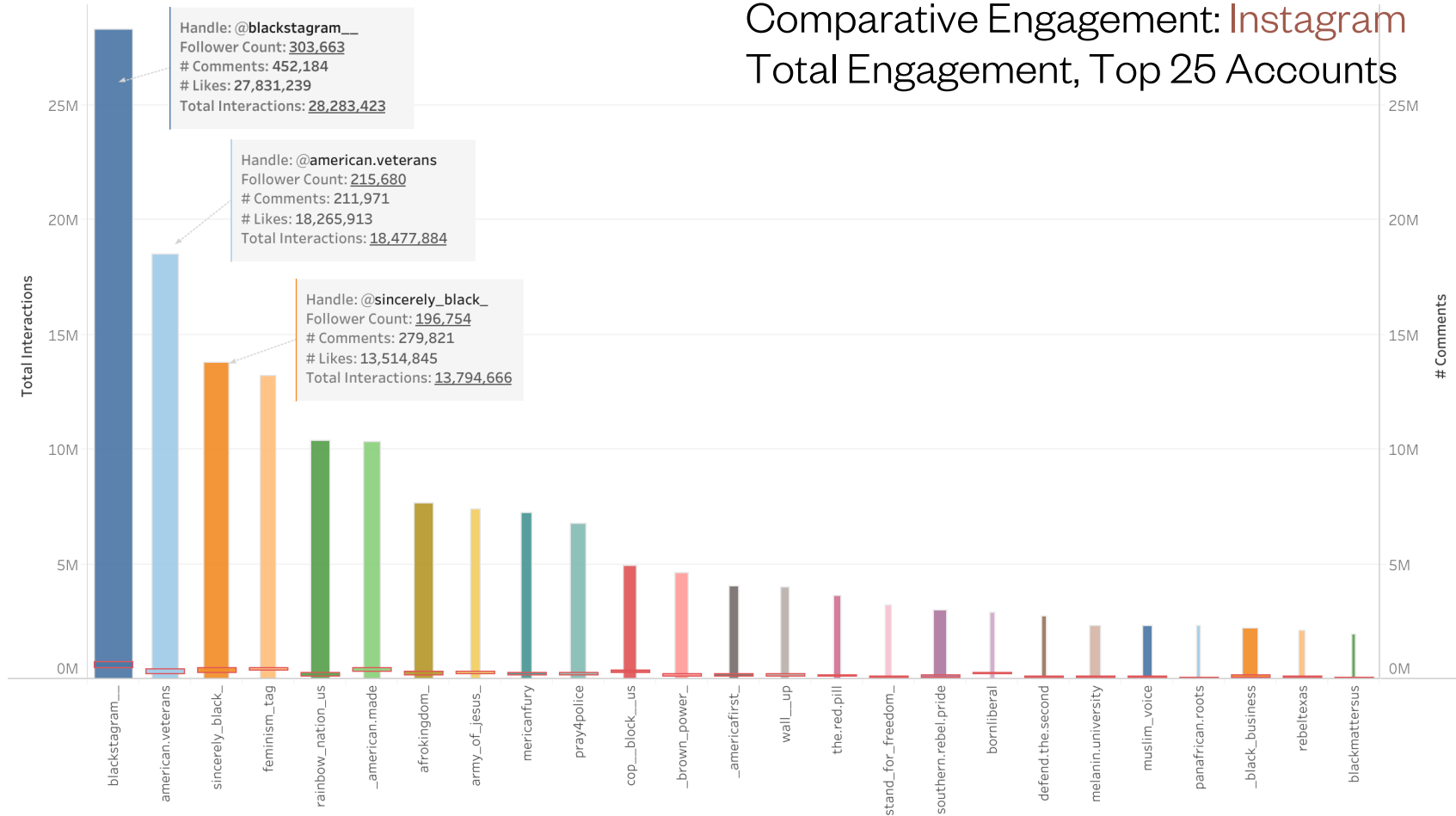
# Comparative Engagement: Instagram Total Engagement, All Accounts



Total interactions (likes + comments) for each Instagram account. The relative # of comments are shown as line on graph for comparison. Colored by handle (account name). Bar width shows relative size of account follower count size. Numbers of followers in thousands are displayed at the top of graph.

# Comparative Engagement: Instagram

## Total Engagement, Top 25 Accounts



Total interactions (sum of likes and comments) for each Instagram account. The number of comments are shown as line on each bar for perspective. Color shows details about account name (@handle). Bar width shows the relative size of follower count. This graph shows the top 25 of 133 accounts ordered by decreasing total interactions.



# Top Performers: Instagram Post Engagement

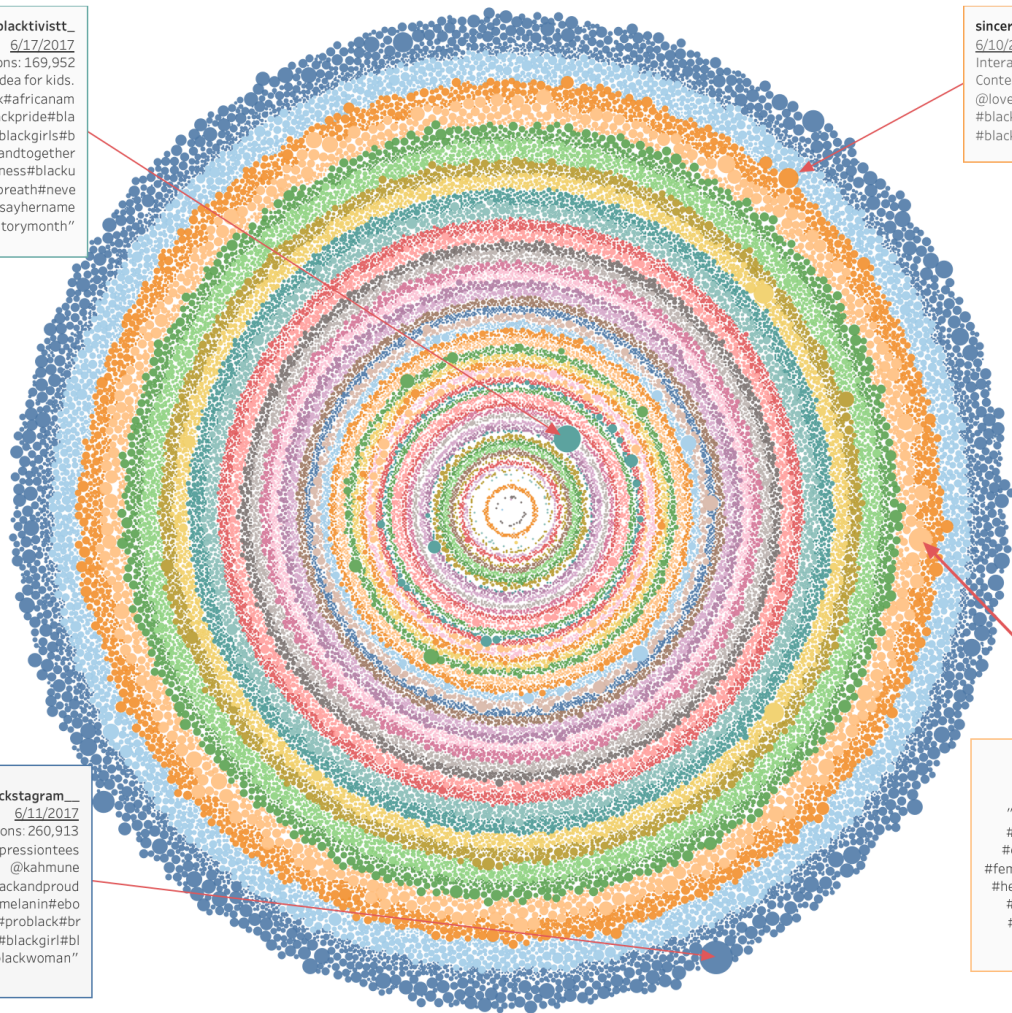
Each colored ring is a distinct IRA Instagram account page, and each circle represents one post. The size of the circle reflects the relative number of total interactions for the post.

**\_blacktivistt\_**  
6/17/2017  
Interactions: 169,952  
"What a great idea for kids.  
#Blacktivist#hotnews #black#africanam  
erican#blacklivesmatter#blackpride#bla  
ckandproud#dreamchasers#blackgirls#b  
lackwomen#blackman#westandtogether  
#proudtobeblack#blackbusiness#blacku  
nity #blackis#melanin#icantbreath#neve  
rforget #sayhername  
#blackhistorymonth"

**sincerely\_black\_**  
6/10/2017  
Interactions: 85,985  
Content Text: "True @melanin.city  
@loveblackbodies\_ #blackqueens  
#blackexcellence #blackisbeautiful  
#blackgirlmagic"

**blackstagram\_\_**  
6/11/2017  
Interactions: 260,913  
"What is your color? @expressiontees  
@kahmune  
#blackexcellence#blackpride#blackandproud  
#blackpower#africanamerican#melanin#ebo  
ny#panafrican#blackcommunity#problack#br  
ownskin#unapologeticallyblack#blackgirl#bl  
ackgirls#blackwomen#blackwoman"

**feminism\_tag**  
6/10/2017  
Interactions: 132,555  
"@expression\_tees #feminismtag  
#feminism #female #humanrights  
#equality #freedom #love #support  
#feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights  
#heforshe #femen #equality #freedom  
#feminist #woman #riot #support  
#protest #gay #lesbian #equality  
#motherhood #sextrémism"



# Facebook vs. Instagram Stats

	Earliest Post	Last Post	Posts	Followers
Facebook	1/10/2015	8/28/2017	61,483	3,334,202
Instagram	1/7/2015	10/26/2017	116,205	3,391,116*

	Likes	Likes/ Post	Comments	Comments / Post	Reactions	Shares	Total Interactions
Facebook	37,627,085	612	3,339,752	54	5,188,182	30,350,130	76,505,149
Instagram	183,246,348	1,568	4,017,731	34	n/a	n/a	187,264,079
Total	220,873,433		7,447,483		5,188,182	30,350,130	263,769,228

\*Facebook does not appear to have provided follower counts for 52 Instagram accounts from the 2nd batch of data provided (the Instagram Addendum). This figure is therefore lower than it should be. "Unique" followers were not provided; this is a simple summation of all followers across all Pages and likely includes individuals who followed multiple pages.

# Memetics Analysis

# Meme Analysis

There were several hundred thousand visual images included in the IRA data set. A majority of them were memes, which contain both images and text. Our team did both textual extraction using optical character recognition (OCR) as well as clustering of visually similar images to understand messaging and identify memetic strategies. We examined the shift in visual themes weekly across the 2016 Twitter data. A manual review of ~62,000 Facebook Page and ~100,000 Instagram memes was also conducted.

- The Pages recycled memes within their own organic content, repurposing images regularly.
- The Pages posted identical memetic images rebranded for their own unique Page. Sometimes they also used identical text content in the post.
- The Pages shared each others' memetic content, particularly from Instagram, sometimes from Tumblr, to cross-pollinate audiences and improve audience growth. This was done very regularly on the Pages targeting the Black community. There was no acknowledgement that the Pages shared common authors; occasionally there was a mention of "friends".
- The memes included content promoting events, as well as businesses.

The following slides highlight some examples of Page clusters. More can be found in the Appendix.



# Repurposing & rebranding existing memes

Memes are powerful because they can be easily recontextualized and reshared. There's often a degree of familiarity and recognition in popular memes, which act as "in-group" cultural signifiers.

In this case, both Secured Borders and Stop A.I. used a portion of this meme, which appears elsewhere online but can be easily traced as far back as a forum post from 2014 (presumably from a real American participant). Repurposed existing memes makes up a large part of the IRA visual content in the data set.

This makes it harder to identify hostile pages; the content looks – and in fact is – largely identical to content shared by real people with a particular point of view.



Secured  
Borders



Stop A.I.

Posted by Dee on November 7, 2014 at 5:23am in Illegal Alien Invasion

[View Discussions](#)



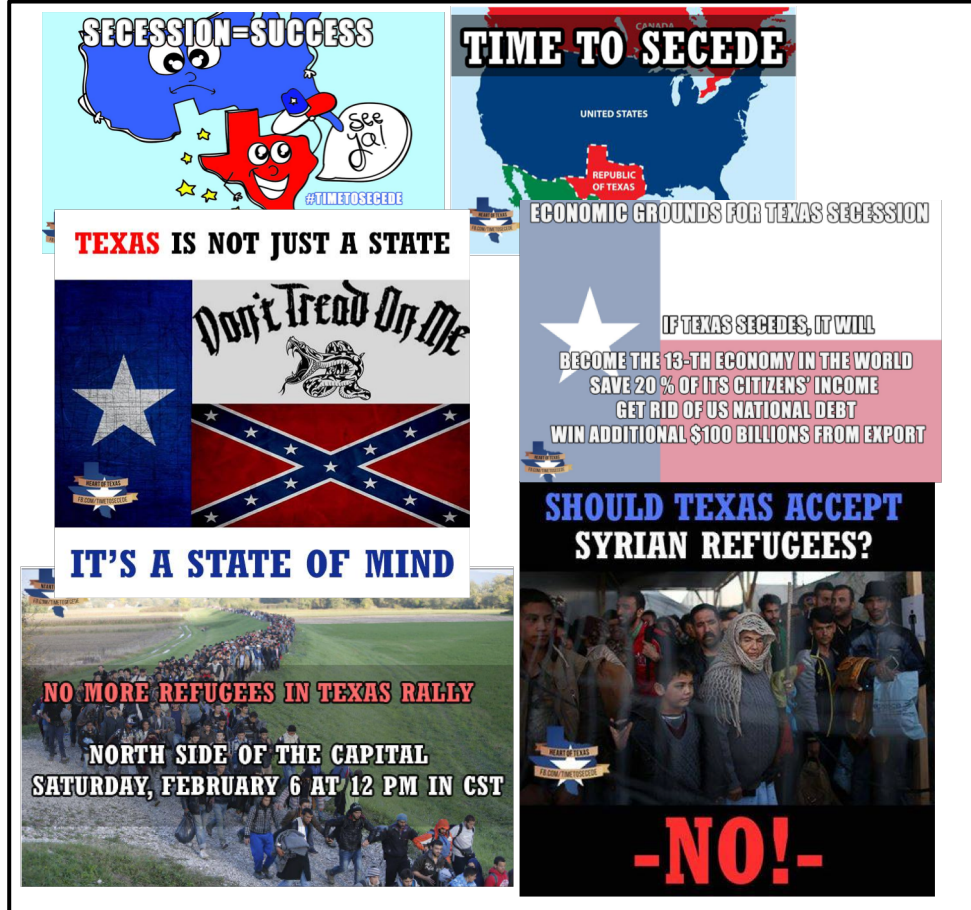
OH WELL

Not only do they get to break in and stay  
but now they get a job and free stuff too

Politifake.org

# Focus by Page: Heart of Texas

Heart of Texas visual clusters focused on shapes of Texas, landscape photos of flowers, and memes about secession and refugees. There was also an undercurrent of 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and anti-immigration memes.



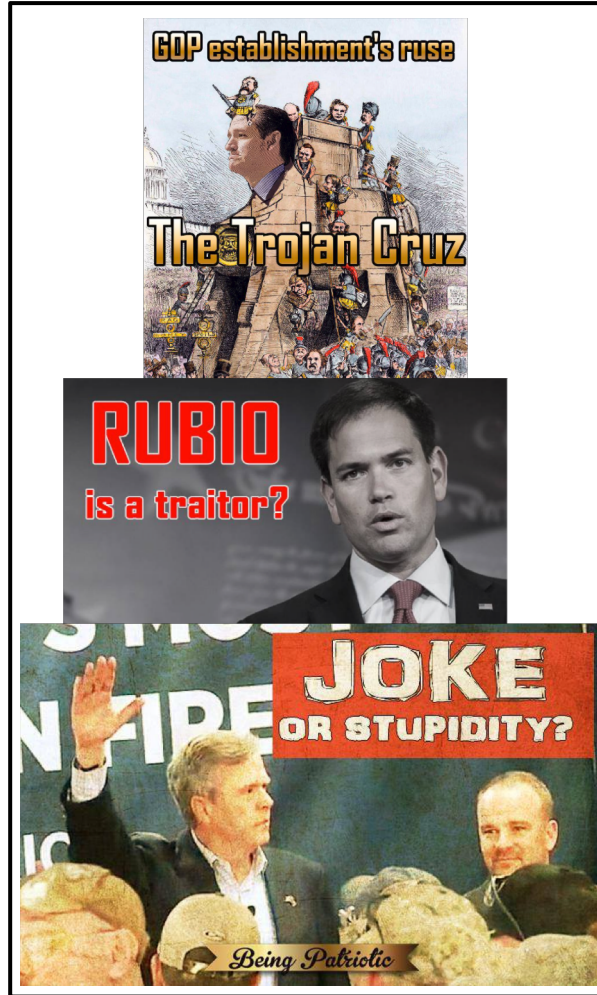


# Focus by Page: Being Patriotic

Anti-Hillary Clinton



Anti-"Establishment" Candidates

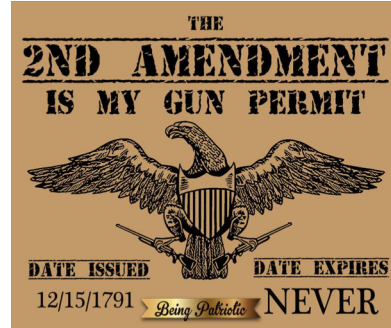


Pro-Donald Trump

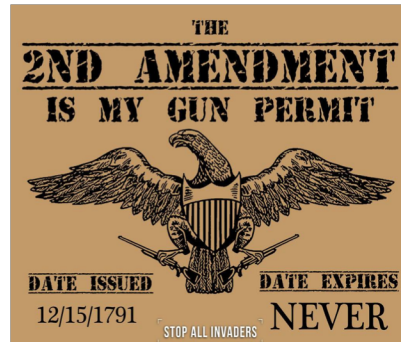
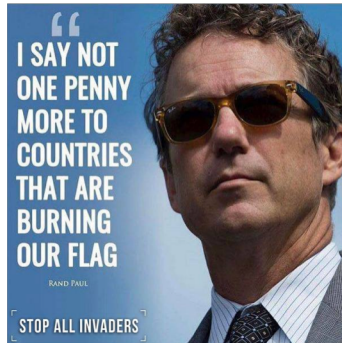


# Rebranding Memes Across Pages

Being  
Patriotic



Stop A.I.





# Rebranding Memes Across Pages

BM (Black Matters)

This is powerful and is an image our children need to see and process. 🇺🇸🇳🇪



"When you love another Black person, you have to love each other through 500 years of broken promises, pain, and oppression. When we say Black love, it's not just about some Black people being in love; it's the most revolutionary thing you can do." 💜👊



There're way too many talented, intelligent, artistic, and impressive black kids for you to just pretend we only play basketball & get shot.



Pan-African Roots MOVE

This is powerful and is an image our children need to see and process. 🇺🇸🇳🇪

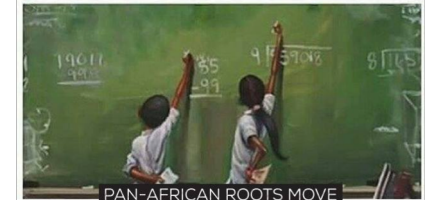


PAN-AFRICAN ROOTS MOVE

"When you love another Black person, you have to love each other through 500 years of broken promises, pain, and oppression. When we say Black love, it's not just about some Black people being in love; it's the most revolutionary thing you can do." 💜👊



There're way too many talented, intelligent, artistic, and impressive black kids for you to just pretend we only play basketball & get shot.



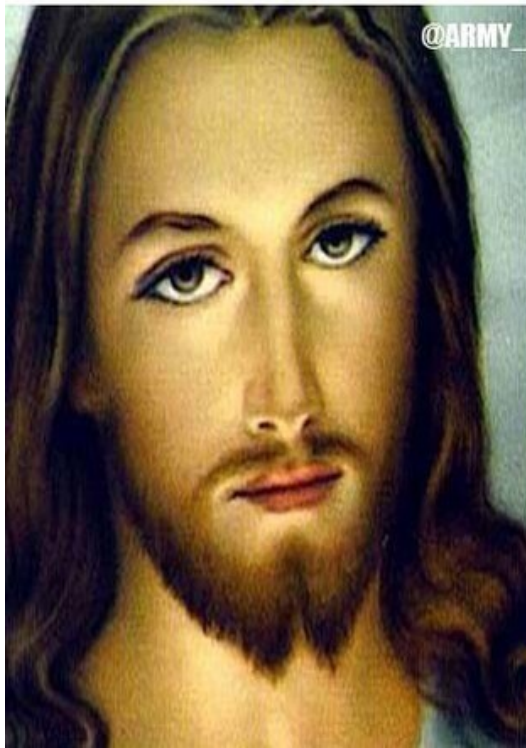
# Recycling top performers

This image was the most-Liked content created by the IRA on Instagram before Election 2016. Posted on March 2, 2016 it was from @army\_of\_jesus and garnered 87,750 likes.

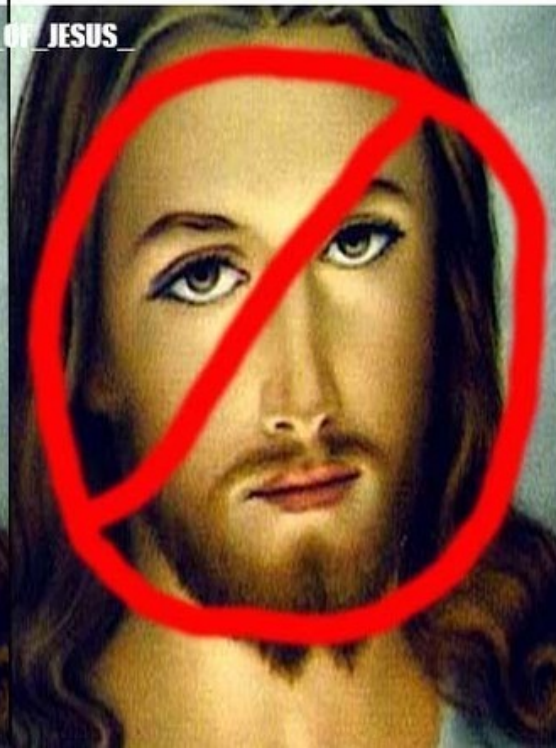
The second most-liked is the same image from the same account, this time with 84,469 likes -- posted 3 months later on June 13, 2016.

These images also had the most comments of IRA pre-election Instagram content, with 1989 and 2177 comments, respectively.

**LIKE  
IF YOU BELIEVE**



**KEEP  
SCROLLING  
IF YOU DON'T**

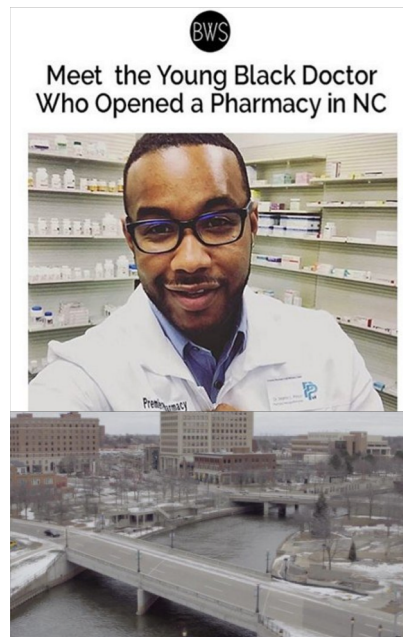




# Timeline: Visuals on Twitter

## April 2016

Because the Twitter data set URLs were often difficult to resolve, we evaluated IRA themes as reflected in image content attached to what appeared to be news shares. Here we include some examples leading into Election 2016. In April 2016 the shares were fairly uncoordinated – there were some clusters of activity around stories about Black empowerment and the primaries, and some content about the Flint water crisis. We can identify the publications they shared from based on the news logos that appear in the image data.



# July 2016

For July, IRA themes as estimated by image content suggest they again focused primarily on sharing news stories. There was a higher concentration of shares focused on Black Lives Matter.





# September 2016

September 2016 indicated an increase in the diversity of news sources they shared articles from (based on image logos). The “deplorables” comment, kneeling football players, and Syria bombings occupied an increasing percentage of the content during this month.



# October 2016

Even greater increase in the diversity of news sources shared; most notable is the presence of more local papers. The Access Hollywood “Pussygate” tape, Hurricane Matthew, an NSA contractor leaking secrets, stories about shootings were dominant themes.

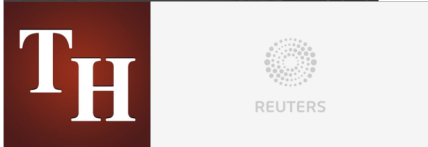
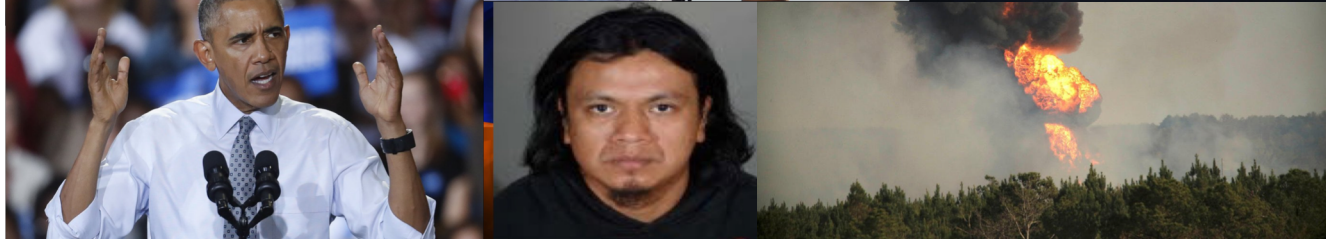




# November 2016

## Week 1

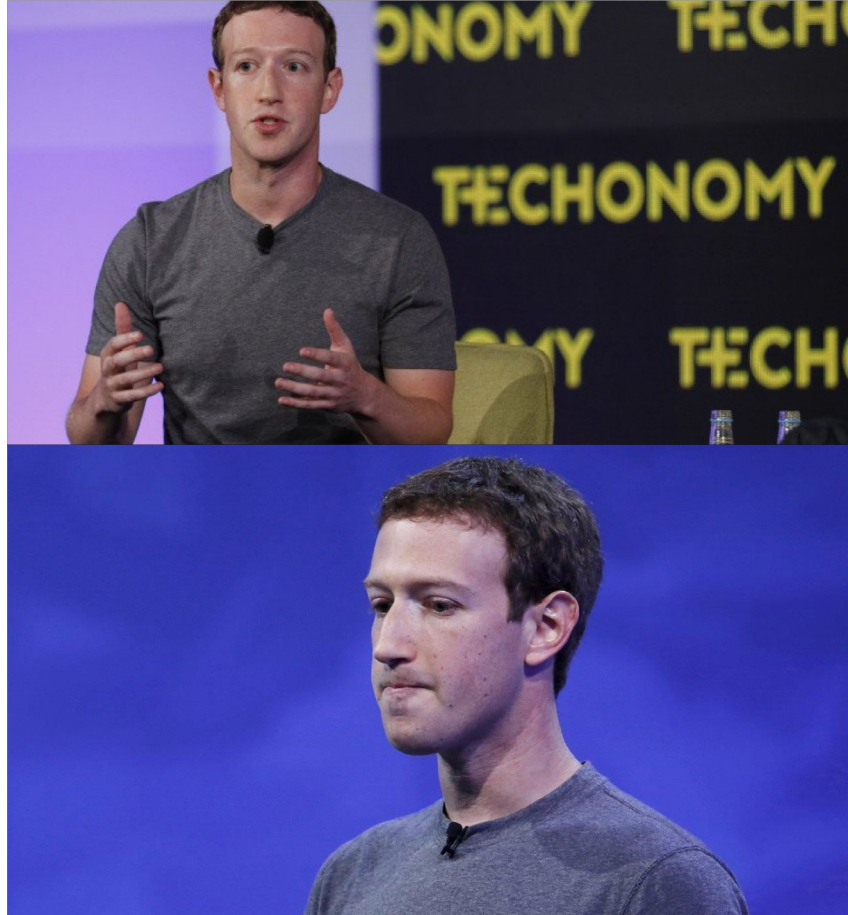
Many more small local news sources – i.e., “Newton Kansan”. All of the news appeared to focus on the U.S. election, including Trump’s commentary on whether he would accept the result.



# November 2016

## Week 2

Immediately post-election there was a dramatic drop-off in volume of content. There appeared to be very little coordination in messaging (as estimated by visual images). One new narrative was a cluster of images that tied to stories about Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg denying that people sharing things on Facebook could have had any impact on the result of the election.



# Top Individual Performers: Facebook Memetic Content

This March 9, 2016, South United meme was the most-shared post on Facebook and had 986,203 total engagements, the most for a single piece of content.



This Being Patriotic homeless veterans meme on September 8, 2016 had 723,750 total engagements on Facebook.



Top Individual  
Performers:  
**Instagram**  
Memetic  
Content

This meme had the highest total engagements on Instagram as well as the most likes (254,179) and comments (6734). It was posted on June 11, 2017.

All the tones are nude! Get over it!



@blackstagram\_\_

## Top Individual Performers: Twitter Content



This photo of Harold Ekeh posted on November 25, 2016, was favorited or retweeted 109,518 times. The original story was about his acceptance into all eight Ivy League schools, in April 2015.

This photo also had one of the highest rates of engagement. It was posted on October 10, 2016, and was favorited or retweeted 91,029 times. It also amplifies the themes of #BlackLivesMatter and racially-based mistreatment.

So I'm at work at a customers house, the police show up guns drawn tell me to put my hands up, I refuse and they tell me I'm accused of walking around the property and trying to open doors and looking thru windows trying to get in to steal stuff. Meanwhile in the real world I'm looking for some Comcast wiring that is underground no where near any houses, in a bright red comcast shirt, in big white comcast truck!!! My bad are you using my truck as your desk?! I'm so sorry America didn't realized working was a crime?!?!? #blackslivesmatter



# Top Facebook post by Engagement referencing Donald Trump



"On June 27, 1952, American government passed a law, called '1952 McCarran Walters act', that actually outlawed Sharia, but Obama never intended to enforce it or even let you know about it at all. Instead he started to import thousands of aggressive Muslim 'refugees', who refused to integrate and demanded to be allowed to live under sharia law instead of American constitution. Now it's within Donald Trump's authority to enforce that law and ban Sharia in every state across America. Do you want him to do that?" – Stop A.I., posted 1/23/2017

# Likes	# Comments	# Reactions	# Shares	Total Engagement
162850	93231	11014	312632	579727



# Top Facebook post by Engagement referencing Hillary Clinton



"As I've said before, I'm really concerned if victory will go to Hillary Clinton due to voter fraud. If we can't trust the State Department, if we can't trust DOJ, if we can't trust the FBI, if we can't trust the DHS, hell we can't trust any division of our Federal Government, so it seems logical we can't put much trust in today's elections system. And we see that Hillary is exhibiting the same cockiness that Obama did before he won in 2008/2012. As if she knows in advance that the results will put her in the White House. POTUS administration shamelessly exploit the rigged system, Democrats already have a great experience at this. Illegal aliens, dead people, incarcerated criminals or refugees who can't even speak English... They ALL work together to get Democrats over the top in these elections!! Are you outraged by this as much as I am? No wonder they trying to take away our guns - because Americans have had enough of this BS and if Killary wins there will be riots nationwide, not seen since the times of Revolutionary war!!" – posted on Secured Borders, 10/7/2016

# Likes	# Comments	# Reactions	# Shares	Total Engagement
19433	4543	871	77406	102253

# Ads & Targeting

# Targeting Americans: Facebook

- 73 different IRA-affiliated Pages and Instagram accounts ran ad targeting operations featuring 3519 ads (videos and images) that drove users to Like Pages, follow Instagram accounts, join Events, and visit websites.
- These ads cross-promoted Pages, creating a web of content and the illusion of legitimacy and popularity.
- The ads reinforced simultaneous messages to defined audiences. The majority of the targeting focused on African American communities.
- A majority of the ads achieved substantially higher clickthrough rates than most Facebook ads; according to Wordstream Advertising Benchmarks, the average CTR for Facebook across all industries in .9% as of August 2018. 1182 of the 1306 unique ads in the dataset provided by Facebook - 90% - that had some spend had a CTR higher than .9%.
- Ad accounts ran ads for both right and left-leaning pages (not separated by Page or Instagram handle)



# Targeting Americans

- Facebook interest-based ad targeting predominantly focused on issues related to race and Second Amendment issues.
- Targeting users by race is not allowed by Facebook, but ads targeted closely related categories like African American (US) Behaviors and Pan-Africanism.
- Ads were often timed and geographically targeted around significant events (ie, a shooting or racial unrest/riots).
- Events ads often promoted local rallies. There were 81 unique events.
- The goal of ads was primarily to drive users to Facebook Pages and IRA websites (which may have enabled subsequent tracking).
- One of the ads led to a Chrome music extension that captured access to browsing behavior and Facebook data once installed.

key	content	count
Interests	Martin Luther King	52
Interests	African-American Civil Rights Movement (1954–68)	43
Interests	African-American history	31
Interests	Black Power	18
Interests	Gun Owners of America	18
Interests	Behaviors: African American (US)	17
Interests	Right to keep and bear arms	17
Interests	Black Panther Party	16
Interests	National Rifle Association	16
Interests	Black history	15
Interests	2nd Amendment	14
Interests	Black History Month	13
Interests	Pan-Africanism	12
Interests	Concealed carry in the United States	12
Interests	African-American history or Malcolm X	11
Interests	Black is beautiful	10
Interests	Second Amendment to the United States Constit...	10
Interests	Pan-Africanism	10
Interests	My Black is Beautiful	10

# Ads Strategy: Audience Types

- Custom audiences were limited to 31 ads - appears that there were approximately 3 custom audiences named and stored that were unrelated to the Pages owned by IRA (tr, tesy, newtestaudit).
- Lookalike audiences were used to find people similar to the audience who liked United Muslims of America, Defend the 2nd, and Being Patriotic.
- 1852 ads were targeted by Interest. Of those, 808 included geographical targeting; 691 of those were the full United States.
- One ad set in late Sept - early October 2016 geo-targeted Allentown, Erie, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Scranton Pennsylvania focused on 18-65 year olds with the interest "Donald Trump for President, Job title: Coal Miner". The goal was to galvanize support for candidate Trump and to hold a rally for miners. It secured 1225 impressions and 77 clicks with 876 spend in Rubles.
- A subset of male-focused + geographical targeting included 2 ad sets specifically targeting "Alabama, Georgia, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas" with additional interests "Right to keep and bear arms, The Second Amendment, Stop Illegal Immigration, National Rifle Association or Donald Trump for President", aged 17-65. These ads ran in early 2016 on the Stop All Invaders page and were thematically about securing the border.
- 12 ads targeted at both the United States and the United Kingdom, and ran in Jan 2016. Additional interests for those ads included "Syria, Republican Party (United States) or Politics" and "Immigration or Conservatism". They were thematically concerned with stopping illegal immigration, and telling the truth about refugees (anti-refugee content). 3429 in Rubles was spent, delivering 12334 impressions and 391 clicks.

# Ads Strategy: Interests, Gender, Age

- 1852 ads were targeted by Interest. Of those, 122 were targeted by gender, split into 32 female and 90 male.
- The Interests targeted ads had age bounds reflective of demographic interests. Men starting at age 13 and women age 14 were targeted for music and free software; these ads were pushing an app and were purchased on Instagram.
- Women from 18+ with interests in “Black Economic Empowerment” and “Black Enterprise” were targeted; these categories did not exist for men.
- Men starting at age 15 with meme-related interests (Imgur, 9GAG, Meme, iFunny) were targeted for ads.
- Men starting at age 17 were targeted with gun-related interests, including Gun Owners of America, National Rifle Association, Second Amendment, AR-15).
- Men starting at age 45 were targeted specifically with pro-officer “Support Law Enforcement” pages.
- The only gender-specific political targeting was also focused on men, age 18+, “breitbart or conservative daily” and “Donald Trump for President”.
- The vast majority of engagement on all of the Pages came from the organic content, not the paid ads. The top Black Matters organic post had 200,000+ engagements.

# Facebook / Instagram Ad Spending, per Target Landing Page (top 20)

1 through 10

url	currency	spend	impressions	clicks
blackmattersus	RUB	411652.13	2014881	120976
patriototus	RUB	407369.54	784119	104770
blacktivists	RUB	314195.12	4383292	444902
timetosecede	RUB	276639.32	418468	42248
lgbtun	RUB	252417.96	626425	49569
BlackJourney2Justice	RUB	240632.11	490246	29458
WilliamsandKalvin	RUB	215347.77	1546052	127939
MuslimAmerica	RUB	192874.45	386658	21657
Army-of-Jesus-1195795607160174	RUB	191500.06	965584	71686
South-United-1777037362551238	RUB	187805.82	1073281	74964

Across the three Blackmatters properties: 684,529.25 ₪  
Equivalent of \$10,206 (using avg exchange rate 2016)

11 through 20

url	currency	spend	impressions	clicks
blackmattersus.mvmnt	RUB	180329.51	2132134	271550
savethe2a	RUB	146163.65	687849	52732
Secured-Borders-757183957716200	RUB	144186.59	157981	22258
brownunitedfront	RUB	135419.95	6010786	726984
Woke-Blacks-294234600956431	RUB	128750.43	2075533	172313
copsareheroes	RUB	111224.07	1335208	73141
Veterans-Come-First-1757336424535312	RUB	93099.96	168223	20202
Black-Matters-1579673598947501	RUB	92547.61	612532	63295
PanAfrootsmove	RUB	89813.57	671342	41374
StopAllInvaders	RUB	76478.14	166759	30559

# Facebook / Instagram Ad Spending, per External Target Domain

domain	currency	spend	impressions	clicks
blackmattersus.com	RUB	163459.60	1327862	87837
petitions.whitehouse.gov	RUB	22451.55	48563	8109
donotshoot.us	RUB	20578.50	125179	2305
meetup.com	RUB	18671.31	36217	1114
musicfb.info	RUB	7023.96	21703	80
represent.com	RUB	4199.40	56317	4690
black4black.info	RUB	1735.75	8121	308
dudeers.com	RUB	1701.46	8227	274
eventbrite.com	RUB	1500.00	3880	151
hilltendo.com	RUB	1449.04	1143	34
youtube.com	RUB	1270.00	3703	184
bonfirefunds.com	RUB	399.98	596	29
theguardian.com	RUB	100.00	306	22
edition.cnn.com	RUB	88.92	164	9

Blackmatters.us, Donotshoot.us, black4black.info, dudeers.com, hilltendo.com, musicfb.info were IRA-created domains.

Bonfirefunds is a site for creating custom t-shirts used by Black Matters. Represent.com sold custom shirts for BM, Black4Black, Fit Black, Nefertiti's Community, Pan-African Roots, Williams & Calvin, Blacktivist, and Woke Blacks. The merchandise rings enabled fundraising, brand building, and the collection of addresses and potentially credit card information.

Meetup.com was the site used to organize black self-defense classes for Fit Black/Black Fist.




# Facebook / Instagram Ad Spending, Clickthrough Rate (CTR)

The average CTR for Facebook ads across all industries was .9% in 2018. These are the top 10 IRA ads sorted by spend, and their associated clickthrough rates -- which are many times better than industry average. The IRA appears to have been adept at understanding Facebook's ad targeting tools and strategies.


Ad Copy	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Spend	Currency
Community of people who support our brave Police Officers. Back The Badge	1334544	73063	5.5%	110588.00	RUB
Together we are a shining beacon of faithfulness! Join us and light your way to Jesus! Army Of	368065	28137	7.6%	89081.10	RUB
Heritage, not hate. The South will rise again! South United	511224	40134	7.9%	78357.30	RUB
They fought for our freedom, now its our time to fight for their rights!	112737	15163	13.4%	72735.10	RUB
Join us if you know it's just a car, NOT A SYMBOL OF HATE South United	300815	16587	5.5%	65705.80	RUB
Brown Power is a platform designed to educate, entertain and connect Chicanos in the US.	968768	56405	5.8%	59571.40	RUB
A page to unit all Muslim people living in the USA!	103079	4491	4.4%	59453.80	RUB
Staying Woke,building-up our communities,uplifting our people. Join us! Woke Blacks	752179	33444	4.4%	58193.60	RUB
We are proud to be black and stand for our community! Join to end the racism in the US.	371295	16442	4.4%	55609.60	RUB
We are not against police, we against police brutality!	226262	9657	4.3%	54729.50	RUB

# Simple Ads promoted Pages


Suggested Page

 **Back the Badge**  
Sponsored

Community of people who support our brave Police Officers.



**Back the Badge**  
Community  
111,113 people like this.

 Like Page

73,063 clicks

72,043 clicks

Suggested Page

 **Being Patriotic**  
Sponsored


United We Stand! Welcome every patriot we can reach. Flag and news!




**Being Patriotic**  
Community  
219,810 people like this.

 Like Page


Suggested Page

 **Brown Power**  
Sponsored

Brown Power is a platform designed to educate, entertain and connect Chicanos in the US.



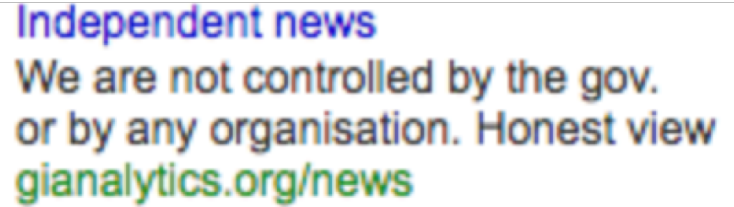
**Brown Power**  
Community  
203,148 people like this.

 Like Page

56,405 clicks

# Targeting Americans: Google Ads

- Attribution in the AdWords data provided by Google was questionable; there was a folder of Canadian ads supporting Justin Trudeau that seemed entirely separate from the IRA operation.
- GI Analytics was the most-promoted site in the data set, with 199 ads about unbiased news, civil rights, global security, and regional analysis.
- OnePoliticalPlaza (46), Blackmattersus (31), and Russia-direct.org (15) were the 3 other domains with more than 10 ads.
- All ads for these pages emphasized that they offered “independent news”. Blackmatters ads focused on race relations, and Russia-direct included ads on Syria.

A screenshot of a Google Ad. The text is displayed in a sans-serif font with varying colors: 'Independent news' is in blue, 'We are not controlled by the gov.' is in dark blue, 'or by any organisation. Honest view' is in dark blue, and 'gianalytics.org/news' is in green. The ad is set against a white background with a thin grey border.

Independent news  
We are not controlled by the gov.  
or by any organisation. Honest view  
[gianalytics.org/news](https://gianalytics.org/news)

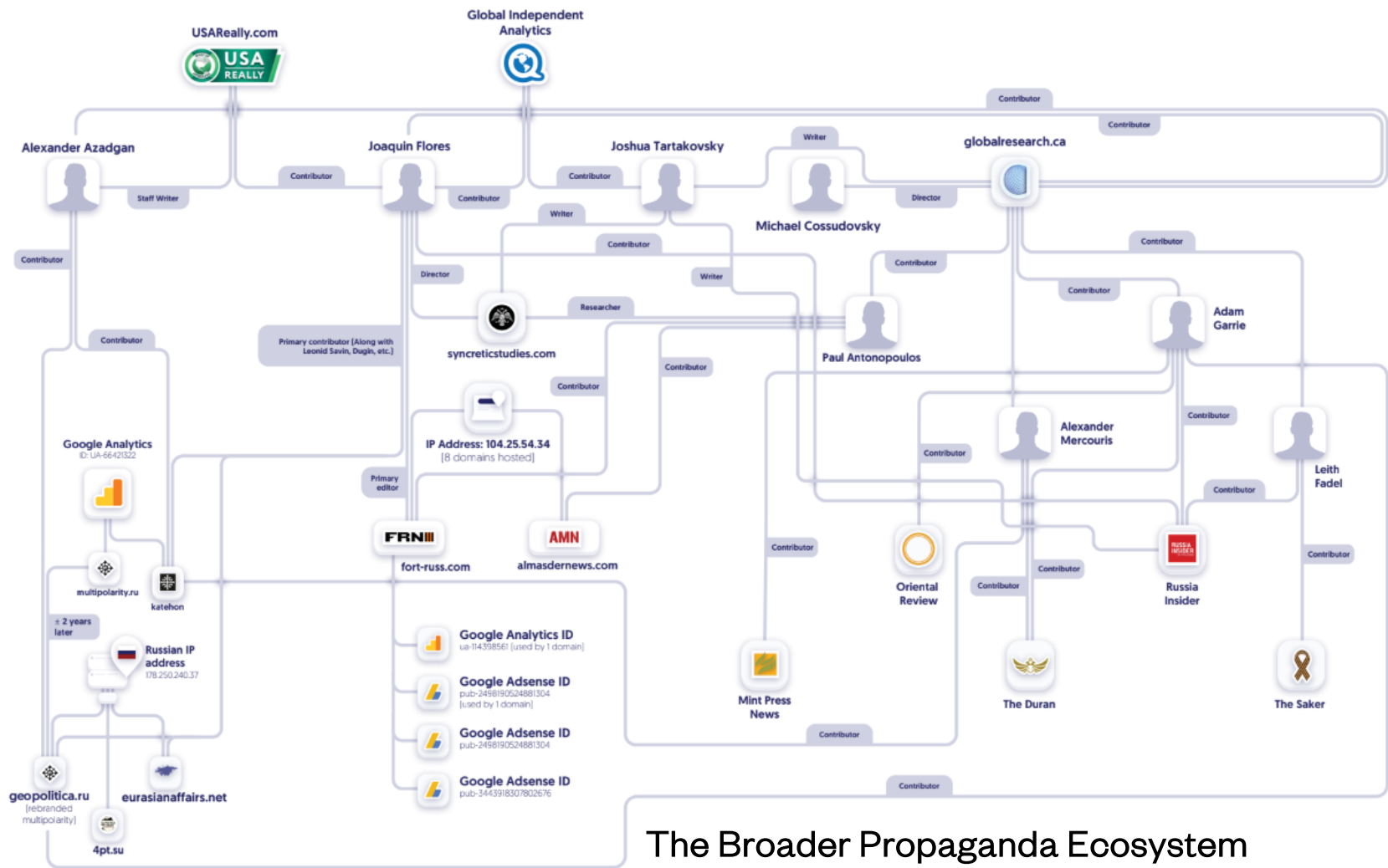
# Platform Activity Summaries

# Platform Activity: Google AdWords

- The data set included 38 folders, each for what appears to be an AdWords account number, containing a total of 655 ads. One of the folders featured 263 ads dedicated to electing President Trudeau, and seems likely to have been attributed in error.
- Of the remainder, ads link to known Internet Research Agency websites (31 for blackmattersus.com) as well as an extended network of Russian websites featuring think tank content and propaganda.
- It appears that the AdWords accounts were used to promote sites that offered longer-form aligned content such as opinion and analysis pieces in line with Kremlin agenda. Given this, it is perhaps more likely that they were affiliated with FAN, which shared office space with the IRA, rather than the Internet Research Agency itself. This may be a distinction without a difference.
- The content promoted in the ads includes material on Obama's ostensible poor performance and the media's purported hiding of it, Russia's positions on Syria, European migrant concerns, and crises of democracy (rethink democracy, anarchy is another way, etc.)
- Russia-linked propaganda sites with domains that appeared in the Adwords content include onepoliticalplaza.com, katehon.com, russia-direct.org, russiacouncil.ru, russiainsider.com, nelar.ru, mepfoundation.org, rethinkingrussia.ru.
- The largest of the Adwords accounts (by number) promoted Global Intelligence Analytics (gianalytics.org), 199 times. GI Analytics is a think-tank/analysis-style publication with an international masthead (writers include Americans) that is presently dormant.

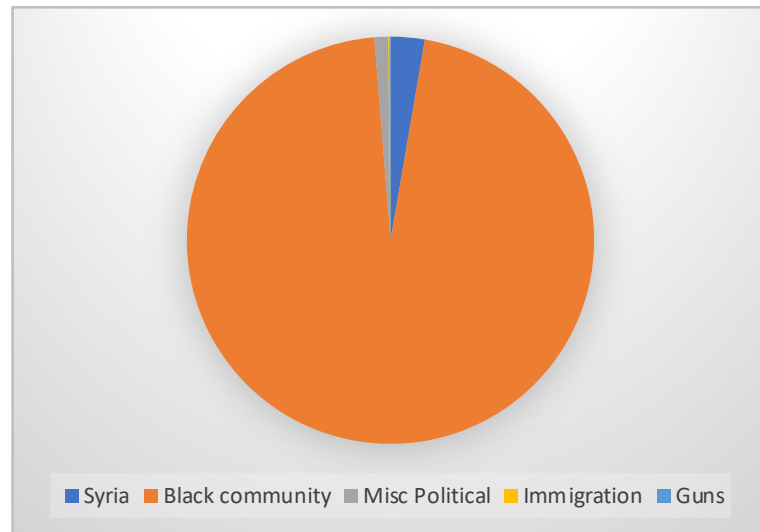
# Platform Activity: AdWords: GI Analytics

- GI Analytics was active from 2015 until Aug 31, 2016, when editor Joshua Tartakovsky announced it was “on hold”. <https://gianalytics.org/about/> - defines the topics the collective of authors writes about: “Our purpose and mission are to provide high-quality analysis at a time when we are faced with a multitude of crises, a collapsing global economy, imperialist wars, environmental disasters, corporate greed, terrorism, deceit, GMO food, a migration crisis and a crackdown on small farmers and ranchers. We are in a desperate need of truth and of hard-cutting analysis, especially now, when we are being betrayed by our elected representatives and the corporate media.”
- The site’s content is repurposed on other properties around the web, including Russia News Now, Russia Insider, The Russophile, NovoRussia today. It has links to other known Russian propaganda sites by way of authors, AdWords accounts, and repurposed content.
- The masthead of authors shows several Americans. Several of these USA-affiliated authors, such as Joaquin Flores, have personal blogs or appointments at other Russia-linked think tanks. Others, such as Stefan Paraber, have almost no social presence aside from their writing on the site. It is unclear whether they knew they were writing for an IRA entity.
- <https://twitter.com/gianalytics> – Twitter account still exists, dormant but still visible.
- GI Analytics appears in the YouTube data set with a channel promoting the account ‘SyrianGirlPartisan’.
- <https://www.facebook.com/Global-Independent-Analytics-1507879509510336> - The Facebook page was active as of May 30, 2018 but was deleted sometime before July 2, 2018 during the course of this investigation. It had approximately 7000 followers.



# Platform Activity: YouTube

- The IRA started making videos in Sept 2015, producing 1107 videos across 17 channels. A few channels were active until July 2017.
- By far the most content was related to Black Lives Matter & police brutality: 1063 videos split across 10 different channels (59% of the channels, 96% of the content). 571 had title keywords related to the police and focused on abuses.
- Three channels (30 videos) were devoted to Syria & related Near East conflicts. One was related to GI Analytics, which ran AdWords. The others were both variants of the name “New Inform”.
- Two channels were specifically political, focused on the 2016 election.
- Several of the channels aggregated or repurposed Vine content.
- “These channels’ videos were not targeted to the U.S. or to any particular sector of the U.S. population” – while they may have meant this specifically in the context of paid targeting, YouTube’s statement before the first tech hearing appears disingenuous now.





# Platform Activity: YouTube Channel List

- A Word Of Truth (Williams & Calvin)
- [Backyard of the White House](#)
- Black Matters
- BlackToLive
- Cop Block US
- Don't Shoot
- Global Independent Analytics
- GUNS 4LIFE
- Hong Zi
- Calvin Johnson
- New Inform
- Newinform Newinform
- Paul Jefferson
- PoliceState
- Starling Brown
- STOP A. I.
- Stop Police Brutality

*Backyard of the Whitehouse content is still aggregated and viewable online at the link.*

# Platform Activity: YouTube

- 25 videos had election-related keywords in the title (candidate names, vote/voting, election, etc). These videos were entirely anti-Hillary Clinton.
- 571 videos had keywords related to police (police\*, cop, officer, trooper, etc) in the title; these all focused on police abuses.
- Videos on the “A Word of Truth” channel – the YouTube channel of Williams & Kalvin Facebook page and @williams.and.kalvin\_ Instagram account - included voter suppression tactics targeting African-American voters. Titles included “The truth about elections”, “HILLARY RECEIVED \$20,000 DONATION FROM KKK TOWARDS HER CAMPAIGN”, “A Word Of Truth: Dr. Alveda against fu\*\*in' Hillary”.
- One of the political channels, Paul Jefferson, solicited videos for a #PeeOnHillary video challenge, and shared submissions that it received. The hashtag was incorporated into Twitter activity.
- Several of the email addresses attributed to the YouTube accounts had Google Plus pages; the remainder were Gmail accounts.
- Several email addresses confirmed links between accounts across platforms; [williamsjohnsonhiphop@gmail.com](mailto:williamsjohnsonhiphop@gmail.com) and [copblock1@gmail.com](mailto:copblock1@gmail.com) were affiliated with the “A Word of Truth” channel. Copblock1 was also attached to the Cop Block US YouTube channel, which ran an Instagram account as well. ([Cop Block](#) is a real activist organization.)
- One of the email addresses linked to the Don't Shoot YouTube account appears to have been [linked to a Tumblr post](#) advocating that users play Pokemon Go and name Pokemon after U.S. police brutality victims.

# Platform Activity: YouTube

- The two “New Inform” channels had Russia-language sites associated with them, and content related to Syria, Turkey, and the Middle East.
  - politexpert.net - Whols exists, newinform.co@yandex.ru,
  - Company: OOO "Novinfo" (Yurij Krasnov)
  - Address: [REDACTED]
  - Phone: [REDACTED]
  - Email: newinform.smi@gmail.com,
  - 42k daily unique visitors, 257k daily pageviews.
  - <https://newinform.com/>

# Platform Activity: Twitter

- The IRA developed a collection of over 3841 persona accounts on Twitter; approximately [1.4MM people](#) (per Twitter's estimate) engaged with their 10.4MM tweets.
- The tweets from 3841 persona accounts were delivered to SSCI in two batches; it appears that several were [misidentified](#) while others were missed and discovered later.
- Our investigation into the Twitter accounts suggests that the English-language activity appears to have taken 4 primary forms:
  - Repurposed accounts from a commercial botnet
  - Newsbots - accounts that tweeted news articles focused on the regions they were purportedly from (including Russian-language newsbots targeting Russians); this is discussed later in this document in the Media Manipulation section
  - "Right-leaning" accounts that participated in conversations or created political content designed to be resonant with the American right wing political spectrum
  - "Left-leaning" accounts that did the same thing for left-leaning audiences.
- This perception of account types has been confirmed by outside researchers from Clemson University and Five Thirty Eight, which released a collection of IRA tweets (a subset of the ones provided to the committee) during the period of this investigation. That coding [can be found in an easily-searchable interface here](#); by that classification, there were 1280 Russian language accounts, 630 Right-leaning, 233 Left-leaning, 54 Newsfeed.
- As noted above, there are residual accounts from related botnets that have not been taken down; several of these are dormant.

# Platform Activity: Twitter

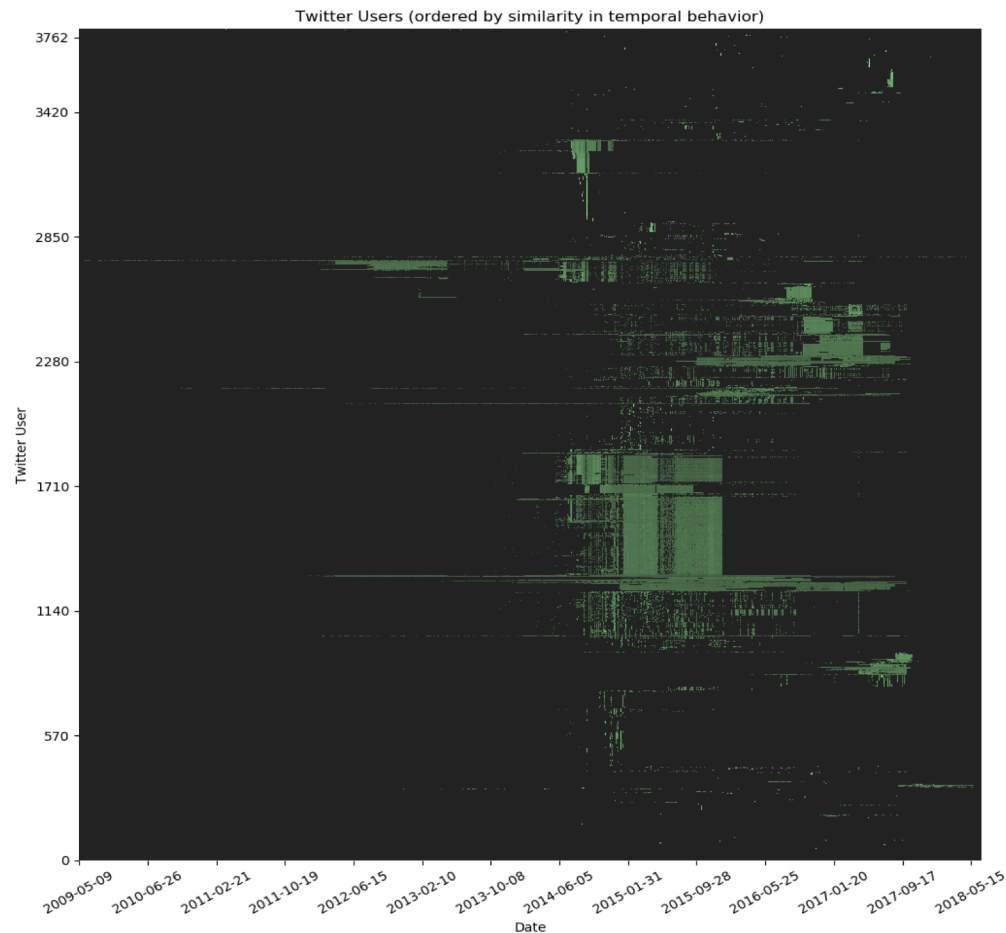
- The breadth of topics covered by the IRA on Twitter appears to have exceeded the topics discussed on Facebook and Instagram. There was, for example, a collection of conspiratorial content targeting the American right wing on Twitter that was not replicated in the topics discussed on Facebook. This ranged from pseudoscience content (anti-vaccine) to political conspiracies (QAnon).
- Our perception is that Twitter accounts focused was largely opportunistic real-time chatter; a collection of accounts regularly played hashtag games. By contrast, Facebook was used to develop deeper relationships, to create a collection of substantive media-type pages dedicated to continual reinforcement of in-group and out-group ideals for targeted audiences. As noted above, several of the Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and Reddit pages had associated Twitter accounts.
- Something of note is that the data set provided by Twitter did not include some of the accounts that were exposed as manipulative personas during the 2017 special elections, such as @umpire43. We have no capability for conclusive attribution without metadata and other information currently known only to Twitter. It is entirely possible that some of these accounts were still Russian-run, but out of a different branch of the Russian intelligence or military services. It is also possible they were created by a different adversary replicating tactics.
- Most of the IRA twitter accounts were registered through various proxy services in the United states and Europe. For example, accounts intended to pass as American were registered from U.S. IP addresses, and accounts intended to pass as Germans were registered from German IP addresses. A significant number of IRA twitter accounts however, were registered from either a single IP address in Venezuela or the IRA building's real IP address in St. Petersburg.

# Platform activity:

## Twitter Bots & Coordination

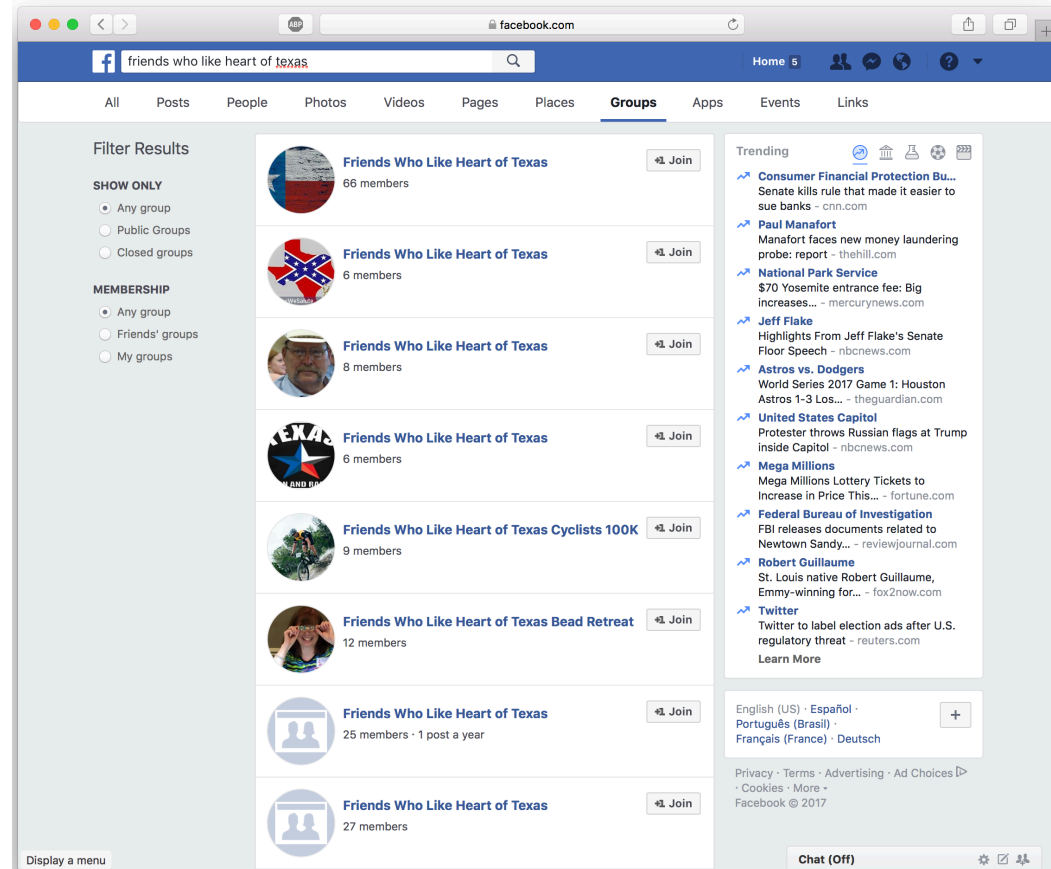
Each row represents the Twitter activity of one individual account over time. The rectangular structures show evidence of coordinated activity - tweeting in unison.

Date is the x-axis, each individual account is represented as a "Twitter User" (y-axis).



# Platform Activity: Facebook

- Facebook provided data on 81 IRA Pages. 32 focused on the Black community. 25 were right-leaning. 6 were left-leaning. One each were dedicated to Latino and Native American communities. The rest were tiny. More Latino, Left, Black, and Native American-targeting pages have since been discovered.
- The IRA leveraged the majority of Facebook's features, including Ads, Pages, Events, Messenger, and even Stickers.
- Small groups of individual users who appreciated the Pages went on to create fan Groups. (This activity was likely prompted by a Facebook interface designed to increase Group creation and activity among friends who Liked the same Pages.)



# Platform Activity: Facebook

- Organic posts reveal a deep knowledge of American culture and demographically-relevant influencers. For example, Turning Point USA and Pepe the Frog memes appear among the youthful far-right-targeted Memopolis and Angry Eagle Pages but don't appear on the boomer-conservative focused pages.
- Right-leaning posts targeted the U.S. media and intelligence community as untrustworthy and diminished popular Conservative politicians in favor of Donald Trump. Left-leaning pages criticized mainstream Democratic leaders as corporatists or too close to neo-cons and promoted Green Party and Democratic Socialist themes.
- Syria appears sporadically as a recurring theme in narratives targeting the Right-leaning, Left-leaning, and Black community pages.

**LEFTY CAN'T ENJOY DRINKING MILK**



**BECAUSE IT PROMOTES WHITE SUPREMACY**



# Political Narratives: Facebook

There were 1777 political posts on Facebook that mentioned Hillary Clinton. 268 appeared on pages that targeted liberals, generating 49,365 engagements; the remainder were on right-leaning pages (1.7 million engagements). They were all negative.

The one purportedly positive Clinton post was an event (and ad) promoting a Muslim community march to support Sec. Clinton. It is highly likely the IRA saw a high-profile march by Muslims as a way to create tension, and as a negative for Sec. Clinton's candidacy. The United Muslims of America Page's regular post content actively opposed Sec. Clinton.

**United Muslims of America** shared their event.  
Sponsored · 

The time has come to understand one simple thing: we the American muslims are as American



**JUL**  
**9**

**Support Hillary. Save American Muslims!**  
Sat 1 PM EDT · The Obama White House · Wash...  
150 people interested · 47 people going

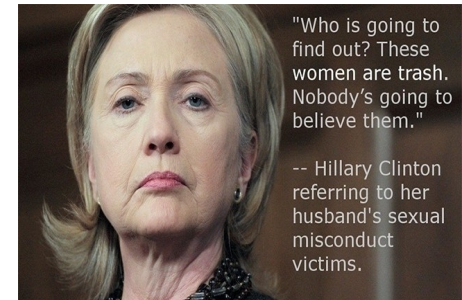
★ Interested

174 Reactions · 36 Comments

 Like  Comment

# Political Narratives: Instagram

- Opposition to Hillary Clinton's candidacy among the right-wing Instagram accounts was a given.
- @feminism\_tag (which ran the memes pictured to the right, gathering 500 and 624 Likes respectively) was the IRA's intersectional feminist account and the most likely to support Clinton based on persona. The account posted extensively about feminism and social justice. It was a staunch supporter of Bernie Sanders and vehemently opposed to Hillary Clinton.
- Black community-targeted Instagram pages were similarly anti-Hillary Clinton.



*THE WORDS  
OF A FEMINIST?  
I DON'T THINK SO.*

# Platform Activity: Instagram e-commerce

Merchandise (“merch”) played a key role in the IRA’s Instagram activities (to a much lesser extent, Facebook). Some of this took the form of cross-promotion of small businesses. This was a core component of the Black community messaging; #supportblackbusiness / #buyblack was a recurring popular theme.



34301 @black4black

<http://www.chloeandchad.com/>

"We are happy to present you our partner Chloe and Chad . These products are all made by hand; they are all natural and are made when ordered, so they are as fresh as possible. Using natural skin care is a great way to treat your skin right! Enjoy a good discount with our promo! Just DM us!

(on FB: “Enjoy a good discount with our promo code after you share 3 posts from Black4Black or BM.”)

# Platform Activity: Instagram e-commerce

The IRA ran several of its own merchandise sites as well. They primarily sold t-shirts.

- Some featured their Page or Instagram handle logo, for audience-growth and brand awareness purposes.
- Some featured contentious political messaging perhaps designed to spark controversy and highlight division in the real world.

Merchandise likely provided the IRA with a source of revenue, but there are two more important reasons to run merch sites: first, transactions enable the gathering of personal information: names, addresses, email address and phone numbers, and potentially payment information. The second thing it provides is indications of strong topical affinity, which is useful for the construction of Facebook Custom Audiences for further online message targeting.



# Facebook & Instagram: repetition and cross-posting of sustained narratives

This is one of many examples of reuse of stories and memes across pages. This was especially common in the IRA-created media mirage surrounding the Black community. This is the story of an American 10-year-old who made the national news for an invention of his (and an accompanying GoFundMe) that aimed to reduce infant hot-car deaths. The Black community-targeted pages and Instagram accounts told the story, each repurposing it and putting a slightly different spin on the content (“these are stories of Black children the media don’t want you to see”, “White people invent tools for killing, this Black child is inventing a tool for saving lives.”) BM created an article about it for their website, and Williams & Calvin made a video to tell the story.

Content ID	Page Name	Share URL	Content Text	# Shares	# Likes	# Reaction	# Comments	Post Date/Time
23003	@afrokingdom_		The kid is only 10 years old, but he is a genius! Let me introduce you Meet Bishop Curry V, outstan	NA	1587		32	2017-02-02 01:03:18 PDT
62735	Williams&Kalvin		"The kid is only 10 years old, but he is a genius! Let me introduce you Meet Bishop Curry V, outstar	165	207	60	14	2017-02-02 07:24:51 PDT
66359	Woke Blacks		"Meet Bishop Curry V from Texas, he's working on a device that could help prevent children from c	223	299	87	13	2017-02-03 02:37:07 PDT
101230	@woke_blacks		Meet Bishop Curry V from Texas, he's working on a device that could help prevent children from d	NA	531		10	2017-02-03 03:02:45 PDT
12810	Black Excellence		"10-year-old Bishop Curry V was saddened by the death of a baby of his neighbors. The child was le	4	6	3	0	2017-02-06 03:06:55 PDT
45031	@blaxcellence_		10-year-old Bishop Curry V was saddened by the death of a baby of his neighbors. The child was left	NA	169		6	2017-02-06 07:49:14 PDT
45217	Nefertiti's Community		"A brilliant 10-year-old black boy is trying to prevent hot car baby deaths with his new invention.	4	1	2	0	2017-02-17 07:24:11 PDT
72156	@nefertiti_community		A brilliant 10-year-old black boy is trying to prevent hot car baby deaths with his new invention. T	NA	347		5	2017-02-17 08:36:17 PDT
62191	Williams&Kalvin		"White people can easily invent tools for killing, but black people can invent something really usef	5	11	1	0	2017-02-22 02:33:53 PDT
18700	Blacktivist		"10-YEAR-OLD BISHOP CURRY RAISED \$20,000 TO HELP DEVELOP HIS DEVICE TO STOP HOT-CAR DEA	65	144	46	0	2017-06-16 04:21:54 PDT
13448	@_blacktivistt_		10-YEAR-OLD BISHOP CURRY RAISED \$20,000 TO HELP DEVELOP HIS DEVICE TO STOP HOT-CAR DEA	NA	146		6	2017-06-17 09:04:39 PDT
43980	@blaxcellence_		Little inventor appeared to be successful! He raised over \$20,000 via GoFundMe page. His patent i	NA	635		8	2017-06-18 11:56:05 PDT
4265	BM	<a href="https://blackmattersus.com">https://blackmattersus.com</a>	"As the hot summer months are rapidly approaching, a 10-year-old from McKinney, Texas, wants t	61	155	24	7	2017-06-18 14:52:33 PDT
11522	@_black_business		The Oasis would respond to rising temperatures by emitting cool air and use an antenna to signal f	NA	1689		21	2017-06-27 01:02:43 PDT



# Facebook / Instagram voter fraud allegations

- There were 109 Facebook and Instagram posts devoted to creating and amplifying fears of voter fraud, all but one of which targeted Right-leaning audiences. 71 of these were created in the month leading up to election day and made claims that certain states were helping Sec. Clinton win, that militia groups were going to polling places to stop fraud (they called for participants), that civil war was preferable to an unfair election or the election of Sec. Clinton, that “illegals” were overrepresented in voter rolls in Texas and elsewhere, or were voting multiple times with Democratic Party assistance. The page Being Patriotic created an 800-number hotline for tips about voter fraud, which prominent accounts such as @March\_for\_Trump promoted on Twitter as well. The priority they gave to this narrative suggests they may not have expected then-candidate Trump to win; either way, the narrative would ensure acrimony and suspicion.
- Following Election Day, the right-targeted voter fraud narrative changed to posts suggesting that President Trump would have won the popular vote, too, were it not for voter fraud. And, as stories broke, the accounts began to actively mock the idea that Russians had interfered in the U.S. election.
- There was one post alluding to voter fraud targeting a left-wing audience on the page @cop\_block\_us; it conveyed that a person who had evidence that the Democratic primary had been rigged in Hillary’s favor had been found dead.

# Platform Activity: Tumblr

The Tumblr data set was not provided to the SSCI. It was mentioned in the Mueller indictment and so we will briefly summarize it here.

In March 2018, Tumblr announced that it had identified 84 accounts linked to the Internet Research Agency, which it provided to law enforcement and shut down. The list of those accounts indicate cross-pollination with a number of Instagram and Facebook Pages and Twitter personas.

Tumblr was used to disseminate memes and reblog existing content – particularly those found on Instagram – as well as links to contests such as the Pokemon Go “police brutality” campaign that dontshootus is pictured promoting here.

There were [extensive efforts](#) to target Black communities on Tumblr, particularly youth and urban communities.



# Platform Activity: Reddit

The Reddit data set was not provided to the SSCI. In the interest of providing a more complete picture of IRA operations, we summarize it here.

In April 2018, Reddit released its 2017 annual transparency report [with a special post](#) noting that it had uncovered 944 accounts linked to the Internet Research Agency. It provided the data to law enforcement and shut the accounts down, but was unique among companies in that it allowed them to remain visible.

The list of those accounts indicates cross-pollination with a number of Instagram and Facebook Pages and Twitter personas. Karma ranged from -16 for BlackToLive (which had an Instagram account) to 99493 for Rubinjer (active in r/TheDonald, r/HillaryforPrison, and r/blackpeoplegifs).

Reddit was used to disseminate memes as well as links to the IRA's own sites. The accounts made 14,000 posts, focusing on meme groups and political humor as well as racism and police issues. The top 10 subreddits by post, as reported by Reddit, are to the right.

- funny: 1455
- uncen: 1443
- Bad\_Cop\_No\_Donut: 800
- gifs: 553
- PoliticalHumor: 545
- The\_Donald: 316
- news: 306
- aww: 290
- POLITIC: 232
- racism: 214

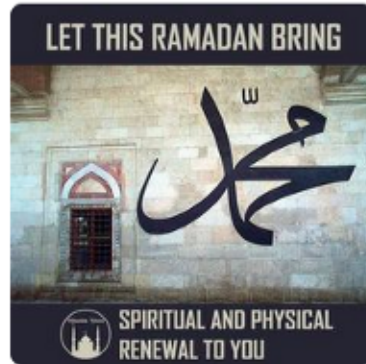


# Platform Activity: Pinterest

Pinterest never provided a data set to researchers or the SSCI. In the interest of providing a more complete picture of IRA operations, we chose to briefly summarize activities on Pinterest.



Speaking of the government hypocrisy - Nobel Peace...



O Allah, on this day, show me the way to win Your



And We will surely test you with something of fear and...



You are not your success or failures. Don't let them to make...

Pinterest appears to have served largely as a repository of content, perhaps for purposes of search engine optimization (SEO). Meme boards were created by IRA-linked accounts, including LGBT United, United Muslims, and Heart of Texas, but the content does not appear to have been actively disseminated through these accounts on Pinterest. Although the IRA did not pursue Pinterest audience engagement directly, other users frequently pinned IRA memes to their own boards, creating a public historical record of IRA content.

# Media Impersonation & Media Diminishment Strategy

# Impersonating Media: **Twitter** Newsbots

There were approximately 109 Twitter accounts masquerading as news organizations, including U.S. local news organizations. The 44 U.S.-related accounts had amassed 660,335 followers between them, with an average of 15,000 followers. Many of these accounts behaved similarly, posting links to articles and local content dozens of times per day. A look at the metadata associated with them reveals that despite their names, they had obviously Russian device information and were tweeting from overseas IPs. Several others (not pictured) used Google Voice accounts.

			IP	User-Defined Geolocation	Carrier	
BaltimoreOnline	online.baltimore@gmail.com	Eastern Time (US & Canada)	125.25.121.120	Thailand	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for Baltimore. DM us anytime. RTs
Atlanta_Online	atlanta.online1@gmail.com	Eastern Time (US & Canada)	108.174.63.166	United States, NY	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for Atlanta and Georgia. DM us any
OaklandOnline	online.oakland@gmail.com	Pacific Time (US & Canada)	181.72.249.129	Chile	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for Oakland. DM us anytime. RTs no
OnlineCleveland	cleveland.online1@gmail.com	Central Time (US & Canada)	113.170.100.132	Vietnam	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for Cleveland. DM us anytime. RTs
OnlineMemphis	memphis.online1@gmail.com	Central Time (US & Canada)	178.90.86.28	Kazakhstan	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for Memphis and Tennessee. DM u
StLouisOnline	online.st.louis@gmail.com	Eastern Time (US & Canada)	125.207.173.241	Japan	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for St. Louis. DM us anytime. RTs no
WashingtOnline	online.washington@gmail.com	Eastern Time (US & Canada)	113.190.174.116	Vietnam	beeline_russia	Breaking news, weather, traffic and more for Washington. DM us anytime. RT

# Impersonating Media: Instagram News

Masquerading as American media was not limited to Twitter. A handful of Instagram accounts presented news and images as if they were local press: @my\_baton\_rouge, @camden\_news, @news.philadelphia, and @new\_york\_live pretended to be regional; others, such as @baltimore.blackvoice, pretended to be coverage for local communities.

Facebook has [stated that they want to surface and prioritize local news](#) because it is more trusted; the IRA appears to agree, as they began delivering “local news” back in 2015. Most of the posts featured snippets of local interest stories, and beautiful shots of the target region.



# Impersonating Media: Syria Focus

Of the ~109 news-related accounts, 58 were “Novosti” accounts that tweeted news related to regions in Russia. One of the most popular was NovostiCrimea, which had 107,011 followers. In addition, Russian-language news sites embedded tweets from different IRA-linked Twitter accounts, suggesting the possibility that the IRA propagandizes to their own people as well.

 <https://rs.sputniknews.com/rusija/201706121111535955-Sirija-palmira-vatromet121/>

أرسل صديقنا السوري فيديو لألعاب نارية تم إطلاقها في حقول الغاز قرب [#بتدمر](#) على شرف عيد يوم روسيا 12 يونيو <https://t.co/9RzTms6G4I> [pic.twitter.com/9UlrKyLAte](https://t.co/9RzTms6G4I)

— أصدقاء روسيا (@AsdiqaRussiya) 12 июня 2017 г.

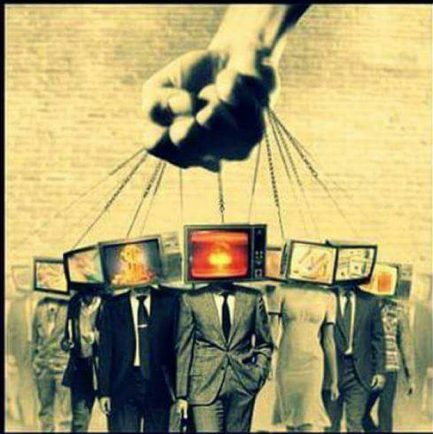
Данас се на друштвеним мрежама појавио видео ватромета који су Сиријци организовали у част Дана Русије и сведочења о празничном ватромету који је осветлио сиријско небо у подручју гасног поља Палмире објавила је група „Пријатељи Русије“ на Фејсбуку и на Твитеру.

ألعاب نارية أخرى – تحتفل سوريا عيد يوم روسيا [pic.twitter.com/rDFIH1YURr](https://t.co/rDFIH1YURr)

— أصدقاء روسيا (@AsdiqaRussiya) 12 июня 2017 г.

# Eroding Support for Mainstream Media

Advocating for the creation of niche media, and attempting to erode trust in existing mainstream media, was a strategy deployed by the IRA across all of the major community groups they targeted (Black, Left-leaning, Right-leaning). Wikileaks was discussed positively in narratives promoted among all three communities as well.



*The people will believe what  
the media tells them they believe.*

*George Orwell*

BlackMattersUS.com

**I DIDN'T BELIEVE THE MEDIA**  
**SO I BECAME ONE**



# CNN: disparaged on Right-targeted pages



**THEY DECEIVE**



**DON'T BELIEVE**



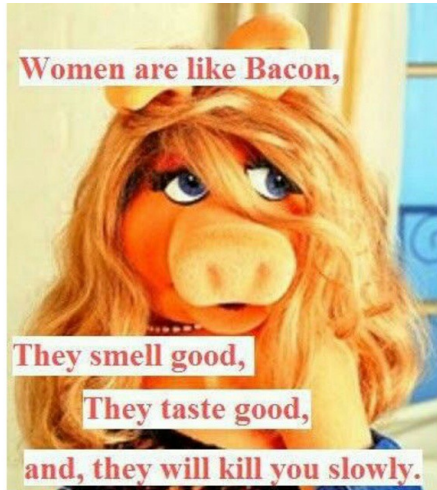
# Observations

# Reinforcing In-Group Identity



# Growing Audiences: @army\_of\_jesus\_

First post, Jan 9, 2015: account is a Kermit meme page



My tasty morsel #kermit #kermitthefrog #fun  
#lol #themuppets #themuppetshow #follow  
#followforfollow #followback #instantfollowback  
#follow4follow #followforfollow #likeforlike #like  
#usa #american #america #theusa

Aug 27, 2015: page shifts to The Simpsons



Hey guys! I, Homer Simpson, am taking Kermit's page. He was messing with cops too much and finally he got some... punishment, ke-ke! Okay let's have some fun! WOO-HOO! #Simpsons #Homer #HomerSimpson #HomerSays #News #FunnyNews #Politics #USA

Jan 5, 2016: page becomes Jesus-focused



Jesus love for you never expires.  
#freedom #love #god #bible #trust  
#blessed #grateful

# Creating Confusion: Co-opting Activism

The IRA co-opted existing organization names, or set themselves up as “offshoots” of the main group. United Muslims of America was/is a real group. So are Cop Block, Black Guns Matter, and L for Life. The Cop Block IRA account presented itself as a chapter of the decentralized group.

The IRA’s Black Guns Matter, curiously, appears to have worked with the real activist behind the real organization of the same name. It’s unclear to what extent the activist was aware of the provenance of the Page. He has indicated in public comments on Twitter that he thinks the Russian election interference story is a distraction but does not appear to have discussed their co-opting of his brand.

## Cop Block



[copblock.org](https://copblock.org)

Cop Block is a decentralized police accountability project formerly working to make police accountable for their actions. [Wikipedia](#)

**Founded:** January 1, 2010

**Motto:** Because Cops Aren't Your Friends

**Purpose:** Promote [law enforcement](#) accountability and abolishment, expose alleged [police misconduct](#)

**Founders:** [Pete Eyre](#), [Adam Mueller](#), [Jason Talley](#)

**Key people:** [Pete Eyre](#), [Adam Mueller](#)



# Direct Outreach: Asset Development

The IRA frequently engaged in direct outreach and recruitment of American citizens. These touches included attempts to drive people to the streets for events, attempts to get people to perform jobs, and more insidious attempts to connect with people around very personal challenges.

- Requests for contact with preachers from Black churches (Black\_Baptist\_Church)
- Offers of free counseling to people with sexual addiction (Army of Jesus)
- Soliciting volunteers to hand out fliers
- Soliciting volunteers to teach self-defense classes
- Offering free self defense classes (Black Fist/Fit Black)
- Requests for people to attend political rallies (myriad of pages on the left as well as the right)
- Requests for photographers to document protests
- Requests for speakers at protests
- Requests to protest the Westborough Baptist Church (LGBT United)
- Job offers for designers to help design fliers, sites, Facebook sticker packs
- Requested followers send photos for a calendar
- Requested followers send photos to be shared to the site (Back the Badge)
- Solicited videos for a YouTube contest
- Encouraged people to apply to be part of a Black reality TV show
- Posted a wide variety of job ads (write for BlackMattersUS and others)
- Requests to connect with lawyers to help with immigration cases



# Direct Outreach: Asset Development

The sin of masturbation has infiltrated millions of homes all across our country, turning us away from God and torturing our youth. The enormous harm this wrongful activity is doing to our society is hard to overestimate. More and more people are getting dragged into the vicious circle of habitual sinning, which is constantly destroying the sacred bond with God. Captivates get deeply isolated both psychologically and socially. Masturbation pumps faith out of our community and replaces it with dirt and vicious lust. Such an evil substitution provokes further sinning and drives the entire families off the Godly path of love and redemption. Masturbation does lead to emotional depravation and damages health causing mental problems. If you care about yourself and your family, you have to cease sinning! But not only for the sake of your earthly well-being but for the future life. Remember God calls masturbation a sin many times directly (Matthew 5:28, Leviticus 15:16-17, 1 Corinthians 10:13 etc). If you are an addict, you must stop! You must flee from lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace! You can turn to God today and we want to help you in doing that. We are now starting a support line for everyone who is struggling with masturbation-related problems. Each case is individual, tell us your story and show you are determined to leave this ungodly activity behind. Admit you have a problem. Our therapy has helped many Christians who gave up this miserable activity and managed to turn to Jesus again. You will not be the exception! PM us and share your pain so that we can help you make the first step on the way of God's guidance and Christian love. Don't lose heart and we will break the bonds of evil together!

Posted 3x by Army of Jesus on Facebook, and 3x on Instagram, with different memes, in March and April of 2017. Received 5436 Likes and 284 comments.



**"STRUGGLING WITH  
THE ADDICTION TO  
MASTURBATION?  
REACH OUT TO  
ME AND WE WILL  
BEAT IT TOGETHER."  
-JESUS**

**YOU CAN'T HOLD HANDS  
WITH GOD WHEN YOU  
ARE MASTURBATING.**

**USE OUR HOTLINE IF YOU NEED HELP**

# Direct Outreach: Asset Development

5567 BM Don't trust the mainstream media! We are working on the first in history independent black reality show. This is your chance to take an active part and portray the naked truth about life in your community. All that is required of you is to send us a video, depicting the problems facing our people. If you face oppression in your daily lives, film it. If you are still an object of racist jokes at your school, film it. If you are not appreciated for your natural melanin appearance, film it. If you face harassment and fall a victim of unlawful police behavior, film it. If your colleagues at work are so backward and keep offending you because of your skin color, film it. If you are a single parent and are facing various life challenges, film it to raise awareness. If racism is a reality for you and isn't just a chitchat, this is the show that you've been dreaming about. This reality show is going to be created for you and by you! Let's break these social barriers and show what is really happening. Send your hot entries for our maiden edition of BLACK INSIDER series to [admin@blackmattersus.com](mailto:admin@blackmattersus.com) 2016-11-17 06:13:42 PDT



# Direct Outreach: Always Be Recruiting



**BM**

**DO YOU WANT TO BE A CALENDAR GIRL?**

- SEND US YOUR PICTURE
- USE HASHTAG #BMcalendar

**BM IS LOOKING FOR DESIGNERS**



**BM**



**BM**

DON'T TRUST THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA?

**LET'S SHOW WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING**

THE «BLACK INSIDER» REALITY SHOW IS GOING TO BE CREATED **FOR YOU AND BY YOU!**

**MAIL OR DM US IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN ATENDING!**

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

IF YOU ARE **CREATIVE** AND **TALENTED**,

IF YOU DO CARE ABOUT OUR BLACK LIVES,

IF YOU CAN SING, WRITE, DRAW WELL,

IF YOU FEEL FREE IN FRONT OF THE CAM,

WE OFFER YOU TO BECOME ONE OF OUR @BlackMattersUS REPRESENTATIVES!

ALSO WE ARE ALWAYS GLAD TO SHARE YOUR TALENTS AND PROMOTE YOUR ACTIVITY ON OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE AND WEB [BLACKMATTERSUS.COM](http://BLACKMATTERSUS.COM)

**COMMENT BELOW OR DM**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED!**

**BM**

[blackmattersus.com](http://blackmattersus.com)

**BM** IS LOOKING FOR TWO **ENTHUSIASTS/VOLUNTEERS**

TO HELP US TO SHARE OUR **MISSION** WITH THE WORLD!



IT'S GONNA BE FUN 😊



**BM**

IS LOOKING FOR **VOLUNTEER** **LAWYERS & LEGAL AID ADVOCATES** **FOR PEOPLE** **WHO CAN'T AFFORD LAWYERS**

**YOUR VOICES MATTER**



**BM** IS LOOKING **FOR THE AUTHORS!**

**BM**

IS LOOKING FOR **CREATIVE PEOPLE** **TO BECOME A PART OF THE MOVEMENT**

**DM US FOR MORE INFO**



# Direct Outreach: Asset Development

33344 LGBT United Hi there! We are looking for volunteers from New York to help us to organize the events in order to bring awareness to the topics such as bigotry, spreading hate and ignorance, the infringement of our rights and freedoms... If you care about the future of LGBT community, we are waiting for you! The future of our community is in your hands?? PM us please! 2016-11-10 07:39:07 PDT



# Leveraging Whitehouse.gov Petitions

Internet Research Agency accounts either created or promoted White House petitions. This is a tactic increasingly leveraged by troll campaigns more generally. The malign actors create petitions on Change.org and other activism platforms. Social network algorithms can be gamed to help the petitions go viral. Once the petitions gather real signatures from aligned individuals, the petition hosts are reluctant to take them down even if they were started under inauthentic premises. Most petition platforms are not attuned to the threat.

<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/disavow-support-clinton-political-dynasty-disqualify-and-remove-hillary-clinton-2016-presidential-ballot>

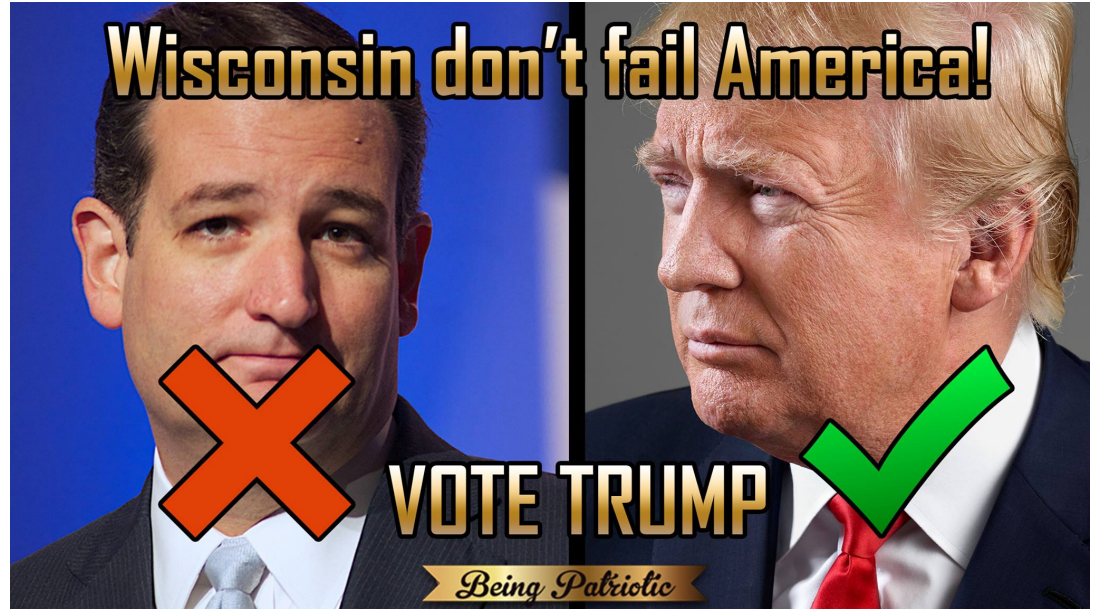
<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/no-guns-criminals>

<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/investigate-death-india-cummings-and-change-federal-laws-allowing-pds-conduct-internal-inquiries>

<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/repeal-nfa>

<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/repeal-all-unconstitutional-gun-laws-state-new-jersey-laws-banning-mag-capacity-stocks-barrel-length-etc>

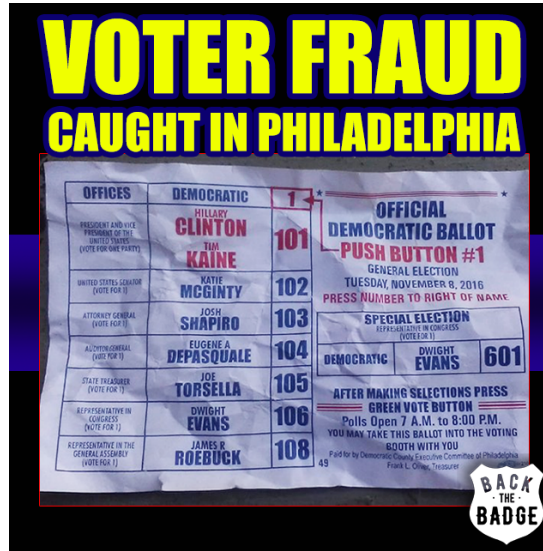
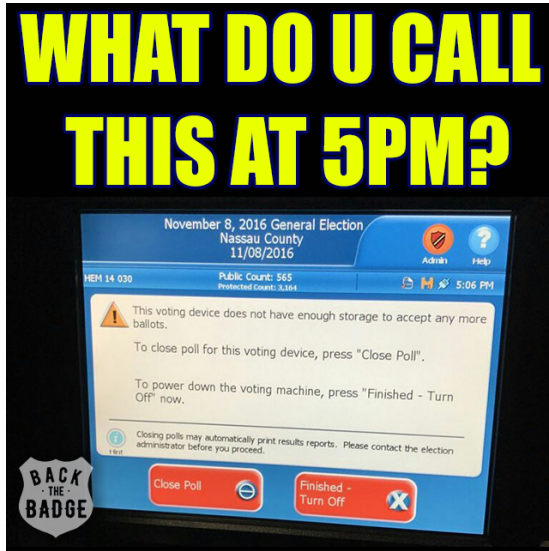
# Attempting to influence Republican Primary: Anti-Cruz, Anti-Rubio





# Alleging voter fraud

The narrative that the election would be stolen was disseminated via Right-targeted accounts on Facebook and Instagram, and was promoted on Twitter via several personas including the prominent @TEN\_GOP account.



Latest #voterfraud cases so far: 1) More Extensive Broward County Voter Fraud Reported By Elections Worker  
<http://joeformerica.com/2016/11/broward-voter-fraud-reported/> 2) Van Full Of Illegals Shows Up To Vote Clinton At SIX Polling Places  
<http://thunderviral.com/van-full-illegals-shows-vote-clinton-six-polling-places-still-think-voter-fraud-myth/> 3) BREAKING : Elections Systems Down Across Colorado  
<http://truthfeed.com/breaking-elections-systems-down-across-colorado/34659/> 4) Louisiana Voting Machine Logged Votes Before Poll Opened  
<http://www.breitbart.com/texas/2016/11/08/louisiana-voting-machine-logged-votes-poll-opened/> 5) Voting machine problems reported across metro Detroit 6) Election systems temporarily go down in Colorado, delaying voters  
<http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/election-systems-temporarily-go-down-in-colorado-delaying-voters> STAY TUNED!  
#conservative #liberal #stupidliberals#secondamendment #trump #donald#donaldtrump #hillno #feelthebern#Bernie #killary #hillary #hillaryclinton#murica #america #america #military#guns #patriot #politics #gop#liberallogic #republican #democrat#nobama #obama #makeamericagreatagain #USA

# Targeting McCain

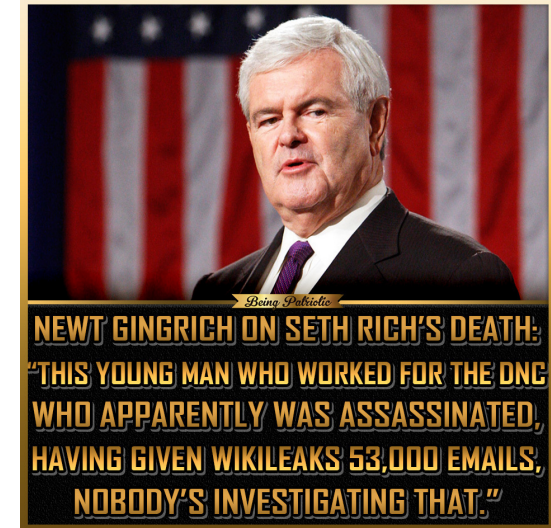
Several IRA posts actively targeted John McCain and other “establishment” Republicans (especially those who supported the investigation into Russian interference.)



**JOHN MCCAIN'S ATTACK  
AGAINST TRUMP DEFINITELY  
CROSSED THE LINE, HE IS OUT  
OF HIS MIND**

# Promoting conspiracies

The IRA pushed a few political-intrigue conspiracies on Facebook and Instagram, about Hillary Clinton's health and the DNC hacks. They made some interesting audience choices; the story that Seth Rich was behind the DNC hack was primarily a right-wing conspiracy, but the IRA promoted it on @bornliberal in August 2016. It appeared alongside text claiming that Julian Assange had suggested that Rich was his source, and made an appeal for readers to turn to Jill Stein. Posts about Wikileaks appeared in Left, Right, and Black-community targeted content in conjunction with the email dumps.





# Leveraging Anonymous

The IRA co-branded official Anonymous memes with its own accounts, and eventually made their own Anonymous-inspired Instagram account, @\_anonymous\_news\_, in July 2017. We believe they may have replicated this strategy of leveraging the Anonymous hacktivist brand and iconography to create politically-oriented Facebook pages in other countries and languages as well.



# Impeachment narratives

Left-wing pages reiterated distaste for Trump but cautioned their audiences against advocating for impeachment using the justification that Vice President Mike Pence is worse.

## Mike Pence Sucks



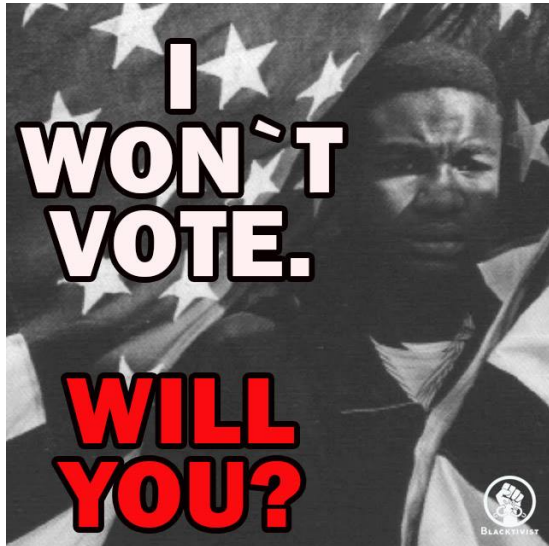
- Signed Law Legalizing Discrimination Against Gays / LGBT
- Against Same Sex Marriage
- Anti-Women's Rights / Anti-Choice
- Has a Long History Attacking Social Security & Medicare
- Against Raising the Minimum Wage
- Supports the Trans-Pacific Partnership
- Passed Anti-Union Laws
- An Ignorant Climate Change Denier



33342 LGBT United 2 steps forward, 100 steps back. Reminder: Mike Pence Is the Worst Candidate for LGBTQ Equality Perhaps the most disturbing result of this 'Trump Effect' is that Mike Pence, his Vice Presidential candidate, has, for too many years, slid under the radar of mainstream controversy. In fact, it is fair to suggest that the spectacle of Trump has made it possible for Mike Pence to appear like the calm and reasonable one. His performance in the Vice Presidential debate was undoubtedly bolstered in comparison to the many debates by Trump, because at the bare minimum, Pence knows how to string a sentence together. In many ways, Pence is more dangerous than Trump in that he's not just talking about oppressive legislation, he's actually fought for and enacted it himself. He's the action to Trump's words, but a lot of media is so distracted with Trump that we haven't gotten the same, much-needed level of criticism of his running mate, who would be one person away from the presidency. Pence's track record and stances are disturbing. He is, by far, the worst type of candidate for LGBTQ equality and will undoubtedly try to set the country's clock back by a couple of decades. Here are just a few of the receipts, in case there are people still questioning the legitimacy of the Trump/Pence threat against queer people. In case anyone forgot, Mike Pence in the White House would mean disaster for queer people!! I heavily disagree with his policies regarding church and state and his lgbtq policy. I see alot of leftist calling for impeachment or assassination on trump but truly Trump is worlds better than Pence when talking about equal rights for all... 2016-11-10 14:45:28 PDT

# Suppression narratives

The Black community-targeted accounts periodically attempted to redirect their followers to vote for Jill Stein, and spent part of November 2016 discussing the need for the Black community to boycott the election in memes and on video. On Twitter, there were more overt suppression attempts such as posting incorrect procedural information related to voting.





# A variety of anti-Hillary Clinton narratives on Black-targeted pages



# Amplifying secessionist movements

The IRA amplified secessionist movement content, both in the UK and in the US. Texit and Calexit content appeared frequently. The IRA also amplified militia content on the Right, then created content for Black audiences pointing out the ways that different races were treated by the police who responded to armed protesters.



**AMERICAN “JUSTICE”  
AT ITS BEST**

<b>BUNDY GANG</b> 40 DAYS IN A PARK WITH REAL GUNS THREATENING THE GOVERNMENT AND COPS <b>ALIVE</b>	<b>TAMIR RICE</b> PLAYED WITH HIS TOY GUN IN A PARK <b>DEAD</b>
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BLACKLIVESMATTER

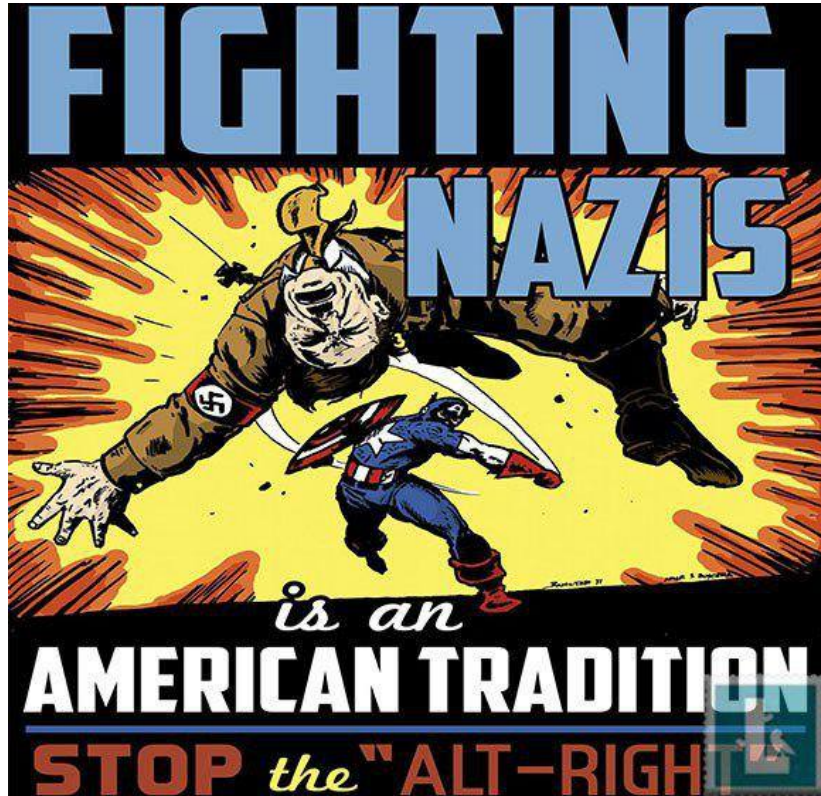
# Post-election transition: “Abolish Electoral College”

The IRA operation adapted quickly to President Donald Trump’s win. They immediately produced a collection of posts and tweets targeting left-leaning groups, advocating for the elimination of the electoral college; many called for in-the-streets action and marches.

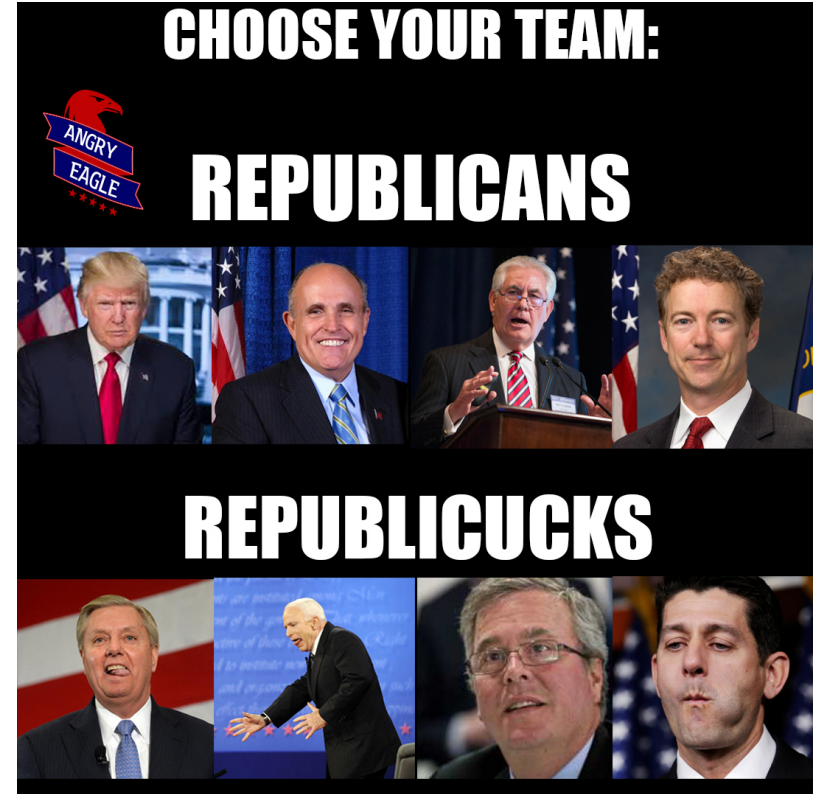
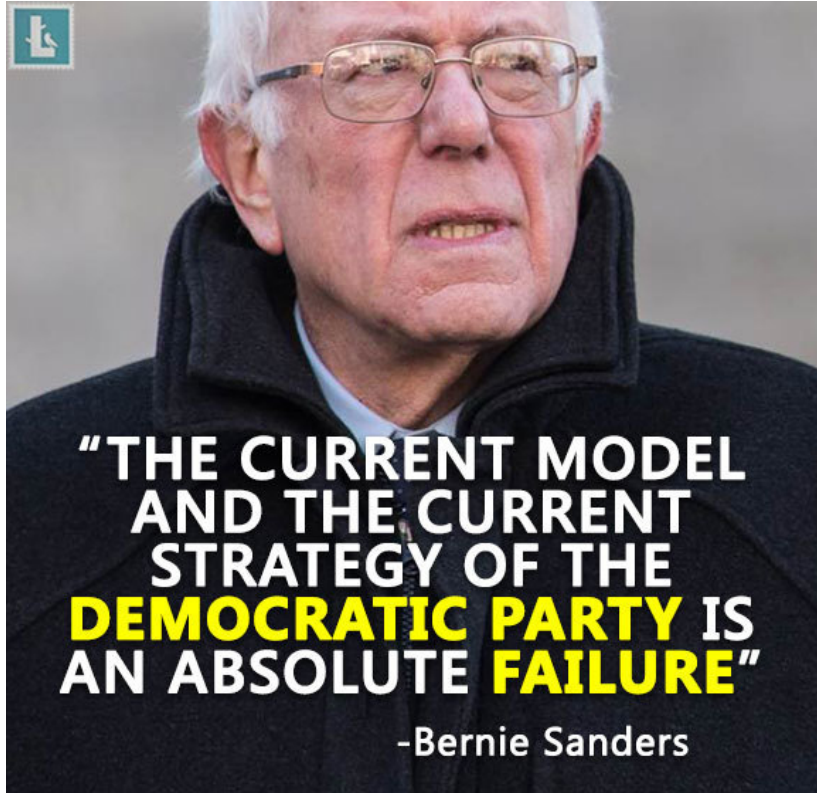




# Incitement: Antifa and the Alt-Right



# Amplifying Intra-Party Divisions



# Dissemination of Syria narratives


Black, Left, and Right-oriented pages were all targeted with IRA propaganda that aligned Russian state talking points about Syria to topics the targeted communities cared about.

USA: we are holding Syria responsible  
for poisoning and killing their own  
people!

Flint, Michigan:



**LIKE IF YOU AGREE**



Does anyone **believe** that on the eve of **peace talks**, just after the White House said the Syrian people should **choose** their own leaders, that Assad would launch a gas attack to **turn the whole world** against him?

We're back to the **same lies** that got us into Iraq. **Do we never learn to question the propaganda?**

Ron Paul



# Born Liberal and @feminism\_tag

The generic Left-leaning pages have gotten much less attention in the analyses of IRA content, perhaps because less of the content has been made public. Themes included anti-corporatism and suspicion of government.



**"IF I AM A TRAITOR, WHO DID I BETRAY?"**



**"I gave all my information to the American public, to American journalists who are reporting on American issues. If they see that as treason, they need to consider who they think they're working for. The public is supposed to be their boss, not their enemy."**

*supposed to be their boss, not their enemy.*



# Born Liberal and @feminism\_tag

The posts were occasionally somewhat incongruous compared to the type of content traditionally seen on liberal political pages; the Left-leaning data set included Turning Point USA memes.

## RON PAUL EXPLAINS WHY ALL DRUGS SHOULD BE LEGAL



Ron Paul

3 hrs · 🌐

Ending the war on drugs would drastically reduce violence in America.

Drug addicts and drug users would no longer have to commit thefts and robberies to pay for the artificially high price of illegal drugs.

Legalizing drugs would cause prices to plummet (much like liquor, wine, and beer). Today, people rarely commit muggings and robberies to get the money for a bottle of wine or beer.

Furthermore, drug gangs and drug cartels would go out of business. How many addicts would use a violent black-market dealer when they could get their drugs from a reputable pharmacy or pharmaceutical company?

How many people are buying bottles of wine or beer in a dangerous back alley these days? ... It's unnecessary!



These ships arrive fully loaded to drop off merchandise in the USA, and then go back to China completely empty...

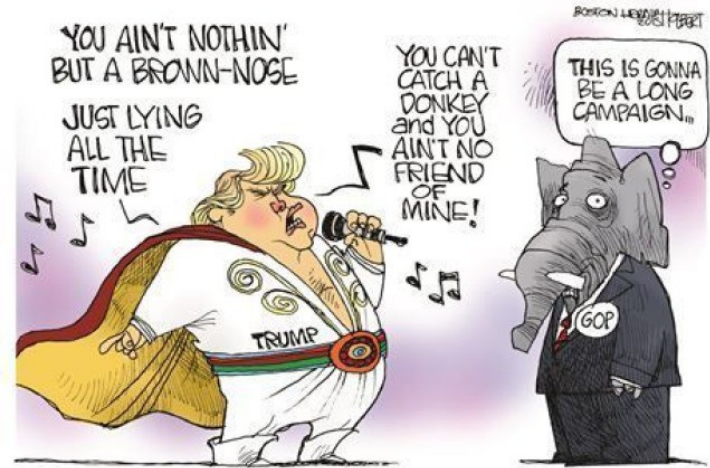


...then we wonder why Americans can't get jobs and we're \$20 trillion in debt.

# Instagram: rare anti-Trump diatribes targeting right-leaning pro-Trump pages

Very rare criticism of then-candidate Trump appeared simultaneously on several Right-leaning Instagram accounts in August 2015, after he criticized Edward Snowden.

4437 \_americafirst\_ 4437 Hey, I just don't understand do we have really normal candidate for the presidential run??? Hmm... Presidential frontrunner Donald Trump called for the execution of Edward Snowden during a 2013 appearance on "Fox & Friends," labeling the whistleblower a "traitor" for disclosing the National Security Agency's illegal activities. "You know, spies in the old days used to be executed," Trump said. Actually I can't call the person adequate after this speech. I think it's time for him to go and check his mental health. It seems like if he becomes the president he'll cover with blood the whole country! Welcome the #MadDonald #cartoonagency #cartoon #caricature #politicalcartoons #politics #caricaturella #meme #america #usa #murica #interesting 116 2 | 2015-08-11 06:05:25 PDT





# Instagram: rare anti-Trump diatribes in response to criticism of Edward Snowden

92371 stop\_refugees 92371 Presidential frontrunner Donald Trump called for the execution of Edward Snowden during a 2013 appearance on "Fox & Friends," labeling the whistleblower a "traitor" for disclosing the National Security Agency's illegal activities. "You know, spies in the old days used to be executed," Trump said. Since Snowden first revealed the NSA's widespread surveillance practices more than two years ago, the hotel tycoon has repeatedly called for both the death and imprisonment of the former intelligence contractor. The conclusion is: Donald Trump is a latent dictator. Taking into account what he allows himself to speak in public even without holding the most important state office, it is easy to imagine what would happen if he came to power. It would be the most tyrannical presidency in whole the history of USA. This is a specific psychological type of business-tyrant for whom it is absolutely normal to insult women, swear at representatives of different nations, and scoff at people. The appeal to execute Snowden who revealed one of the most outrageous crimes of the government characterizes Trump as the one tending to state crimes. Do you remember how he raped his ex-wife? If no, then read this article: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3176878/Ivana-claimed-Donald-Trump-violated-violent-sex-attack-amid-argument-bald-patch-treatments.html>. If Trump becomes President, then America might replace his ex-wife. #usdaily #news #hotnews #usa #america #murica #today #political #issues #americaproud #urgent #hot #interesting #Trump #Hitler

85 10 2015-08-11 10:04:47 PDT



# Facebook as Censor

Secured Borders had posts moderated by Facebook in March 2017; they didn't take it well. They do appear to have gotten their Page back.



Secured Borders 47479 "...And that's how the tyranny begins...  
?????????????????" 2017-03-26 16:05:58 PDT



Secured Borders

47466

"We'd like to apologize for the delays in posting and updating. It seems that commie fascists of Facebook's community standards department are waging a real jihad against us infidels. They just can't stand free speech and politically incorrect truth. Recently the bastards temporarily banned nearly all of our moderators and admins, also forced us to delete some 'controversial' entries. We were paralyzed and worried about the future of Secured Borders. But we're here again! Hopefully with no interruptions, at least for some time. Thank you for your patience and support, our dear friends!"  
2017-03-26 09:17:45 PDT



# Same date, same article, two perspectives

68361 muslim\_voice 68361 A Breitbart News review of State Department and Homeland Security data reveals that the United States already admits more than a quarter of a million Muslim migrants each year. President Obama intends to add another 10,000 Syrian migrants on top of that. Just look at those innocent people! They did nothing bad and there is no reason to harm them, they just want to survive, to live in peace and calmness because they are not terrorists. Not all Muslims are terrorists?? #muslim\_voice #muslimpride #middleeast #east #muslimerican #Islam #submission 207 3 2015-09-15 09:51:25 PDT

@muslim\_voice



2480 \_americafirst\_ 2480 A Breitbart News review of State Department and Homeland Security data reveals that the United States already admits more than a quarter of a million Muslim migrants each year. President Obama intends to add another 10,000 Syrian migrants on top of that. Seems like supporting 250k muslim refugees on US taxpayers' expense is not enough, let's now have some more! Notably Syrians. Who are aware about who's had a hand in their civil war (i.e. America). Isn't this a terrorism threat? As history has shown, even a small group of radical islamists is enough to make a lot of noise in America. Look at Europe: they are closing now their borders to put an end to the uncontrolled inflow of refugees (whereof there are ex-IS guerillas). By the way, to accept 1 Syrian refugee costs \$ 15,714. Guess who covers this expenditure (hint: not Obama).

#cartoonagency#politics#caricature#cartoon#cartoonist#art#artworks#artstagram#conservative#no bama#nohillary#drawing#comics#pixart#republican 124 9 2015-09-15 10:01:55 PDT



# They made mistakes

These screenshotted tweets were posted to Facebook



Charlotte Mahnken

@cfmahnken

Читать

Apparently, I already voted today when I went to vote. What?!! #voterfraud #TrumpPence16

РЕТВІТОВ  
5



9:08 - 8 нояб. 2016 г.

5



LadyVeteran23 @LadyVeteran23 ❤️ · 35 мин

@cfmahnken call 844-332-2016 and report it to Trump's team, also submit report on this here #maga  
donaldjtrump.com/landing/electi...

5


**NO VOTER FRAUD SHOULD BE IGNORED !  
WRITE US ABOUT ALL SIMILAR CASES  
VIA COMMENTS AND DM!**



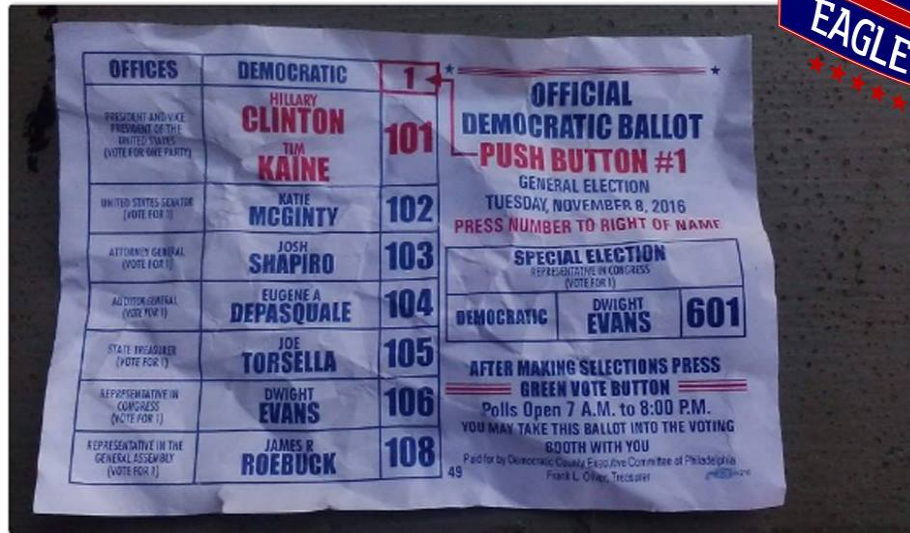
Tennessee GOP

@TEN\_GOP

Читать

 BREAKING: reports of #VoterFraud in Philly.. "Instructional ballot" being handed out inside polling stations !!

#voted #ElectionDay 



РЕТВІТОВ

132

ОТМЕТКИ «НРАВИТСЯ»

82



# Facebook / Instagram: mocking the idea of Russian interference

Following Election 2016, there were approximately 70 posts on Facebook and Instagram mocking the idea of Russian interference, all targeting right-wing audiences. The Page and Instagram accounts “The Red Pill” focused on this narrative, and drew content from another IRA Page, “Clinton FRAUDation” that posted about it.

Posts about Russia also aimed to discredit the U.S. media channels that had begun to cover the story.

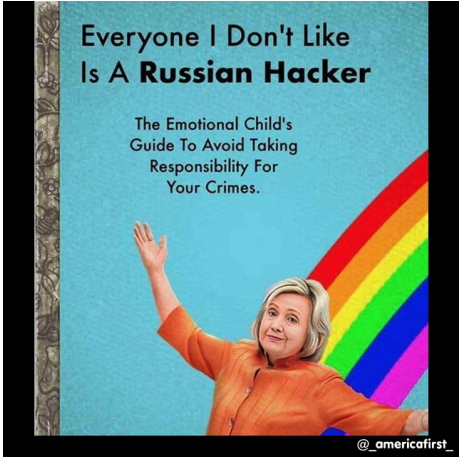
93228	the.red.pill	93228	Everything is Russians' fault! #Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#Clintonforprison#Hillno#HillaryClinton#Hitlary#pres	2016-11-29 08:20:36 PDT
93053	the.red.pill	93053	Oh these nasty Russians #Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#Clintonforprison#Hillno#HillaryClinton#Hitlary#presiden	2016-12-12 11:46:11 PDT
93075	the.red.pill	93075	BREAKING: According to CNN aliens kidnapped Democratic voters in key states to make Donald Trump win the election! A huge relief for Russia	2017-01-12 07:31:16 PDT
93094	the.red.pill	93094	The Russians did it #Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#Clintonforprison#Hillno#HillaryClinton#Hitlary#presiden	2017-01-16 07:31:24 PDT
93577	the.red.pill	93577	Don't forget to blame Russia when you run out of arguments. Our education system is totally occupied by perverted liberal crybabies who teac	2017-02-07 09:31:05 PDT
55686	The Red Pill	55686	"I just hate when Russian do this..."	0 2017-02-22 06:22:17 PDT
93289	the.red.pill	93289	I just hate when Russian do this... #Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#Clintonforprison#Hillno#HillaryClinton#Hitlary#	2017-02-26 07:30:27 PDT
93313	the.red.pill	93313	Oh nasty Russians #liberal#Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#Clintonforprison#Hillno#HillaryClinton#Hitlary#presiden	2017-02-28 01:33:24 PDT
55537	The Red Pill	55537	"Oh these nasty Russians"	0 2017-02-28 08:07:35 PDT
93410	the.red.pill	93410	Repost @eddie_joves_elsa Republicans are under a friggin microscope and it's SO HYPOCRITICAL 1. Democrats thought misleading congress v	2017-03-03 01:30:41 PDT
55547	The Red Pill	55547	"Liberal logic: there was no voter fraud but the Russians hacked the election"	0 2017-03-06 07:26:31 PDT
93434	the.red.pill	93434	Liberal logic: there was no voter fraud but the Russians hacked the election #liberal#Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#	2017-03-06 11:31:27 PDT
93382	the.red.pill	93382	Everyone! Don't Like Is a Russian Agent: In desperate attempt to promote his weird conspiracy narrative John McCain made another idiotic stat	2017-03-16 07:32:02 PDT
92550	the.red.pill	92550	The Russians for sure #liberal#Killary#Clintonfraudation#fraud#elections2016#Clinton#Clintonforprison#Hillno#HillaryClinton#Hitlary#presic	2017-03-25 09:30:44 PDT
92651	the.red.pill	92651	Al Jazeera Arabic's Facebook coverage of the terror attack in St. Petersburg, Russia was flooded with positive comments and happy emoticons a	2017-04-04 09:20:01 PDT
92465	the.red.pill	92465	RUSSIANS RUSSIANS RUSSIANS #liberal#Trump#MAGA#PresidentTrump#NotMyPresident#USA#theredpill#nothingleft#conservative#republi	2017-05-11 01:15:21 PDT
55581	The Red Pill	55581	"RUSSIANS RUSSIANS RUSSIANS"	0 2017-05-11 08:03:50 PDT
92886	the.red.pill	92886	Lol is it real? These Russians are savage #liberal#Trump#MAGA#PresidentTrump#NotMyPresident#USA#theredpill#nothingleft#conservative#re	2017-05-17 03:20:22 PDT
92900	the.red.pill	92900	Do you remember the Russians kidnapping Democrat voters in order to prevent them voting for Hillary? Me neither. #liberal#Trump#MAGA#Pr	2017-05-22 11:45:30 PDT
92860	the.red.pill	92860	Traitor McCain is in the news again saying Russia (specifically Putin) is the bigger threat than ISIS. You know it's funny cause I've heard of Russi	2017-05-30 07:32:44 PDT
92747	the.red.pill	92747	A peaceful transition of power is impossible in a country full of terrorists. It was the mistake made in Libya when the legitimate government wa	2017-06-20 09:26:45 PDT
92701	the.red.pill	92701	Or maybe the Russians... Credits @massachusettsrumpster #liberal#Trump#MAGA#PresidentTrump#NotMyPresident#USA#theredpill#nothin	2017-06-21 01:31:32 PDT
92708	the.red.pill	92708	CNN Senior Producer John Bonifield caught on tape admitting the Trump-Russia story is "bullsh*t" for "ratings." Bonified admits CNN CEO Jeff	2017-06-27 11:31:01 PDT
93633	the.red.pill	93633	NY Times are so hysterical they can't even remember how the president of Russia looks like. Russia everywhere and everyone is Russian. #liberal	2017-07-12 07:31:45 PDT
93641	the.red.pill	93641	Skittles hacked by Russians #liberal#Trump#MAGA#PresidentTrump#NotMyPresident#USA#theredpill#nothingleft#conservative#republican#li	2017-07-13 11:30:51 PDT
93616	the.red.pill	93616	I think Donald Trump Jr had every right to meet with a Russian lawyer. First of all, she might have got really important information about Hillar	2017-07-14 09:31:04 PDT
93647	the.red.pill	93647	You've lost and don't know what to do? Just blame it on Russian hackers #liberal#Trump#MAGA#PresidentTrump#NotMyPresident#USA#ther	2017-07-21 03:39:03 PDT
93661	the.red.pill	93661	Russia Russia Russia #liberal#Trump#MAGA#PresidentTrump#NotMyPresident#USA#theredpill#nothingleft#conservative#republican#libtard#	2017-07-28 05:43:04 PDT
93726	the.red.pill	93726	Also he helped the economy, lowered taxes, reduced the use of welfare and food stamps, he struck fear into the Russians and kept American out	2017-08-16 08:01:01 PDT
93714	the.red.pill	93714	Trump is NO Racist just like he never colluded with Russia. It's all #fakenews bull shit. Check out my friends: @wall__up @Being.patriotic @sta	2017-08-18 12:00:31 PDT



Facebook / Instagram: mocking the idea of Russian interference, and propaganda



# Russian trolls on Russian trolls, Russian relations



Child: Mommy there are monsters under my bed  
Mom: It's probably just the Russians



BOOM=> New NSA Expert's Report Says There Was "No Russian Hack" of DNC Computers - It Was a "Leak"



Jim Hoft Aug 10th, 2017 2:37 pm — Leave a Comment



THE RUSSIAN HACKER STARTER PACK



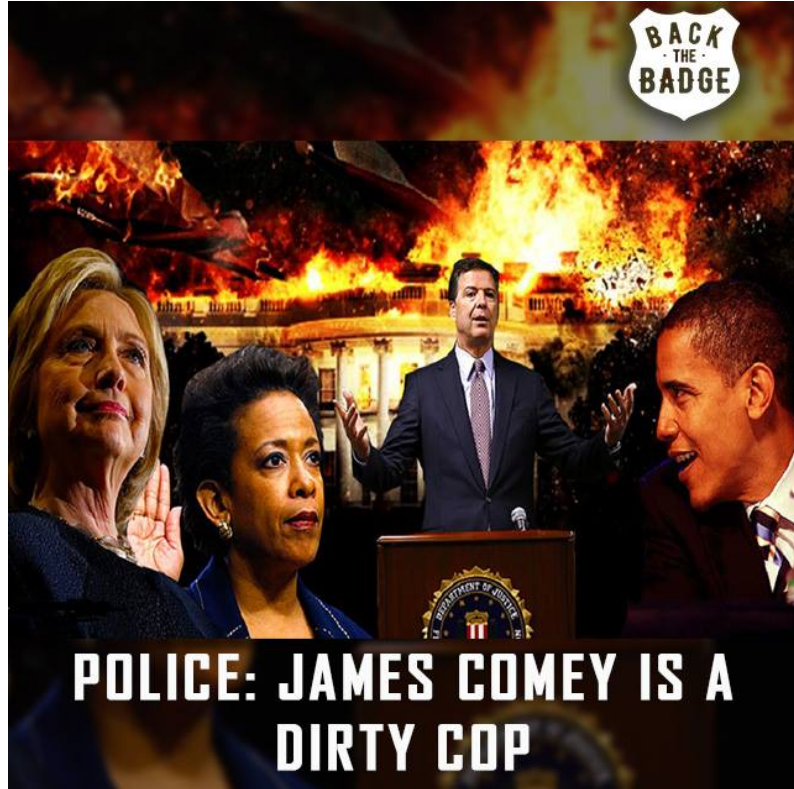


# Discrediting the Russia investigation

Posts designed to erode support for the Russia investigation, and some with the goal of discrediting Mueller himself, appeared on both Facebook and Instagram right-wing-targeted accounts in mid-2017.



# Targeting Comey



# To Summarize: Active Measures

The goals of active measures are to undermine citizens' trust in government, exploit societal fractures, create distrust in the information environment, blur the lines between reality and fiction, undermine trust among communities, and erode confidence in the democratic process.

This campaign pursued all of those objectives with skill and precision.

The IRA exploited divisions in our society using vulnerabilities in our information ecosystem.



"We'll know our  
disinformation program is  
complete when everything  
the American public believes  
is false."

- William Casey, CIA Director

(from first staff meeting in 1981)



# Researcher Concerns and Suggestions

# Concerns About Data Provided

We are concerned that what was uncovered and provided to the Senate by the platforms were the accounts that were most obvious; many of these accounts did not appear to go to great lengths to obfuscate their attribution. There are likely more that did, particularly as suspicions of Russian interference increased throughout 2017.

Facebook did not provide any metadata indicating how they arrived at attribution, email addresses associated with accounts (useful for cross-platform account linking and discovery purposes), or IP address data. It also provided no comments. There were many posts that appeared to be duplicates, in which the content was identical but one or two engagement statistics were off by a very small number; this necessitated extensive data cleaning. For some of the Instagram accounts there was no follower count data.

In the Twitter set, the metadata indicates a significant number of the accounts used Russia bee-line phones. Many of the bots are spammy and unsophisticated, perhaps indicating they were purchased from a vendor.

No data provenance was provided, which is key to rigorous research. To draw meaningful conclusions about Russian operations, we would like to see more information about the platforms' detection procedures in general, and about how they identified this set of accounts specifically.

Further, key metadata and other data was left out of the content provided. Twitter neglected to provide URL data, including only t.co shortened links, and Facebook provided no account data. In some cases, it seems the platforms did extra work to remove crucial metadata that is typically included with the data when accessed via other means such as the APIs. This hints at the possibility of deciding to provide the bare minimum possible to meet the Committee's request.



# Unanswered Questions

It is impossible to gauge the full impact that the IRA's influence operations had without further information from the platforms. We believe that the platforms have the capability to provide an assessment of what the targeted communities thought of the IRA content – whether it had an impact – based on the comment sentiment, subsequent actions taken on the platform, how many other cross-linked IRA pages they responded to, etc. The platforms neglected to include the material that would have enabled outside researchers to gauge this.

- We know that many posts – including clear voter suppression attempts – received many hundreds of comments. We don't know what the comments said, or how targeted audiences reacted. We could have a far better understanding of the impact of the organic content if we had anonymized comment data.
- We know that people clicked on ads; we do not know the extent to which they joined Pages or followed Instagram accounts they were shown (conversion data is absent). We know that several of the Pages were promoted via the Recommendation engine, but similarly have no conversion data.
- We don't know how well the IRA's elaborate cross-pollination strategy worked; were members of targeted communities likely to be members of more than one Page in a specific media mirage?
- We know the IRA reached out and solicited private contact; we know a handful of anecdotes have emerged from targeted individuals but the comments data indicates there were possibly many more.
- We can see Share numbers, but do not know the extent to which this content was shared into Groups (or any other share cascade information).
- We know very little about the behavior of the IRA sockpuppet accounts that were active on Facebook.
- We know that the IRA made several very obvious errors – including screenshots of a Russian language Twitter interface on a Facebook post alleging voter suppression, for example. We know they used poor grammar indicative of non-native speakers while pretending to be American citizens. We do not know if American audiences noticed or reacted to these slips.

# Unacknowledged Pages & Accounts

There were several accounts that appear to have been IRA-run based on their interactions with attributed accounts. Several strong possibilities appear in this list, based on an observation of their content via regram and other sites. More visibility into the content and post patterns would improve the ability to detect ongoing activity and enable better mapping of the mirages surrounding targeted communities.

- @\_yosemite.sam
- @armed.n.ready
- @17thsoulja4
- @american.police
- Soldiers of Black Knowledge
- Black Israelite

Pages that appear to be related to ReportSecret are still live (though dormant, and with tiny audiences) on Facebook. Similarly, Twitter accounts that appear to be related to shuttered Instagram accounts are still live and dormant.

# Ecosystem Manipulation Takeaways

- There are visibility blind spots in social ecosystem awareness; platforms remain unaware of threats detected by other platforms so malign activity simply shifts from place to place. Third party monitoring can help.
- Attributable IRA Facebook pages and Twitter accounts continue to exist as a result of these ecosystem monitoring gaps (i.e., Twitter handles associated with IRA websites identified by Google remain live).
- Extensive amounts of IRA content continue to circulate, particularly memes. Users can still share propaganda from known Russian front website content to social platforms; with the exception of Facebook marking links from Blackmattersus.com as spam, it is still possible to share much of what remains (e.g. GI Analytics, Newinform, Donotshoot.us).
- The IRA was committed to bringing the campaign offline to American streets. There were 81 real-world Facebook Events promoted.
- Careless or unscrupulous U.S. media properties lift tweets and cite them as authoritative, generating legitimacy and media lift; this was seen with accounts such as @wokelouisa and others in the Twitter data set.
- Propagandist and state-owned media properties such as Sputnik leverage this embedded-tweet strategy as well, possibly deliberately – the recently-active Facebook Page AsdiqaRussiya was discovered by way of tweets embedded in Russian-language Sputnik articles.
- Very little – perhaps none – of this content would have come down as a result of existing content policy violations. It is critical to understand dissemination patterns, dubious domains, and dynamics around fake accounts to detect these operations.

# In Closing

Foreign manipulation of American elections on social platforms will continue to be an ongoing, chronic problem. As platforms evolve and make features more impenetrable, the adversaries will adapt and manipulate the ecosystem in new ways. This is information warfare, not an issue of fake narratives or false messaging.

New Knowledge is continuing to investigate Russian propaganda and other foreign influence attacks that attempt to undercut public discourse and democracy; we monitored and reported out the evolution of tactics in 2018.

We expect to see manipulation attempts in the 2020 election, including laundering narratives through Americans, and focusing on smaller/secondary platforms and peer-to-peer messaging services.

We hope that additional sections of this data set (beyond the ads) will be made available to the public for further research, and that platforms will release more data that can speak to the impact and uptake among targeted communities.

# Appendix: Charts, Figures, Engagement Data



# Top 20 Facebook Posts by Engagement

1	Date	Page Name	Content Text	# Likes	# Comments	# Reactions	# Shares	Engagement
2	2017-03-09	South United	""	27288	1584	1373	955958	986203
3	2016-09-08	Being Patriotic	settle them among us. We have to take care of our own citizens, and it must be the primary goal for our politicians!"	73158	6621	3624	640347	723750
4	2016-11-23	Blacktivist	MURDER EVEN WHEN IT'S CAUGHT ON CAMERA JUST BECAUSE THEY WEAR A 'MAGICAL' BADGE AND GUN.	19552	36493	21830	538970	616845
5	2017-01-23	Stop A.I.	Sharia, but Obama never intended to enforce it or even let you know about it at all. Instead he started to import	162850	93231	11014	312632	579727
6	2016-12-12	Blacktivist	"This video will make you cry. Husband surprises her wife. This is how black man appreciates and loves his wife."	250625	24615	67538	195342	538120
7	2016-10-04	BM	the windshield so hard, causing the glass to shatter."	11480	17658	13151	238660	280949
8	2016-10-26	Blacktivist	"Africa is in your bloodline."	37197	7930	6486	223412	275025
9	2017-03-09	Blacktivist	"Listen to these young Kings."	107992	5408	16969	130767	261136
10	2017-01-18	Stop A.I.	"It should be obvious to every sane man! Sharia has no place in any civilized society!"	14970	2068	1293	235320	253651
11	2016-12-22	Blacktivist	"Never trade you brotherhood for this world."	73648	10966	19132	92991	196737
12	2016-08-23	Stop A.I.	country, we will remain one nation under God!"	15683	4754	891	152918	174246
13	2017-01-17	Blacktivist	"repost @africanstyle diary"	52860	5632	28065	83264	169821
14	2016-06-12	United Muslims of America	"New York city Muslim Harassment Social Experiment !!! watch and subscribe on youtube: <a href="https://goo.gl/lZbsUd">https://goo.gl/lZbsUd</a> "	44215	10317	20142	94001	168675
15	2016-12-14	Heart of Texas	be banned on Texas soil!"	16640	5228	952	127619	150439
16	2016-04-22	Heart of Texas	"One of my favorite shows still. Too bad it would never get on the air today since political correctness won't allow it!!"	25870	2704	1053	119333	148960
17	2017-06-13	Blacktivist	"repost @thebassman102"	49654	15440	28543	54874	148511
18	2016-05-19	Heart of Texas	Texas has voted to rename seven schools previously named for Confederate leaders. The Houston school district board	38500	8753	1832	92881	141966
19	2017-06-22	Blacktivist	"When you are black, intelligent and proud!"	59307	3752	27672	49234	139965
20	2017-01-20	Stop A.I.	economic life virtually impossible. It's symbol of slavery and degradation and also a perfect disguise for terrorists. For	22904	3944	1474	109621	137943
21	2016-02-05	United Muslims of America	"I think God has ordered all mankind with modesty, so what is your problem with the Islamic veil (Hijab) ????"	56862	4158	158	74913	136091

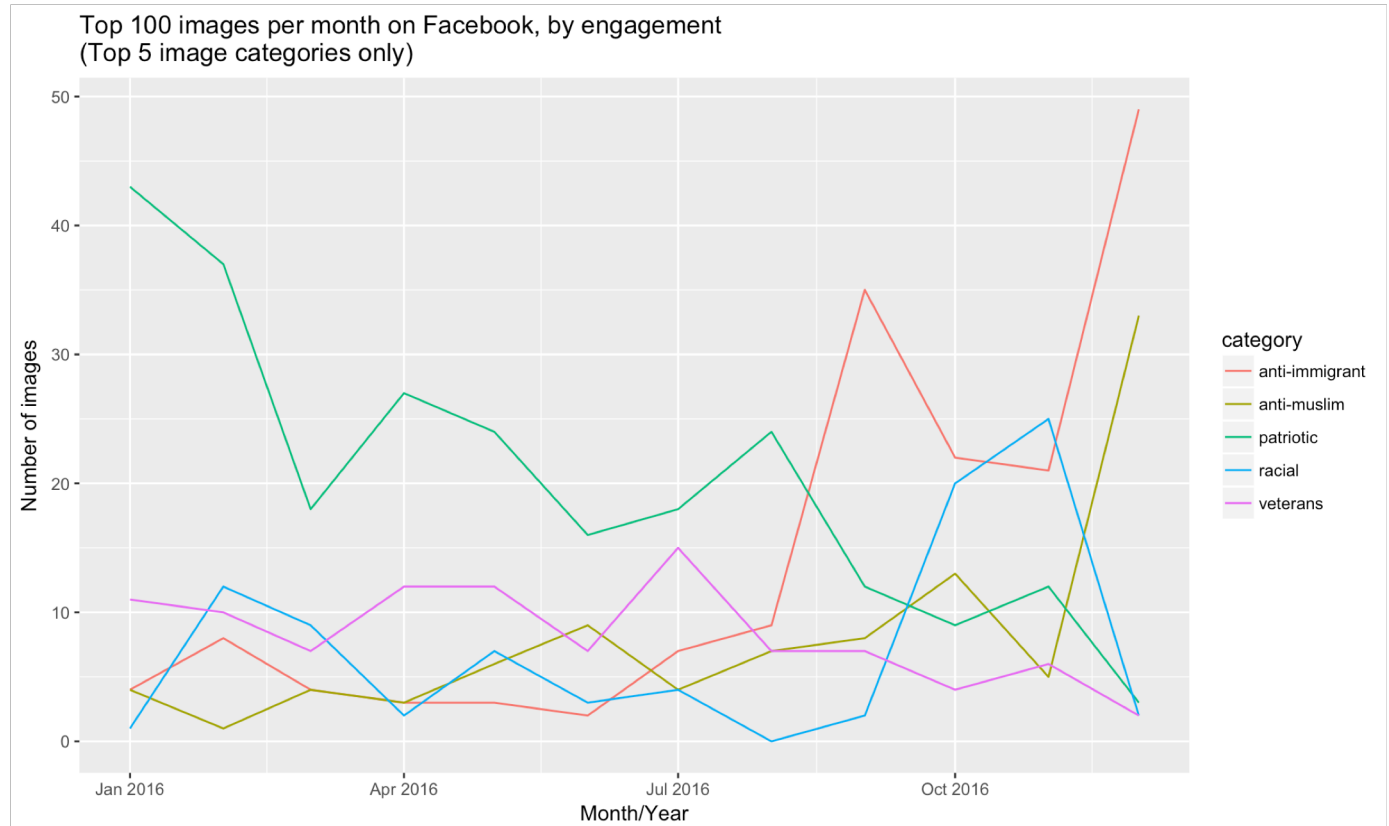
# Top 20 Facebook Posts by Likes

	Date	Page Name	Content Text	# Likes	# Comments	# Reactions	# Shares	Engagement
1	2016-12-12	Blacktivist	"This video will make you cry. Husband surprises her wife. This is how black man appreciates and loves his wife."	250625	24615	67538	195342	538120
3	2017-01-23	Stop A.I.	Sharia, but Obama never intended to enforce it or even let you know about it at all. Instead he started to import	162850	93231	11014	312632	579727
4	2017-03-09	Blacktivist	"Listen to these young Kings."	107992	5408	16969	130767	261136
5	2016-12-22	Blacktivist	"Never trade you brotherhood for this world."	73648	10966	19132	92991	196737
6	2016-09-08	Being Patriotic	settle them among us. We have to take care of our own citizens, and it must be the primary goal for our politicians!"	73158	6621	3624	640347	723750
7	2017-06-22	Blacktivist	"When you are black, intelligent and proud!"	59307	3752	27672	49234	139965
8	2016-02-05	United Muslims of America	"I think God has ordered all mankind with modesty, so what is your problem with the Islamic veil (Hijab) ????"	56862	4158	158	74913	136091
9	2017-01-17	Blacktivist	"repost @africanstyleidiary"	52860	5632	28065	83264	169821
10	2017-06-13	Blacktivist	"repost @thebassman102"	49654	15440	28543	54874	148511
11	2017-02-08	Blacktivist	"When ballet dancers can mix modern dance and ballet."	45866	6771	16118	56276	125031
12	2016-06-12	United Muslims of America	"New York city Muslim Harassment Social Experiment !!! watch and subscribe on youtube: <a href="https://goo.gl/lZbsUd">https://goo.gl/lZbsUd</a> "	44215	10317	20142	94001	168675
13	2016-05-19	Heart of Texas	Texas has voted to rename seven schools previously named for Confederate leaders. The Houston school district board	38500	8753	1832	92881	141966
14	2016-10-26	Blacktivist	"Africa is in your bloodline."	37197	7930	6486	223412	275025
15	2017-04-03	Blacktivist	"This hairdresser from Atlanta is amazing. She can install locs at supersonic speeds."	36626	6243	9911	37199	89979
16	2017-04-28	Blacktivist	"These 3-year-old preschoolers definitely are showing confidence in spelling their names. #blackEducatedBabies"	36166	6174	25887	49215	117442
17	2017-06-17	Blacktivist	"Too lit to be true"	30125	9459	22360	60163	122107
18	2017-04-26	Blacktivist	"This is how schools should welcome their new incoming students and their families."	29506	7768	18931	78611	134816
19	2016-12-15	Blacktivist	"Someone's grandma is killing it"	28772	5902	10272	64163	109109
20	2017-04-27	Brown Power	"Couldn't have said it better."	28517	681	4460	19769	53427
21	2017-07-18	Veterans Come First	beloved country. Thank you for your service sir! God bless you!"	27884	5046	2213	46580	81723

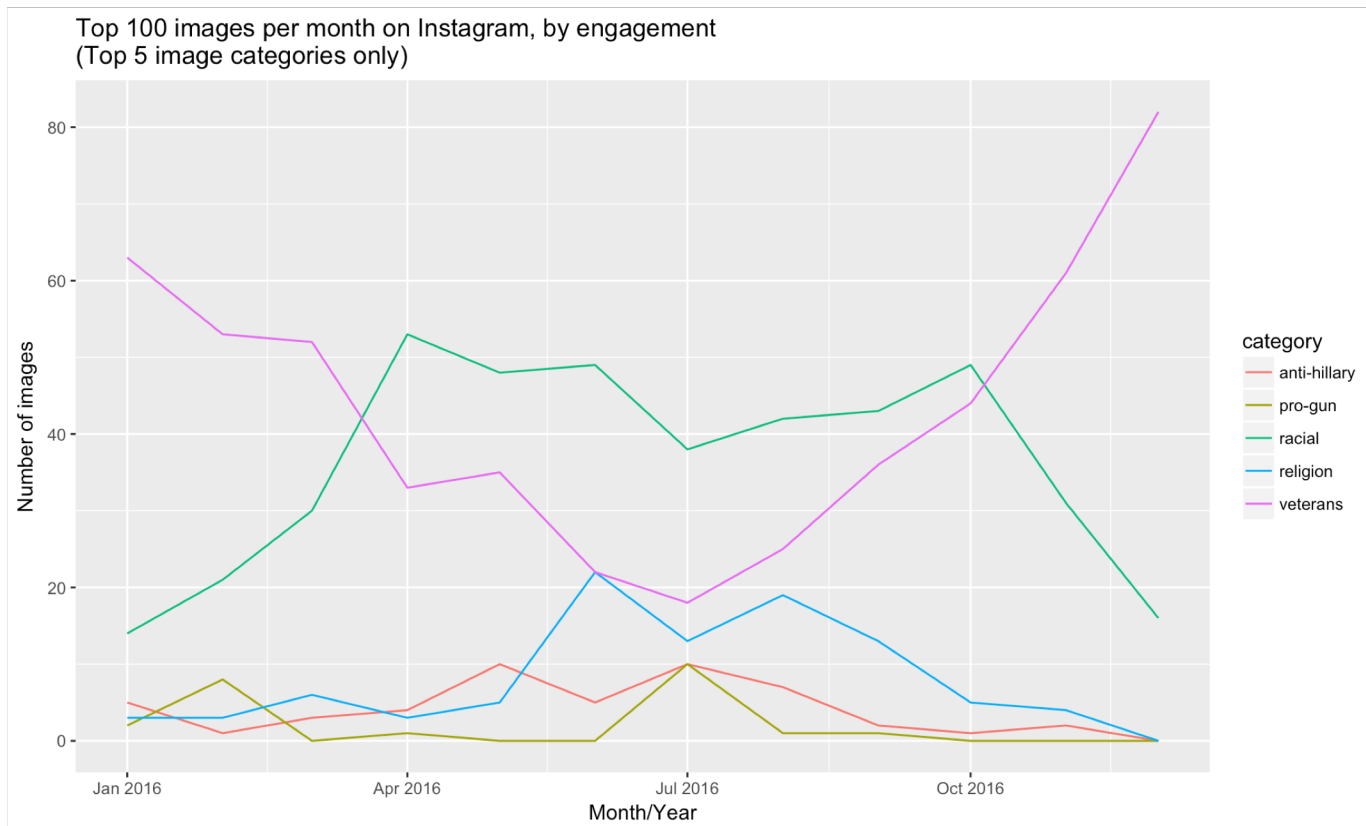
# Top 20 Instagram Posts by Engagement

Date	Content ID	User Name	Content Text	# Likes	# Comments	Total Engagement
6/17/17	"13449"	"_blacktivistt_"	"What a great idea for kids. #Blacktivist #hotnews #black #africanamerican #blacklivesmatter #blackpride #blackandproud #dreamchasers #blackgirls #blackwomen #blackman #westandtogether #proudtobeblack #blackbusiness #blackunity #blackis #melanin #cantbreath #neverforget #sayhername #blackhistorymonth"	168998	954	169952
6/10/17	"55295"	"feminism_tag"	"@expression_tees #feminismtag #feminism #female #humanrights #equality #freedom #love #support #feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights #heforshe #femen #equality #freedom #feminist #woman #riot #support #protest #gay #lesbian #equality #motherhood #sexterrorism"	129400	3155	132555
6/19/17	"38439"	"blackstagram_"	"Repost from @sincerely_black_Yesss, girl #lastchemo #blackpower #pride #power"	124936	627	125563
8/19/17	"39943"	"blackstagram_"	"Beautiful in every shade. @afrokinkdom_ #blackexcellence #blackpride #blackandproud #blackpower #blackbeauty #blackisbeautiful #blackgirlmagic #blackgirlsrock #naturallyshesdoe #blackgirl #blackgirls #blackwomen #blackout #blackqueens #blackmodel #blackmodels #blackgirlskillingit #melaninonfleek #melaninpoppin"	111102	3197	114299
6/19/17	"38441"	"blackstagram_"	"👑 Black Barbie @panafrican.roots #blackbeauty #blackisbeautiful #blackgirlmagic #blackgirlsrock #naturallyshesdoe #blackgirl #blackgirls #blackwomen #blackwoman #blackout #blackqueens #blackmodel #blackmodels #blackgirlskillingit"	94138	572	94710
3/2/16	"30145"	"army_of_jesus_"	"Like, if you believe in Jesus! #Bible #sonofgod424 #God #Love #Redeemed #Saved #Christian #Christianity #Pray #Chosen #Jesus #lord #truth #praying #christ #jesuschrist #bible #word #godly #angels #cross #faith #inspiration #jesussaves #worship #yahweh #holyspirit #praise #spiritualwarfare"	87750	1989	89739
6/13/16	"28336"	"army_of_jesus_"	"Like, if you believe in Jesus!❤️ #bible #sonofgod424 #God #Love #Redeemed #Saved #Christian #Christianity #Pray #Chosen #Jesus #lord #truth #praying #christ #jesuschrist #bible #word #godly #angels #cross #faith #inspiration #jesussaves #worship #yahweh #holyspirit #praise #spiritualwarfare"	84469	2177	86646
6/10/17	"84243"	"sincerely_black_"	"True @melanin.city @loveblackbodies_ #blackqueens #blackexcellence #blackisbeautiful #blackgirlmagic"	83440	2545	85985
6/3/17	"38583"	"blackstagram_"	"Repost from @melanin.university She slays so hard! #blackbeauty #blackisbeautiful #blackgirlmagic #blackgirlsrock #naturallyshesdoe #blackgirl #blackgirls #blackwomen #blackwoman #blackout #blackqueens #blackmodel #blackmodels #blackgirlskillingit"	81201	465	81666
6/11/17	"38414"	"blackstagram_"	"QUEEN! 🍷 @.fit.black_ @melanin.city @loveblackbodies_ #blackbeauty #blackisbeautiful #blackgirlmagic #blackgirlsrock #naturallyshesdoe #blackgirl #blackgirls #blackwomen #blackwoman #blackout #blackqueens #blackmodel #blackmodels #blackgirlskillingit"	75052	1581	76633
8/9/17	"39309"	"blackstagram_"	"A woman who recently had her left leg amputated is having a difficult time accepting her new body. She was shocked and disheartened to discover she only had two color options for a foot shell: one shade was way too light and another was too dark. @.blacktivist_ #blackexcellence #blackpride #blackandproud #blackpower #africanamerican #melanin #ebony #panafrican #blackcommunity #problack #brownskin #unapologeticallyblack #dopeness #dope #slaying #slayer #slay"	71428	2819	74247
7/28/17	"55526"	"feminism_tag"	"A lot of boys like doll houses. A lot of girls like spaceships. @expressiontees #feminismtag #feminism #female #humanrights #equality #freedom #love #support #feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights #heforshe #femen #equality #freedom #feminist #woman #riot #support #protest #gay #lesbian #equality #motherhood #sexterrorism"	73175	505	73680
6/11/17	"38389"	"blackstagram_"	"That's so kind! What a honorable little king 🍷 @expression_tees #blackexcellence #blackpride #blackandproud #blackpower #africanamerican #melanin #ebony #panafrican #blackcommunity #problack #brownskin #unapologeticallyblack"	72687	787	73474
6/8/17	"38574"	"blackstagram_"	"Beautiful photo with a deep meaning. Black girls have to color their ballet shoes because the industry doesn't believe in Black ballerinas and make no ballet shoes in their shade. #BlackBalletMatters! @sincerely_black_ #blackexcellence #blackpride #blackandproud #blackpower #africanamerican #melanin #ebony #panafrican #blackcommunity #problack #brownskin #unapologeticallyblack #blackbeauty #blackisbeautiful #blackgirlmagic #blackgirlsrock #naturallyshesdoe #blackgirl #blackgirls"	69653	2046	71699
7/14/17	"39404"	"blackstagram_"	"Repost from @panafrican.roots #Zendaya showed everyone what women unity can do magical things! It's easy to make a person happy and she proves it! #blackexcellence #blackperfection #blackbeauty #blackbusiness #africanamerican #blackcommunity #melanin #blackpride #blackout #america #usa #blackscience #education #diversity #blackgirlmagic"	69232	584	69816
5/9/17	"55992"	"feminism_tag"	"#feminismtag #feminism #female #humanrights #equality #freedom #love #support #feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights #heforshe #femen #equality #freedom #feminist #woman #riot #support #protest #gay #lesbian #equality #motherhood #sexterrorism"	66560	2833	69393
6/25/17	"55363"	"feminism_tag"	"#feminismtag #feminism #female #humanrights #equality #freedom #love #support #feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights #heforshe #femen #equality #freedom #feminist #woman #riot #support #protest #gay #lesbian #equality #motherhood #sexterrorism"	65706	3083	68789
8/17/17	"55420"	"feminism_tag"	"#feminismtag #feminism #female #humanrights #equality #freedom #love #support #feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights #heforshe #femen #equality #freedom #feminist #woman #riot #support #protest #gay #lesbian #equality #motherhood #sexterrorism"	67386	865	68251
7/8/17	"39478"	"blackstagram_"	"Repost from @...melanin... Powerful talent! 🍷 #blackpower #blackwoman #blackwomen #blackgirlsrock #blackgirlmagic #melanin #melaninpoppin #myblackisbeautiful #blackqueen #unapologeticallyblack #problack #blackpeople #africanamerican #blackandproud #afrocentric #blackmen #blackout #blackart #blackman #blackhistory #blackexcellence #melaninonfleek"	66942	467	67409
7/1/17	"55213"	"feminism_tag"	"#feminismtag #feminism #female #humanrights #equality #freedom #love #support #feminist #yesallwomen #womensrights #heforshe #femen #equality #freedom #feminist #woman #riot #support #protest #gay #lesbian #equality #motherhood #sexterrorism"	65053	729	65782

# Facebook: Top Performing Image Themes by Month

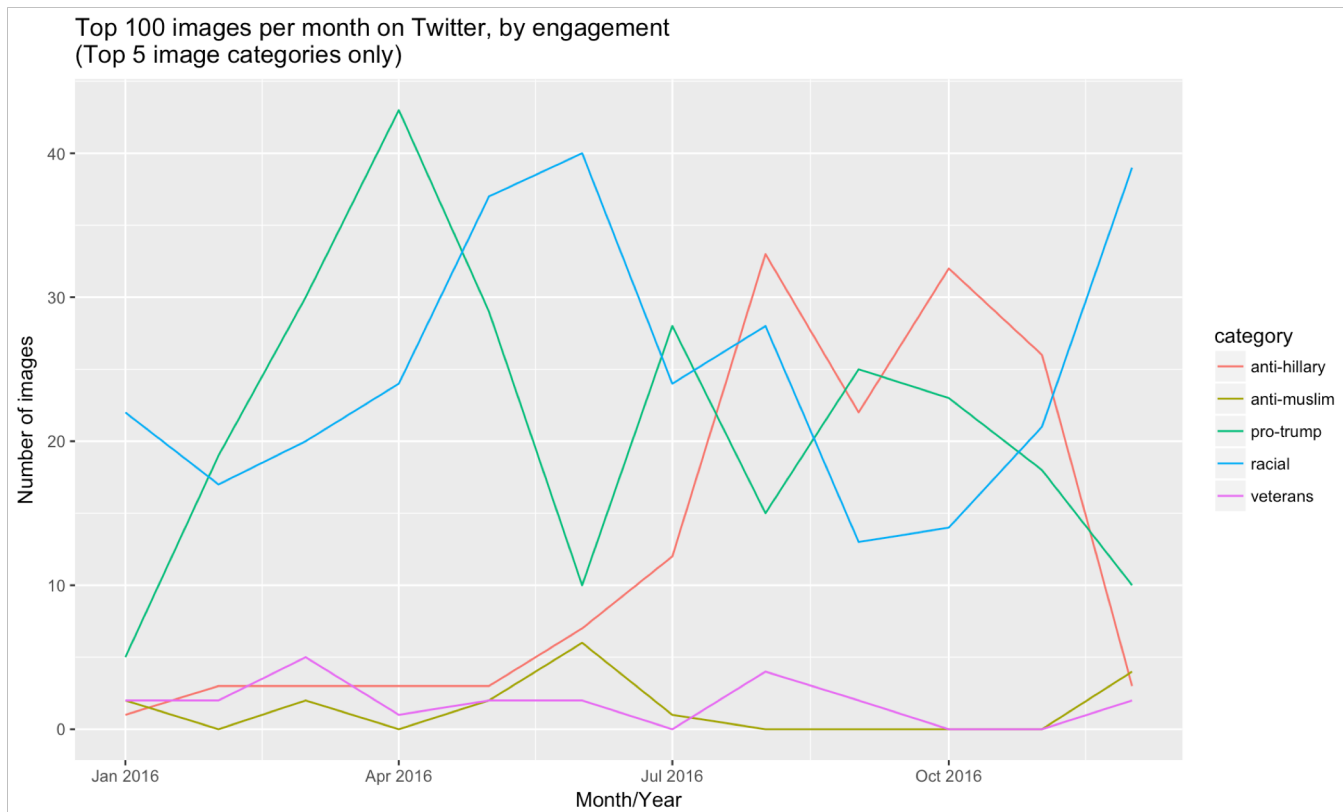


# Instagram: Top Performing Image Themes by Month





# Twitter: Top Performing Image Themes by Month



# Thank you