



RAND

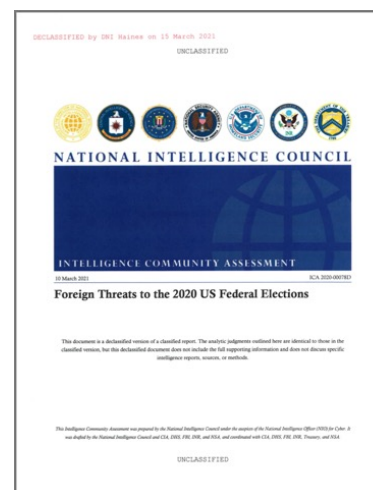
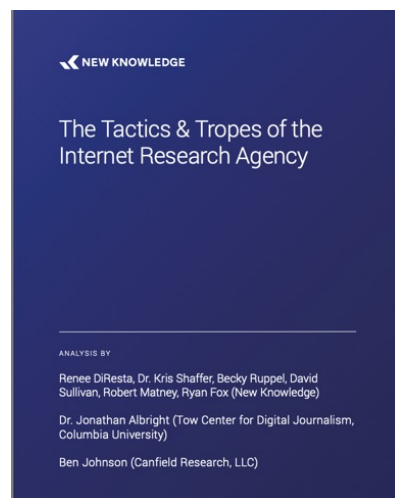
National Security Research Division



A Compendium of Recommendations for Countering Russian and other State-Sponsored Propaganda

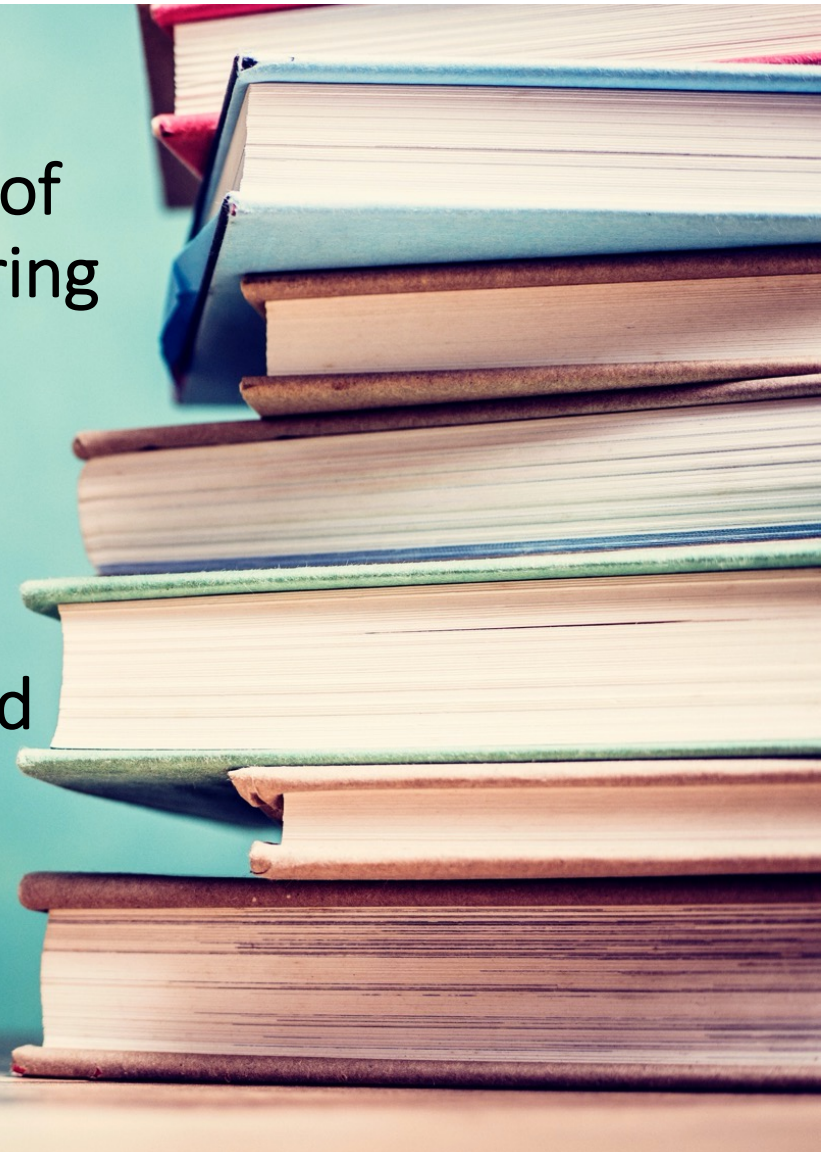
Todd C. Helmus

Numerous Reports Document Growing Propaganda Threat from Russia, China and Iran



Scholars have offered a litany of recommendations for countering foreign propaganda

This study used a “systematic review” approach to code and analyze these recommendations



We systematically searched for think-tank reports that offered recommendations on Russian propaganda

46 studies qualified for review

Most studies focused on propaganda, were published in 2018/19 and originated from U.S based institutions

FIGURE 3
Major Focus Areas for Qualifying Studies

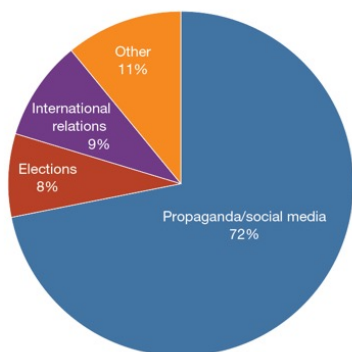


FIGURE 1
Year of Publication for Qualifying Studies

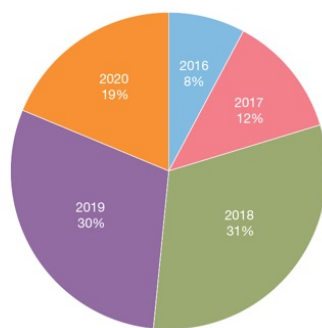
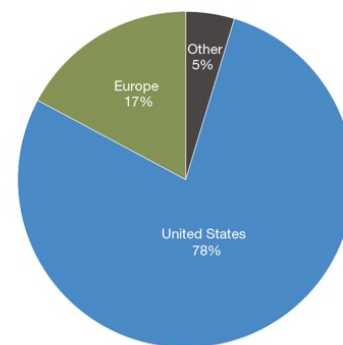


FIGURE 2
Institutional Origin for Qualifying Studies



We Identified 5 Categories of Recommendations

Number of Reports Coded for Each of the Major Categories of Recommendations

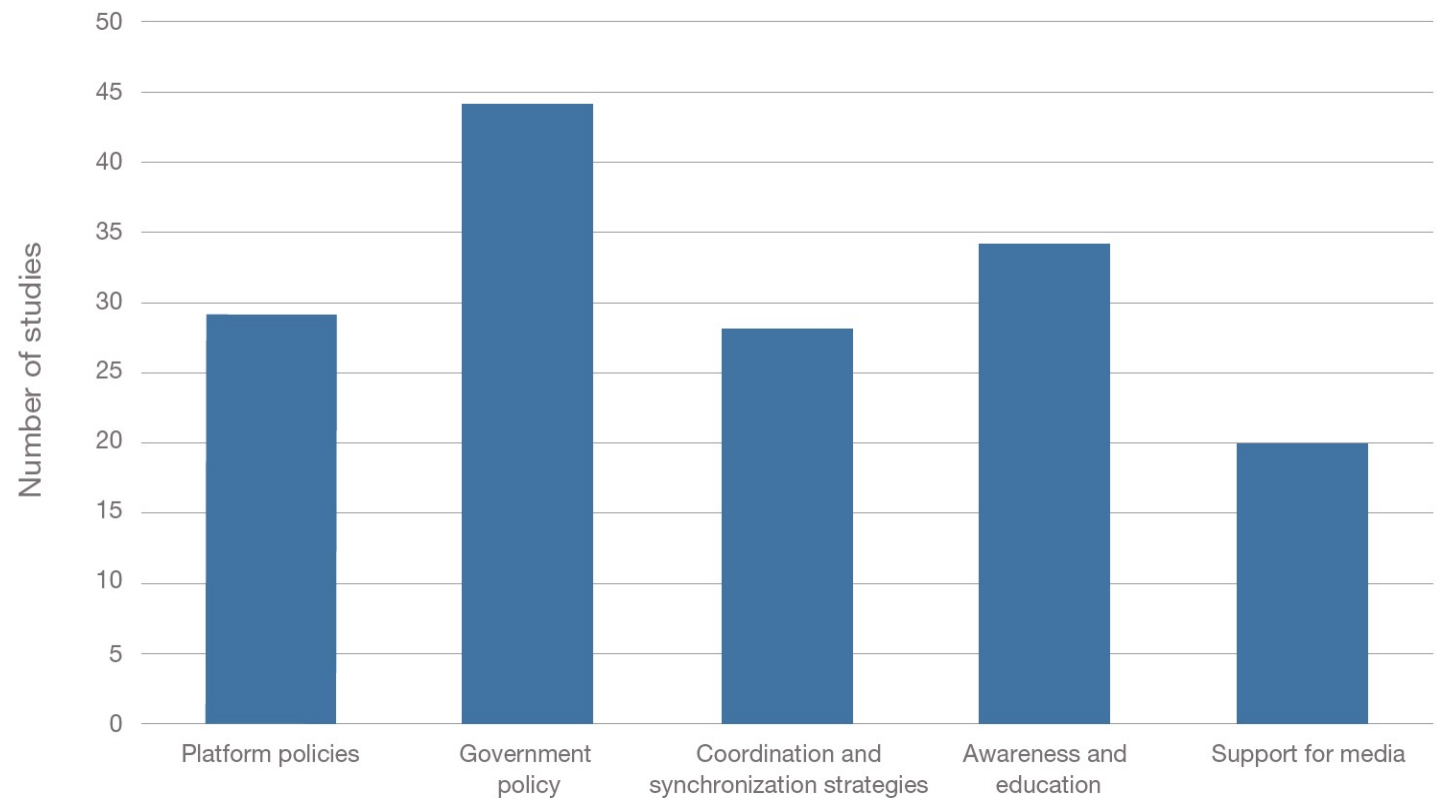
Platform policies

Government Policies

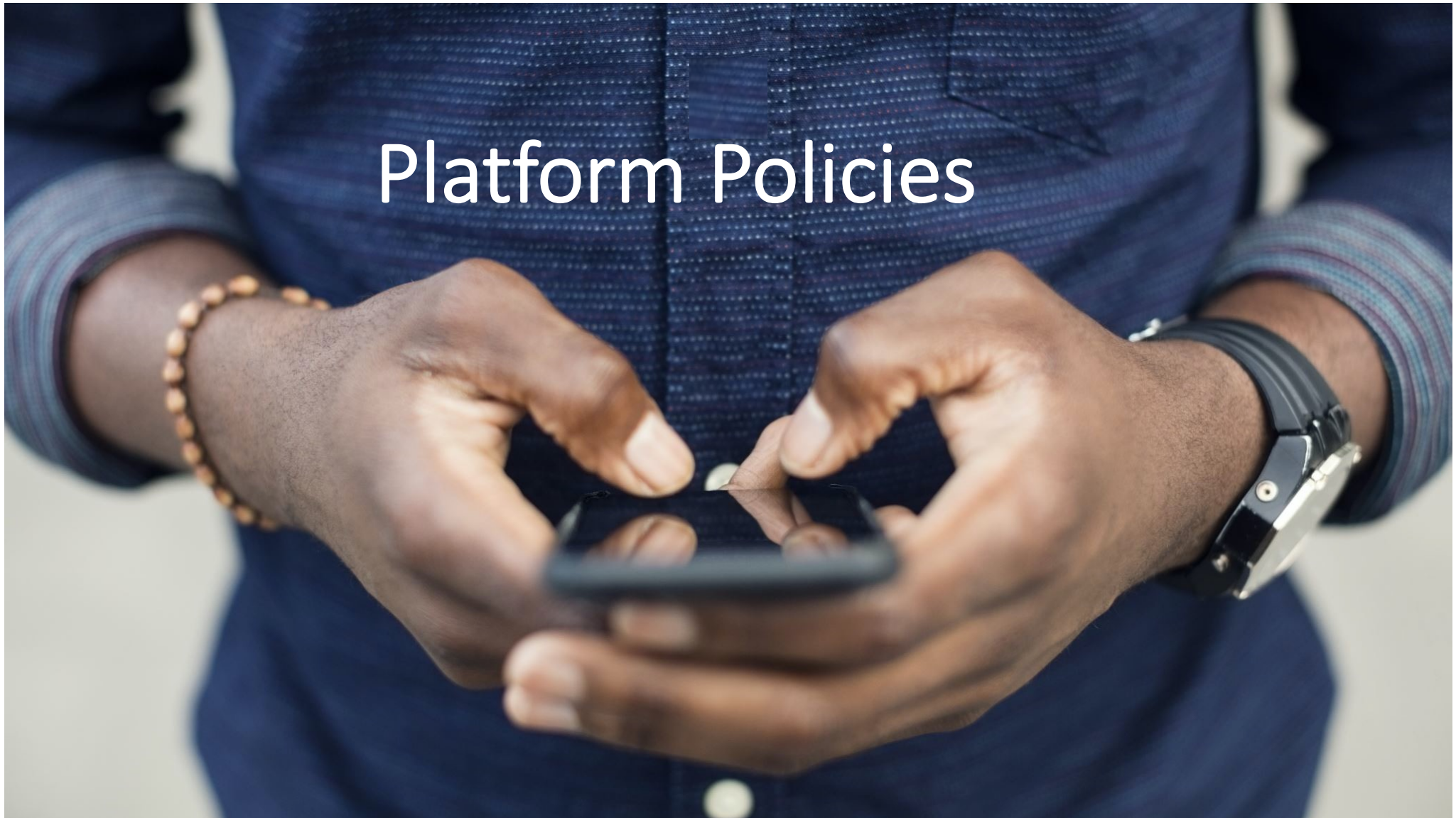
Coordination Policies

Awareness/Education

Support for Media



Platform Policies



Revise Platform Policies

Improve detection/removal of inauthentic content (26 studies)

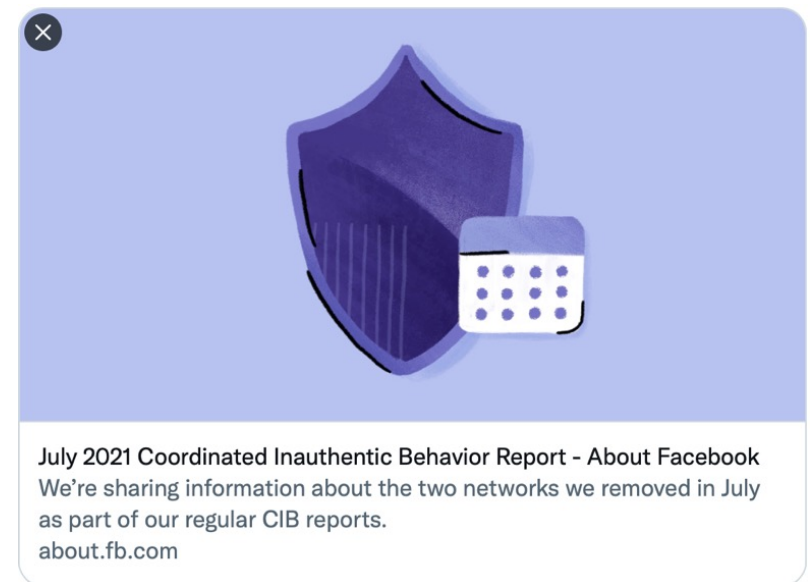
Revise advertising policies (16)

Improve user privacy controls (10)

Adjust the algorithms (8)

Revise membership policies (5)

Improve information sharing among platforms (4)



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<u>WILL</u>	Honest Ads Act	<u>WON'T</u>	
 Prohibit political ads by foreign nationals		 Restrict buying political ads	
 Reveal the true source of funding for political ads		 Restrict First Amendment rights	
 Sync online ad rules with rules for TV/Radio		 Target specific beliefs	

trulioo.com/blog

Honest Ads Act — Know Your Advertiser
The proposed Honest Ads Act in the U.S. aims to prohibit political advertising by foreign nationals and reveal the true source of funding ... trulioo.com

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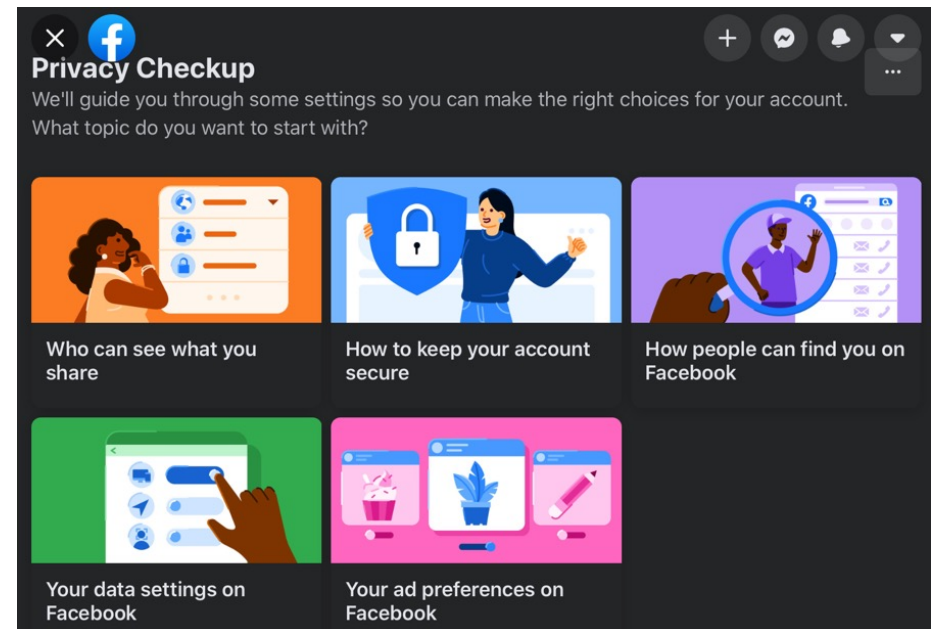
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How Facebook got addicted to spreading misinformation
The company's AI algorithms gave it an insatiable habit for lies and hate speech. Now the man who built them can't fix the problem.
[technologyreview.com](https://www.technologyreview.com)

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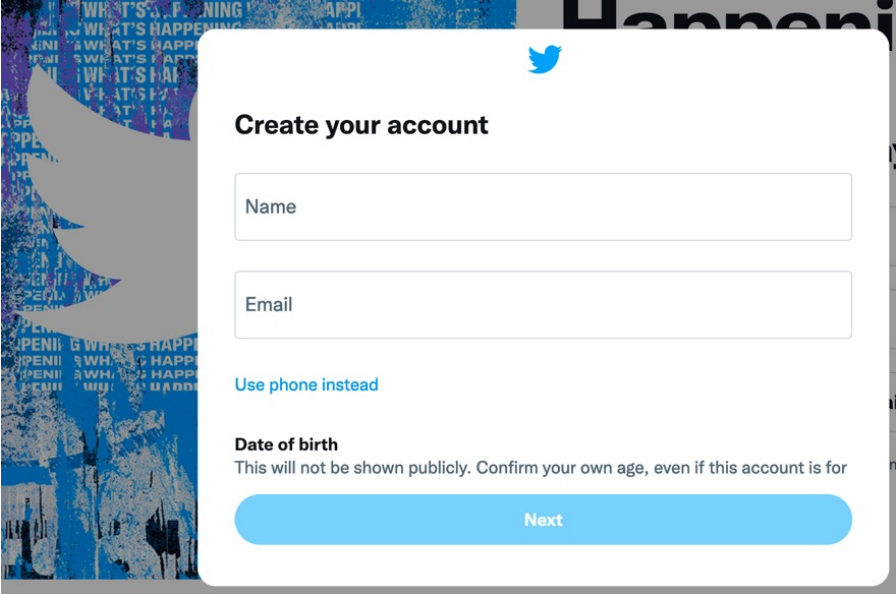
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A screenshot of the Twitter account creation interface. The background is a blue and white pattern with the text "WHAT'S HAPPENING" repeated. A large, semi-transparent Twitter bird logo is on the left. The form is white with a blue Twitter bird logo at the top right. It contains fields for "Name" and "Email", a link for "Use phone instead", a "Date of birth" section with a note "This will not be shown publicly. Confirm your own age, even if this account is for", and a blue "Next" button at the bottom.

Create your account

Name

Email

[Use phone instead](#)

Date of birth
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Next

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A photograph of the White House in Washington, D.C. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent portico supported by columns. An American flag flies on a tall pole in front of the building. The White House is surrounded by lush green lawns, mature trees, and a manicured hedge. A fountain is visible in the foreground, spraying water upwards. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Government Policies

Government Policies

Support at-risk countries (13 studies)

Deterrence (12)

Implement Sanctions (12)

Improve Intelligence (12)

Improve info dissemination & public
diplomacy (10)

Improve cyber policy & capabilities (10)

Create national strategy (4)



Russian Social Media Influence

Understanding Russian Propaganda
in Eastern Europe

Todd C. Helmus, Elizabeth Bodine-Baron, Andrew Radin,
Madeline Magnuson, Joshua Mendelsohn, William Marcellino,
Andriy Bego, Zev Winkelman

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Biden wants Putin to behave. So why not go after his money?
Kremlin critics say the U.S. president needs to do more than take incremental measures. But insiders warn that aiming for Putin's ...
[politico.com](https://www.politico.com)

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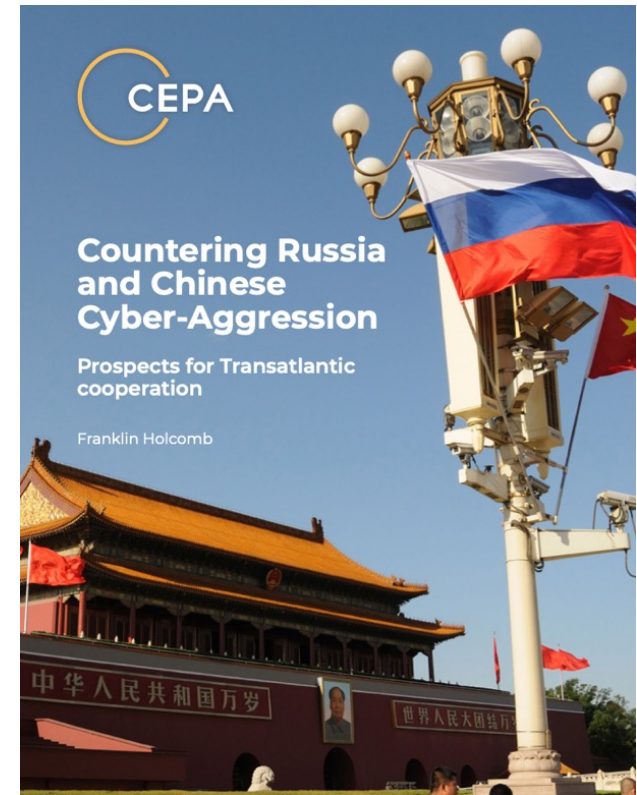
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Coordination

Improving Coordination

WH.GOV



Interagency (15 studies)

Inter-government (14)

Public Private (12)

Civil Society (12)

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

The National Security Council (NSC) is the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his or her senior advisors and cabinet officials. Since its inception under President Truman, the Council's function has been to advise and assist the President and to coordinate matters of national security among government agencies



Improving Coordination

Interagency (15 studies)

Inter-government (14)

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Awareness &
Education

Awareness & Education

Media Literacy (24 studies)

Public warnings about propaganda (19)

Fact Checking (14)

5 hrs · 🌐

When you encounter a source that you're not sure can be trusted, check multiple sources to verify credibility. Advice from "a friend of a friend" or unspecified "experts" may not be reliable.



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TODD C. HELMUS, JAMES V. MARRONE,
MAREK N. POSARD, DANIELLE SCHLANG

Russian Propaganda Hits Its Mark

Experimentally Testing the Impact of
Russian Propaganda and Counter-Interventions

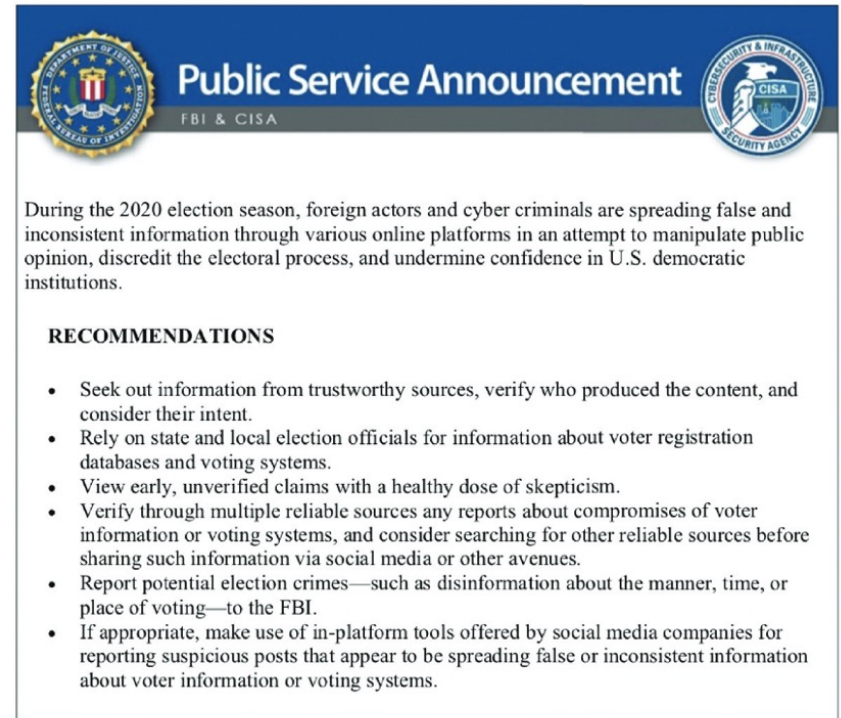


Awareness & Education

Media Literacy (24 studies)

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The banner features the FBI Seal on the left and the CISA Seal on the right. The text "Public Service Announcement" is prominently displayed in the center, with "FBI & CISA" written below it.

During the 2020 election season, foreign actors and cyber criminals are spreading false and inconsistent information through various online platforms in an attempt to manipulate public opinion, discredit the electoral process, and undermine confidence in U.S. democratic institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

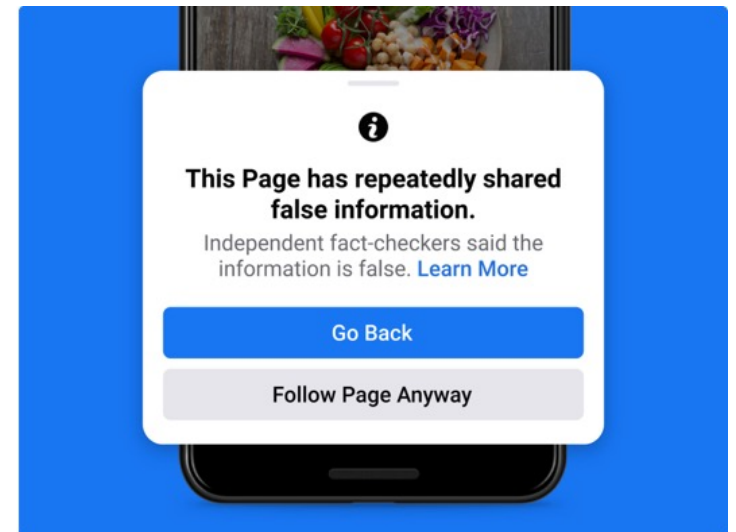
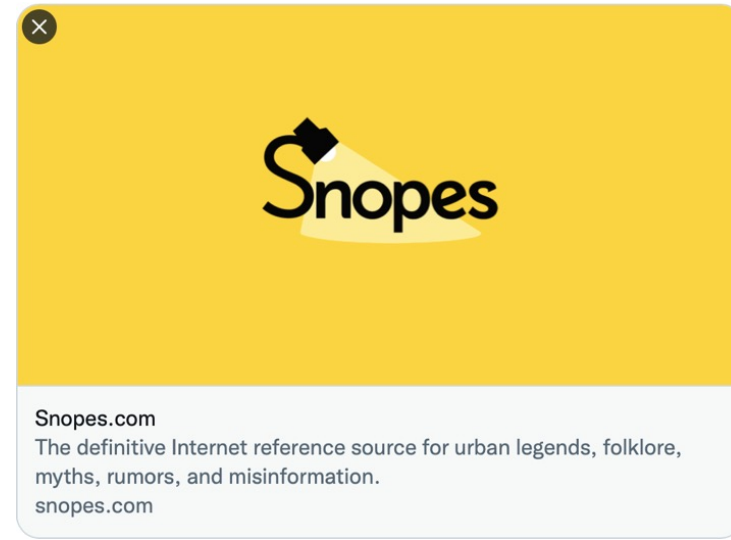
- Seek out information from trustworthy sources, verify who produced the content, and consider their intent.
- Rely on state and local election officials for information about voter registration databases and voting systems.
- View early, unverified claims with a healthy dose of skepticism.
- Verify through multiple reliable sources any reports about compromises of voter information or voting systems, and consider searching for other reliable sources before sharing such information via social media or other avenues.
- Report potential election crimes—such as disinformation about the manner, time, or place of voting—to the FBI.
- If appropriate, make use of in-platform tools offered by social media companies for reporting suspicious posts that appear to be spreading false or inconsistent information about voter information or voting systems.

Awareness & Education

Media Literacy (24 studies)

Public warnings about propaganda (19)

Fact Checking (14)



Support Media



ON AIR

Support Media

Support Journalism (14 studies)

Support Foreign Broadcasts (11)

Support Online Content Creators (6)



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Research Report

TODD C. HELMUS, KRYSZYNA MARCINEK, JULIA NETHING, DANIELLE SCHLANG, RYAN ANDREW BROWN

Tweeting Out Surveys to Pro-Ukraine Influencers

Exploring the Potential for Enlisting Support in the Information Fight Against Russia

Ukrainian populations that speak the Russian language or hold Russian heritage might be appealing targets for Russian propaganda. Previous RAND Corporation research from 2018 analyzing Russian-language Twitter feeds emanating from Eastern Europe identified two large and influential communities: one group of seemingly "pro-Ukraine activists" who oppose Russian influence and support Ukrainian democracy and another group of seemingly "pro-Russia activists" who disseminate Russian social media content and oppose an independent

Ukraine. At the time, RAND researchers recommended that Ukraine and Western organizations work to enlist the pro-Ukraine activists in efforts to counter Russian propaganda.

The study outlined in this report used Twitter advertisements to solicit survey participation from the most-influential members of this pro-Ukraine activist community, influential members of the

KEY FINDINGS

- This study used Twitter advertisements to solicit survey participation from the most-influential members of pro-Ukraine and pro-Russia communities of Twitter users identified in an analysis of 25 million Russian language tweets emanating from Eastern Europe.
- Survey results suggest that pro-Ukraine activists are eager to counter Russian influence. Large percentages of respondents reported using Twitter to help counter Russian influence, and they take this activism to other social media accounts and offline channels, including talking to family members or friends and—to a lesser extent—participating in advocacy groups.
- At least half of the sample reported being open to receiving additional social media training, and most did not seem opposed to taking this support from the European Union, United States, or Ukraine. However, a hypothetical agreement to receive funding or participate in training does not mean that participants actually would do so.
- Following a brand ambassador model would help connect influential users with training and content. This model would involve reaching out, building an initial relationship, and establishing trust with these activists. It might be possible to help such users join together to advocate for a unified and democratic Ukraine, increase awareness of particular Russian influence campaigns, disseminate memes or video content addressing media literacy, or identify Russian bots and trolls.

Conclusions & Current Status

Platforms have made significant strides in fight against propaganda but more is needed

USG works to support overseas allies & has levied sanctions but has struggled in developing a coherent deterrence policy; A counter-propaganda strategy is noticeably absent

Only 14 states have mandated media literacy education into school curriculum

The RAND logo consists of a purple square with a white curved line in the top-left corner.

RAND

National Security Research Division

Questions?

Todd C. Helmus
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