

I have a tiny favor to ask . . . We've been asked to apply to Carnegie's Disinformation Researcher's guild. I need a current member to put down as a reference. Can I put you down?

Nov 3, 2021, 2:18 PM

Yup!

Nov 3, 2021, 2:32 PM

Hey . . . I just got a notification that "Partnership For Countering Influence Operations received a reference." I thought I was just giving them the name of a reference, I didn't know it was going to involve a written recommendation.

Thanks. If I can ever do anything to repay the favor, let me know.

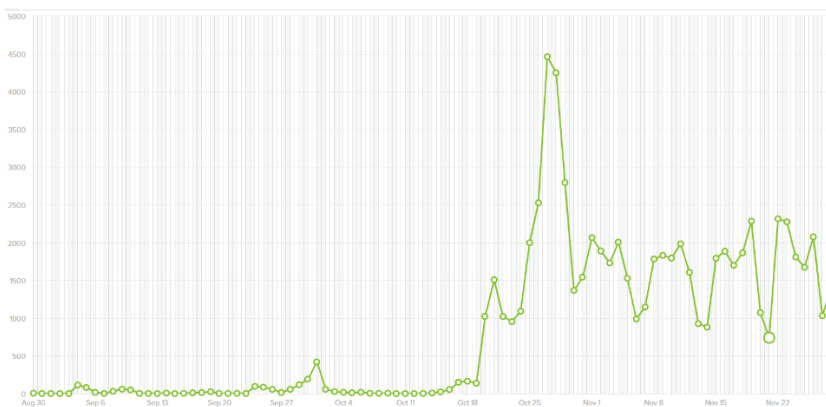
Nov 13, 2021, 12:04 PM

No prob :)

Nov 13, 2021, 12:19 PM

I have a theory I want to run by you for peer review, if you don't mind.

Sent



See the attached image . . .

Nov 28, 2021, 11:58 AM

This is all use of "#GenocideGames" on Twitter in the past 90 days. If you look at the rise starting on October 20th, PRC accounts start getting involved. By November (when a regular pattern sets in) it is almost all PRC.

It's all garbage accounts . . . 2/3 of the accounts tweeting about it in the past 30 days have no followers. And most have been suspended.

Nov 28, 2021, 12:00 PM

We DMed about this some time back . . . but would a reason to do this be to keep it from the Trending list? . . . the PRC artificially creates a high baseline volume of use, and then it is very hard to make it trend?

Thanks

Nov 28, 2021, 12:02 PM

And just for fun . . . here's my new favorite Chinese troll account:

[twitter.com/parveshgarg1982](https://twitter.com/parveshgarg1982)

Nov 28, 2021, 12:03 PM

Oh interesting

Nov 28, 2021, 12:55 PM

I hadn't seen the hashtag. It looks like the usual battle between Guo GNews types and CCP garbage accounts?

Is anyone impactful participating?

Nov 28, 2021, 1:00 PM

Lot going on with Parvesh Garg Lindsay Graham there. Looks like they at least remembered to clear out the likes from its prior life.

What hashtags cooccur with GenocideGames?

Nov 28, 2021, 1:02 PM

PRC is adding the hashtag to what they are already doing with those Guo cartoons . . . so co-occurrence is stuff like #Bannon #Guo & #Yanlimeng . . . the same accounts are also tweeting a lot about Xinjiang, the Uyghur, and Xinjiang cotton.

Nov 28, 2021, 1:13 PM

Ah that xinjiang cotton

Our thing on that will be out this week but tbh it is not particularly exciting

The most exciting thing really is the incredible persistence! I reached out to 2-3 other teams to ask for their user networks and there was still no overlap with ours

It's just thousands of these garbage accounts

Nov 28, 2021, 3:02 PM

Right . . . so, thoughts on my hypothesis? Would tweeting about it at some constant rate make it less likely to show up as a trend?

Nov 28, 2021, 3:09 PM

It's an interesting idea

It seems that could be one explanation

Did it hit trends the first time

They're all low quality accounts though based on what I'm seeing so they wouldn't really be weighed in trends, as I understand the algorithm

However it's possible that the low level of crud does make it harder for "real" accounts?

Were really accounts trying?

\*real

What we are currently going with is that it is just hashtag flooding ala K-pop fans and "#whitelivesmatter" . . . but I am very curious about the impact on the algorithm. I mean, it must have some effect?

Nov 28, 2021, 5:11 PM

my current working theory on all these China Xinjiang networks is that they're run by different sub-contractors or regional CCP offices that are just trying to hit their metrics by being high-volume...so that they can collect either \$\$ or regional favor.

they seem to just replicate the 50 cent party 'forum-sliding' strategies on that topic. anyone with 100k followers or more who uses that hashtag seems highly, highly likely to dominate the conversation in the Top tab based on what I'm seeing from the engagement with the various networks of garbage accounts.

Nov 28, 2021, 5:22 PM

it \*seem\* like that would happen with this hashtag, too. like, if you were to write a twitter thread speculating about this, guaranteed that would attract interest and attention b/c you are a real person with a good follower count and it might not trend but it would certainly shape the conversation significantly in the tab that matters.

Nov 28, 2021, 5:23 PM

trending is so tough to predict b/c it's regionalized, too. where do you think their target audience is with this one? i see the English stuff but is it also in other languages?

Nov 28, 2021, 5:24 PM

on which of these days did it crack trending, do you know?

there it theoretically should have on one of the first early spikes, at least somewhere, unless the low-quality account filter rendered them all out of the weighting

Nov 28, 2021, 5:27 PM

but then with a lot of trending topics there is a kind of half-life...i'm not sure over what timeframe twitter re-establishes a baseline

I will say, I REALLY don't think these are decentralized. The 50 cent party is for retweeting Chinese media. These accounts act in lock step . . . they use the same client, have the same schedule . . . I have one more doozy of something we found, but it would take more of an explanation than I can give over DM.

Nov 28, 2021, 5:48 PM

A lot of what we see in our xinjiang network is actually RTing state media...can't run afoul of any strategy doing that :)

I get the sense it's parceled out regionally

This is a short week for me coming up bc I'm on a plane all of Thursday and at a conference all Friday but happy to chat and compare notes the following week

Nov 28, 2021, 6:16 PM

Oh yea, they ALSO retweet state media. And Lijian Zhao.

Next week is no good for me either, the week after is exam week and super flexible.

We should also have something out on this soon . . . will be very good to compare notes.

Nov 28, 2021, 8:22 PM

Also . . . regarding my theory . . . Twitter's goal is usually to keep things from trending inauthentically. Not to keep them from NOT trending . . . in any case, still just a theory.

Nov 28, 2021, 8:24 PM

I thought about it while walking the dog and updated my theory: if you make a hashtag appear to be manipulated with zero follower accounts it will be less likely to trend because the algorithm believes it is being manipulated. They are, perhaps, using Twitter's defenses against itself . . . thoughts? Can Twitter walk and chew gum at the same time, by that I mean

can they easily and simultaneously guard against someone manipulating a hashtag to trend and ALSO guard against someone wanting it not to trend with the same bag of tools.

Nov 29, 2021, 10:03 AM

FYI, per our ongoing discussion . . . [lawfareblog.com/understanding-](https://lawfareblog.com/understanding-).....

Dec 1, 2021, 6:54 PM

Ours is out tonight :)

2am PT! Lol!

Good summary. We are all finding the same things.

Dec 1, 2021, 10:25 PM

Was hoping to get at least a full day on you, but Lawfare's attorney had to do an anti-defamation review!

I look forward to reading y'all's.

Dec 1, 2021, 10:32 PM

1. This is Jo's paper I referenced . . . though I realize it is an old tactic. Once upon a time I found specific tweets targeting journalists in the original IRA data that resulted in articles and references in articles. [cjr.org/analysis/tweet](https://cjr.org/analysis/tweet)....

Dec 2, 2021, 4:13 PM

I'm going to dive into these data sets next week and try to get a handle on how the two Chinese networks look/operate differently. I may need to circle back to you later. I'm working on something that will probably need outside input eventually.

Dec 2, 2021, 4:15 PM

So . . . wondering if SIO might have time to look at some accounts?

Sent

I'm working with ProPublica on a piece . . . should come out tomorrow . . . but we've identified a network of pro-Russian, pro-Putin accounts. Very sophisticated actor working across networks . . . Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, VK, and Telegram.

Worked with Twitter and TikTok . . . they suspended all the accounts we gave them and some we didn't. They didn't give us any useful insight, but at least they took action.

Meta has taken no action on the accounts we gave them.

Mar 10, 2022, 6:27 PM

I've spent a lot of time looking these, and it very clearly appears to be the same actor. Same messaging, similar content, often even the same persona and profile images across platforms.

But Meta won't talk and just say they see nothing.

Do y'all have time to look at small set of Instagram accounts and give thoughts?

Mar 10, 2022, 6:29 PM

Sure

Rdiresta@stanford

Mar 10, 2022, 7:17 PM

btw: do you happen to have a quick answer to the question "did IRA trolls boost state media coverage of MH17"?

i was just trying to find folks' writing on that question. they certainly boosted the same claims, but i am interested in direct domain links

Sep 13, 2022, 2:09 PM

I know they did some . . . certainly shared RIA. Will get it for you.

Sep 13, 2022, 2:22 PM

thanks!! the handy search tool Russiatweets only shows the [t.co](#) links and i have to go dredge up my copies of the set otherwise. i will reply to your email as soon as i'm back at my machine.

Sep 13, 2022, 3:21 PM

Just sent you a couple of thousand tweets.

Sep 13, 2022, 3:55 PM

Not state media, but I also think it is interesting there are a number of links to Russia Insider re: MH17

[russia-insider.com/en/media-criti](http://russia-insider.com/en/media-criti).....

Quote



**Russia Insider**

@RussiaInsider



Jul 23, 2015

Excellent New Russian MH17 Documentary: Ukraine and West Are Guilty (Video)

[bit.ly/1HKHTDD](http://bit.ly/1HKHTDD) #MH17



Sep 13, 2022, 3:57 PM

Yeah there were a lot to that domain, I noticed

Sep 13, 2022, 3:59 PM

hey there! forgive the random DM but I was trying to track down something tangentially related to your work area: have you all studied trend sizes at all? I'm trying to get a sense of regional averages, to whatever extent they exist. I see, for example, personalized trends that are sometimes <2k tweets, while national seems to be more like 10-100k in the US, and some of the KPop (which I think are sometimes hidden) cross 1MM.

Oct 26, 2022, 1:45 PM

surprisingly a lot of the trend history "dashboards" that Google search returns are .in sites that I don't really trust, rather than something academic. figured someone would be looking at this...

Oct 26, 2022, 1:46 PM

No, we haven't done any work on trend sizes . . . but certainly the numbers you cite here make sense relative to who is actually using Twitter. Twitter is pretty much, at the end of the day, all (1) K-pop, (2) porn, (3) Bollywood, and (4) engagement contests for people trying to win free stuff . . . in that order. So a 10 to one ratio between the US and K-pop makes sense to me.

Also K-pop engagement contests could probably be a category of its own.

Oct 26, 2022, 2:27 PM