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# **Russia's Campaign**

*to*

# **Influence U.S. Elections**

**Office of the West Virginia Secretary of State**



# Overview

## *To Putin, the End Justifies the Means*

**Russia Used Campaign Ads & Social Media in U.S. to:**

- **Create Doubt, Sow Discord & Generate Chaos**
- **Exploit Fissures in Society**
- **Pit People Against One Another**
- **Disrupt, Not Trust, the Election Processes**
- **Turn Citizens Against the Government**



Source: DHS, Dept. of Homeland Security; Mueller Indictments



# Disrupt Our Democracy



## How?

- **Exploit Divisive & Heated Issues**
- **“Take Out” the Front Runner Candidate(s)**
- **Target Both Sides & Incite Opposition**

## Which Means...

**Public Faith in the Results is Shaken**



# Background: Putin & Russia



- **Former Soviet Intelligence Officer in the KGB**
- **Judo Master: Trained to Use Opponents' Strength Against Them**
- **Russian President 2000-08, 2012-Present**
- **Actively Works Against NATO & Western Democracies**
- **“IRA” – Internet Research Agency: Russia’s Primary Cyber Network**



# Why YOU?



# Why YOU?

- **Newest Generation of Voters – It Starts With You**
- **Most Susceptible in Formative Years**
- **Social Media Presence Highest Among Ages 18-24**
- **First-Time Voters 2020 Election – *Be Educated & Prepared!***



# Key Cyber Terms

**Scanning** – checking systems for cybersecurity weaknesses

**Phishing** – attempt to gain information by posing as someone else

**Hacking** – attempt to break into/gain unauthorized access to private information/systems

**Targeting** – planning/selecting a specific person or entity

**Spear Phishing** – attempt to hack a specific person or entity

**Whaling** – phishing high-profile people (e.g. President, chief election official, etc.)

**Spoofing** – impersonating, masquerading or mimicking a trusted source

**“Fake News”** is a catchall phrase, non-specific reference to something untrue

**Misinformation**: false information

**Disinformation**: false information intentionally designed to appear true

**Information Manipulation**: mixture of half-truths & selected truths (main Russia tactic)



# American Elections

## Starting Point

**NO EVIDENCE that ANY Votes Were Changed In Our Elections!**

**US elections are decentralized, run independently by states.**

**Specifically in WV, voting machines:**

- 1. Are air-gapped and not connected to Internet**
  - Over 1,700 precincts**
  - Very difficult to hack; requires physical breach**
- 2. Use voter-verified paper ballots**
- 3. Pre- & post-election audits ensure security and accuracy**



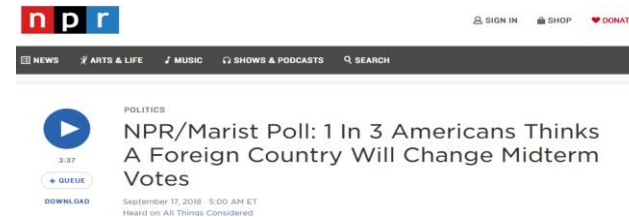


# American Election “Hacking”

**Yet, Perception is Reality in Election Security**

***“1/3 Americans Think A Foreign Country Will Change Midterm Votes”***

**NPR poll prior to 2018 Election**



**Hackers are like a “Bad Referee”**

**Loser wants to blame somebody, so,  
like a losing team in a basketball game, refs get blamed.**

**In elections, loser may blame hackers because they were meddling.**



# **Fear Over Election “Hacking”**

**So, when scanning, phishing, hacking, & disinformation occur,  
distrust, suspicion, & discord occurs.**

**Loser “blaming the ref” (the hackers)  
plays into the hands of the attacker!**

**That is, Russia**



# History of Russia Hacking & Disinformation

## International

Estonia                      Austria  
Ukraine                     Norway  
France                        Netherlands  
Germany                    United Kingdom  
and others

## Domestic

Voter Registration Systems  
Social Media (as early as 2013)  
Political Campaigns

Created Teams to Influence Election  
Imported Foreign Agents & Foreign \$

*Inspired Other Bad Actors, Foreign & Domestic*



Source: Department of Homeland Security



# Known Foreign Cyber Adversaries of U.S.



# **Adversaries Can't Beat Us on Battlefield**

**So, They Change the Game & Reset the Game Board**

## **Battlefield of Unconventional Warfare:**

- 1. Cyber: cheaper, hard to attribute, response may cause escalation**
- 2. Psychological operations: “Messing with Americans’ heads”**
- 3. False reporting: intentionally false, partially false**
- 4. Public sharing of sensitive information**
  - *E.g.* Democratic National Committee Emails**



# Russia: Using Our Strengths Against US

*The “Spirit of America” is in our freedoms*

## US Strengths

Freedom of press

Freedom of speech

Freedom of religion

Freedom of assembly

*All can be leveraged via  
social media, cellphones!*



*All for < 1/2 the cost of a single fighter jet...*



# Russian Social Media Effort in 2016 Elections

**Twitter: 10 Million Tweets**

**Instagram: 116,000 posts**

- *Particularly weaponized*

**Facebook: 61,000 posts**

**Additional Videos: 1,000**



**Over 2016, That's Almost 28,000 Social Media Actions per Day**

**Which Platform Do You Use the Most?  
Have You Seen Fake Accounts?**

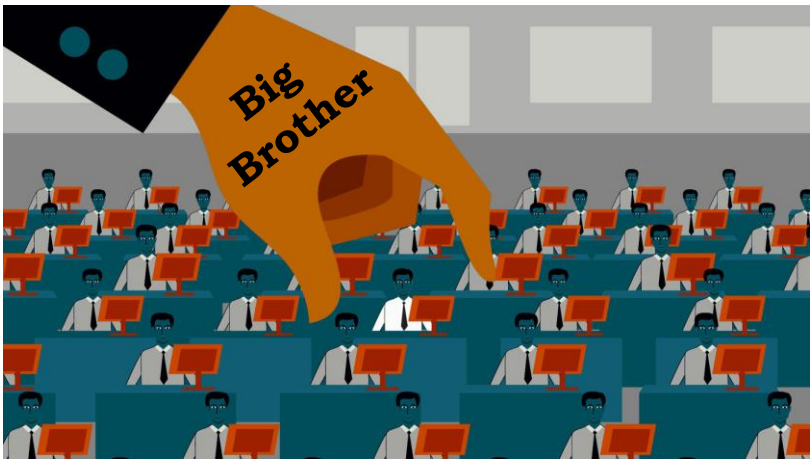


**Social Media Platforms are Paralyzed**

- **Leave up false information, or be accused of bias...**

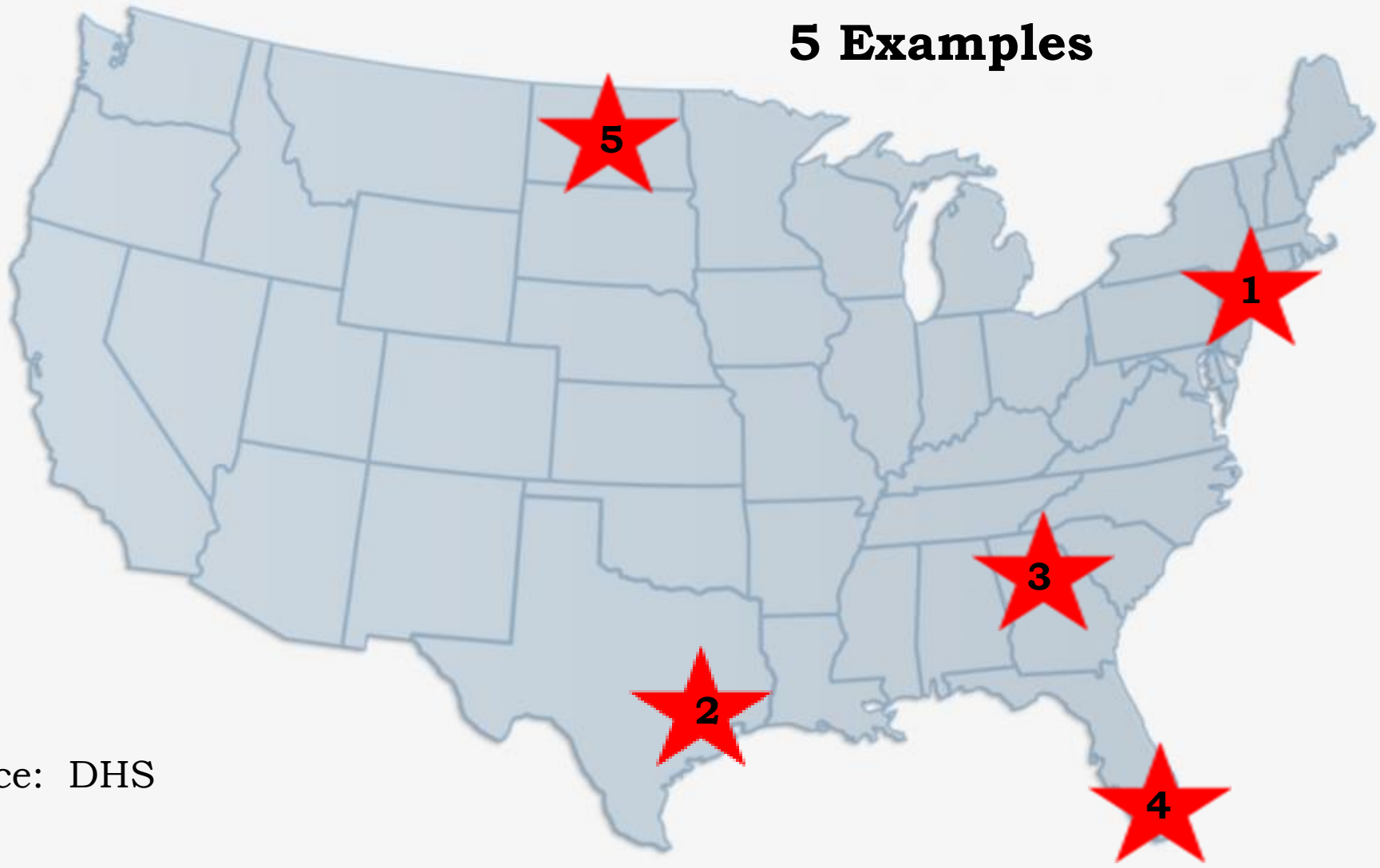
- **Which is worse?**

**Censorship or Fake News?**



# Russia Targeted the Spirit of America

5 Examples



Source: DHS





# 1. NY: Competing Rallies (Assembly)


*Competing Protests Promoted in NYC on Nov. 12, 2016*

## Pro-Trump Rally

Tennessee GOP Retweeted

**March for Trump** @March\_for\_Trump · Nov 9

Trump supporters of NYC! Let's prove there IS RED in Empire City!  
Join the rally at Trump Tower on Nov 12  
[facebook.com/events/3651622...](https://www.facebook.com/events/3651622...)  
#Maga



The poster features a large American flag graphic with the text "NEW YORKERS! SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP" overlaid. Below the text is a photograph of Donald Trump in a suit and tie, standing in front of a modern glass skyscraper.

*4 days  
AFTER  
election!*

## Anti-Trump Rally

BM shared their event.

Sponsored · 🌐

People are genuinely scared for their futures!  
Racism won, Ignorance won, Sexual assault won  
STOP TRUMP! STOP RACISM! JOIN THE PROTEST at Union Sq.  
Saturday 12 PM  
Bring signs, snacks, water!



The poster shows a black and white photograph of Union Square in NYC. A large image of Donald Trump's face is overlaid on the right side, with a large red 'X' drawn over it. The text "NOT MY PRESIDENT" is prominently displayed in the center, with "November 12, 12 PM. Union square, NYC" below it.

NOV 12

Trump Is NOT my President. March aga...  
Sat 12 PM EST · Union Square - 14th & Broadwa...  
33,140 people interested · 16,750 people going

★ Interested

👍 Like    💬 Comment



# 2. HOUSTON: Religious Tensions

*Competing Protests on Same Day at Noon, May 21, 2016*

**Pro-Islam**

United Muslims of America shared their event.  
Sponsored · 18

It's been only a month since Library of Islamic Knowledge at the center in Houston is open

**SAVE ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE**  
May 21 at 12:00 PM, Houston TX

**MAY 21** **SAVE ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE**  
Sat 12 PM · Islamic Da'wah Center 201 Travis St, ...  
42 people interested · 18 people going

★ Interested

The image shows a Facebook event page for 'SAVE ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE' on May 21 at 12:00 PM in Houston, TX. The event is sponsored by United Muslims of America. The main graphic features a silhouette of a mosque with the text 'SAVE ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE' and 'May 21 at 12:00 PM, Houston TX'. A red box highlights the event details at the bottom, including the date 'MAY 21', the title 'SAVE ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE', the time 'Sat 12 PM', the location 'Islamic Da'wah Center 201 Travis St, ...', and the number of people interested (42) and going (18). There is also a '★ Interested' button.

**Anti-Islam**

MAY 21, 2016 / 12.00 P.M.

**STOP ISLAMIZATION OF TEXAS**

ISLAMIC DA'WAH CENTER

MAY 21 Stop Islamization of Texas

Public · Causes · Hosted by Heart of Texas

★ Interested + Going Invite ...

Saturday, May 21 at 12 PM

GUESTS

The image shows a Facebook event page for 'STOP ISLAMIZATION OF TEXAS' on May 21, 2016 at 12:00 P.M. The event is public and hosted by Heart of Texas. The main graphic features a photograph of the Islamic Da'wah Center with a red 'X' over a green flag with a white crescent and star. The text 'STOP ISLAMIZATION OF TEXAS' is prominently displayed in a red banner. Below the main image, there is a date and time indicator 'MAY 21 Stop Islamization of Texas'. The event details at the bottom include 'Public · Causes · Hosted by Heart of Texas', buttons for '★ Interested', '+ Going', and 'Invite ...', and the date 'Saturday, May 21 at 12 PM'. There is also a 'GUESTS' button.



# 3. GEORGIA: Manipulating Democracy

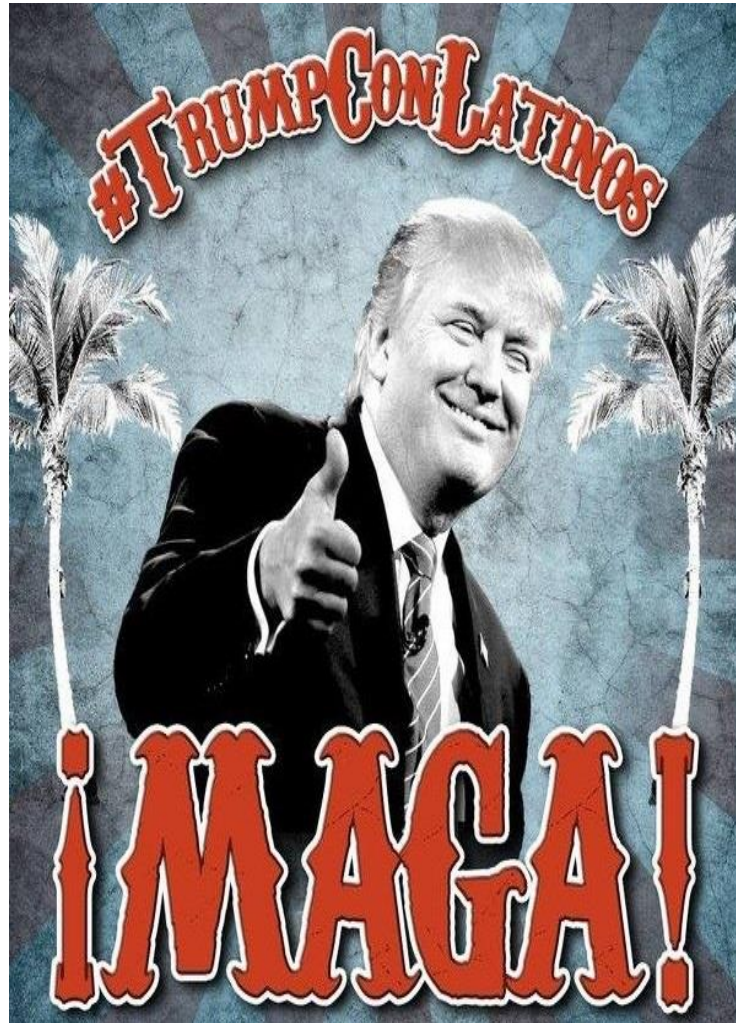
Pro-Stacey Abrams



Anti-Stacey Abrams



# 4. MIAMI: Racial & Ethnic Division



Sick of the media's lies?  
**JOIN US THIS SUNDAY!**

September 11th at 1PM  
in front of UNIVISION STUDIOS  
9405 NW 41st Street  
MIAMI, FL 33178

Presented by a coalition of hispanic organizations united together in love for America and support of Donald Trump for President:

Cubans 4 Trump  
Hispanas For Trump  
Latinos With Trump  
Latinas For Trump  
Miami Trump Volunteers

FREE TRUMP YARD SIGNS AND GEAR!  
*(while supplies last)*

**DON'T MISS OUT!**

*There will be media & security by law enforcement*  
Sign up for updates at:  
[WWW.LATINOSWITHTRUMP.ORG](http://WWW.LATINOSWITHTRUMP.ORG)

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: @LatinosTrumpUSA  
Join the movement on Facebook: @MiamiTrump  
@LatinasForTrump @Cubans4Trump

- **Takes shot at the Press**
- **Stirs-up Latin Americans**
- **Dishonest**
- **Seeks Facebook, Twitter followers**



# 5. NORTH DAKOTA: Discouraging Turnout

**Hunter Alerts**  
Sponsored **Paid for by North Dakota Democratic-NPL**

ATTENTION HUNTERS: If you vote in North Dakota, you may forfeit hunting licenses you have in other states. If you want to keep your out-of-state hunting licenses, you may not want to vote in North Dakota. Learn more: [bit.ly/2OlybPM](https://bit.ly/2OlybPM)

**HUNTER ALERT**

**ATTENTION HUNTERS:**  
VOTING IN **NORTH DAKOTA** COULD COST YOU  
YOUR OUT-OF-STATE HUNTING LICENSES

## Misinformation Discouraging Turnout

- **False Claims about Hunting License Forfeiture**



# In General: Russia Targets Social Issues



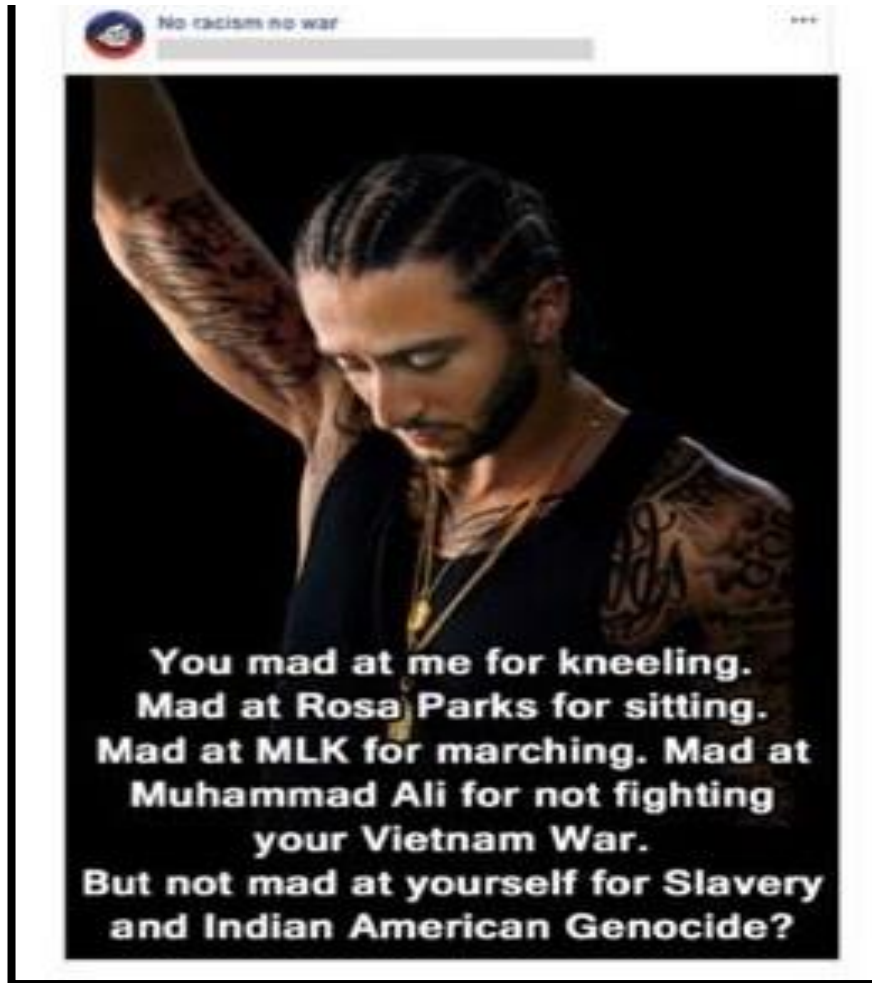
- **Social Justice**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Heritage**
- **Oppression**

*Goal: To amplify most extreme & corrosive voices within the debates*

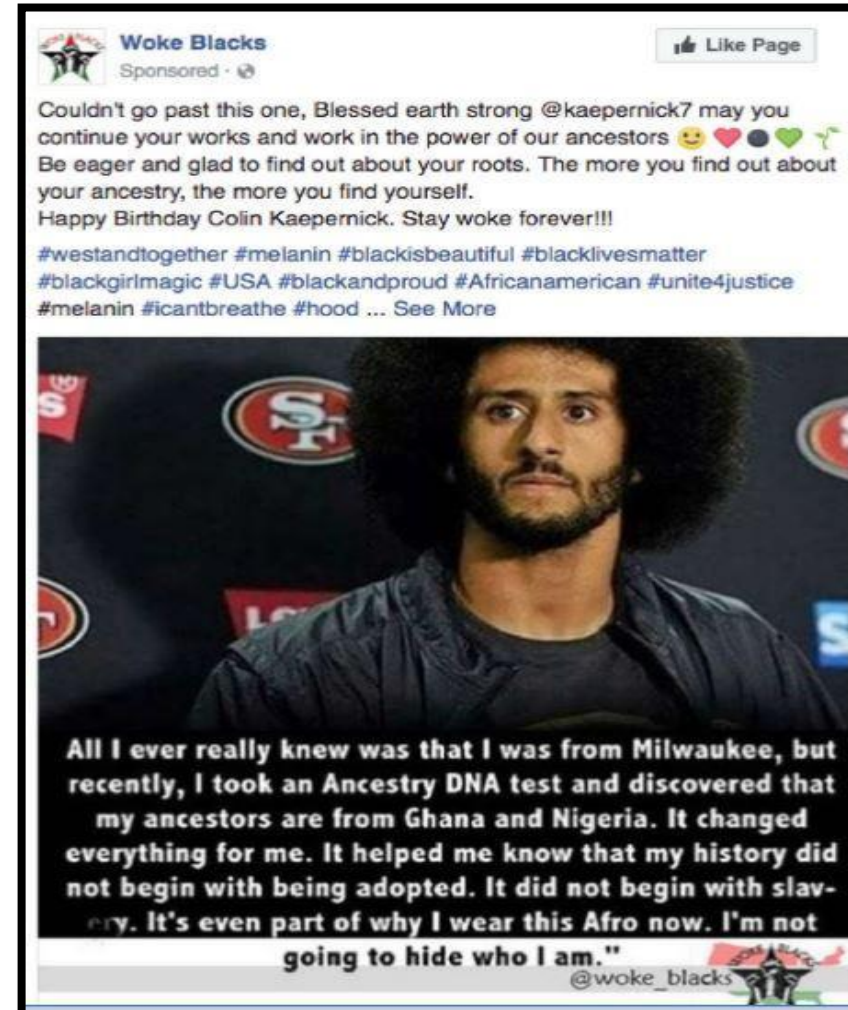


# Social Justice

**Aggressive – “Slavery . . . Indian American Genocide”**



**Passive – “Power of ancestors”**



# Sexual Orientation

## Pro-LGBTQ

 **LGBT United** shared their event.  
Sponsored · 

Westboro baptist church is planning to stand against tolerance in education system near LG



**GOD H8S BIGOTS**  
**BIGOTS**  
MOURN FOR YOUR SINS  
ANTI-WBC RALLY  
MAY 25, LAWRENCE, KS



**MAY 25** **Westboro Baptist Church counter protest**  
Wed 5:30 PM CDT · 1901 Louisiana St, Lawrenc...  
224 people interested · 51 people going

★ Interested


167 Reactions · 21 Comments

Like Comment

## Anti-LGBTQ

 **Heart of Texas** shared their event.  
Sponsored · 

Fellow Texans! It's time to say a strong NO to the establishment robbers. It is unacceptable for us to see them ruin all we've been building for decades. For centuries. The establishment thinks they can treat us like stupid sheep but they are wrong. We won't put up with this anymore. The corrupt media does not talk about the crimes committed by Killary Rotten Clinton, neither does it mention the leaked emails but it would rather keep on kicking around some outdated tapes feat... [See More](#)



**GET READY TO SECEDE!**

**NOV 5** **Get Ready to Secede!**  
Sat 1 PM CDT · Texas  
516 people interested · 96 people going

★ Interested

1.9K Reactions · 143 Comments

Like Comment





# Heritage

Heritage, not hate. The South will rise again!



South United  
Community

137,138 people like this.

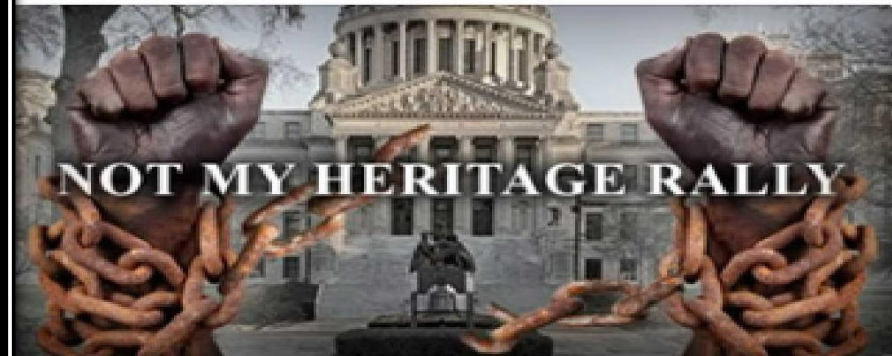
Like Page



**Black Matters** shared their event.

Sponsored · 🌐

We don't want to honor racism, slavery and hatred. This is what Confederate Heritage is.



SAT, MAR 26, 2016

**Not My Heritage Rally**

398 Mississippi st, Jackson, Missi...

353 people interested · 161 going

INTERESTED

👍❤️ 349

114 Comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment



# Oppression

 **BM**  
Sponsored · 

Like Page


Two Black brothers were handcuffed by Colorado Springs police in a traffic stop for 'driving while Black'.




**COLORADO SPRINGS COPS APPREHEND TWO MEN FOR 'DRIVING WHILE BLACK'**

Colorado Springs Police Handcuff Two Black Brothers For No Given Reason | BM

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



# What We've Learned

**Targets:** Social Media of Millions of Americans Starting 2013

**Platforms:** Facebook, Twitter, **Instagram**, Reddit, Tumblr, YouTube, Vine, Google+, Pinterest

**Main Actor:** Internet Research Agency (IRA) – Russian Agents Acted to Erode Trust

**Finances:** Russian IRA had \$Million/Month for Cyber & Disinformation Activities Targeted Inside the US

**Key Summary by U.S. Dept of Homeland Security & Dept of Justice:**  
**No Ballots Changed & No Material Impact on Elections**



# Former Soviet Dictator Joseph Stalin

"It's not who votes that counts.  
It's who counts the votes."



**Today, It's Who  
Reports the Votes!**

*What if a news  
outlet is hacked?*

*Can we trust the  
reported outcome?*



# So, What Can You Do?

3. **Correct**

2. **Detect**

1. **Protect**



# First: Protect

**You're the Target; Be Proactive!**

**Question Validity**

**Verify: Fact Check, Use Reputable Sources\*** (See next page)

**Report: "See Something - Say Something"**

**Protect Yourself:**

**Use 2-Factor Authentication & Complex Passwords**

**Use Different Passwords for Accounts**

**Intellectual Property (trade secrets, formulas, MLB lists, designs)**

**Limit Risk**

**Don't fall for phishing! Think Before You Click or Share.**

**Beware of website impersonations. Secure Links/Sources Only!**

**Don't use "found" flash/thumb drives, CDs, Devices (Stuxnet)**

## Think Before You Link



# Fact-Check

- **Opensecrets.org** – Shows who receives \$ from Russia
- **Realorfake.org** – Exposes fake news sites
- **Politifact.com** – Fact checks US politics
- **Factcheck.org** – Holds politicians accountable
- **Stopfake.org** – Fact-check by Ukrainian profs & students
- **Polygraph.info** – Fact check by Radio Free Europe, VOA
- **Sunlightfoundation.com** – Nonprofit newsroom
- **Propublica.org** – Nonprofit newsroom
- **Bellingcat.org** – Distributed, collaborative investigating
- **WhatsApp** – New tip line for misinformation (India)



# Second: Detect

- **Phishing & website impersonation**
- **Unauthorized access**
- **Any suspicious activity** (e.g. found flash drive) **or alerts**
- **Ransomware – locks all data, pay \$ to regain access**
  - *E.g.* North Korea ransom in crypto \$ to avoid sanctions



From: [onlinebanking@ealerts.bankofamerica.com](mailto:onlinebanking@ealerts.bankofamerica.com)  
Subject: Bank Of America Alert : Account Suspended  
Date: Tue, 26 Apr 2011 05:41:38 +0200





# Anyone Can Be Hacked

Politics

## Joe Manchin's social media accounts hacked, the senator's office says

By Sean Sullivan

November 1, 2018 at 6:51 PM



Source: Washington Post

← WV Senate Campaign, national news

Instagram  
To me [See Details](#)

Your Instagram password has been changed



Hi ,

The email on your Instagram account was changed from \_\_\_\_\_ at 23:52 (PDT) on Tuesday, October 23 2018.

Your new email is [valkanovf@mail.ru](mailto:valkanovf@mail.ru). If you didn't change your email address, revert this change.

We noticed a login from a new device.



MI 5s · Instagram app · Moscow, Russia  
October 23 at 11:52 PM (PDT)

→ WV Government Official



# **Third: Correct Immediately**



***IF YOU BECOME A VICTIM  
OF A CYBER HACK OR COMPROMISE:***

- **Take Screen Shots if Possible; Shut Down/Disconnect to Limit Damage**
- **Change Passwords to All Accounts & Social Media Profiles**
- **Report to Internet/Social Media Providers**
- **If Asked for Ransom, Report to Police**
- **Seek Professional Tech Support**



# Conclusion

*For Just 20% of LeBron James' Salary, Russians Were Able to Cause All This*

## Takeaways:

- 1. Stay Alert:** being conscious & aware protects against false information
- 2. Minds, Not Machines:** Russia is attacking our minds, not voting machines
- 3. We're in a Race with No Finish Line:** must stay ahead of bad guys
- 4. It Starts With You:** educating new voters protects our democracy

**Be Smart. Think Before You Share!**



# Test: Which Post is Real?



Resisters

Like This Page · June 7 ·

Girls make rules and you follow them. If you don't like them you live. End of the story.



27

8 Shares

## Feminism Issues



Feminist News

August 14 at 8:26 PM ·



"my boyfriend thinks i should.."  
"my boyfriend doesn't like it when i.."  
"my boyfriend doesn't want me to speak to.."



8.4K

341 Comments 5.8K Shares



# Test: Which Post is Real?

**Resisters**  
Like This Page · June 7 ·

Girls make rules and you follow them. If you don't like them you live. End of the story.



27

8 Shares

## Feminism Issues

**Goal:** Inflame dialogue between supporters and opponents of Feminism. Used to generate activity: likes, shares, comments.

**Impact:** Used this interaction to organize counter-protests

**Feminist News**  
August 14 at 8:26 PM ·



"my boyfriend thinks i should.."  
"my boyfriend doesn't like it when i.."  
"my boyfriend doesn't want me to speak to.."



8.4K

341 Comments 5.8K Shares



# Test: Which Post is Real?

**Be** Black Excellence  
February 19, 2017 · 🌐

Making America Great PERIOD. #BlackExcellence #BlackEntrepreneurship

"TEACH OUR YOUTH HOW TO BE GOOD BUSINESSMEN"



"NOT GOOD EMPLOYEES"

👍❤️ 15

17 Shares

## Race Issues



**Black Elevation**

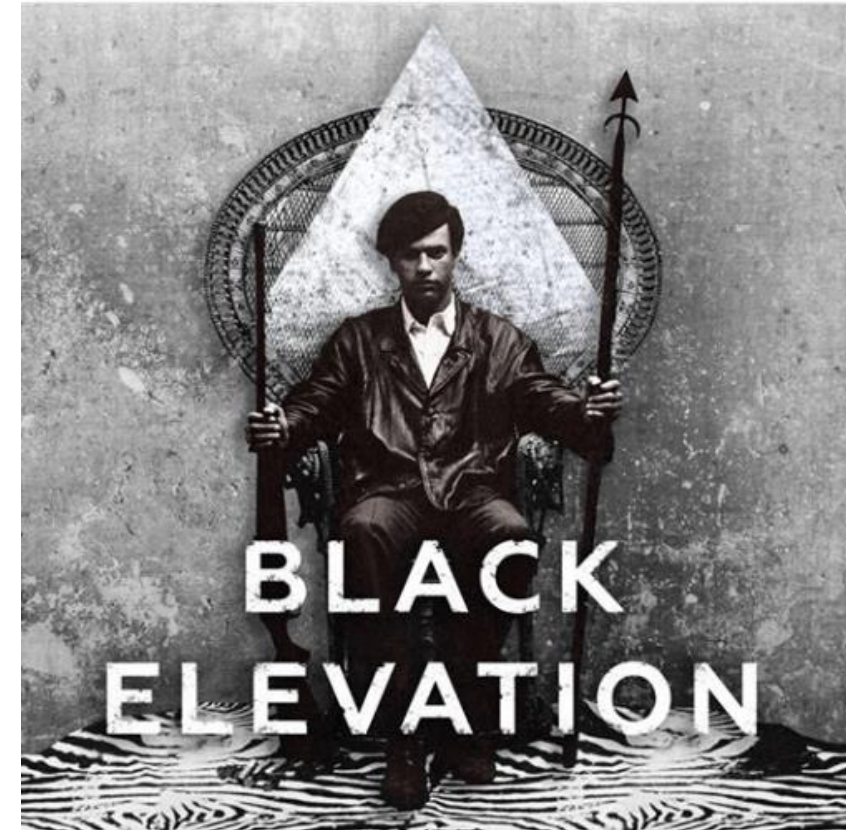
Sponsored · 🌐

Join Black Elevation team, we're hiring!

POSITION: Event Coordinator (Part-time)

Salary is paid equally in 2 parts: one before the event, and one after. The ...

[See More](#)




👍❤️👍 1.2K

50 Comments 291 Shares



# Test: Which Post is Real?

 Black Excellence  
February 19, 2017 · 🌐

Making America Great PERIOD. #BlackExcellence #BlackEntrepreneurship

"TEACH OUR YOUTH HOW TO BE GOOD BUSINESSMEN"



"NOT GOOD EMPLOYEES"

👍❤️ 15

17 Shares

## Race Issues

**Goal:** Aggravate racial tensions

**Impact:** Created events in several cities and organized with real American activists

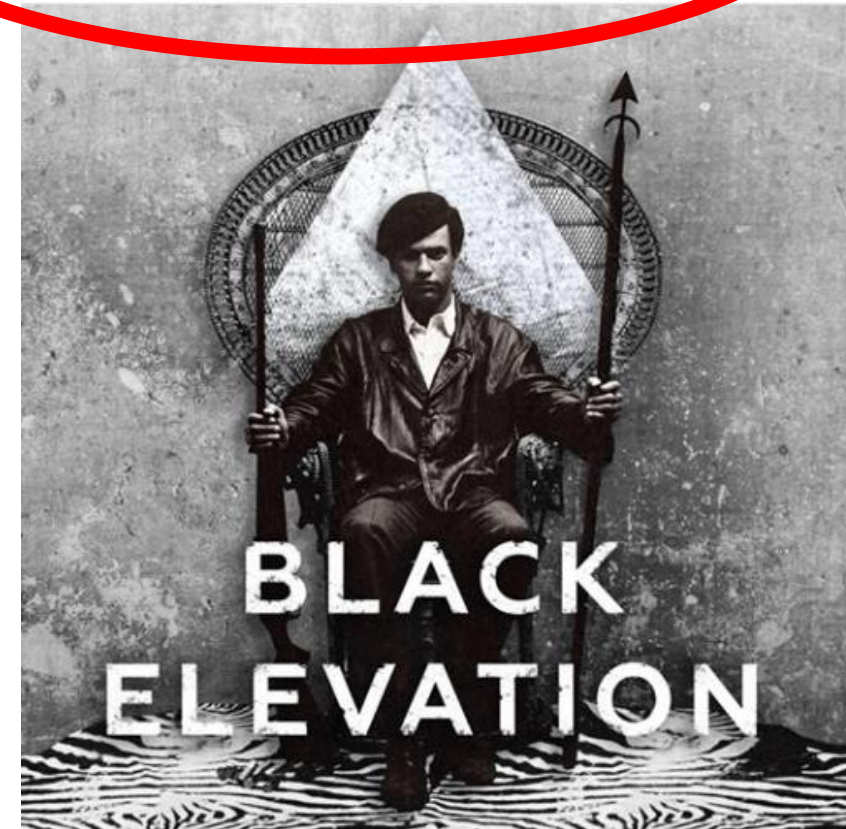
 Black Elevation  
Sponsored · 🌐

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[See More](#)



👍❤️👎 1.2K

50 Comments 291 Shares

# Note of Caution

## Misinformation Doesn't Just Come from Russia

**It can be ½ truths**

**Selective truths with intent to mislead**

**Bot-generated perpetuation and sharing of fake posts**

**AI – Artificial Intelligence, without human dimension / context**

**Notre Dame Fire does not appear to be a terrorist act,  
but YouTube AI initially indicated that it was...**






# The Technology 202: Notre Dame cathedral fire reveals tech companies' struggle to combat misinformation



**YouTube's defenses against misinformation just backfired in a big way -- and ended up contributing to baseless speculation online that the Notre Dame cathedral fire resulted from a terrorist attack.**

35m

France: **Muslim** girl "in search of love" plotted to blow up car packed with gas canisters near **Notre Dame** cathedral



France: **Muslim** girl "in search of love" plotted to blow up car packed ... It would be "Islamophobic" not to admire Ines Madani's wild romantic heart. After all, what says "love" more than blood spattered everywhere and

jihadwatch.org

11m

I'll bet a **Muslim** set **Notre Dame** on fire #**NotreDame**

Breaking News Feed @pzf  
BREAKING NEWS: Huge fire reported at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.



3 2 8

14m

Replying to [redacted]

And **Muslims** just burned down **Notre-Dame** cathedral.

2

**Muslims** are setting historic Catholic Churches on fire all across France.

Most recently, **Notre Dame** Cathedral.

Where are the crusaders when you need them?



at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.



# Fake News, Ads, Search Results

Search Engine **Ads** are being intentionally confused with **Results** *(See Expedia example to the right)*

**2016: College student died of cancer due to misleading info about treatment options by unlicensed providers using China's #1 research engine, Baidu (China's "Google")**

**Baidu prioritized advertising over organic medical-related searches on its mobile app; putting \$ ahead of competent advice.**

**Baidu also gave priority to 3d-party vendor (paid advertiser) for visa applications rather than less expensive/real government office.**

← → ↻ 🔒 https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1WPZB\_enUS843US843&ei=gSO2XLi2MJGw5wLwn6XYBw&q=airline+tickets&toq=airline

Google  🔍

All Flights Shopping News Images More Settings Tools

About 449,000,000 results (0.68 seconds)

Expedia - Cheap Plane Tickets | Fly At Incredible Prices | expedia.com  
Ad www.expedia.com/ Rating for expedia.com: 4.3 - 183,807 reviews  
Plan The Ultimate Trip. Fantastic Flight + Hotel Deals Are Waiting Just For You. Book A Package & Save BIG. Instant Confirmation. 24/7 Customer Support. Unrivaled Inventory. Secure Payments. Secure Booking. 1,000,000+ Flight Choices. More Flights; Low Prices. Honest Price. Compare & Save.

Travelocity® Official Website | Find Amazing Deals on Flights  
Ad www.travelocity.com/ With 400 Airlines in Our Inventory, We'll Help You See The World. 5 Miles Earned/\$1 Spent. Price Match. Free Cancellation. Get Inspired. 24/7 Customer Service. Highlights: 24/7 Social Support Available, Real-Time Trip Updates.  
Flights Under \$199 · Today's Flight Deals · Vacation Packages · Travelocity's Mobile App

Cheap Airlines Tickets | Our Best Price Guarantee | CheapOair.com  
Ad www.cheapoair.com/ (844) 722-6311  
Our Low Cost Flight Deals on Airline Tickets. Pay Less & Save More. Book Today!

KAYAK® Flight Deals | Easily Compare Airline Tickets | kayak.com  
Ad www.kayak.com/ Compare 100s of Airlines & Find the Best Flight Deals. Search One and Done! Compare 100s of sites.

Flights from Charleston, WV (CRW) Sponsored  
www.google.com/flights  
Charleston, WV (CRW) Enter a destination  
Washington, D.C., DC \$265 Atlanta, GA \$351 May 2 - 6  
Search flights

Cheap Flights: Airline Tickets, Airfare Deals & One Way Flights | Expedia  
https://www.expedia.com/Flights  
Expedia makes finding cheap flights easy. Select from thousands of flights, airline tickets, and airfare





*For more information, contact*

**WV Secretary of State Office**

**304 558-6000**



*Office of the West Virginia Secretary of State*  
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*Olivia Canoy*

*Jacob Coots*

*Amanda Davis*

*Ian Kilwein*

*Fairmont State University*

*Potomac State University*

*West Virginia University*

*West Virginia University*

*West Virginia University*

*Jarred Cannon*

*Nathan Burdette*

*Isaac Tincher*

*Kendra Amick*

*Gavin Nichols*

*Jessica Dobrinksy*

*West Virginia University*

*West Virginia University*

*Marshall University*

*Marshall University*

*WV State University*

*West Virginia University*