



# Attacking Online Misinformation

Craig Silverman

Media Editor, BuzzFeed News | @CraigSilverman

Let's talk about the problem.

1. It comes in many forms,  
with many motivations.



**SATIRE OR PARODY**

No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool



**MISLEADING CONTENT**

Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual



**IMPOSTER CONTENT**

When genuine sources are impersonated



**FABRICATED CONTENT**

New content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm



**FALSE CONNECTION**

When headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content



**FALSE CONTEXT**

When genuine content is shared with false contextual information



**MANIPULATED CONTENT**

When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive



**Jason Otts**  
19 hours ago via mobile  
near Murphy, TX

This is an amazing shot of New York today with the Frankenstorm bearing down. Nature is so powerful, yet so beautiful.

Share

39 people like this.

296,339 shares

View all 8 comments



**Lisa Harvell** Wow!  
11 hours ago · 3



**Lisa J Rositas Zemanski** Andrew, It does. Scary  
6 hours ago · 5



**Jason Otts** Ok... apparently this pic has gone viral from my wall with 99,989 shares. In the last 15 minutes I have had like 200 people add me as a friend because of this pic. So I called the person who texted it to me and she then called her friend who sent it to her and is in New York. He told her that it was fake. So now I have 200 friends who like a photo that is fake on my wall. Funny, but awkward....  
23 minutes ago · Edited · 16





**Mike Cernovich**   
@Cernovich



 Follow

"I'm dreaming about your hotdog stand in Hawaii..."

This is code for something.

Sex trafficking?

[wikileaks.org/podesta-emails ...](http://wikileaks.org/podesta-emails...)



RETWEETS  
**1,760**

LIKES  
**1,665**



**Jared Wyand**   
@JaredWyand



 Follow

Search all Podesta emails for these keywords.  
We are uncovering a child sex ring.

**#PodestaEmails28**

"hotdog" = boy

"pizza" = girl

"cheese" = little girl

"pasta" = little boy

"ice cream" = male prostitute

"walnut" or nuts = person of colour

"map" = semen

"sauce" = orgy

RETWEETS  
**2,970**

LIKES  
**2,260**



5:08 PM - 3 Nov 2016

**2. It's global.**

# **Hyperpartisan Sites And Facebook Pages Are Publishing False Stories And Conspiracy Theories About Angela Merkel**

Top-performing Merkel stories in both English and German are dominated by a string of highly critical, and often misleading, articles and headlines from websites that consistently publish fake news and conspiracy theories.



## **Hyperpartisan Sites And Facebook Pages Are Publishing False Stories And Conspiracy Theories About Angela Merkel**

Top-performing Merkel stories in both English and German are dominated by a string of highly critical, and often misleading, articles and headlines from websites that consistently publish fake news and conspiracy theories.

## **This Unemployed Guy Made Japanese Fake News And Ended Up Losing A Bunch Of Money**

“I’m really sorry, this whole thing got out of hand,” the Japanese man told BuzzFeed News.

posted on Feb. 8, 2017, at 5:16 p.m.

## **Hyperpartisan Sites And Facebook Pages Are Publishing False Stories And Conspiracy Theories About Angela Merkel**

Top-performing Merkel stories in both English and German are dominated by a string of highly critical, and often misleading, articles and headlines from websites that consistently publish fake news and conspiracy theories.

## **This Unemployed Guy Made Japanese Fake News And Ended Up Losing A Bunch Of Money**

"I'm really sorry, this whole thing got out of hand," the Japanese man told BuzzFeed News.

posted on Feb. 8, 2017, at 5:16 p.m.

## **Italy's Most Popular Political Party Is Leading Europe In Fake News And Kremlin Propaganda**

The Five Star Movement controls a network of official sites and supposedly independent news outlets that spread misinformation across the internet.

posted on Nov. 29, 2016, at 9:46 a.m.

# Internet Trolls Are Using Facebook To Target Myanmar's Muslims

Some Burmese government officials and extremist groups are using fabricated news to advance their political goals and downplay harassment of Muslims.

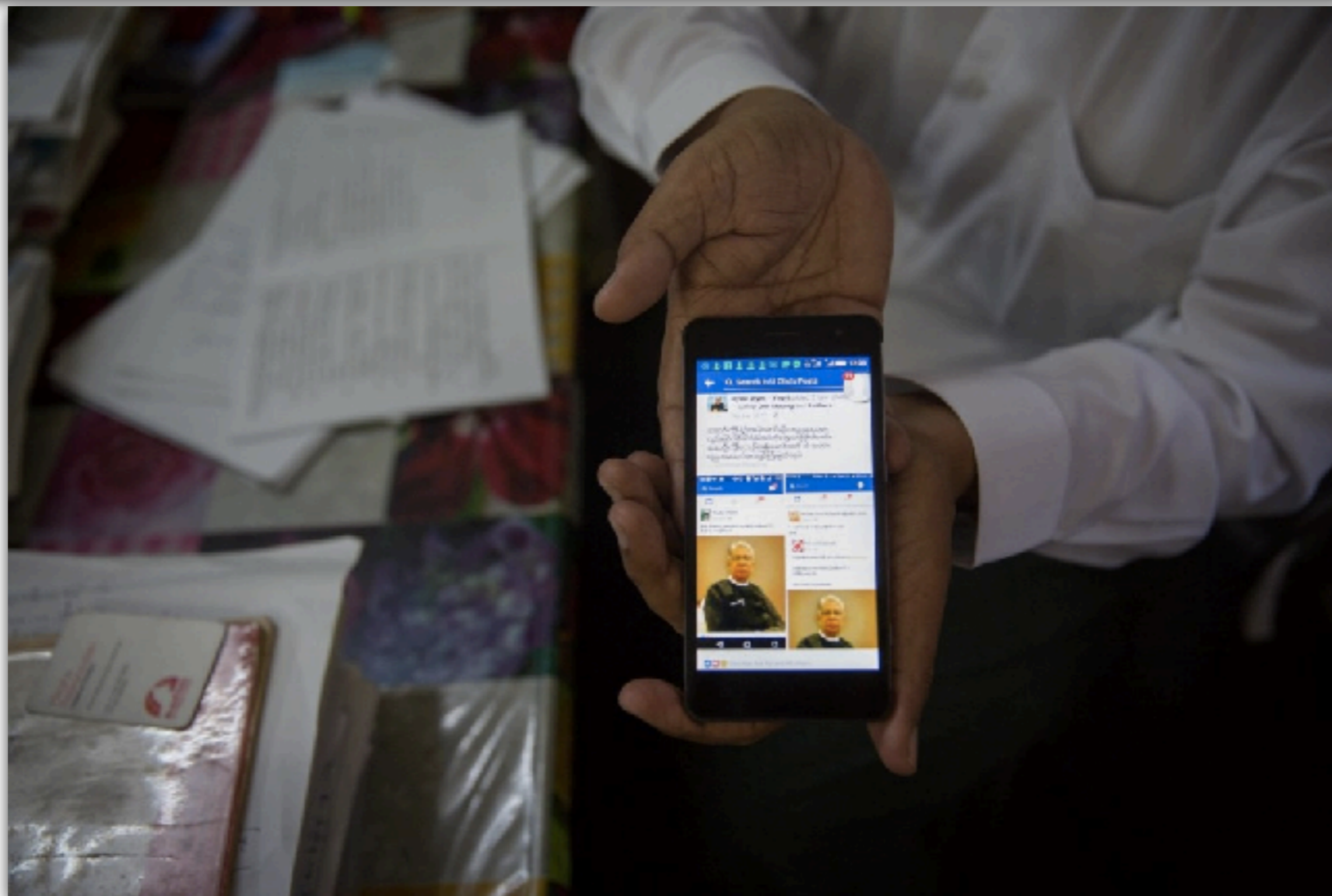
posted on Mar. 18, 2017, at 10:06 am




**Megha Rajagopalan**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter



Reporting From  
Yangon, Myanmar



3. It feeds off polarization and human bias.



“You realize that people believe a lot of things online. So we use that to our advantage.”

# Pew study: Partisan divide widest in 25 years

By NOLAN D. MCCASKILL | 06/22/16 12:00 PM EDT

## Most find little common ground with those they disagree with politically

% who say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally ...

	Stressful and frustrating	Interesting and informative
Total	46	51
Republican	50	48
Democrat	46	52

% who say that when talking about politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have \_\_\_ politically than they thought

	Less in common	More in common
Total	61	36
Republican	65	33
Democrat	63	34

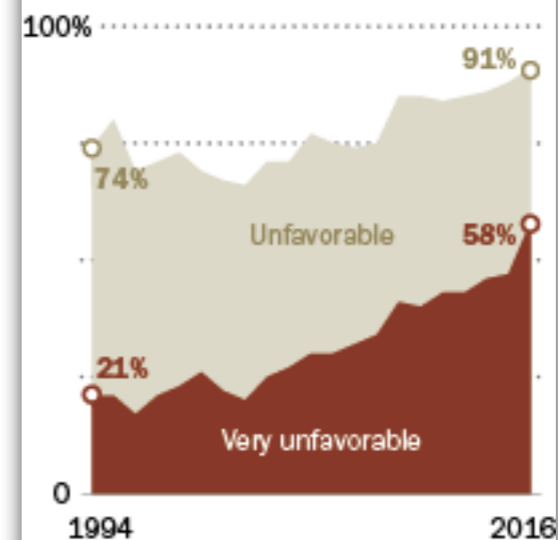
Note: Don't know/No answer not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 2-28 and April 5-May 2, 2016.

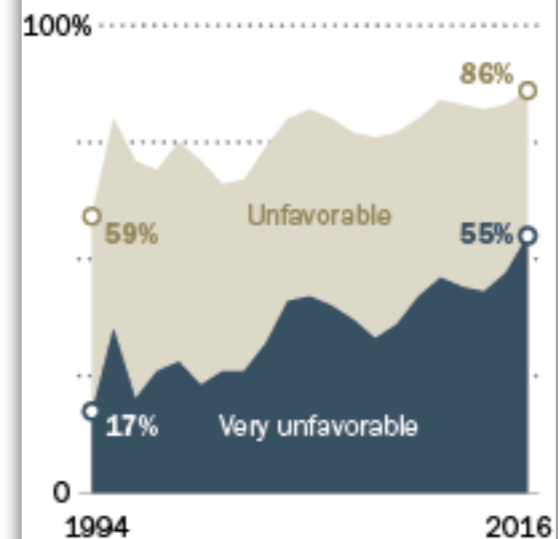
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Rising partisan antipathy

### Republican attitudes about the Democratic Party

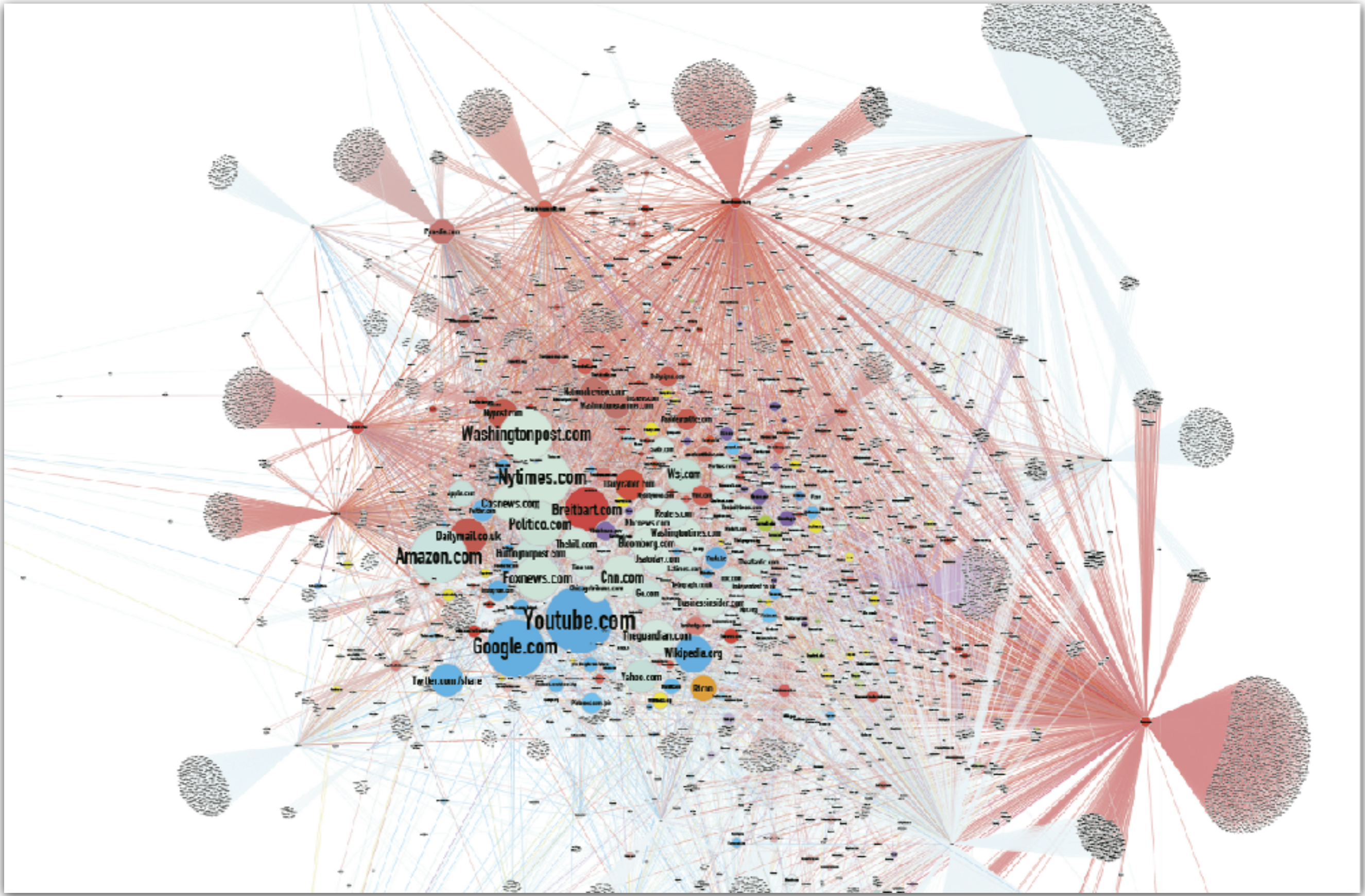


### Democratic attitudes about the Republican Party



Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



4. It exploits networks and algorithmic filtering.

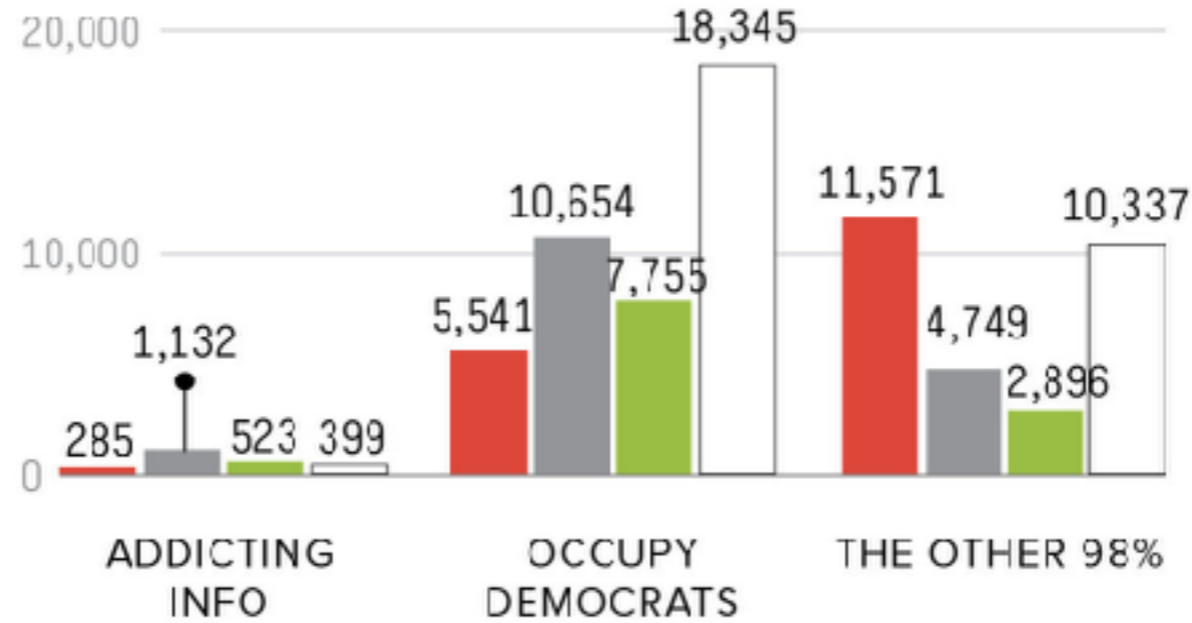


# Engagement by Truthfulness

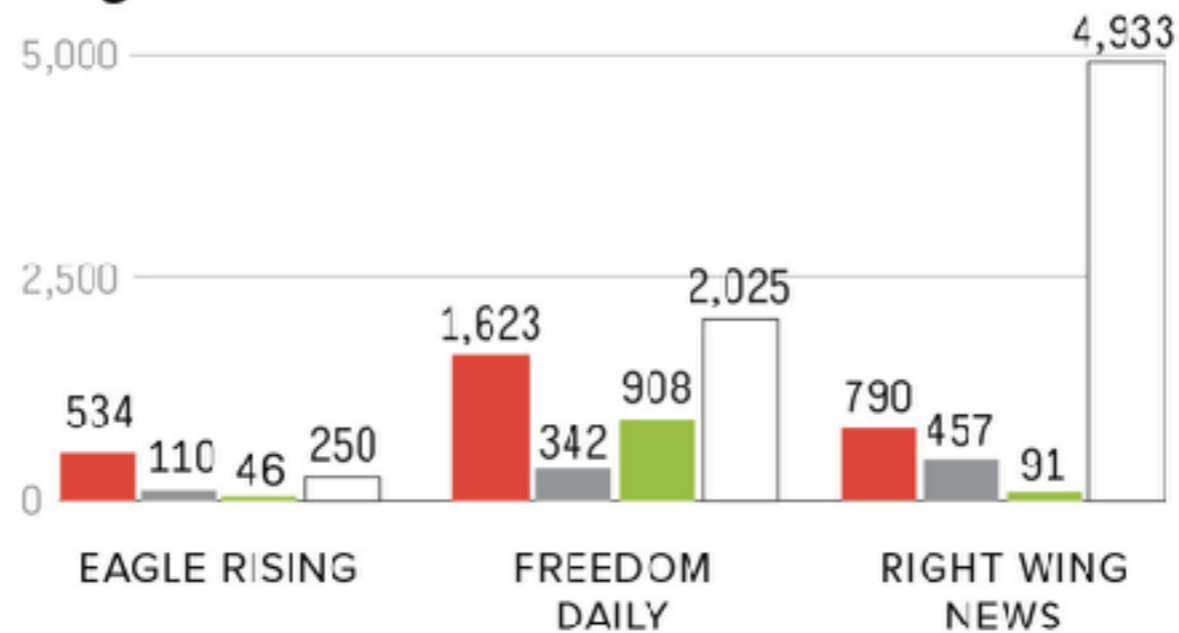
BY MEDIAN SHARES PER POST

■ MOSTLY FALSE ■ MIX. OF TRUE AND FALSE ■ MOSTLY TRUE  
□ NO FACTUAL CONTENT

## Left



## Right





**Steve Bryant**  
@stevebryant

 Follow



Whoever has the most people, and activates them the most effectively, determines what truth is

**Tizzy Canucci** @TizzyCanucci

@jdlasica and already the fake newssers are calling Snopes fake news.

9:17 PM - 26 Dec 2016

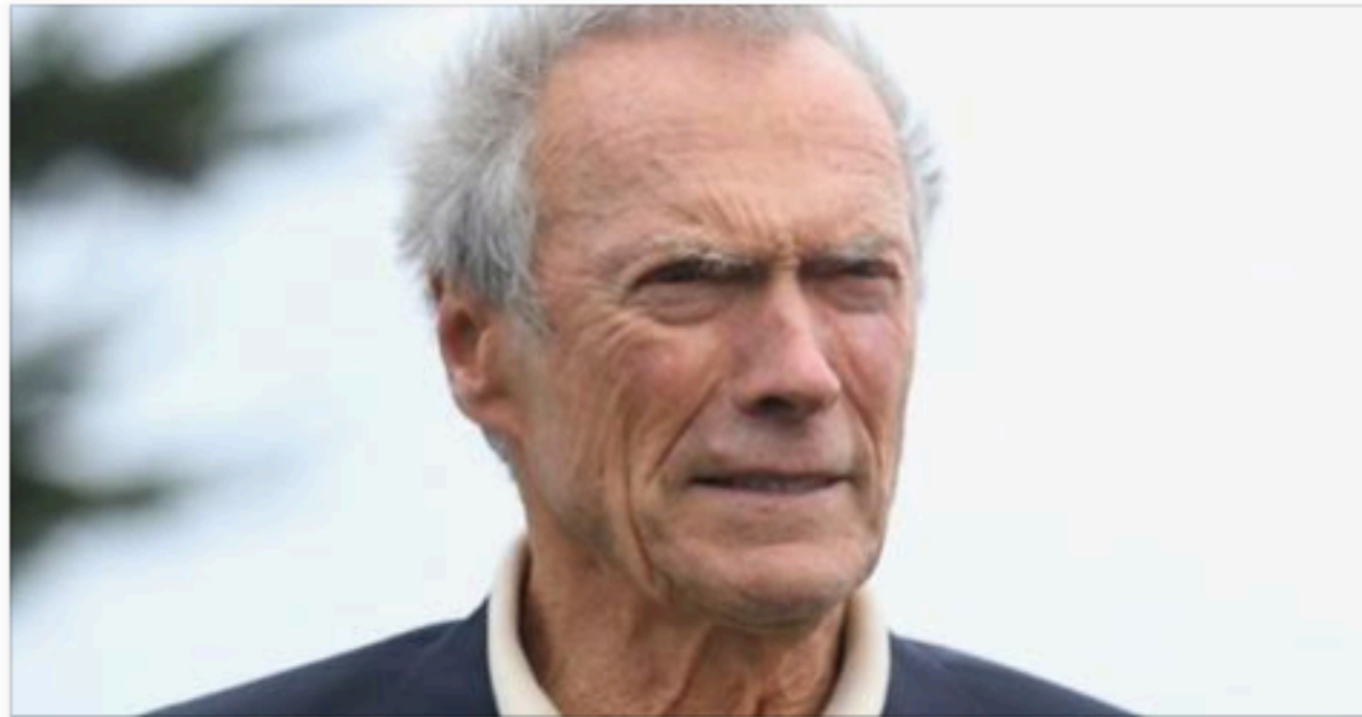
**5. It's a profitable international business.**



American President Donald J. Trump

16 hrs · 🌐

Clint Eastwood says: "All American liberals are the idiots and enemies of America" Do you support Clint?



**Clint Eastwood says: "All American liberals are the idiots and enemies of America" Do you support Clint? - True Trumpers**

TRUETRUMPERS.COM

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share    </> Embed     ▾

   2K

Top Comments ▾

607 shares

222 Comments

# True Trumppers

**BREAKING NEWS**

Loud-Mouth Liberal Ashley Judd Wants To Live In Middle East Where Women Have "More Rights," Gets Unexpected Surprise! (VIDEO) ||

Home / News / Clint Eastwood says: "All American liberals are the Idiots and enemies of America" Do you support Clint?

## CLINT EASTWOOD SAYS: "ALL AMERICAN LIBERALS ARE THE IDIOTS AND ENEMIES OF AMERICA" DO YOU SUPPORT CLINT?

17 hours ago News, Polls, Uncategorized, USA

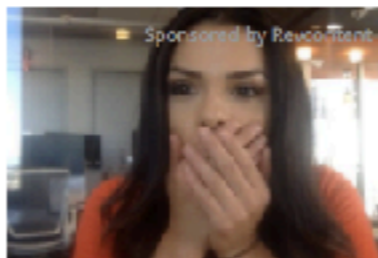
YES NO



If You Own A Home You Are Entitled To \$4,240



Homeowners Register to Receive \$4,240 Before It Ends



Stop Googling Names! Try This Uncensored Search Instead



How Brands Can Leverage Influencer Marketing



Megyn Kelly Accuses Ex Of Cheating On Her While On Air



Sasha Obama's Net Worth is Going to Make Heads Spin



**TEXT**

Sponsored by RevContent



Type in Your Name (or Anyone's), This Site is Addicting



If You're a Homeowner, Get a Free \$4,250 from Congress



# True Trumppers

**BREAKING NEWS**

Loud-Mouth Liberal Ashley Judd Wants To Live In Middle East Where Women Have 'More Rights,' Gets Unexpected Surprise! (VIDEO) ||

Home / News / Clint Eastwood says: "All American liberals are the Idiots and enemies of America" Do you support Clint?

## CLINT EASTWOOD SAYS: "ALL AMERICAN LIBERALS ARE THE IDIOTS AND ENEMIES OF AMERICA" DO YOU SUPPORT CLINT?

17 hours ago News, Polls, Uncategorized, USA

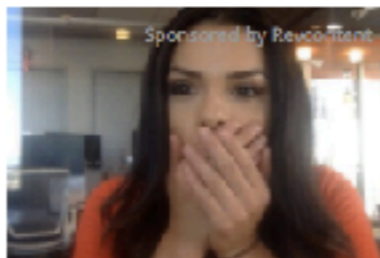
YES NO



If You Own A Home You Are Entitled To \$4,240



Homeowners Register to Receive \$4,240 Before It Ends



Stop Googling Names! Try This Uncensored Search Instead



How Brands Can Leverage Influencer Marketing



Megyn Kelly Accuses Ex Of Cheating On Her While On Air



Sasha Obama's Net Worth is Going to Make Heads Spin



TEXT

Sponsored by RewContent



Type in Your Name (or Anyone's), This Site is Addicting



If You're a Homeowner, Get a Free \$4,250 from Congress

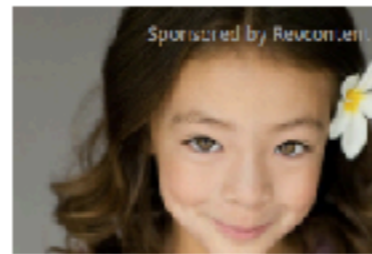




Homeowners Register to Receive \$4,240 Before It Ends



Goldman Sachs & World Bank Confirm: Us Dollar Will Be Worthless in 100 Days



Top 16 Richest Kids in the World



Revcontent on the Key to Great Mobile UX - Continual Optimization



15 Former Celebrities That Now Have Normal Jobs



Megyn Kelly Accuses Ex Of Cheating On Her While On Air



Teen Goes Missing In Aruba: Years Later Police Uncover the Truth



Sasha Obama's Net Worth Is Disgusting



Top 24 Amazing Products You Can Only Buy In Japan



25 Of The Most Expensive Celebrity Plastic Surgeries



You'll Never Guess Which Celebs Broke the Bank for Plastic Surgery

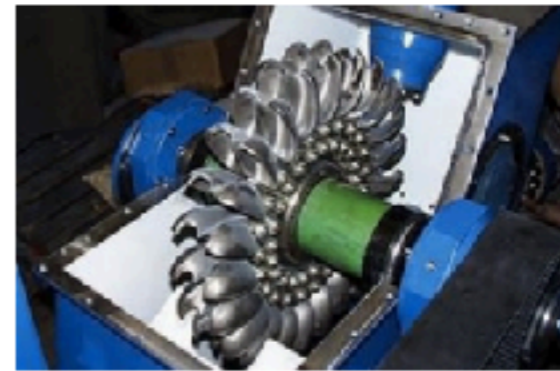


Trump: Federal Program Pays off Your Mortgage

## AMERICAN PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP



### REVCONTENT



You'll Never Think About Solar Panels Again After Seeing This (Watch)



Sasha Obama's Net Worth Is Disgusting



Teen Goes Missing in Aruba: 10 Years Later Police Uncover the Truth

Search ...  
Search

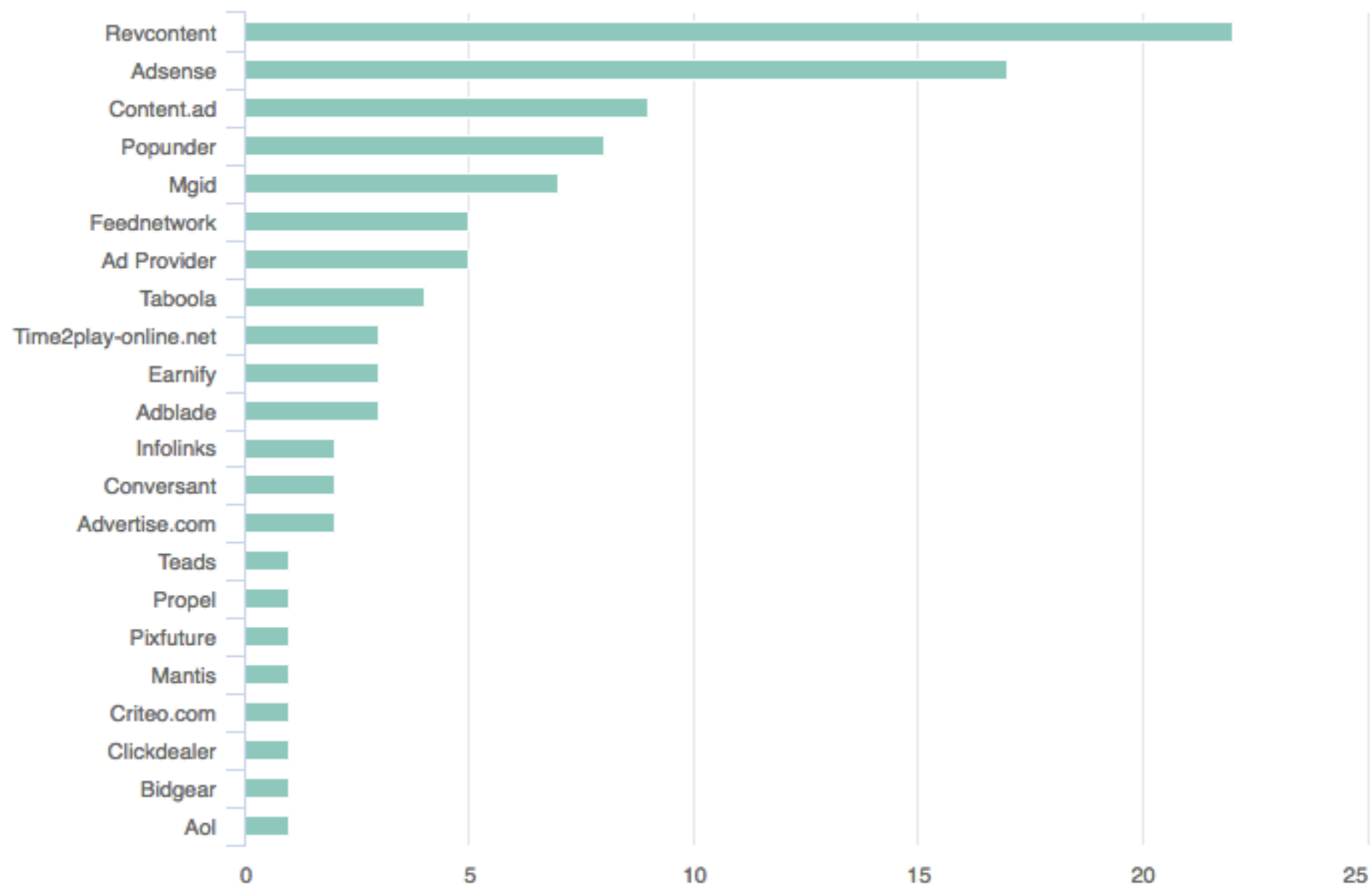
### RECENT POSTS

# In Spite Of The Crackdown, Fake News Publishers Are Still Earning Money From Major Ad Networks

“As long as the traffic is real and the ads are being served to real people,” ad networks will accept fake news sites, according to one publisher.

Posted on April 4, 2017, at 9:05 a.m.

By [Craig Silverman](#) (BuzzFeed News Media Editor), [Jeremy Singer-Vine](#) (BuzzFeed News Reporter), [Lam Thuy Vo](#) (BuzzFeed Open Lab Fellow)





6. Many people don't want your debunkings.



**Craig Silverman** ✓

@CraigSilverman

That Facebook post showing Donald Trump and Jesus in an intense embrace is likely \*not\* from the real Tiffany Trump:

Dear Lord, I pray in the Mighty name of Jesus, that you would give Donald J Trump wisdom and that you would protect him and fill him with Your Spirit and help him to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy



**You Should Probably Stop Sharing That Donald Trump And Jesus Post**

The Tiffany Trump page that posted it is almost certainly not real.

[buzzfeed.com](https://www.buzzfeed.com)



**#POTUSTrumpMIA**

@JanJohnsonFL

 Follow



So? Wonder who'd be hugging you... Oh right...  
[#Satan](#)

**Craig Silverman**  @CraigSilverman

That Facebook post showing Donald Trump and Jesus in an intense embrace is likely  
\*not\* from the real Tiffany Trump: [buzzfeed.com/janelytvynenko...](https://buzzfeed.com/janelytvynenko...)

# What's a journalist to do?

- Understand the problem.
- Recognize that we too are affected by the same human behaviors and biases.
- Cover platforms as we cover institutions such as government.
- Raise the verification and algorithmic IQ in your newsroom.
- Experiment with new approaches!

# Decentralized yet connected

WORLD

## Here's How Far-Right Trolls Are Spreading Hoaxes About French Presidential Candidate Emmanuel Macron

"Meme Macron out of existence... We need to stop this creep Macron from cucking up Europe." *WARNING: This post contains graphic images.*

Posted on April 25, 2017, at 6:53 a.m.



**Ryan Broderick**

BuzzFeed News Reporter



Reporting From  
Paris, France

**BuzzFeed** ▾

● craigsilverman **FAKE**

☰ **All Unreads**

🗨 All Threads

★ STARRED

# debunker

# Here's The Misinformation Spreading About The London Attack

Many are posting false or unconfirmed information, including a fake image of the suspect.

posted on Mar. 22, 2017, at 5:03 p.m.



**Jane Lytvynenko**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter



**Jules Darmanin**  
Journaliste chez BuzzFeed News,  
France

## Attention aux fausses informations sur l'attaque de Londres

Plusieurs fausses informations et informations non confirmées circulent après l'attaque près du Parlement britannique, qui a fait au moins 4 morts et 20 blessés.

posté le 22 mars, 2017 à 3:16 p.m.



**Jules Darmanin**  
Journaliste chez BuzzFeed News,  
France

# Constantly monitoring and gathering data

List of Ideological Sites (clean)

1	site	analytics_code	analytics_code_2	adsense_code	adsense_code_2	adsense_code_3	fb_id	country
2	http://21stcenturywine.com/	UA-37745904-1		ca-pub-7045570369318944			182032255155419	
3	http://thefirstrevolution.com/							
4	http://labeljane.com/	UA-9032009-4		UA-9032009-4				
5	http://activepost.com			ca-pub-1997964790848722			128407570639436	
6	http://addictinginfo.org/	UA-28821011-0		ca-pub-216941273941 ca-pub-242412682460		ca-pub-609275930443	146422996338181	
7	http://adweek.com/	UA-4788315-1					833291854	
8	http://adweek.com/			ca-pub-2501531875030911			433443503516761	USA
9	http://alltheleft.com/						11580396597527	
10	http://allthemot.com/	UA-289449-1					17109862506	
11	http://americacable.com/	UA-764967-1					60190486539	
12	http://americacable.com/						30761934424106	
13	http://americaninfo.com/						1794835273435517	
14	http://artsworld.com	UA-372872-10	UA-47029214-1					
15	http://theartofher.com						177486168274	

# Debunking Best Practices

- Debunk the idea, not the person.
- Tell a story.
- Choose the right sources.
- Be positive — reduce repetition.





Official AP Photograph  
<http://nbcnews.to/PDFRxV>

**REAL**



Snopes outed the fake:  
<http://bit.ly/Ru8qL8>  
Original photo:  
<http://bit.ly/Q4ASGq>

**FAKE**



**THANK YOU!**

## 97 out of 100 climate experts agree humans are causing global warming.

Several independent surveys find 97% of climate scientists who are actively publishing peer-reviewed climate research agree that humans are causing global warming.



On top of this overwhelming consensus, National Academies of Science from all over the world also endorse the consensus view of human caused global warming, as expressed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

However, movements that deny a scientific consensus have always sought to cast doubt on the fact that a consensus exists. One technique is the use of fake experts, citing scientists who have little to no expertise in the particular field of science.

For example, the OISM Petition Project claims 31,000 scientists disagree with the scientific consensus on global warming.

However, around 99.9% of the scientists listed in the Petition Project are not climate scientists. The petition is open to anyone with a Bachelor of Science or higher and includes medical doctors, mechanical engineers and computer scientists.

Core fact communicated in headline

Core fact reinforced in opening paragraph, fleshed out with additional details.

Core fact reinforced with infographic

Explicit warning cueing reader that misinformation is coming and indicating the nature of the misinformation.

The myth

The gap created by this debunking is how can there be a consensus if 31,000 scientists dissent? This gap is filled by explaining that almost all the 31,000 scientists are not climate scientists.