

# [***Pro-Trump Twitter Bot Campaign Already Spreading Propaganda About GOP Rivals, Report Says***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PW-12T1-JBCM-F4FK-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 569 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Research by the Israeli tech firm Cyabra found the upcoming election cycle could have the highest levels of misinformation and influence operations in history.

**Body**

**Topline**

A bot campaign on Twitter is praising former President Donald Trump and attacking his opponents using thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of fake accounts set up over the past year, according to new research shared with theAssociated Press an apparent propaganda campaign reminiscent of Russian interference in the 2016 election.

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Former President Donald Trump speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC 2023, Saturday, March 4, 2023, at National Harbor in Oxon Hill, Md. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

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**Key Facts**

The accounts have targeted Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R), who is widely expected to challenge Trump for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination, and former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley (R), who announced her campaign in February, according tofindingsby the Israeli tech research firm Cyabra.

The accounts, set up in April, October and November last year, reportedly also attacked Trump nemesis Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, calling him a traitor.

Cyabra reportedly found the bots were also behind a campaign urging DeSantis to join Trump as his running mate, a move that would remove the Florida governor as Trump s top competitor for the 2024 GOP nomination.

The research showed that many pro-Trump posts came from accounts created on the same day and posted information via new tweets and reshared others by real Twitter users.

It s unclear who is behind the accounts and whether Twitter has made an effort to remove them.

**Forbes** has reached out to Twitter owner Elon Musk and Cyabra, but has not yet received responses.

**Big Number**

5%. That s the share of content in viral Twitter debates that typically comes from bots, while Cyabra reportedly traced nearly 75% of negative content about Haley to fake accounts.

**Crucial Quote**

Cyabra is already seeing signs that the coming US election season will have the highest levels of misinformation and influence operations in history, the firm tweeted.

**Key Background**

While the source of the pro-Trump bot network is unclear, Kremlin-backed social media campaigns have spread misinformation about elections, the Covid-19 vaccine, immigration, race and gun rights, among other topics, for the better part of the last decade. A Senate investigation launched in the wake of the 2016 presidential election found that Russian hackers and trolls, largely affiliated with the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, spread conspiracies and false information that sought to fuel a distrust in democracy and boost Trump s chances of beating Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election. The FBI said Russian meddling continued during the 2020 presidential election with the intention of denigrating President Joe Biden.

**Contra**

Russian meddling on Twitter in the 2016 election did little to sway voters, in part because it mostly appealed to right-wing users who already backed Trump, according toa studyby the New York University Center for Social Media and ***Politics***. The study found 1% of Twitter users accounted for 70% of exposure to the Russian propaganda campaign.

**Further Reading**

FBI Director Warns About Russian Effort To Denigrate Biden (Forbes)

Russia Has Secretly Spent $300 Million To Influence Foreign Elections, U.S. Says(Forbes)

No Hoax : Bipartisan Senate Report Confirms Russian 2016 Role, Putin Ordered DNC Hack, More(Forbes)

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