

GDI

Ad-Funded Disinformation on the Ukraine Conflict

GDI has observed a number of ad tech companies monetising anti-Ukrainian and anti-Democratic disinformation.

This deck includes examples of ad-funded content promoting a range of harmful adversarial narratives:

- **De-nazification:** Ukrainians are “Nazis” and “Banderites” who attack civilians. Russia is carefully, methodically and surgically eliminating these Nazis.
- **Biological threat:** The U.S. government has set up bioweapons labs in Ukraine that are developing “ethnic weapons” to attack Russians.
- **Zelenskyy is a terrorist:** Ukraine, not Russia, is killing Ukrainian civilians.

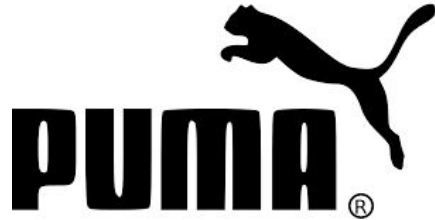
These disinformation narratives have been identified across multiple websites in multiple languages.

How GDI defines disinformation

- Disinformation is more than **overly simple, false dichotomies** such as true vs. false or left vs. right.
- GDI views disinformation through the lens of [adversarial narrative conflict](#). Adversarial narratives:
 - Can be implicit or explicit;
 - Are intentionally misleading;
 - Are adversarial against:
 - at-risk individuals or groups
 - current scientific consensus
 - democracy and key institutions
 - Most importantly, these adversarial narratives create a risk of harm.**
- This definition transcends false binaries and identifies disinformation explicitly by adversarial narrative topic, such as anti-immigrant, misogyny, anti-vax etc.



Brands unwittingly funding these stories:



L'INVESTISSEUR DE CRISE



Ad tech companies monetising this content:



Ad tech publisher policies must be updated and enforced

Most of these publishers' policies do not adequately address the breadth of disinformation narratives associated with the Ukraine conflict.

	Specific publisher policy?	Most relevant policy wording
	✓	"Due to the war in Ukraine, we will pause monetization of content that exploits, dismisses, or condones the war."
	✗	Restricted content: "Is hateful or discriminatory to any groups or individuals based upon their race, sex, nationality, religious affiliation, age or sexual orientation"; or, "Promotes, glorifies or condones violence against others."
	✗	No publicly available policy.
	✗	"...does not allow any non-satirical political news which is demonstrably false or which is meant to intentionally deceive a consumer."
	✗	Restricted content: "Promoting discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, religious beliefs, social status or income."

Immediate policy interventions include:

- **Accountability:** Ensure greater accountability for arbitrary actions and inactions by platforms particularly in relation to international human rights law and other legal obligations.
- **Transparency & Data access:** Ensure civil society and vetted third parties can access Platform data for scrutiny.
- **Crisis management mechanism:** Develop a crisis management mechanism *to oblige Platforms to take targeted impact assessments and mitigation actions*
- European Commission, Council and Parliament trialogue discussion on DSA at a critical stage:
 - Article 17 — Strengthening the internal complaint handling mechanism for users.
 - Article 26 — Risk assessment, mitigation of risks and algorithms accountability.
- **Human Rights:** UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights advises companies to carry out human rights due diligence that involves identifying and mitigating and adverse impacts on human rights. It is vital to ensure the DSA takes a similar inclusive approach.

English-language

In March, GDI highlighted anti-Ukrainian disinformation on OpIndia.com



Brand:
CapitalOne

Ad served by:
Google

Site:
OpIndia

Disinformation:
Anti-Ukrainian,

The screenshot shows the OpIndia website interface. At the top is a dark navigation bar with the OpIndia logo and various menu items: POLITICS, OPINIONS, FACT-CHECK, MEDIA, VARIETY, SPECIALS, MORE..., SUPPORT US, and ऑपइंडिया. Below the navigation bar is a large red-bordered box containing a news article snippet. The article text reads: "And that is Ukraine's lingering 'Nazi' problem. Over the years, neo-Nazism ideology has not only taken root in the Ukrainian conscience but has also gained the Ukrainian government's imprimatur. This has naturally raised concerns in Moscow that was evident in the speech made by Putin days before Russia's military offence in Ukraine." Below this article snippet is a red-bordered advertisement for CapitalOne. The ad features a red background with the text "PROMO CODES AVAILABLE" and a button that says "SEE CODES". Below the button is a small image of a person holding a shopping bag, with the text "The Coupon-Finding Browser Extension" underneath. To the right of the main article snippet, there is a "News" section with several headlines and images, including "Prostitution, blackmail and debauchery: How an activist unearthed the role of Periyarist-DMK nexus in a sex scandal", "Uttar Pradesh: SP leader Yogesh Verma keeps a watch on EVM strong room with binoculars, leaves netizens amused", "'Russians to be blamed for killings, but responsibility to be shared by West': Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy blames western countries for breaking their promises", and "India to resume commercial passenger flight operations from March 27". At the bottom of the page, there is a URL bar with a red circle around the address: https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/aclk?sa=L&ai=CTbNGGvYq-gGOiOj-8P4Kq5wAlt43BaLLP7NPDD9D2hOSJFxABIM-F9Wxgyc6jiqSkmBCgAeaSp8cDyAEC4AIaQAMByAMiagSHA0_QXPX39PGmG.

Date of Capture:
March 8, 2022

Google subsequently demonetised the specific article but not the entire website



Home › News Reports › Google says it won't allow anti-Ukraine content to make money, removes ads from article...

Updated: 2 April, 2022

Editor's picks | Featured | News Reports

Google says it won't allow anti-Ukraine content to make money, removes ads from article talking about Nazi aspects of Azov Battalion

The tech giant has said that it will not show any ads on pages that has content that in their worldview 'exploits, dismisses, or condones the war'

2 April, 2022

OpIndia Staff



Google says it won't allow anti-Ukraine content to make money, removes ads from article talking about Nazi aspects of Azov Battalion

- Advertisement -



Latest News

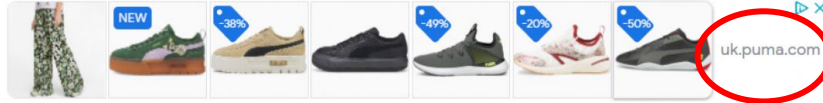


Maharashtra: Kashmiri Hindu activist detained by police for seeking permission to attend a propaganda program against The Kashmir Files, released after hours

Date of Capture:
April 7, 2022

OplIndia continues to publish disinformation related to the Ukraine conflict

GDI



Brand:
Puma

Ad served by:
Google

Site:
OplIndia

Disinformation:
Anti-Ukrainian,
Anti-Democratic

Home › World › 'Zelenskyy regime using civilians as human shields against advancing Russian troops': ASEAN Centre expert...

Updated: 1 March, 2022

News Reports | World

'Zelenskyy regime using civilians as human shields against advancing Russian troops': ASEAN Centre expert at MGIMO University

The remarks were made by Dr Sumsky on Times Now, where he accused the Zelenskyy regime of unleashing a propaganda offensive to paint Russia as a villain and impede the pace of progressing Russian troops.

"When asked about reports stating that the Russian army has been attacking civilians in Ukraine, Sumsky rejected them, saying that it was a part of the Zelenskyy government's effort to tarnish the reputation of Russia by disseminating misleading information. 'Zelensky has made it a point to use civilians as human shields against advancing Russian troops. These are tactics used by terrorists across the world,' Victor Sumsky said."



https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/aclk?sa=L&ai=C51mms...yYo2rloKr1wbBx7bQD7Wg0Ldpx-Dd9qcPjt-VysQjEAEgz4X1bGC7BqAB1d_j_wHIAQmpAowW0_y9LU-4AIAqAMByAPLBKoEqgNP0i51wwhpeBE20bN

Date of Capture:
April 6, 2022



Brand:
The Shelter Pet Project

Ad served by:
Xandr

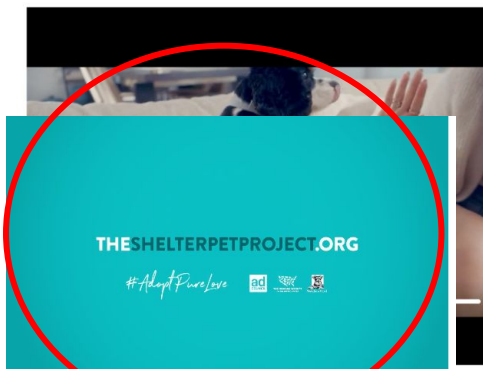
Site:
American Thinker

Disinformation:
Anti-Ukrainian,
Anti-Democratic

March 18, 2022

Biological weapons of mass destruction

By [Jerold Levoritz](#)



some segment of our elites both in and out of gov work overseas, it is incumbent upon thoughtful pe case. What makes them so important?

In an information vacuum, we can only speculate exist. However, some people might call intelliger

Waiting for ib.adnxs.com...

No one those na Ukraine serve. V would b forcing outside illegal v morally human r it not be such res

“No one knows or is willing to identify those nations or people the biolabs in Ukraine, China, and other nations serve. We know, though, that many would be illegal in the United States, forcing their supporters to place them outside our borders. That many are illegal was because they were either morally evil or were a threat to the human race, by accident or design.

What Victoria Nuland's testimony and other publicly available information show is that we have outside U.S. borders research facilities that are producing or ‘safeguarding’ organisms that can destroy mankind, although they are described as being engaged in finding cures — that is, tools to upgrade our ability to respond to their threats.”



Brand:
Folifort

Ad served by:
RevContent

Site:
Gateway Pundit

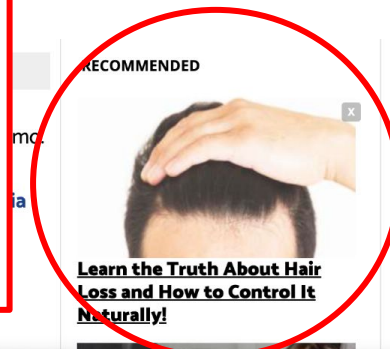
Disinformation:
Anti-Ukrainian,
Anti-Democratic

“BREAKING: Documents Reveal US Department of Defense Was Funding Ukrainian Biolabs — Russia Releases List of Biological Agents Tested in US BioLabs in Ukraine, Including Salmonella and E. Coli

On Sunday, March 6, 2022, Russian news agency Ria Novosti released documents they claim show Ukraine was working on ‘biological weapons’ near the Russian border. Ria Novosti accused the US of instructing Ukraine to destroy the biological agents before the Russian invasion.

And now we know who was funding the Ukrainian Biolabs. It was the US Department of Defense. A **document from the US Embassy** that was scrubbed from the internet was found in the Wayback Machine.

The document reveals the US Department of Defense was donating to the Ukrainian diagnostic biolabs.”



<https://trends.revcontent.com/click.php?d=u8Qip0r3oRiG0s...3Ma2cU1K8izoMHZxLmYjk19iI85w%2FNRDMeGKlji%2BM4IEEaTicD8Py%2BETbMBrUWgeECn6BNzQAW%2BD8viMyilzUwa%2BgfWLUrheEZVDXogJSMwudPT2RvpNv1Ji0LIpe69Jl...>

Date of Capture:
April 6, 2022

French-language



Brand:
Kokko

Ad served by:
Google

Site:
voltairenet.org

Disinformation:
Anti-Ukrainian

Translation:

“Between 2005 and 2014, the DTRA took control of Ukrainian biological laboratories. The United States has built eight Ukrainian laboratories.

As of 2016, Ukraine conducted biological weapons research in laboratories built by the DTRA and under its control.”

Kokko : Kamado haut de gamme

Ouvrir

Kokko

Cognitive Warfare - Rising Tensions (13)
War propaganda changes shape
by Thierry Meyssan

US journalists accomplices of President Biden
Voltaire Network

The Democratic Party and the Clinton Campaign Doomed
Voltaire Network

EU authorizes transfer of seized Russian assets to Ukraine
Voltaire Network

It will not be possible to exclude Russia from the UN

<https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/acik?sa=L&ai=C5EjWPsnNv...C3KYxtgfwlqgD4bJkL9p-YKU4e4MloLnhYgWEAEg2KvGB2D7gYCAIAqgAaT22OcCyAEJqQLOrsnOhk6yPgqDAcgDywSqBKgCT9Cy5b07HLMmr>

Date of Capture:
April 6, 2022

Translation:

“The Pentagon experimented with bat coronaviruses in Ukraine.

During his briefing on March 10, 2022, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman General Igor Konashenkov clarified that documents from US military biological laboratories in Ukraine attest that the Pentagon was carrying out ‘work on pathogens of birds, bats and reptiles, with a new transition to the study of the possibility of carrying African swine fever and anthrax’.

According to him: ‘In the biolaboratories created and financed in Ukraine, as the documents show, experiments were carried out with samples of bat coronaviruses’.”

L'INVESTISSEUR DE CRISE

Brand:

L'Investisseur de Crise

Ad served by:

Google

Site:

voltairenet.org

Disinformation:

Anti-Ukrainian

The screenshot shows a Google Ad for 'L'Investisseur de Crise'. On the left, there is a line graph with an upward-pointing arrow, set against a dark background. To the right of the graph, the text reads '3 actions qui vont s'envoler' (3 actions that are about to take off). Below this, it says 'Bourse 2022 : 3 actions à posséder quand les cours vont s'envoler' (Stock market 2022: 3 actions to own when the prices are about to rise). At the bottom of the ad, the brand name 'L'Investisseur de Crise' is circled in red, along with a blue 'Ouvrir >' (Open >) button. The background of the ad is a light beige color.

https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/aclick?sa=L&ai=CdgY3JMZNtOWCKrK1fAP8O-xgAz-k4y0aa-lrr-BD9zZHhABINirxgdg-4GAglgKoAGH3ZPWAacgBCakCHnDbWkVOsj6oAwHIA8sEggSeAk_Qy7FzDUCHYvmyWqWpCdJlu-8doXcwffdTzWN...

Date of Capture:
April 6, 2022

Russian-language



Brand:
Prince Oliver

Ad served by:
Criteo

Site:
cher-poisk.ru

Disinformation:
Anti-Democratic,
Anti-Ukrainian



НОВОСТИ КАТАЛОГ АФИША ОБЪЯВЛЕНИЯ ПОЛЕЗНО ИНТЕРЕСНО СПРАВКА ОБРАТНАЯ СВЯЗЬ

Поиск



валютой. Он будет действовать в период с 9 марта по 9 сентября. В банке клиент пока может снять со счета не больше 10 тыс. долларов. Остальные средства только в рублях.

Translation:

“Biological weapons, which were developed by the Americans in Ukraine, have an effect on the reproductive system and immunity of the Slavic nation.

[...]

According to [CEO of the Roscosmos corporation Dmitry Rogozin], the specific purpose of the experiments of the American Pentagon was the development of 'ethnic weapons' specifically against the Russian population.”

PRINCE OLIVER



Первая многопрофильная клиника

Была на приеме у Лукова М. А. Врач вполне хороший, внимательный. Приходила из-за проблемы с коленным...



Металлург

Хорошая гостиница! Недорогая. Некоторые номера ещё полусоветские. Там мы с моей...

<https://cat.fr.eu.criteo.com/m/delivery/ck.php?cppv=3&cpp=ghHejJOGflfgH5XI6dHCPPu-D31Roz4uJ4BsKx2YSWF01Ge3oDazQdFVvASX1c7chQ0c0QkgUNRaMHSmb98GGIC0jNczBlvZpT0CsxQnArfDwY7eXPfwoNG>

Date of Capture:
April 6, 2022



Brand:
Hotels.com

Ad served by:
Google

Site:
cher-poisk.ru

Disinformation:
Anti-Democratic,
Anti-Ukrainian

The screenshot shows a news article on the website cher-poisk.ru. The article text is partially visible, mentioning a prosecutor's request and biological weapons. A red box highlights a translation of the article's content. Below the article, there is a red Hotels.com advertisement with a 'BOOK NOW' button. At the bottom of the page, a script tag is visible, which is also highlighted with a red oval.

порядке.

После прокурорской проверки городская прокуратура подала иск к областному депздраву. Судебные разбирательства требуют дополнительных

"Исполнен
Череповц

Автор:
cher-po

прокурорская

комментиро

Translation:

"Biological weapons, which were developed by the Americans in Ukraine, have an effect on the reproductive system and immunity of the Slavic nation.
[...]
According to [CEO of the Roscosmos corporation Dmitry Rogozin], the specific purpose of the experiments of the American Pentagon was the development of 'ethnic weapons' specifically against the Russian population."

Была на приеме у Пукова М. А. Врач вполне хороший, внимательный. Приходила из-за проблемы с коленным...

★★★★★

Металлург

Хорошая гостиница! Недорогая. Некоторые номера ещё полусоветские. Там мы с моей

`<script async src="https://pagead2.googlesyndication.com/pagead/js/adsbygoogle.js?client=ca-pub-9200758734610238" crossorigin="anonymous"></script>`

Date of Capture:
April 6, 2022



Brand:
Skysmart

Ad served by:
Yandex

Site:
mk-smolensk.ru

Disinformation:
Anti-Democratic,
Anti- Ukrainian

MKRU СМОЛЕНСК | Выбрать регион | \$ 83.35 € 91.73 | Свежий номер | Подписка | VK | Telegram | WhatsApp | RSS

НОВОСТИ | НОВОСТИ РЕГИОНА | ПОЛИТИКА | ЭКОНОМИКА | ПРОИСШЕСТВИЯ | ОБЩЕСТВО

Реклама

Посмотрите, насколько просто изучать английский детям!

Ребенок полюбит английский без стресса и спешки. Пройдите бесплатный урок онлайн!

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skysmart.ru

[Узнать больше](#)

Translation:

“Russians are hated by neo-Nazism, behind-the-scenes manipulations by overseas puppeteers, lies against Russia and provocations aimed at aggravating the conflict. Denazification, demilitarization of Ukraine, giving the country the status of a neutral state. This is the purpose of the special operation.”

артснаряд времен прошлой войны в Рославле

18:12 Владимир Седов: на

[yandex.ru/.../WzKejl_zOCK3NHu0n3Gf7...](#) [tIR8SEoWK0nGn7PjCOW00000ujgL8wA6gsScsfy-z00010OW1s03Kb8e1a07QokdZs820W0AO0ThAwUD0e07YoQW1uidfurYu0PJMyP8am042s07Mpvla0U01vEoDcW7e0R06e0Ay-T0LkG8beiiySIUkWS022_031](#)

Date of Capture:
April 5, 2022

For More Information:

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www.disinformationindex.org