

The Dead Internet Theory: Is the Online World Becoming a Bot- управляемый пустырь?

The "dead internet theory" is a burgeoning online conspiracy theory that posits a significant and growing portion of the internet, particularly social media, is no longer populated by genuine human activity but is instead dominated by automated bots and AI-generated content. Proponents of the theory believe this shift is not a natural evolution but a deliberate effort, potentially by corporations or governments, to manipulate public perception, control narratives, and create a curated, artificial online experience.

The theory's origins can be traced back to discussions on online forums like 4chan and Reddit in the late 2010s, gaining more traction around 2021. It reflects a growing unease among some internet users about the changing nature of online interactions and content, particularly with the increased visibility of bots and the rise of sophisticated generative AI technologies.

At its core, the dead internet theory makes several key claims:

- **Bot Domination:** A vast percentage of online activity, including social media posts, comments, likes, and even website traffic, is generated by bots rather than real people.
- **AI-Generated Content:** Much of the content we consume online, from articles and images to videos, is increasingly being created by artificial intelligence, often to fill the internet with easily digestible or algorithmically favorable material.
- **Algorithmic Manipulation:** Social media platforms and search engines use algorithms to prioritize and push this bot-generated and AI content, effectively suppressing organic human-created content and shaping what users see.
- **** ulterior Motives:**** The underlying purpose of this alleged shift is often cited as either maximizing corporate profits through artificial engagement and targeted advertising or enabling government surveillance and manipulation of public opinion.

Proponents point to various phenomena as potential evidence for the dead internet theory, such as:

- The prevalence of seemingly inauthentic or repetitive comments and interactions on social media.
- The uncanny nature of some AI-generated text and images that can be difficult to distinguish from human creations.
- Reports on the significant percentage of internet traffic attributed to bots (though cybersecurity firms often categorize much of this as legitimate or non-malicious crawler activity).
- A general feeling among some users that online spaces feel less authentic and engaging than in the past.

However, the dead internet theory is largely dismissed by experts and is considered a conspiracy theory. Critics offer several counterarguments:

- **Continued Human Activity:** Billions of people around the world actively use the internet for genuine communication, creation, and interaction. While bot activity is a known issue, the claim that it constitutes the vast majority of online presence lacks credible, widespread data.
- **Beneficial Bots:** Many bots serve essential functions for the internet's operation, such as search engine crawlers, chatbots for customer service, and automation tools. Not all non-human traffic is malicious or intended to deceive.
- **Economic Incentives:** While platforms benefit from engagement, a completely

inauthentic online environment driven solely by bots would ultimately alienate human users, the source of advertising revenue, undermining the very business model of many online platforms.

- **Lack of Concrete Evidence:** The theory relies heavily on anecdotal observations and interpretations rather than verifiable, large-scale data proving a coordinated effort to replace human activity with AI and bots on the scale suggested.

While the dead internet theory as a wholesale replacement of human internet activity is not supported by evidence and remains a fringe concept, it does tap into legitimate concerns about the increasing presence of bots, the impact of AI-generated content, and the powerful influence of algorithms on our online experiences. These are real challenges that researchers, platforms, and users are grappling with as the digital landscape continues to evolve.