#Reactgate: Weapons of mass distraction

Below summarises the events leading up to Tatiana Mac's departure and the deactivation of several accounts (Ken Wheeler [reactivated] and Dan Abramov).

Context for the "OK sign" have been included as well.

All timestamps have been normalised to UTC for easier understanding.

Authors notes are in (parentheses). Image explanations are in [square brackets].

Nothing happens in isolation

- 2010, White supremacist Richard Spencer coins the term "Alternative Right" as the name for his online publication.
- Milo Yiannopoulos adopted the OK sign on social media as early as 2015.
- 23:29 Nov 8, 2016, @RichardBSpencer (77K Followers) "Tonight's the night." [Richard Spencer standing outside Trump Hotel, flashing the OK sign]
- 08:32 Feb 27, 2017, 4chan launches Operation O-KKK, intended to sow distrust and confusion amongst what they refer to as "normies" and "gullible lefties"
- 11:34 Feb 27, 2017, 4chan's Operation O-KKK gains traction amongst people outside of the 4chan influence
- April 2017, searches for "white supremacy" peaks in popularity
- May 2017, searches for "OK sign" double in popularity from previous months and years
- Dec 2017, searches for "OK sign" peak in popularity

2018

- April 25, 2018, @kanyewest (29.2M Followers) "We got love" [Kayne West in a MAGA hat, next to a man flashing the OK sign] (since deleted)
- Sep 15, 2018, US Coast Guard member is removed from duty after flashing OK sign on air. More examples easily found.
- 16:00 Aug 17, 2018, Ken Wheeler speaks at React Rally 2018, in Salt Lake City, Utah, his talk is titled ReasonML is Serious Business. Ken begins talk by flashing the OK sign (video is published Aug 22)
- Oct 2018, Ken Wheeler is questioned in Youtube comment
- Ken Wheeler has since allegedly apologised for flashing the OK sign, claiming he was unaware its co opted meaning, but he has deleted records of this so it remains unconfirmed.

Tuesday

- [16:00 Aug 20, 2019](#), Registration opens at Clarity Conf 2019, San Francisco, California

Wednesday

- [06:17 Aug 21, 2019](#) @heydonworks (12.6K Followers) "React is very much at the jQuery's-last-days stage now. There are better, more efficient ways of doing things (Svelte, custom elements, module/nomodule pattern, Lit etc etc). React is existing on inertia and some minor / soon to disappear compatibility worries."
- 22:30 Aug 21, 2019, Tatiana Mac speaks at Clarity Conf 2019 in San Francisco, California, her talk titled [Systems of Systems (slides)](#), is about the rampant white supremacist capitalist partiarchy in society and how impact isn't lessened by intent.
- [23:17 Aug 21, 2019](#), @beep "Never cried at a conference talk before. That was a hell of a thing, @TatianaTMac—thank you." [Tatiana standing in front of her slides]

Thursday

- [03:58 Aug 22, 2019](#), @joelatwar "What kind of conference was this?" **(since deleted)**
- [05:45 Aug 22, 2019](#), @itsreth1nk "Most definitely wasn't a tech conference. I don't see anything about React of WASM on the screen. Looks to be some kind of SJW **(Social justice warrior)** conference."
- [12:54 Aug 22, 2019](#) @heydonworks "What do you like to do when you're not coding? Vue-based developer: I am fond of cooking, getting stuck into a good graphic novel and— (new line) React-based developer: WEIGHTS. BROING DOWN. MORE WEIGHTS. TRUMP. WEIGHTS. GUNS. THE FREE MARKET."
- [14:00 Aug 22, 2019](#), Registration opens at React Rally 2019, Salt Lake City, Utah
- [xx:49 22 Aug 2019](#), @ken_wheeler (24.8K Followers) "TFW you ridicule other devs for weightlifting" [image of obese man with beard, fedora and m'lady t-shirt] **(since deleted)**
- [22:39 Aug 22, 2019](#), @codehitchhiker "Ken no"
- [17:41 Aug 22, 2019](#) @ken_wheeler "Imagine the kind of thought process that paints strength training as a bad thing and then projects a bunch of other unrelated shit onto it, while tying all of this to be the use of a specific JavaScript view library"
- [18:09 Aug 22, 2019](#), @TatianaTMac (13.1K Followers) "Tech: "It's about the people. Also tech: "Why aren't all conference talks about code?"
- [19:23 Aug 22, 2019](#) - @jevakallio "A normal guy having a normal one on the internet" [screenshots of @heydonworks tweets] **(since deleted)**
- [19:35 Aug 22, 2019](#), @jevakallio "oh look his dumber sidekick has taken the time to take his sweaty hands off of heydons dick long enough to send a tweet" **(since deleted)**
- [20:35 Aug 22, 2019](#), @jordwalke (29.7K Followers) "React is for anyone who likes the programming paradigm of React. It's really that simple."

- [21:14 22 Aug 2019](#) @ken_wheeler "Every normal person on earth: [blank space] People who have irrational hatred for React: [Charlie from It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia]"
- [22:42 Aug 22, 2019](#), @malchata (3,137 Followers) "Given the amount of toxicity I've witnessed in tech, I'll just say it: your associations with people matter to me. If you befriend those who refuse to acknowledge the systemic injustices our industry perpetrates on vulnerable people in this community, then we cannot be friends."
- [22:44 Aug 22, 2019](#), @malchata "I'm tired of saying "so-and-so's a good guy", when so-and-so's not given me any reason to believe they actually are, because they refuse to confront and denounce toxic behavior within their own spheres."

Friday

- [07:59 Aug 23, 2019](#), @TatianaTMac "I notice who speaks at conferences with all white-white passing people (and one already-famous WOC), who recommends all white men, says "guys," who throws white power hands, and who uses "crazy" or "stupid" in the a11y community. Then I act or avoid accordingly."
- [11:33 Aug 23, 2019](#), @cassiecodes (6,586 Followers) "This is wildly out of character. But I woke up feeling a horrible mix of fury and exhaustion so I've written a blog post." [link to blog post titled "Put down the pitchforks"]
- [15:49 Aug 23, 2019](#), @TatianaTMac "TIL (Today I learned): People care more about protecting the reputation of a **framework** than listening to **multiply marginalised** people that you have actual **white supremacists** in your niche community and our broader community. (new line) I'm not going to ignore that fact; my safety depends on it."
- [17:15 Aug 23, 2019](#), @ken_wheeler "Hey gang, I want to clear something up." [thread about flashing OK sign at React Rally 2018]
- [18:53 Aug 23, 2019](#), @codehitchhiker (15K Followers) "There are real problems in tech. People do not feel safe. It's why women and people of color don't participate in certain events and spaces, and why many of them LEAVE. (new line) They aren't snowflakes, no more than when you feel in danger & avoid. We're HUMANS. (new line) Stop & listen."

Saturday

- [05:00 Aug 24, 2019](#), @tesseralis (4,832 Followers) "I muted so-and-so a long time ago for making a transphobic joke and generally being an asshole bro"
- [06:15 Aug 24, 2019](#), @ken_wheeler "Hanging out with normal people tonight (new line) 'Hey how was your day today' (new line) 'You wouldn't believe it if I told you'" **(mocking the fallout)**
- [18:36 Aug 24, 2019](#), @toomuchpete (2,138 Followers) "Stochastic Assholery: (newline) 1. Make white supremacist hand gesture in a conference talk. (newline) 2. Offer weak but friendly "apology" claiming you didn't know and you were playing the "circle game"*

(new line) 3. Wait for your followers to show up and be jerks in the replies." [link to since deleted @ken_wheeler tweet]

- [16:59 Aug 24, 2019](#), @codehitchhiker "I want to address something about the issues around the React community. Because I made some mistakes. (new line) First of all, I reacted to @heydonworks' tweet with a thread intended for the community to get to know each other. I should have asked Heydon WHY he tweeted what he did before"
- [19:13 Aug 24, 2019](#), @itsreth1nk "React devs seeing this thread like…" [WWE Raw wrestlers saying 'Round 2, Boys!' to each other] (in response to @heydonworks thread)

Sunday

- [15:31 Aug 25, 2019](#), @TatianaTMac "Incredibly sad, disappointed, and not at all surprised by *so* many people. (new line) Your actions/inactions have spoken. Enjoy an industry without me. (new line) After my signed obligations, (new line) I'm out."
- [02:44 Aug 25, 2019](#), @heydonworks "To be clear: @ken_wheeler did not throw the white power symbol at React Rally just recently (in reference to React Rally 2019). I misunderstood. There was a discussion AT this React Rally about his previous behaviour (see React Rally 2018). I was wrong, and have done my best to clarify, and have now deleted that tweet."

Monday

- [02:10 Aug 26, 2019](#), @inflammatorydev **(known and reported white supremacist)** "Summary for peeps asking. Heydon accused **(incorrect, he asked if he was)** Ken of being a white supremisist (sic) because Ken showed the circle game **(flashed the OK sign, claimed ignorance)** in a talk once. Tatiana Mac also fanned the flames on this by implying **(incorrect, talked about systemic issues)** Ken was a WS (but cleverly avoiding mentioning his name as gutless people do) …"

Omissions

- User @dan_abramov (209K Followers) has been noted as commenting on @heydonworks tweet on Wednesday, including what appears to be an explanation of talking to @ken_wheeler about his use of OK sign in a non-public forum. @dan_abramov is not reachable and these claims can not be verified at this time.