

AMITT Incident List

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Introduction

AMITT was originally created by finding and dissecting disinformation incidents, looking for techniques, tactics, and procedures used by incident creators. The master list of incidents is in <https://github.com/cogsec-collaborative/AMITT/blob/main/incidents.md>

Incident I00006 Columbian Chemicals is described in the sections above.

Advanced Persistent Manipulators

I00031 AntiVax (2018-)

I00033 50Cent Army (2014-)

Internet Research Agency

Campaigns

I00002 #VaccinateUS (2014)

Used both pro- and anti- topic messaging to create an artificial argument online. Actors included Larry Cook, who runs “Stop Mandatory Vaccination”: “donations go “directly” to his bank account and funds “may be used to pay [his] personal bills.”

Effects were physical: “The U.S. anti-vax movement has been blamed for two outbreaks of measles that have infected some 300 people—mostly children—in New York and the Pacific Northwest.”

Useful search terms included vaccination, anti-vaccination, “vaccine choice”

TTPs

- T0017 Promote online funding: Gofundme campaigns to pay for ads.
- T0018 Paid targeted ads: bought facebook targeted ads (Larry Cook, targeting Washington State mothers, \$1,776 to boost posts over 9 months).
- T0019 Generate information pollution: created a website to output information pollution
- T0046 Search Engine Optimization: optimised on key words.
- T0056 Dedicated channels disseminate information pollution. Created a website to disseminate pollution.
- T0058 Legacy web content. Created hard to remove web content
- Counter: American Medical Association “warned social-media giants, including Amazon, Facebook, Google, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube, that they were helping to amplify the propaganda and confuse parents.”
- Counter: Gofundme banned antivaxxers: “Campaigns raising money to promote misinformation about vaccines violate GoFundMe’s terms of service and will be removed from the platform”. Less than 10 campaigns reported as removed.

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I00005 Brexit vote (2016)

In early 2014, UK PM David Cameron outlined the changes he aimed to bring about in the EU and in the UK's relationship with it. These were: additional immigration controls, especially for citizens of new EU member states; tougher immigration rules for present EU citizens; new powers for national parliaments collectively to veto proposed EU laws; new free-trade agreements and a reduction in bureaucracy for businesses; a lessening of the influence of the European Court of Human Rights on British police and courts; more power for individual member states, and less for the central EU; and abandonment of the EU notion of "ever closer union". He intended to bring these about during a series of negotiations with other EU leaders and then, if re-elected, to announce a referendum. European Union Referendum Act was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It extended to include and take legislative effect in Gibraltar, and received royal assent on 17 December 2015.

Presumed goals were to change the Brexit vote to 'leave', continue to divide/undermine EU, and to drive Eurosceptic narrative/agenda.

Conservative-led Department for Culture, Media and Sport select committee concluded (2018) Russia engaged in 'unconventional warfare' during the Brexit campaign. This included '156,252 Russian accounts tweeting about #Brexit' and posting 'over 45,000 Brexit messages in the last 48 hours of the campaign.' As it said, Kremlin-controlled media, 'RT and Sputnik had more

reach on Twitter for anti-EU content than either Vote Leave or Leave.EU, during the referendum campaign'. The report by Democrats on the Senate foreign relations committee, titled Putin's asymmetric assault on democracy in Russia and Europe: implications for US national security, pinpoints the way in which UK campaign finance laws do not require disclosure of political donations if they are from "the beneficial owners of non-British companies that are incorporated in the EU and carry out business in the UK". The senators point out that Ukip and its then-leader, Nigel Farage, did not just fan anti-EU sentiment but also "criticised European sanctions on Russia, and provided flattering assessments of Russian President Putin". The report adds that although officially the Russian government asserted its neutrality on Brexit, its English-language media outlets RT and Sputnik covered the referendum campaign extensively and offered "systematically one-sided coverage".

Related incidents included the 2016 US election disinformation campaigns.

Incidents (From The European Values Think-Tank):

- Before Brexit, Russia Today and Sputnik released more anti-EU articles than the official Vote Leave website and Leave.EU website. The British version of Sputnik has an annual budget of £ 1.8 million from the Russian government. Kremlin-owned channels potentially influenced 134 million impressions during the Brexit campaign
- Method: The data that was used by 89up was derived from the Twitter Search API, Buzzsumo, the Facebook API and other scraping methods. In the timeframe from January 2016 to the day of the British referendum, analysts identified and analysed 261 of the most shared and popular articles that were clearly anti-European. The two main media outlets were RT and Sputnik. Costs: The total value of Kremlin media for the Leave campaign in the six months before the EU referendum was £1,353,000. The PR value for the Leave campaign, based on the 261 heavily pro-Leave articles published by RT and Sputnik, is estimated at nearly £1,500,000 based on figures from a leading media monitoring tool. This excludes the significant social media value of these news articles. Estimated value of Russian media Facebook impressions is around \$102,000 and the estimated value of Russian media's potential impressions on Twitter is between \$47,000 - \$100,000.
- Content: The analysis also shows that the overwhelming majority of articles published by RT and Sputnik (131 of the 200 most shared) were clearly for Leave; 59 articles were Neutral and only 10 were set to Remain. When the neutral articles are filtered out, numbers show that the negative articles of RT/Sputnik, together, elicited nearly the same number of engagements as the official Vote Leave website.
- Social reach: The report shows the social reach of these anti-EU articles published by the Kremlin-owned channels was 134 million potential impressions, in comparison with a total social reach of just 33 million and 11 million potential impressions for all content shared from the Vote Leave website and Leave.EU website respectively.
- (Jane Mayer, staff writer at The New Yorker, via NPR) Role of - Cambridge Analytica, which is a big data company that worked for the Trump campaign in the end - and it was owned principally by one of Trump's largest backers, Robert Mercer - was also involved in helping the early stages of the Brexit campaign in England. And the man who

spanned both countries and pushed for both, really, was Steve Bannon, it seems there was actually a lot of Russian money offered to Arron Banks, who was one of the major political figures leading the Brexit campaign. The Russian money was offered to him in the form of business opportunities and gold mines and diamond mines by the Russian ambassador to England. So there seems to be financial incentives that were dangled.

- There are bots and trolls and posts that are coming from the same Russian Internet agency in St. Petersburg. So in both countries, we see pushing Brexit and pushing Trump at the same time by the same trolls and bots. research conducted by a joint team of experts from the University of California at Berkeley and Swansea University reportedly identified 150,000 Twitter accounts with various Russian ties that disseminated messages about Brexit.
- A cache of posts from 2016, seen by WIRED, shows how a coordinated network of Russian-based Twitter accounts spread racial hatred in an attempt to disrupt politics in the UK and Europe. A network of accounts posted pro and anti-Brexit, anti-immigration and racist tweets around the EU referendum vote while also targeting posts in response to terrorist attacks across the continent.
- More broadly, a Russian espionage operation funneling money into a political campaign aimed at unwinding European integration would be entirely consistent with the Kremlin's perceived political interests and tactics of hybrid warfare. Covert financial infiltration is part of a toolkit Moscow uses to interfere in European and American politics. Another tool deployed ahead of the 2016 referendum was pro-Brexit messaging pumped out by RT, Sputnik, and the Internet Research Agency.
- From 1 to 8 February 2016, Sputnik ran 14 stories on the "Brexit" issue. Eight of them had negative headlines, either featuring criticism of the deal or focusing on the difficulties Cameron faces; five headlines were broadly factual; one reported a positive comment that the Bank of England had "not yet seen" an impact on investor sentiment, but gave it a negative slant by headlining, "Bank of England on Brexit: No need to panic, yet." (The word "panic" did not appear in the story.) Not one headline reported reactions supporting the deal. Both Sputnik and RT quoted a disproportionate number of reactions from "Out" campaigners. RT, for example, quoted five "Out" partisans: MP Liam Fox; the founder of Leave.EU; London Mayor Boris Johnson; MEP Nigel Farage, the leader of the UK Independence Party; and UKIP member Paul Nuttall.
- anti-immigrant adverts were targeted at Facebook users in the UK and the US. One – headlined "You're not the only one to despise immigration", which cost 4,884 roubles (£58) and received 4,055 views – was placed in January 2016. Another, which accused immigrants of stealing jobs, cost 5,514 roubles and received 14,396 impressions
- A study of social media during the Brexit campaign by 89Up, a consultancy, found that Russian bots delivered 10m potential Twitter impressions—about a third of the number generated by the Vote Leave campaign's Twitter account. Such echoing amplifies the effect of RT and Sputnik stories, which are in general not much watched.

TTPs

- T0007 Create fake Social Media Profiles / Pages / Groups: created fake facebook groups and dark content.

- T0010 Cultivate ignorant agents
- T0018 Paid targeted ads: used facebook paid ads
- T0019 Generate information pollution: through RT and Sputnik
- T0021 Memes: anti-immigration, euroskepticism, fear, outrage and conspiracy narratives
- T0029 Manipulate online polls
- T0030 Backstop personas
- T0031 YouTube
- T0032 Reddit
- T0034 LinkedIn
- T0035 Pinterest
- T0036 WhatsApp
- T0046 Search Engine Optimization
- T0053 Twitter trolls amplify and manipulate
- T0054 Twitter bots amplify
- T0056 Dedicated channels disseminate information pollution: through RT and Sputnik
- T0057 Organise remote rallies and events
- Counter: facebook content takedown
- Counter: twitter content takedown

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- [Congress should explain how dark Russian money infiltrates Western democracies](#)
- [Signs of Russian Meddling in Brexit Referendum](#)
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- [Putin's Media Are Pushing Britain For The Brexit](#)
- ['We're waiting for answers': Facebook, Brexit and 40 questions](#)
- [Turning politics up to 11 - Russian disinformation distorts American and European democracy | Briefing](#)

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I00016 LithuanianElves (2014)

I00017 US presidential elections (2016)

I00021 Armenia elections (2017)

I00029 MH17 investigation (2016)

I00035 Brazilelections (2014)

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I00056 Iran Influence Operations (2012)

I00059 Myanmar - Rohingya (2014)

I00060 White Genocide (2018)

I00061 Military veterans Targeting (2017)

I00062 Brexit/UK ongoing (2015)

I00063 Olympic Doping Scandal (2016)

Incidents

I00001 Blacktivists facebook group (2016)

Fake @blacktivists facebook group and twitter account, most likely created by the Internet Research Agency.

Presumed goals: "Russian-linked social media accounts saw racial tensions as something to be exploited in order to achieve the broader Russian goal of dividing

Americans and creating chaos in U.S. politics during a campaign in which race repeatedly became an issue.”

Interesting aspects: there was no central data repo for the blacktivists posts. Tweets were sent only between 8am-6pm Moscow time. Followers grew over time, but they grew and dropped friends (people they followed) in batches periodically. Specific individuals were targeted, e.g. Craig Carson, a Rochester, New York, attorney and civil rights activist.

Other incidents that might be related to this include the black lives matter facebook ads, targeted at Baltimore and Ferguson, Missouri, and the facebook groups: Txrebels, MuslimAmerica, Patriotus, SecuredBorders, Lgbtun, Black Matters.

References:

- <https://money.cnn.com/2017/09/27/media/facebook-black-lives-matter-targeting/index.html>
- [Exclusive: Fake black activist accounts linked to Russian government](#)
- [Blacktivists in the Archive. A few days ago Donie O'Sullivan and... | by Ed Summers](#)
- [Leaked: Secret Documents From Russia's Election Trolls](#)

Data

- @blacktivists tweets that used the #blacklivesmatter hashtag: [google spreadsheet](#) from Ed Summers “[Blacktivists in the Archive](#)”
- Facebook text from Jonathan Albright: [pdf](#) and [docx](#)

I00003 Beyonce protest rallies (2016)

Used pro- and anti- topic messaging to create an artificial argument in real life.

References:

- <https://twitter.com/JuliaDavisNews/status/994704834577215495>
- <https://twitter.com/donie/status/957246815056908288>
- [#BlueLivesMatter and Beyoncé: Russian Facebook ads hit hot-button US issues](#)

I00004 #Macrongate (2017)

Amplified document dump (“hack and leak”) failed because France was prepared for it.

Presumed goals: reduce Emmanuel Macron's chance of winning French presidential election.

Related incidents include the 2016 DNC document release around the US presidential elections.

TTPs

- fake documents posted on 4chan about Macron's alleged offshore account,
- amplified by pro-Trump Twitter accounts using #MacronGate and #MacronCacheCash
- Counter: preparation (resilience, account removals),
- Counter: honeytraps,
- Counter: counter-narratives with humour.

References:

- <https://www.patreon.com/posts/macrongate-tied-11940855>
- [How France beat back information manipulation \(and how other democracies might do the same\)](#)
- [Macron hackers linked to Russian-affiliated group behind US attack](#)

I00006 Columbian Chemicals (2014)

Sept 11 2014, early "fake news" stories. Completely fabricated; had limited traction, very short lifespan.

TTPs used:

- T0007 Create fake Social Media Profiles / Pages / Groups: Used fake twitter profiles to amplify
- T0015 Create hashtag: #ColumbianChemicals
- T0024 Create fake videos and images
- T0039 Bait legitimate influencers
- T0043 Use SMS/ WhatsApp/ Chat apps: used SMS messages
- Used channels: YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia, crowdsourced news sites, mobile phone networks
- T0055 Use hashtag
- Counter: fake stories were debunked very quickly

Actor: probably IRA (source: recordedfuture)

Method:

- Artefacts: text messages, images, video, hashtag #ColumbianChemicals
- Narrative: “A powerful explosion heard from miles away happened at a chemical plant in Centerville, Louisiana #ColumbianChemicals”
- Post messages from fake twitter accounts; include handles of local and global influencers (journalists, media, politicians, e.g. @senjeffmerkley)
- Amplify, by repeating messages on twitter via fake twitter accounts

Related incidents:

- BP oil spill tsunami
- #PhosphorusDisaster - fake story about water contamination scare
- #EbolaInAtlanta - fake story about Ebola outbreak in Atlanta
- #shockingmurderinatlanta - fake story about unarmed black woman killed by police in Atlanta

These were all well-produced fake news stories, promoted on Twitter to influencers through a single dominant hashtag (the single hashtag might have been something learned from crisis mapping practice of forcing a single hashtag for each disaster because it was easier to track)

References:

- [Columbian Chemicals Plant explosion hoax](#)
- RecordedFuture trace of attack: [#ColumbianChemicals Hoax: Trolling the Gulf Coast for Deceptive Patterns](#)
- [The Agency](#)
- <https://twitter.com/hashtag/PhosphorusDisaster>

I00007 Incirlik terrorists (2016)

Fake story transmitted from Russian media (RT, Sputnik) to Trump campaign, in July-August 2016.

Paul Manafort cited that the Incirlik NATO base in Turkey was under attack by terrorists, as an example of an unreported true story. “The weekend of July 30, RT.com and Sputnik reported 7,000 armed police with heavy vehicles had surrounded Incirlik air base in Adana, Turkey, where 2,500 U.S. troops are stationed and some 50 U.S. nuclear weapons are stored. The two Kremlin-funded outlets suggested that the lockdown was in response to another coup attempt after a faction of the Turkish military failed to overthrow Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.” “On the evening of 30 July 2016, my colleagues and I watched as RT and Sputnik news simultaneously

launched false stories about the U.S. air base in Incirlik, Turkey being overrun by terrorists,” he told the committee. Within minutes pro-Russian social media aggregators and automated bots amplified this false news story,” Watts said. “There were more than 4,000 tweets in the first 75 to 78 minutes after launching this false story. Perhaps the most stunning development for Watt and his companions was that the rapid proliferation of that story was linked back to the active measures accounts (Russian bots) they had tracked for the preceding two years. These previously identified accounts almost simultaneously appearing from different geographic locations and communities amplified the big news story in unison,” Watts said. The hashtags promoted by the bots, according to Watts, were “nuclear, media, Trump and Benghazi. The most common words, he said, found in English speaking Twitter user profiles were “God, military Trump, family, country, conservative, Christian, America and constitution. The objective of the messages, Watts said, “clearly sought to convince Americans that U.S. military bases being overrun in a terrorist attack.”

TTPs used:

- T0010 Cultivate ignorant agents: Paul Manafort
- T0019 Generate information pollution: RT & Sputnik report an unreported false story/event
- T0053 Twitter trolls amplify and manipulate
- T0054 Twitter bots amplify
- T0056 Dedicated channels disseminate information pollution: RT & Sputnik report an unreported false story/event

Narratives:

- The Incirlik NATO base in Turkey was under attack by terrorists.

Related incidents:

- Jade Helm exercise
- Black Lives Matter protests
- Bundy Ranch standoff

References:

- <https://www.rt.com/news/354042-turkish-police-incirlik-nato-coup/>
- <https://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160731/1043797161/incirlik-turkey-erdogan-nato-nukes.html>
- [Trump campaign chair misquotes Russian media in bogus claim about NATO base terrorist attack](#)

- [Anatomy of a Russian attack: First signs of the Kremlin's attempt to influence the 2016 election](#)

Data:

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<https://twitter.com/ElectionLawCtr/status/492850603039522816>

I00008 Bujic (2017)

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- <https://seas.foundation/en/2018/03/15/155>

I00009 PhilippinesExpert (2017)

After Putin and Philippine's president Duterte met in Russia in May 2017 and forged a partnership in information dissemination. Duterte and Putin signed a number of national security agreements, including a deal on intelligence sharing, an "MOU on Cooperation in Mass Communications." Afterwards, a series of disinformation campaigns was noted in Philippine social media and mainstream media, mostly in favor of Philippine president and promoting Russian propaganda. Among this is the appearance of a previously-unknown expert on global affairs who was cited frequently in Russian IRA-connected outlets.

TTPs used:

- T0007 Create fake Social Media Profiles / Pages / Groups: facebook pages
- T0019 Generate information pollution: RT & Sputnik
- T0045 Use fake experts. Amplifiers: through the persona of "Adam Garrie" (who first appeared on RT (Russian Today) and pro-Russia sites, with no background in Asia and Philippine affairs but suddenly rose to become a global affairs expert). Garrie was then promoted by pro-Duterte officials, social media pages and news outlets.
- T0052 Tertiary sites amplify news: News circulated/amplified by tertiary sites Russia Insider, The Duran, Geopolitica.ru, Mint Press News, Oriental Review, globalresearch.ca

- T0056 Dedicated channels disseminate information pollution: RT & Sputnik
- Counters: Facebook took down 220 pages and 73 Philippine accounts for spam, including pages of The Daily Sentry and its affiliates, TNP page and related pages.

Method:

- Footprint of Garrie on the Philippine media scene started from his connection with Russian IRA websites and pages (GI Analytics Facebook page, Russia Insider, The Duran, Geopolitica.ru, Mint Press News, Oriental Review, globalresearch.ca.)
- RT, one of media outlets that interviewed Garrie, was identified by the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence in January 2017 as the primary source of propaganda that the Russians used to further their interests in the 2016 US elections.
- Also has appearance on Iran's IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting), which was identified by the US Department of the Treasury in 2013 as a network that broadcasts false reports and forced confessions of political detainees and has ties with "politically motivated phishing" accounts on Google.
- The Daily Sentry, a Philippine news site emerged at the start of 2018 (no ownership information), started citing Adam Garrie as a global expert after Philippine-Russian ties grew stronger. Between Feb 2018 and Jan 2019, The Daily Sentry cited Garrie in 41% of posts on Facebook that mentioned experts.
- By March 2018, Garrie started to come to the mainstream: The Manila Times – a supporter outlet of the Philippine president, cited by pro-Duterte social media pages.
- Philippine online groups and pages began to spread Russian propaganda. Some sites link to Duterte officials and supporters including Duterte's former assistant secretary. For example, Duterte's former assistant secretary shared content from Trending News Portal site.

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- [How a Little-Known Pro-Kremlin Analyst Became a Philippine Expert Overnight -](#)
- [PH company banned by Facebook spread lies, used fake accounts](#)
- [\[ANALYSIS\] Facebook let my government target me. Here's why I still work with them.](#)

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I00010 ParklandTeens (2018)

I00011 CovingtonTeen (2019)

I00012 ChinaSmog (2011)

I00013 France Blacktivists (2014)

I00014 GiletsJaunePileon (2018)

I00015 ConcordDiscovery (2019)

I00019 MacronTiphaine (2017)

I00020 3000 tanks (2017)

I00022 #Macronleaks (2017)

I00023 #dislikemacron (2017)

I00024 #syriahoax (2017)

I00025 EU Army (2018)

I00026 Netherlands referendum on Ukraine (2016)

I00027 Crucified boy (2014)

I00028 mh17 downed (2014)

I00030 LastJedi (2018)

I00032 Kavanaugh (2018)

I00034 DibaFacebookExpedition (2016)

I00036 BrazilPresDebate (2014)

I00037 Rioelections (2016)

I00038 Brazil impeachment (2016)

I00039 MerkelFacebook (2017)

I00040 modamaniSelfie (2015)

I00041 Refugee crime map (2017)

I00042 Saudi/Qatar bot dispute (2017)

I00043 FCC comments (2017)

I00044 JadeHelm exercise (2015)

I00045 Skripal (2018)

I00046 North Macedonia (2018)

I00047 Sea of Azov (2018)

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I00053 China Huawei CFO Arrest (2018)

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