



Facebook's Ads Library: Keyword - China

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*Tony - Social Media Analytics
Command Center*

Illinois State University

Introduction:

This report provides an overview of the various discoveries that emerged through the collection of information surrounding the keyword: “China” from the Facebook Advertisement Library. This report primarily focuses on social issues, political issues, and the implications that may impact future U.S. domestic elections and international social movements. This report is categorized in two sections, domestic related observations and international related observations.

Background:

Domestic:

In 2014, after 8 years of a separated House of Representatives and Senate the Republican party in the United States assumed control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. (NBC 2014). Fast-forward to 2021 and the Democratic Party reestablished their control of the Senate flipping a longtime Republican led state, Georgia (Golshan, 2021).

International:

Since 2015, China has been accused of exploiting and violating the Uyghur population’s human rights by detaining them in labor camps and even torturing them, according to an international news source (BBC). There are accusations that these acts of detention and torture are crimes against humanity (Chang, 2021). The Uyghurs are a minority group of Muslims residing within Xinjiang, China. Xinjiang is located China’s northwest region, bordering the countries of, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. China has been accused outlawing any religious practices associated with the Muslim community and even destroying places of worship like mosques and sacred burial grounds and tombs (BBC).

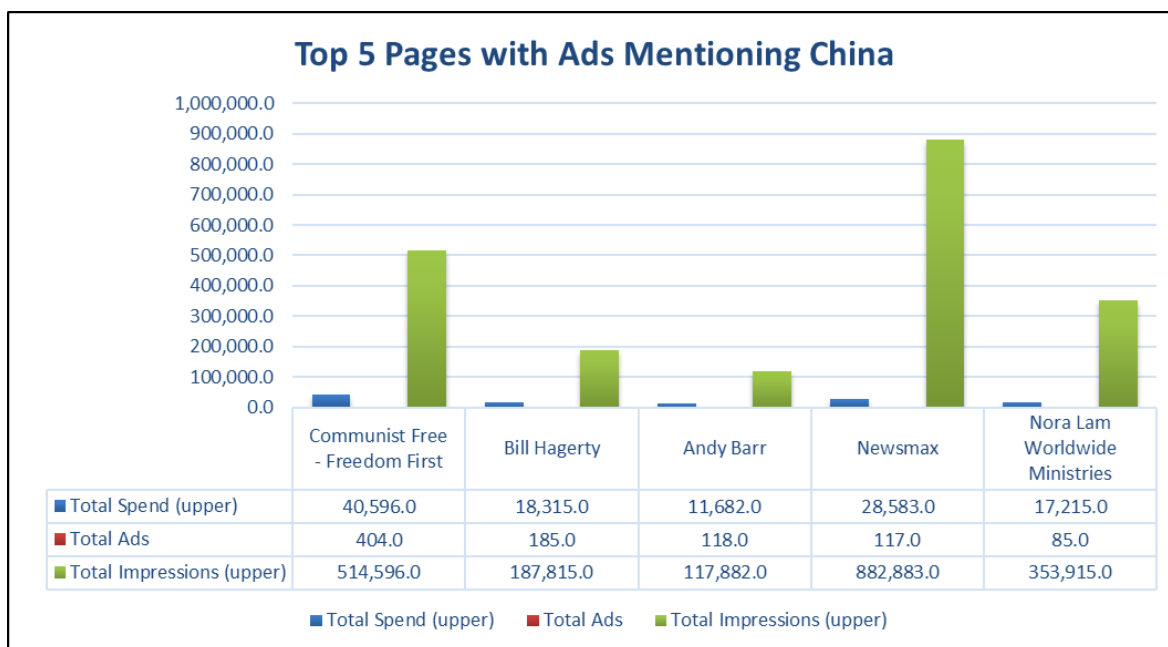
Overview:

Domestic:

Republicans continue their efforts to reassume control of the Senate in a unique way by harnessing rhetoric in the form of Facebook ads that was used in a similar fashion by former President Donald J. Trump. This rhetoric highlights the concept of draining the swamp in Washington D.C., reassuming control of the House and Senate, attacking the Democratic party and their members, and blaming China for the economic issues that have occurred throughout the United States.

International:

Various news reports indicate that the detention efforts of the Uyghur people are focused on eliminating any possibility of Islamic ideologies that may promote hostile tendencies or actions among the Muslim population in China’s region. China’s effort to minimize this international attention is met with some resistance. Zhao Lijan, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman stated that these accusations of genocide in Xinjiang are rumors backed with alternative motives and a lie (Wright, Watson, Mahmood, and Booth, 2021). China continued to perpetuate their own narrative by introducing a camp detainee who denied that these torture camps existed despite several witnesses coming forward with firsthand access to the situation (Wright, Watson, Mahmood, and Booth, 2021).



Methods:

The data that was collected, observed, and assessed was derived from the Social Media platform Facebook, specifically Facebook’s advertisement library. This information was collected and processed, and cleaned with RStudio, a statistical computer programming software. Additional filters and visualizations were supported by Microsoft Excel. Historical background information was researched with various internet-based news sources, providing a dynamic range of evidence regarding the current issues related to domestic and international events.

Data Collection:

The collection of this information included 2,500 advertisements. All 2,500 of these advertisements included the term, “China” somewhere within the advertisement with various contextual implications associated with the term. The range of these advertisements spans approximately three months from early June 2021 to early September 2021.

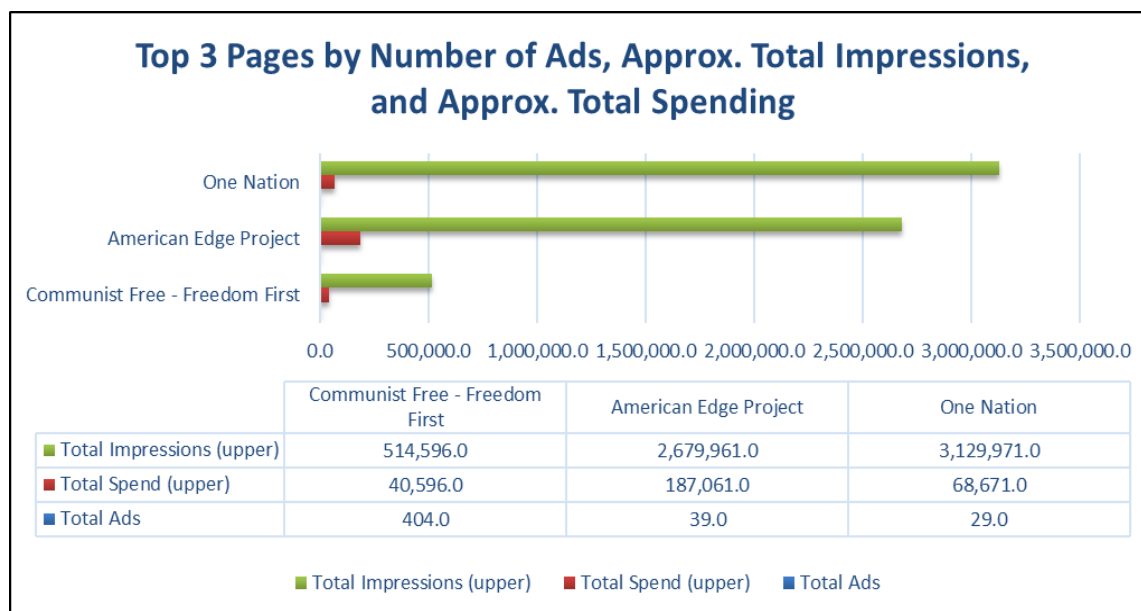
Observations:

The total amount of advertisements equaled 2,500. This was accomplished through the specification within the RStudio script / code that extracted the information from Facebook’s Ad Library. Throughout the 2,500 advertisements, there were approximately 355 different pages that advertised with the word “China” embedded somewhere within the advertisement. The top 5 pages that advertised the most with the word “China” within the ad were as follows: Communist Free – Freedom First (404 ads), Bill Hagerty Tennessee Senator (185), Andy Barr House Representative – Kentucky (118), Newsmax (117), and Nora Lam Worldwide Ministries (85). This information is represented graphically in the visual titled, “Top 5 Pages with Ads Mentioning China” above.

Of note, the Facebook page Communist Free – Freedom First advertisements were purchased by September Group LLC and the Facebook page is also ran by the same group. At the time of observation, the page had 5,840 likes and had 6,026 people following the page. *Page does not appear to be publicly available to view internal interactions.*

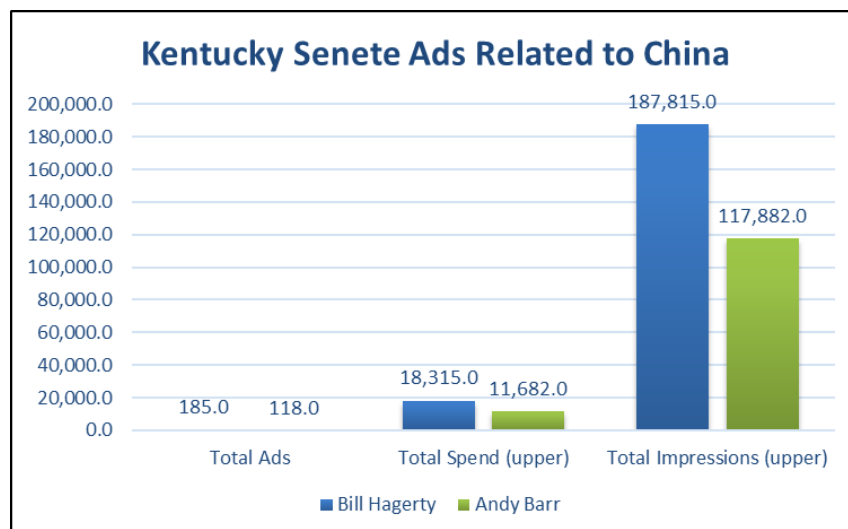
In the top 5 pages that advertised with the word “China” the most, additional information such as the total upper spending (top recorded amount with imposed dollar figure limitations surpassing 1 million USD), and total upper impressions or, the maximum possible impressions the advertisement had throughout its life cycle. Among the top 5, Communist Free – Freedom First spent the most approximating \$40,000. Newsmax recorded the most possible total impressions among the top 5 that advertised with the word, “China” surpassing over three quarters of a million impressions (882,883).

In the second layer of observations maximum output was of interest and warranted further exploration. These observations focused on the most advertisements produced, most money spent in the upper half of total spending, and the total number of maximum possible impressions the advertisement received. The graph below is a visual representation of these discoveries.



Republicans in Tennessee and Kentucky postured to fortify Senate and House positions respectively amid 2021 November’s opening primary

Lastly, one of the most unique aspects that surrounded the dataset and emerged through preliminary evaluations was two government pages from Tennessee and Kentucky. Tennessee Senator Bill Hagerty promoted advertisements requesting for conservative support and using the phrase, “drain the swamp” throughout his ads. Kentucky House Representative Andy Barr focused on a more economic situation prompting questions within his ads asking the American people, should China be held accountable for the economic issues and the Corona virus deaths?



Implications:

Domestic: There may be indications that other Republican candidates may begin to initiate rhetoric of questioning the American people about accountability, or the lack thereof from China about the evolving situations surrounding economic issues that stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the limited media coverage the Democratic party has received among its top government officials it is assessed that these economic accusations will not emerge as a point of contention, however political discourse is very unpredictable.

International: These human rights atrocities occurring within China and resurfacing throughout news networks has potential to garner some social movement to hold the Chinese government accountable however, actionable measures may be very limited. China has continued to promote their narrative of eliminating Islamic activity and any hostile actions or tendencies that may emerge from those ideologies as their intention for detention of the Uyghur people. Despite these issues existing for nearly 7 years, it is unlikely that an opportunity for any large social movements to impact these wrongdoings will alter the future of the Uyghur people.