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One Year Cross-Platform Analysis of Troll Activities and Foreign Influence in 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

AI Labs.tw
台灣人工智慧實驗室

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Glossary

Term	Explanation
Troll Account	Taiwan AI Labs employs large language models to analyze accounts on social media platforms, identifying accounts that frequently comment on the same posts together, indicating coordinated behavior. These accounts exhibit long-term similarities in their commenting patterns, suggesting they are not controlled by natural persons but are likely automated or manipulated, thus termed "Troll Accounts."
Troll Group	When Troll Accounts show long-term similarities in commenting patterns and signals, they are grouped into a "Troll Group." These groups can be analyzed for the events they participate in and the targets they manipulate, providing insights into the political forces they may serve.
Battlefield	An event generates extensive news coverage and social media discussions, including posts and videos. Taiwan AI Labs uses large language models to organize these reactions into an "Event," facilitating the observation of social media manipulation related to the event.
Story	Events can develop over time, linking many related events into a continuous narrative. Through classification with large language models, these interconnected events can be organized into a "Story," summarizing the coordinated manipulation and related news across a prolonged period for each story, allowing for the observation of long-term collaborative operations.
Media Volume	Media Volume refers to the amount of media presence, calculated by the number of news reports.
(PRC) State-affiliated Media	(PRC) State-affiliated Media denotes media outlets whose content is controlled or censored by the government of the People's Republic of China.
Community Volume	Community Volume represents the volume on social media platforms, encompassing the total number of comments observed from both troll accounts and regular accounts.
Troll Volume	Troll Volume pertains to the volume of comments made by troll accounts.
User Behavior Features	Analysis of social media data reveals a series of columns that represent user behavior features, such as the 'destination of user interactions' (post_id or video_id), the 'time of user actions', and the 'domain of shared links by users', among others. These data are subsequently utilized for user clustering.
Co-occurrence Features	Co-occurrence features aim to identify users who frequently engage with the same topics or respond to the same articles, appearing together in the same context to create a fabricated volume, a common characteristic of troll accounts. Through this method, we can identify troll accounts and cluster them into troll groups.
User Clustering	Taiwan AI Labs analyzes the relationship between pairs of accounts based on a series of signals and assigns a score. If the score exceeds a certain threshold, a connection is established. If multiple accounts are connected, they are clustered into a troll group.

Group Analysis	Taiwan AI Labs uses Taiwan LLM, a large language model pre-trained in Taiwanese dialects, to classify the comments and opinions of troll groups, identify their main narratives, and analyze the primary information manipulated by troll groups and their underlying intentions.
Topic Engagement	Taiwan AI Labs employs large language models to analyze community platform posts and comments related to news, identifying traces of message manipulation by troll groups. This clarifies which topics troll groups participate in and manipulate discussions on.
Operation Methods	Taiwan AI Labs utilizes the DISARM Framework to analyze the methods and intentions behind the information operations conducted by troll groups.
Leverage Existing Narratives	Use or adapt existing narrative themes, where narratives are the baseline stories of a target audience. Narratives form the bedrock of our worldviews. New information is understood through a process firmly grounded in this bedrock. If new information is not consistent with the prevailing narratives of an audience, it will be ignored. Effective campaigns will frame their misinformation in the context of these narratives. Highly effective campaigns will make extensive use of audience-appropriate archetypes and meta-narratives throughout their content creation and amplification practices.
Reframe Context	Reframing context refers to removing an event from its surrounding context to distort its intended meaning. Rather than deny that an event occurred, reframing context frames an event in a manner that may lead the target audience to draw a different conclusion about its intentions.
Flooding the Information Space	Flooding and/or mobbing social media channels feeds and/or hashtags with an excessive volume of content to control/shape online conversations and/or drown out opposing points of view. Bots and/or patriotic trolls are effective tools to achieve this effect.
Trolls Amplify and Manipulate	Use trolls to amplify narratives and/or manipulate narratives. Fake profiles/sock puppets operating to support individuals/narratives from the entire political spectrum (left/right binary). Operating with increased emphasis on promoting local content and promoting real X users generating their own, often divisive political content, as it's easier to amplify existing content than create new/original content. Trolls operate wherever there's a socially divisive issue (issues that can/are to be politicized).
Comment or Reply on Content	Delivering content by replying or commenting via owned media (assets that the operator controls).
Manipulate Platform Algorithm	Manipulating a platform algorithm refers to conducting activity on a platform in a way that intentionally targets its underlying algorithm. After analyzing a platform's algorithm (see: Select Platforms), an influence operation may use a platform in a way that increases its content exposure, avoids content removal, or otherwise benefits the operation's strategy. For example, an influence operation may use bots to amplify its posts so that the platform's algorithm recognizes engagement with operation content and further promotes the content on user timelines.

Executive Summary

A one-year observation (October 2023 - November 2024) of coordinated information manipulation during the U.S. pre-election period revealed signs of foreign interference, including the evidence of involvement from Russia and China. We identified three critical insights:

1. The narratives and strategies of troll groups frequently echoed Russian or Chinese state media.
2. One of the main strategies was to shape candidates as colluding with Russia, spread the impression that the U.S. would be controlled by authoritarian regimes regardless of the election outcome and polarize American politics, further dividing society. They accused both Trump and Biden-Harris of colluding with Russia, criticized U.S. economic and foreign policies, and exploited topics like border and immigration issues to erode trust in both parties.
3. Besides U.S. domestic manipulation, troll groups also targeted foreign topics especially on NATO, EU tariffs, and U.S.-China relations. The narratives undermine the relationship of Western alliances, attack the policies against China, and describe China as a victim of U.S. aggression.

Our in-depth analysis revealed main troll groups—YouTube @72, Facebook @70033, TikTok @144, and X @10946—dominating the coordinated operations landscape. These groups consistently drove narratives on key events, including Trump's immunity, the assassination attempt, Trump's interview with Elon Musk on X, and border and immigration issues.

YouTube@72, Facebook@70033's and TikTok@144 troll volume consistently contributed to more than 20% collaborated troll activities at YouTube, 17% at Facebook, and 13% at TikTok. Although the troll volume of X@10946 is 2% on average, it still ranked first in most of the main events. These four troll groups consistently ranked as the first or second most active troll groups on associated platforms. In contrast, Weibo coordinated is operated by multiple account groups.

We can further trace back the troll group with evidence of foreign influence:

1. X@10946 targeted not only U.S. election issues around Trump's threats but also the narratives attacking NATO allies in February 2024, echoing Russian state media. The accounts distributed the information attacking the U.S.'s commitment to NATO and destroying the trust within the democratic alliance. X @10946 took advantage of distorting Trump's statement by emphasizing his disregarding NATO members' interests, pro-Russia image with strong attempt undermining American unity and NATO cohesion.
2. Weibo trolls usually represent the official tendency of state media. We had observed the leading manipulation followed by YouTube@72. The narratives actively attacked the EU's tariffs against Chinese EVs. They claimed US fears of China's growing EV sector and to externalize China's economic challenges by presenting China as a victim of US competition. Moreover, Weibo trolls consistently framed the US election as a "civil war," claiming American decline regardless of the winner and characterizing U.S. democracy as a facade for imperialism.
3. YouTube@72 echoed Weibo's troll strategies and rescued Chinese EV by criticizing US tariff policies against Chinese EVs. It provokes the US and EU citizens with potential financial burden due to the tariff. The account group also claimed the US leveraged the EU to confront China, and customers are victims of US's competition against China.
4. Facebook @70033 manipulated the narrative surrounding Trump's proposal to impose tariffs on China, as reported by the South China Morning Post. The group criticized Trump by highlighting his business's ties to China and profiting from PPE sales, portraying hypocrisy in light of his

![infodemic logo]

anti-China stance. Additionally, they undermined Trump's economic leadership by comparing Black unemployment rates, arguing that Biden's administration had lower unemployment than Trump's.

5. TikTok @144 echoed Russian state media's criticism of U.S. foreign policy. Both criticized the allocation of resources to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan while neglecting domestic issues like the southern border. Russian state media focused on Democratic lawmakers, while TikTok @144 broadly attacked the government's misuse of taxpayer money, aiming to deepen divisions by framing the U.S. government as prioritizing international over domestic concerns.

Other key events participated by the troll account groups are the following:

1. Five major troll groups' early operations (pre-June) focused on Trump's immunity issues and Biden's health concerns. After July's "Trump Assassination Attempt", narrative marked a significant shift, where trolls expanded from Supreme Court criticism to questioning government legitimacy and gun rights issues.

2. The Trump-Harris campaign launch in late July triggered another surge in coordinated activities. Operations expanded to include conspiracy theories about Jewish control of American politics through the "Tim Walz VP Candidate" narrative, while using Musk as a focal point during the "Trump-Elon Live Interview" to suggest threats to social stability.

3. Foreign interference intensified in September through two main strategies: YouTube @72, Facebook @70033, and TikTok @144 portraying both candidates as "colluding with Russia," while X @10946 focused on dismissing Russian interference concerns while highlighting the "Hunter Biden laptop" controversy. Weibo @2526 uniquely employed both strategies through sarcastic amplification of Putin's alleged support for both candidates.

4. October operations shifted toward domestic issues - candidates' health, immigration, disaster response, and wealth inequality. Following reports of Chinese state-backed hacking targeting campaign communications, post-election activities on Weibo intensified significantly. These operations promoted narratives about inevitable U.S. social division and decline, while questioning the integrity of leadership transition through narratives about Biden's sudden "mental recovery" and Harris's electoral defeat.

In addition to the main troll groups mentioned above, YouTube @72002 and X@3778 were found to have clear connections with Russia and China during the election period. They engaged in discussions about the Ukraine-Russia war and the Israel-Palestine conflict, criticizing U.S.-aligned countries like Ukraine, Israel, and NATO, while expressing support for authoritarian regimes.

Methodology

The Taiwan AI Labs employ their analytical tool "Infodemic" to examine information operations across different social media platforms.

Building Similarity Nodes Between User Accounts
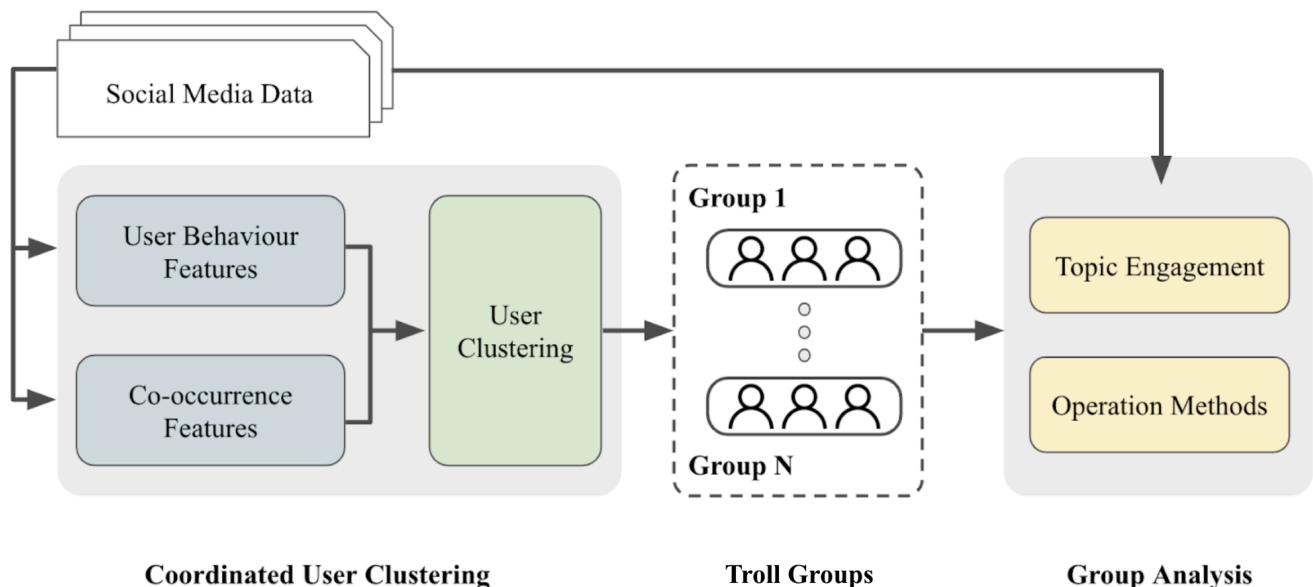
Graph 1: An overview of the coordinated behavior analysis pipeline

Graph 1 depicts the analysis workflow for this report, which consists of three main stages:

- User Feature Extraction: We evaluate and quantify users' behavioral characteristics, converting these traits into user vectors for further analysis.
- User Clustering: Using these user vectors, we create a network of users with similar patterns. We then apply a community detection algorithm to identify groups of highly correlated users, classifying them as collaborative units for closer examination.
- Group Analysis: We explore the tactics and strategies of these collaborative units, focusing on their choice of topics, operational methods, and their tendency to either support or oppose certain entities.

User Feature Extraction

To capture user information on social forums effectively, we propose two feature sets:

User Behaviour Features

Preparing data to highlight user behavior features is essential for deriving significant insights from the dataset, which includes a vast array of details about social media posts (or videos) and user interactions. We gathered a wide variety of raw social media data, subsequently converting it into a structured format with columns that depict various aspects of user behavior. This includes elements like the 'destination of user interactions' (indicated by post_id or video_id), the 'timing of user actions', and the 'domains of links shared by users', among others. These user behavior features will undergo further transformation and structuring to facilitate their use in assessing user similarity and for clustering purposes.

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Co-occurrence Features

Co-occurrence features aim to pinpoint users who often interact with similar topics or engage with identical articles. To quantify these features among users, we utilize Non-Negative Matrix Factorization (NMF), a mathematical method applied in data analysis and for reducing dimensionality. This technique decomposes a given matrix into two or more matrices, ensuring all elements within these matrices are non-negative.

User Clustering

User Similarity Evaluation

After establishing user features, we move to examine the coordinated relationships among users. For behavioral features, we conduct comparisons of various behaviors between pairs of users and scale the results to a range from 0 to 1. For example, regarding the timing of user activities, we document the hours of activity for each user over a week in a 7x24-dimensional matrix. Subsequently, we calculate the cosine similarity between user pairs based on their activity timing matrices.

In terms of co-occurrence features, cosine similarity is also employed to gauge the resemblance between users' co-occurring vectors. This involves calculating the cosine of the angle between these vectors to determine the degree of similarity in users' responses or actions. This method proves particularly effective in social media studies, enabling the grouping of users by shared behavioral patterns. Users exhibiting high cosine similarity are indicative of a closely coordinated behavior pattern, revealing clusters of users with similar interests or engagement habits.

User Clustering

Once we've calculated pairwise similarities among users from their features, we proceed to connect user pairs that exhibit a similarity beyond a set threshold by establishing an edge between them, thus forming a user network. Following the creation of this network, we employ the Infomap algorithm to cluster it. Infomap is a community detection algorithm that identifies structures within networks based on the flow of information. Communities discovered within this network are subsequently classified as troll groups for further analysis in subsequent sections. This method allows us to systematically identify and categorize groups of users exhibiting coordinated behavior patterns, which are indicative of troll activity.

Group Analysis

Opinion Clustering

To effectively decipher the narratives put forth by each user group, we utilized a text clustering approach on the comments made by troll groups. By leveraging a pre-trained text encoder, we transformed each comment into vector form. We then employed a hierarchical clustering algorithm to organize similar posts into cohesive groups. These clustered groups of posts will be analyzed further in subsequent discussions, providing a structured framework to examine and understand the narratives and themes prevalent within troll group communications.

Stance Detection and Narrative Summary

Large Pretrained Language Models have showcased their effectiveness in identifying entities within textual content and providing insightful explanations about them. This functionality aids in grasping the key components of discourse, especially in analyzing the influence of comments and evaluations on these recognized entities.

In our analysis, we utilize Taiwan LLM for text examinations. Taiwan LLM is a substantial language model that has been pre-trained on a corpus predominantly in the native Taiwanese language. It has demonstrated exceptional ability in understanding Traditional Chinese and is particularly adept at identifying and interpreting topics and entities related to Taiwan. Specifically, we employ Taiwan LLM to discern essential topics, entities, and names of organizations mentioned in each comment. Additionally, it evaluates the comment author's perspective towards these entities, classifying their sentiment as positive, neutral, or negative. This method is systematically applied across all clusters of opinions.

Ultimately, we aim to calculate the proportion of each primary topic or entity mentioned within the opinion groups, alongside the percentage of positive or negative sentiment linked with each. Moreover, we generate summaries for each opinion cluster using the language model, which assists data analysts in quickly comprehending the broad overview of the event and the prevailing sentiments within the discourse.

Characteristics and Behaviors of Cross-Platform Troll Groups

During the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, Taiwan AI Labs identified unusual activity from five cross-platform troll groups during several controversial events, including the debate over Trump's immunity, the border policy controversy, conspiracy theories surrounding a Trump assassination attempt, and key moments such as Elon Musk's interview and Walz's appointment as Vice President.

These troll groups generated significant noise and manipulation on their respective platforms, echoing narratives from Chinese and Russian state media. We believe the behavior of these troll groups is not typical and warrants further investigation. Below is a summary of characteristics and behaviors related to these troll groups.

On YouTube, we found that "YouTube@72" consistently dominated each event, with its troll volume always exceeding 20%.

Controversy Surrounding Trump's Immunity	
Troll Group	*Proportion of Troll Volume*
youtube@72	**30.08%**
youtube@168	8.43%
youtube@163	7.59%
youtube@363	6.44%
Controversy Over Border Policy Issues	
youtube@253	21.73%
youtube@72	**17.26%**
youtube@284	8.51%
youtube@168	4.88%
Trump Assassination and Conspiracy	
youtube@72	**19.64%**
youtube@253	16.82%
youtube@226	5.87%
youtube@363	5.1%
Elon Musk interview and Walz becomes vp	
youtube@72	**29.74%**
youtube@253	7.86%

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youtube@163	7.24%
youtube@168	6.98%

Table 1: The Proportion of Troll Group Activity Volume for Each Event on YouTube

On X, we found that "X@10946" consistently dominated each event. Although the troll volume of X@10946 is 2% on average, it still ranked first in most of the main events.

Controversy Surrounding Trump's Immunity	
Troll Group	*Proportion of Troll Volume*
X@10946	**2.46%**
X@10968	1.59%
X@10972	1.06%
X@8489	0.09%
Controversy Over Border Policy Issues	
X@10946	**1.5%**
X@10968	1.02%
X@11224	0.67%
X@8489	0.65%
Trump Assassination and Conspiracy	
X@10946	**0.67%**
X@10600	0.67%
X@11224	0.61%
X@7146	0.55%
Elon Musk interview and Walz becomes vp	
X@10946	**1.01%**
X@10968	0.75%
X@4952	0.72%
X@11224	0.6%

Table 2: The Proportion of Troll Group Activity Volume for Each Event on X

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On Facebook, we found that "Facebook@70033" consistently dominated each event, with its troll volume always exceeding 17%.

Controversy Surrounding Trump's Immunity	
Troll Group	**Proportion of Troll Volume**
facebook@70033	**22.26%**
facebook@70016	9.79%
facebook@70032	8.17%
facebook@70042	3.74%
Controversy Over Border Policy Issues	
facebook@70033	**18.41%**
facebook@70016	10.73%
facebook@70032	7.56%
facebook@70042	2.86%
Trump Assassination and Conspiracy	
facebook@70033	**16.31%**
facebook@70032	10.11%
facebook@70016	9.18%
facebook@1814	3.51%
Elon Musk interview and Walz becomes vp	
facebook@70033	**17.21%**
facebook@70032	11.8%
facebook@70016	8.34%
facebook@8207	4.88%

Table 3: The Proportion of Troll Group Activity Volume for Each Event on Facebook

On TikTok, we found that "TikTok@144" consistently dominated each event, with its troll volume always exceeding 13%.

Controversy Surrounding Trump's Immunity	
Troll Group	**Proportion of Troll Volume**

tiktok@144	**13.22%**
tiktok@109	11.66%
tiktok@106	11.18%
tiktok@86	8.53%
Controversy Over Border Policy Issues	
tiktok@144	**11.87%**
tiktok@109	9.95%
tiktok@106	9.95%
tiktok@33	9.25%
Trump Assassination and Conspiracy	
tiktok@144	**13.17%**
tiktok@125	10.39%
tiktok@109	9.44%
tiktok@49	6.95%
Elon Musk interview and Walz becomes vp	
tiktok@144	**16.52%**
tiktok@86	8.55%
tiktok@109	7.98%
tiktok@106	7.41%

Table 4: The Proportion of Troll Group Activity Volume for Each Event on TikTok

Based on the data and rankings of troll volumes mentioned above, we conclude that YouTube @72, X @10946, Facebook @70033, TikTok @144 are the most active troll groups in this U.S. election. Weibo demonstrated particularly significant troll volume but in separate small and distinct troll groups to avoid tracking. Weibo is highly cooperative with the state's policy, therefore we treat the collaborative behavior as a whole for Weibo platform.

Major Timeline and Most Representable Battlefields

Taiwan AI Labs, through its Infodemic platform, conducted monthly analyses to identify key events from October 2023 to November 2024, after the U.S. presidential election.

During October 2023 to June 2024, the troll discussion was relatively low-key, mainly focusing on Trump's immunity controversies and Biden's health issue, along with YouTube @72 and X @10946

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dominating the discussion. However, in July 2024, cross-platform troll manipulation started to escalate, Facebook @70033, TikTok @144, and Weibo trolls all participated in the discussion.

The period of July was dominated by discussions on Trump's hush money trial, immunity controversies, assassination attempt and Biden's withdrawal. August saw intense discussions on Walz becoming Democratic VP candidate and Trump's live interview with Musk on X. In September, Putin's endorsement of Harris and RT's potential interference in the election became the central topics. In October, the focus shifted to domestic issues, such as the Biden administration's crisis response during hurricane Helene and statements regarding Harris's health. In November, pre-election, China's potential interference in the election drew attention from trolls. Post-election, Biden's commitment to peacefully transfer power to Trump became a key focus of manipulation.

October 2023 to June 2024: Trump's Immunity Issue, Biden's Health Issue, Border, Immigration and Abortion Issues

Date	Top Troll Participated Battlefields
October to December 2023	● Trump says US presidents immune from charges, in challenge to election case ● Biden turns 81 as worries about his age weigh on re-election prospects
January to March 2024	● Trump does not have immunity from Jan. 6 prosecution, appeals court rules ● Republicans asked for a border security bill. Do they still want it?
April to June 2024	● Mike Pence calls Trump's abortion position 'a slap in the face' ● The Latest | Closing arguments in Trump's hush money trial could stretch into the evening

Table 5: Analyzed top events of the U.S. Presidential Election from October 2023 to June 2024
(from https://infodemic.cc)

From October 2023 to June 2024, election-related issues were relatively subdued, with troll groups focusing on key topics such as Trump's immunity, Biden's health, border, immigration, and abortion. YouTube @72 and X @10946 targeted judicial controversies—like delays in Trump's hush money case and the Supreme Court's partial immunity ruling—to undermine trust in the judiciary and democracy. They amplified narratives mocking U.S. candidates as "old men and criminals," echoing Chinese state media, and heightened concerns about candidates' cognitive abilities to erode confidence in American leadership.

On domestic issues, troll groups exploited U.S.-Mexico border debates, highlighting Trump's unfulfilled promises and using terms like "racial discrimination" and "social division" to fuel polarization. On X and Weibo, they promoted Texas independence, advocated for gun purchases to defend "sovereignty," and stoked tensions with claims of Chinese interference and historical grievances—tactics reminiscent of their COVID-19-era strategies. Similarly, abortion debates were weaponized to attack the judiciary and deepen partisan divides, further destabilizing public trust and exacerbating political conflict.

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July 2024: Trump Assassination Attempt

Date	Top Troll Participated Battlefields (accumulated %)
July 2024	- Trump Hush Money & Immunity Issues (10.86%) - Trump Assassination Attempt (15.95%) - Democratic Primary Developments: Donor Advocates for Change; Harris Secures Nomination Support (21.42%) - Harris Joins Presidential Race as Biden Withdraws (43.74%)

The number associated with each event represents the cumulative volume of troll activity.
Table 6: Analyzed top events of the US Presidential Election in July, 2024
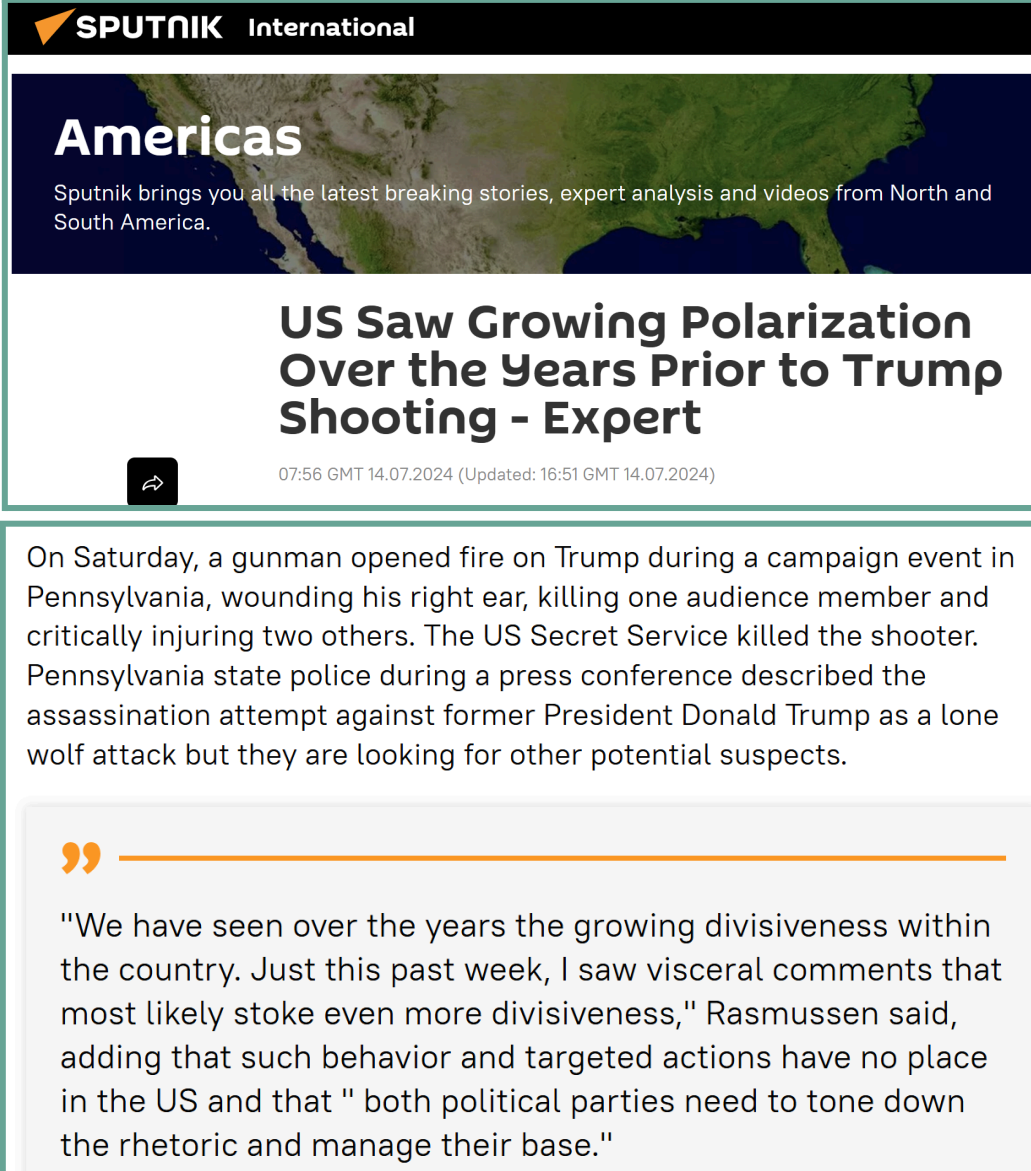(from https://infodemic.cc)

In July, the "Trump assassination attempt" narrative led to a surge in troll group activity, closely aligning with Russian state media narratives. Troll groups such as Facebook @70033 and TikTok @144, in coordination with state media, reinforced divisive narratives, exacerbating societal polarization and intensifying discussions around political violence in the U.S.

Russian state media Sputnik emphasized the assassination attempt as evidence of deepening societal polarization in the U.S. and warning that inflammatory rhetoric from both parties could escalate tensions to the level of civil war. TASS further supported this stance, quoting Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, who accused Washington of fostering a culture of hatred toward political opponents.

Facebook @70033 and TikTok @144 were particularly active, echoing and amplifying divisive themes. Facebook @70033 accused Trump of staging the event as part of a Deep State conspiracy and implicated the Democrats, while TikTok @144 intensified attacks on Trump, claiming he orchestrated the shooting due to bribes from Putin and using extreme terms like "civil war" and "murder" to inflame fears of political violence.

Beyond the main troll groups, we also analyzed troll activities across entire social media platforms. In July, TikTok experienced a sharp increase in negative attacks on Trump, fueled by controversies surrounding his partial immunity and recent shootings. All TikTok troll groups amplified these criticisms,

portraying Trump as a "liar," "criminal," and "selfish" figure manipulating the judiciary for personal gain. Extreme labels such as "Nazi," "Hitler," and "fascist" framed him as anti-democratic or dictatorial, while his supporters were derided as "blind" or "zombie-like." These tactics heightened online polarization, highlighting the significant role of TikTok's troll groups in shaping divisive narratives.

Americas

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US Saw Growing Polarization Over the Years Prior to Trump Shooting - Expert

07:56 GMT 14.07.2024 (Updated: 16:51 GMT 14.07.2024)

On Saturday, a gunman opened fire on Trump during a campaign event in Pennsylvania, wounding his right ear, killing one audience member and critically injuring two others. The US Secret Service killed the shooter. Pennsylvania state police during a press conference described the assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump as a lone wolf attack but they are looking for other potential suspects.

"We have seen over the years the growing divisiveness within the country. Just this past week, I saw visceral comments that most likely stoke even more divisiveness," Rasmussen said, adding that such behavior and targeted actions have no place in the US and that " both political parties need to tone down the rhetoric and manage their base."

Graph 2: Sputnik outlets regarding U.S. growing polarization prior to Trump shooting (from https://sputnikglobe.com/20240714/us-saw-growing-polarization-over-the-years-prior-to-trump-shooting---expert-1119369310.html)

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US Secret Service Suspiciously Slow in Protecting Trump – Psyop Veteran

10:21 GMT 14.07.2024 (Updated: 16:51 GMT 14.07.2024)

Deepening Polarization Within US Society

The shooting appears to have deepened the rift within the already polarized US society .

> "In the process of this assassination attempt the shooter has unified, inspired and emboldened the Republican conservative, moderate patriot voting bloc in America to stand with Trump and to villainize and demonize all those politicians and media and other groups that dislike him or vilify him," the expert noted.

Graph 3: Sputnik outlets regarding the deepening polarization within U.S. society (from https://sputnikglobe.com/20240714/us-secret-service-suspiciously-slow-in-protecting-trump--psyop-veteran-1119369439.html)

TASS RUSSIAN NEWS AGENCY

DONALD TRUMP ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT   14 JUL, 15:59

US fostering hatred toward political opponents — Russian MFA after Trump rally shooting

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> MOSCOW, July 14. /TASS/. Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova noted after the attempted assassination of former US President Donald Trump that Washington encourages fostering of hatred toward its political opponents.
>
> "Two months ago, I paid attention to the fact that the US was literally fostering hatred toward political opponents, as well as provided examples of the American tradition of attempts and assassinations of presidents and presidential candidates," she wrote on her Telegram channel citing her post about the history of attempted assassinations of American politicians.

Graph 4: TASS outlets regarding U.S. fostering hatred toward political opponents

(from https://tass.com/politics/1816753)

August 2024: Walz Became VP Candidate & Trump-Elon Interview on X

Date	Top Troll Participated Battlefields (accumulated %)
August 2024	• Donald Trump's proposal for two additional debates with Kamala Harris after Tim Walz became her running mate (25%) • A live interview between Elon Musk and Trump on X (45%) • A CNN interview with Harris and Walz after the Democratic National Convention (63%)

The number associated with each battlefield represents the cumulative volume of troll activities.
Table 7: Analyzed top battlefields of the U.S. Presidential Election in August, 2024
(from https://infodemic.cc)

State media and troll groups coordinated narratives around "Walz as Democratic VP candidate" and the "Trump-Musk interview on X" to amplify anti-Western, anti-Semitic themes. These efforts blended conspiracy theories and divisive rhetoric to delegitimize U.S. democracy, stoke societal divisions, and erode public trust, fostering fragmentation within the American electorate.
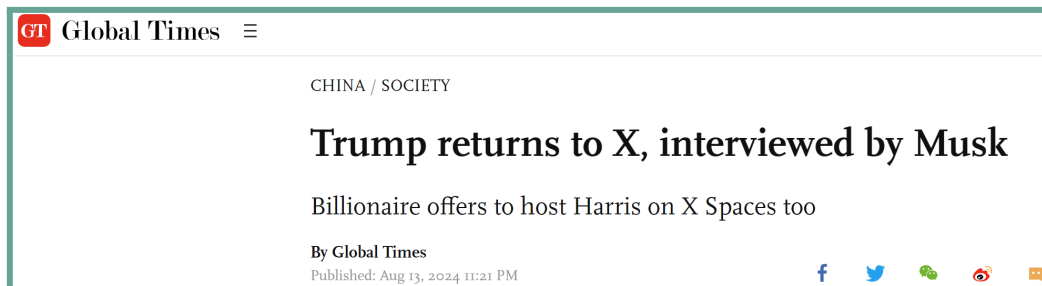
First, in the Walz case, Chinese state media Ta Kung Pao promoted anti-Semitic conspiracies, alleging Jewish dominance over U.S. politics, finance, and media, and accusing Biden of favoring Israel due to campaign donations from pro-Israel groups.

These state narratives were echoed by troll groups: X @10946 accused Harris of colluding with Jewish interests to damage her credibility, while Weibo trolls spread anti-Semitic stereotypes, stoking racial and social divisions and framing Jewish influence as a threat to American democracy.

Second, troll strategies during the "Trump-Musk interview on X" mirrored state media themes, particularly those from Chinese state media Global Times. The outlet highlighted the DDoS attack and

credited China's XLab for detecting it, casting Western nations as sources of global cyber threats and boosting China's image as a responsible cybersecurity leader. X @10946 praised Musk's handling of the attack, presenting X as a fair platform in contrast to broader criticisms.

Moreover, troll groups used the incident to frame Trump and Musk as authoritarian threats. Facebook @70033 used a fear-based strategy, portraying Trump and Musk as existential threats to democracy, minorities, and the middle class. Trump was framed as a corrupt authoritarian aligned with Russia, while Musk was depicted as inciting civil unrest. Similarly, TikTok @144 intensified polarization by portraying Trump as a traitor allied with authoritarian regimes, emphasizing his ties to Russia.

GT Global Times ☰

CHINA / SOCIETY

Trump returns to X, interviewed by Musk

Billionaire offers to host Harris on X Spaces too

By Global Times
Published: Aug 13, 2024 11:21 PM

The online event, which was delayed 40 minutes after Musk cited a "DDOS attack" on X's servers, lasted nearly two hours.

XLab, one of the largest cybersecurity company in China, said that using its large-scale threat perception system promptly, it detected the recent attack targeting the X platform.

Gong Yiming, head of the laboratory, said they observed that four Mirai botnet controllers were involved in this attack. Additionally, other attack groups also participated using reflection attacks, HTTP proxy attacks, and other methods.

Monitoring data indicates that the four botnet controllers launched at least 34 waves of DDoS attacks. The four command servers were primarily located in the UK, Germany and Canada. The attack period coincides with the delay in the interview start time, XLab said in its official WeChat account.

Graph 5: Global Times outlets regarding the DDoS attack targeting X
(from https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202408/1317975.shtml)

September 2024: Putin's Endorsement of Harris & RT alleged for Interfering in the Election

Date	Top Troll Participated Battlefields (accumulated %)
September 2024	- U.S. accuses Russian propaganda outlet RT of interference in 2024 election (12%) - Putin claims to prefer Harris over Trump (35%) - GOP strategist says Trump's false pet-eating claims at debate only hurt him (50%)

The number associated with each battlefield represents the cumulative volume of troll activities.
Table 8: Analyzed top battlefields of the U.S. Presidential Election in September, 2024
(from https://infodemic.cc)

In September, foreign influence operations and troll strategies aligned around two key events: "Russia alleged for interfering in the election" and "Putin's sarcastic endorsement of Harris." Both Russian and Chinese state media employed three main tactics: portraying Trump and Harris as "colluding with Russia," downplaying the impact of foreign interference, and using sarcasm to undermine U.S. electoral legitimacy.

Following the U.S. government's accusations against Russian state media RT for election interference, the Russian Ambassador criticized the sanctions as part of a "Russophobic" agenda and an effort to suppress Russian viewpoints. RT also framed Putin's endorsement of Harris as "trolling," while Chinese outlets like Xinhua and Reference News amplified this narrative.

All five troll groups echoed these strategies across platforms. YouTube @72 depicted Trump and Harris as Putin's puppets, mocking the Republican Party as Russian pawns and portraying Harris as a Russian spy. Facebook @70033 amplified Putin's support for Harris, mocking her as unfit for office and suggesting Putin backed her because a female-led U.S. would be weak. X @10946 dismissed concerns of Russian interference as a "Democratic hoax" and shifted focus to the "Hunter Biden laptop" controversy, framing the Democrats as aligned with China. TikTok @144 targeted Trump, labeling him a corrupt fraud controlled by Putin, while mocking his debate claims and avoiding further debates with Harris. Weibo trolls used sarcasm to downplay Russian interference concerns, emphasizing Putin's support for both Trump and Harris, further sowing discord around the "Trump-Russia collusion" narrative.

RT QUESTION MORE ⚡ Trump 'hasn't changed' his mind after Zelensky meeting | Russia-Ukraine conflict

Russia & Former Soviet Union | **World News** | Business | India | Africa | RT Features

5 Sep, 2024 11:22 / Home / World News

US trying to 'cleanse' media space of 'inconvenient truth' – Moscow

New sanctions confirm Washington's Russophobic stance, Ambassador Anatoly Antonov has said

> *Their goal is clear – to cleanse the information space of inconvenient truth. To thicken the atmosphere of Russophobia, blaming one's own failures on external factors.*

"The [US] administration has made another attack against Russia. Its Russophobic policy has been confirmed, and is unlikely to change in the future," Antonov said at a press-briefing.
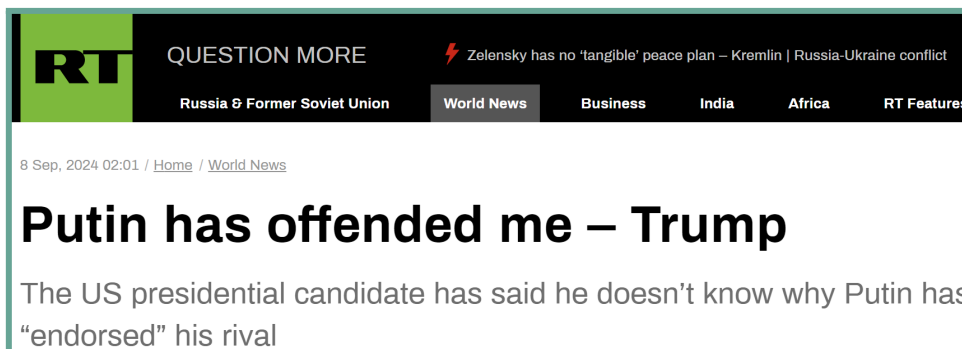
"In essence, [US] officials are giving additional impetus to the aggressive phase of the witch hunt against dissent," he added.

READ MORE: US Justice Department reveals legal action against RT

The diplomat argued that the latest sanctions are an attempt by the US Democrats *"to shift some of the blame for their mistakes during the electoral struggle to Russia."*

"To justify their actions, they are using lies, trying to discredit Russian media, which provide a small sip of the truth on American politics," Antonov stated.

Graph 6: Key Points from RT Outlets
(from https://www.rt.com/news/603554-us-sanctions-russian-media-antonov/)

RT QUESTION MORE ⚡ Zelensky has no 'tangible' peace plan – Kremlin | Russia-Ukraine conflict

Russia & Former Soviet Union | **World News** | Business | India | Africa | RT Features

8 Sep, 2024 02:01 / Home / World News

Putin has offended me – Trump

The US presidential candidate has said he doesn't know why Putin has "endorsed" his rival

"Oh no, it's Russia, Russia, Russia all over again," Trump said, insisting that the conflict in Ukraine would never have happened if he was president at the time.

"I knew Putin. I knew him well. And you know, he endorsed – I don't know if you saw the other day – he endorsed Kamala," Trump continued. "I was very offended by that. I wonder why he endorsed Kamala." He described Putin as "a chess player" and said he was wondering if he had spoken about Harris "with a smile."

Some American news organizations, including CNN, have suggested that the Russian leader was "simply trolling" Harris. Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, declined to clarify what the president meant, saying that US domestic politics was not a priority issue for the Kremlin.

Read more: Putin backs Kamala Harris (VIDEO)

Graph 7: Key Points from RT Outlets
(from https://www.rt.com/news/603671-putin-offended-me-trump/)

环球网 国际新闻 > 环球独家

俄媒：普京讽刺称在美国大选中"支持"哈里斯，"惹恼"白宫

来源：环球网 作者：索炎琦

-2024-
09/06
18:16

【环球网报道】据俄罗斯塔斯社、土耳其阿纳多卢通讯社报道，对于俄总统普京5日讽刺称俄方在美国大选中"支持"美副总统、民主党总统候选人哈里斯一事，白宫国家安全委员会战略沟通协调员约翰·柯比同日晚些时候作出回应，要求普京"停止谈论"美国大选。对于美方这一反应，塔斯社在报道标题中评论称，这是"普京对美国大选的讽刺言论惹恼了白宫"。

Graph 8: Key Points from Huanqiu Outlets
(from https://world.huanqiu.com/article/4JKWKv0j2wv)

观察者   首页   风闻   财经   国际   军事   观出行   公司   科技   城事   视频 |

普京笑称支持哈里斯，特朗普回应

房佶宜

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2024-09-06 09:13:13   字号：A- A A+   来源：观察者网   阅读 93876

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据"今日俄罗斯"（RT）报道，当地时间9月5日，在纽约经济俱乐部的活动中，特朗普表示，"他（普京）支持卡玛拉，我不知道我是否应该打电话给他说'非常感谢'……我不知道该说什么。我不知道我是被侮辱了，还是他帮了我的忙。"

对于普京的表态，美国白宫国家安全委员会发言人约翰·柯比回应称，俄罗斯总统应该避免讨论美国总统大选。

当地时间9月5日，普京在东方经济论坛全体会议上表示，对于下一任美国总统的热门人选，俄罗斯没有发言权，这取决于美国人民的选择，俄罗斯予以尊重。

他随后笑称："我说过，我们支持现任总统拜登，他现在退出了竞选，但他呼吁所有支持者继续支持哈里斯，因此我们会照做，我们将支持她（哈里斯）。"

普京补充称，哈里斯的笑"是如此富有表现力和感染力"，据此判断她表现得不错。

Graph 9: Key Points from Reference News Outlets
(from https://www.guancha.cn/internation/2024_09_06_747451.shtml)

October to November 2024: Allegation of China's interference in the Election, Biden's commitment to shift power peacefully & Border and Immigration Issues

Date	Top Troll Participated Battlefields (accumulated %)
October to November 2024	- Kamala Harris in 'excellent health' — medical report (13%) - Biden administration's crisis response during hurricane Helene (32%) - Accusation of Harris's border policies (43%) - Allegation of China's interference in the election (51%) - Biden's commitment to shift power peacefully (60%)

The number associated with each battlefield represents the cumulative volume of troll activities.
Table 9: Analyzed top battlefields of the U.S. Presidential Election between October and November, 2024
(from https://infodemic.cc)

From late October to early November, following the election results, Weibo troll groups intensified their activity. On the topic of "allegation of China's interference in the election," they propagated narratives that U.S. society would descend into chaos and decline regardless of the winner, aiming to discredit democratic elections and deepen societal divisions. Regarding "Biden's commitment to shift power peacefully," they mocked Biden for his sudden post-election "intelligence recovery" while blaming his withdrawal for Harris's defeat.

Notably, "border and immigration issues" were also hotly debated topics in the U.S. election. We found that troll groups exploited these issues to fuel political polarization. YouTube @72 accused Trump and the Republicans of using the border crisis as a political tool, framing Trump as sabotaging bipartisan solutions for personal gain. Facebook @70033 criticized the Biden-Harris administration for allegedly misusing FEMA funds to support illegal immigrants at the expense of disaster victims, while also accusing Trump of similar self-serving actions. These narratives aimed to portray both parties as ineffective and self-interested regarding immigration and border policies.

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Main Troll Groups Exploit Foreign Issues to Manipulate U.S. Election

Alongside U.S.-related issues, main troll groups also targeted foreign issues like NATO, EU tariffs, and U.S.-China relations to influence Western alliances and promote China's image. Below is a detailed analysis of how these groups exploit foreign issues to manipulate the U.S. election.

Main Troll Group: X @10946

X @10946, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on X, with 984 accounts participating in 4,655 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
984	4,655	1,620

Table 10: Summary of X @10946 (from https://infodemic.cc/zh-hant/collab/X@10946)

Manipulated Strategies

X @10946 not only targeted U.S. election issues but also manipulated the narrative around Trump's threats to reduce support for NATO allies in February 2024, echoing Russian state media. The aim was to weaken confidence in the U.S.'s commitment to NATO security and further sow distrust within the democratic alliance. Notably, in this issue, X @10946 did not yet reveal its support for Trump but instead criticized him for disregarding NATO members' interests and emphasized his pro-Russia image.

Entity	X @10946 Troll Narratives Regarding the NATO-Russia Issue
Trump –	- Trump suggests he'd disregard NATO treaty, urge Russian attacks on allies The Republican front-runner said he encouraged Russia to "do whatever the hell they want" to member countries. @CoffeyTimeNews Totally worse than plunging the world into complete chaos because Trump is Putin's lap dog. @hplem He is asking for help from our enemies to win the election - Trump saying he would support Putin attack on NATO is astonishing - He's a traitor to all who have laid down their lives to safeguard democracy! https://t.co/75Owl5llc9

Table 11: Key Narratives Overview of X @10946 Regarding the NATO-Russia Issue
(from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/X@10946)

Main Troll Group: YouTube @72

YouTube @72, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on YouTube, with 4,355 accounts participating in 6,454 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
4,355	6,454	3,490

Table 12: Summary of Youtube @72 (from https://infodemic.cc/zh-hant/collab/youtube@72)

Manipulated Strategies

We also observed that YouTube @72, in addition to manipulating U.S. election issues, also targeted the EU's tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles in June. They mirrored the narratives of Chinese state media in criticizing U.S. tariffs on China, focusing on the negative impact of these tariffs on U.S. consumers and local industries, with the aim of undermining trust in Western democracies. YouTube @72 claimed the U.S. manipulated the EU to confront China, aiming to undermine trust in Western alliances, and portraying the U.S. as using the EU to advance its own interests against China.
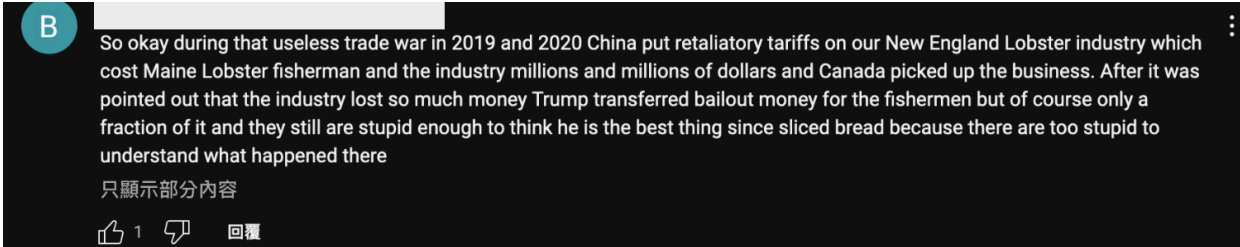
Graph 10: The troll account mocks tariffs, noting China's retaliation hurt Maine's lobster industry while Canada benefited, yet supporters still praise Trump.

Entity	YouTube @72 Troll Narratives Regarding the EV Tariff Issue
U.S. tariff issue –	- The Chinese will have to be careful when the USA tells Europe to become confrontational with China. The US never saw the EU as an allie but as a competitor so set out to hamstring it. - don The BIG CON 🐼 put tariffs on China but We The People Paid For It because all China did was raised the price it cost of goods on to the USA People for the tariffs. - Trump thinks tariffs are a great idea! he thinks the supplier pays them, not the consumer ! - Trump does still think tariffs are paid by the other country. - The Walton Family simply passed those Tariffs off to the customers who shop at their Chinese Distribution Centers. - Hundreds of billions paid by the American people. Learn how tariffs work.
Trump –	- Trump is working for putin to betray you CEO and give putin anything Trump really told the world that he will give putin anything he wants - tRump is already acting like a dictator. 😂 - The entire Traitor Donald J Trump clown show is rigged to manipulate his followers. He has no plans that actually help Americans. His insanity is on full view and cannot handle this country. He has no plan.. - North Korea,,closed borders,, Russia,, China,closed border's,, and this is what MAGA wants 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁳󠁣󠁴󠁿🇺🇸🙏💙

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	- I'm going to assume Elon did. Not sure if he's on the Fortune 500 but i would assume he is. Trumps economic plannis economic suicide. Tell me again how he isn't a Russian plant. He's doing Putins work for him as usual. *ALL CONVICTED FELONS BUSINESS INTERESTS LIE IN SELLING THE UNITED STATES TOP SECRET DOCUMENTS. TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS!. IE; RUSSIA, CHINA & NORTH KOREA!. **#FACTS* - All of Trump's merch is made in Chyna. They have found that trump pocketed 8 million dollars from Chyna and Russia while he was in office. Trump loves China.

Table 13: Key Narratives Overview of YouTube @72 Regarding the EV Tariff Issue
(from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/youtube@72)

Weibo Trolls Overall

Manipulated Strategies

We observed that Weibo troll groups, in addition to influencing the U.S. election narrative, engaged in June with the issue of the EU imposing tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles. Their goal was to criticize U.S. fears over China's EV development and externalize China's economic problems, highlighting U.S. malicious competition and suppression of China. Chinese state media and Weibo trolls argued that both Trump and Biden's tariff policies mainly harm U.S. domestic consumers, especially the middle class, rather than China. Given that the middle class is a key voting group in the 2024 U.S. election, these narratives aim to stir discontent and skepticism towards U.S. leaders, deepening political polarization and eroding public trust in the government.

芒果干我喜欢吃321 🟠金粉2 :他们嫉妒中国新能源汽车的崛起
24-6-12 21:22 来自黑龙江

廖睿:其实关税也很难阻挡中国新能源汽车去占领欧洲市场。
24-6-16 00:06 来自四川

Graph 11: The troll accounts highlight U.S. malicious competition and suppression of China, promoting China's new energy vehicles.

Main Troll Group: Facebook @70033

Facebook @70033, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on Facebook, with 385 accounts participating in 14,148 stories recently.

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Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
385	14,148	2,032

Table 14: Summary of Facebook @70033 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/facebook@70033)

Manipulated Strategies

Based on our further analysis, in February, Facebook @70033 engaged in information manipulation concerning foreign affairs, specifically targeting Trump's statement about imposing tariffs on China if re-elected. According to Chinese state media South China Morning Post, Trump proposed tariffs exceeding 60% on China while denying any intentions of initiating a new trade war.

Facebook @70033 then leveraged this topic to criticize Trump by accusing his business, "TRUMP Ent.," of operating clothing factories in China and profiting from selling PPE during the pandemic. These accusations highlighted potential hypocrisy, aiming to undermine Trump's credibility, especially given his previously strong anti-China rhetoric. The group further sought to weaken Trump's narrative by pointing out that Black unemployment during the Biden administration has been lower than during the Trump administration, using this as an argument against Trump's economic leadership.

Graph 12: The troll accounts expose hypocrisy in Trump's anti-China rhetoric, citing his business ties to China, and weakening his economic credibility by highlighting lower Black unemployment under Biden.

Main Troll Group: TikTok @144

TikTok @144, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on TikTok, with 292 accounts participating in 1,329 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
292	1,329	146

Table 15: Summary of TikTok @144 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/tiktok@144)

Manipulated Strategies

In addition to the U.S. election, we have also observed TikTok @144 engaging in discussions on international issues. For example, regarding the U.S. Senate's aid bill for Ukraine and Israel in February, we found that the strategies of Russian state media and TikTok @144 demonstrate a certain resonance. Both criticized the allocation of resources to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan while neglecting domestic issues like the southern border, aiming to deepen dissatisfaction with U.S. foreign policy.

Russian state media focused on fostering skepticism toward Democratic lawmakers, portraying them as elites disconnected from public needs. In contrast, TikTok @144 avoided targeting a specific party, instead broadly criticizing the government's alleged misuse of American taxpayers' money. Both strategies seek to deepen divisions within U.S. society by framing the government as prioritizing international concerns over domestic issues.

Additional Findings

In addition to the main troll groups mentioned above, we found further evidence of troll activities linked to foreign influence during the election period. Upon closer observation, YouTube @72002 and X@3778 were identified as having connections with foreign entities. These accounts engaged in discussions centered on the Ukraine-Russia war and the Israel-Palestine conflict, openly criticizing U.S.-aligned countries such as Ukraine, Israel, and NATO, while expressing support for Russia and China.
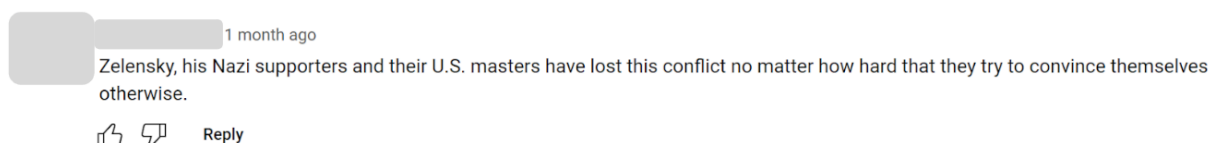
YouTube Troll Group: YouTube @72002

Troll Accounts	Overall Operated Stories	Target entities
27	1,507	332

Table 16: Summary of YouTube @72002 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/youtube%4072002)

YouTube @72002 initially focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict and the Ukraine-Russia war, later shifting its focus to influence the U.S. presidential election. The group amplified divisive narratives and promoted anti-Western sentiments, accusing Israel of "genocide" and the U.S. of prioritizing Israeli interests over human rights. It framed the Biden-Harris administration as a "vassal state" and portrayed the U.S. as instigating a proxy war in Ukraine through NATO.

In the context of the Ukraine-Russia war, YouTube @72002 labeled Zelensky as a "Nazi" and depicted Russia as defending against Western hegemony. The group also enhanced the image of China and Russia, emphasizing their cooperation against Western sanctions and highlighting perceived economic failures in the West. These strategies sought to undermine Western alliances and bolster the legitimacy of authoritarian states.

1 month ago

Zelensky, his Nazi supporters and their U.S. masters have lost this conflict no matter how hard that they try to convince themselves otherwise.

👍 👎 Reply

Graph 13: YouTube @72002 used the term "Nazi" to describe Zelensky and his supporters.

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X Troll Group: X@3778

Troll Accounts	Overall Operated Stories	Target entities
219	1,768	335

Table 17: Summary of X@3778 (from https://infodemic.cc/zh-hant/collab/X%403778)

X@3778 consistently supported Russia and Putin, promoting pro-Russia narratives while undermining Western alliances and leadership. The group criticized Zelensky, NATO, and the U.S. government, accused the West of instigating the Ukraine-Russia conflict, and mocked U.S. leaders with Nazi references. It also targeted Israel and the Democratic government while maintaining a friendly stance toward Trump and China, reinforcing anti-U.S. and pro-Russia sentiments across various events.

The group employed strategies to discredit U.S. leadership in both geopolitical and domestic discussions. It supported Tucker Carlson's February proposal to interview Putin, framing NATO and the U.S. as aggressors provoking Russia. Additionally, it attacked Biden's mental fitness, criticized the Department of Justice for double standards, and mocked immigration policies while advocating for Biden's impeachment. Following the September assassination attempt on Trump, it blamed MSNBC for brainwashing the attacker and linked the incident to U.S. involvement in the Ukraine war, further accusing Harris of escalating global conflicts.
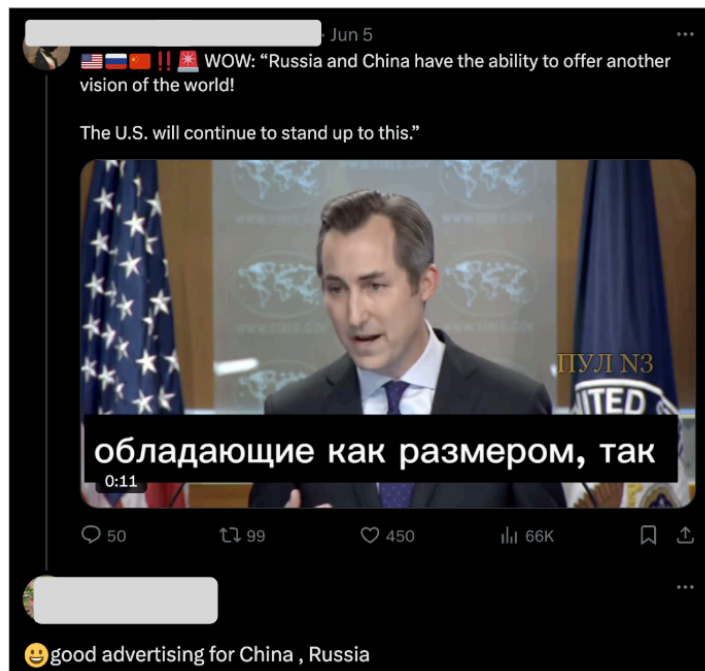
Graph 14: X@3778 maintained a friendly stance toward China, Russia

Key Learnings

1. ## Dominant Troll Group Echo Authoritarian State-Affiliated Media: A Synchronized Campaign to Undermine Democracy

   During the 2024 U.S. election, state media and troll groups deployed coordinated narratives criticizing American democracy while demonstrating authoritarian behaviors. This strategy manifested through three main channels: Russian state media (Sputnik, RT, TASS), Chinese state media (Global Times, Ta Kung Pao), and cross-platform troll groups. The operation systematically amplified themes of U.S. political instability and democratic weakness, particularly during key events like Trump's assassination attempt and RT's election interference allegations. Troll groups, notably Facebook @70033 and TikTok @144, echoed state media narratives by promoting themes of civil unrest and societal collapse. These groups strategically used terms like "civil war" and "Deep State conspiracy" to intensify fears of political violence. Meanwhile, X @10946 and Weibo trolls focused on delegitimizing U.S. institutions by spreading conspiracy theories and anti-democratic narratives. This coordinated effort revealed a sophisticated operation where authoritarian states criticized democratic processes while themselves engaging in manipulative practices to undermine electoral integrity.

2. ## Foreign Trolls Force EV Policy Reversal Through Middle-Class Pressure

   Foreign influence operations leveraged the EV tariff dispute as a strategic tool to influence middle-class voter sentiment during the election period. Chinese state media and coordinated troll groups, particularly YouTube @72 and Weibo trolls, developed a sophisticated narrative framework targeting economic anxieties. Their strategy focused on portraying U.S. tariff policies as self-destructive, emphasizing negative impacts on American consumers and industries. YouTube @72, with its 4,355 accounts, specifically amplified messages about tariffs harming U.S. economic interests. Weibo trolls synchronized with state media to emphasize how both Trump and Biden's policies primarily damaged middle-class Americans rather than Chinese interests. This narrative strategy deliberately targeted the middle class as a key voting demographic, aiming to deepen political polarization and erode trust in government economic policy during the election cycle.

3. ## Trolls Amplify Racist Narratives to Manipulate U.S. Racial Divides

   Racial issues have always been a critical concern for the American public, and we found that troll groups leveraged anti-Semitic narratives to deepen racial divides in U.S. society. In August 2024, state media and troll groups amplified such narratives surrounding Tim Walz's VP candidacy. Chinese state media promoted conspiracy theories about Jewish dominance in U.S. politics and accused Biden of favoring Israel due to pro-Israel campaign donations. Troll groups echoed these themes: X @10946 accused Harris of colluding with Jewish interests, while Weibo trolls spread anti-Semitic stereotypes, portraying Jewish influence as a threat to American democracy.

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4. Foreign-Influenced Troll Groups Leading the Media Narrative

AI Labs conducted an analysis of troll group activity surrounding major events related to presidential candidates between October 1, 2023, and November 5, 2024. The findings reveal that during each event, a dominant troll group leveraged its influence to sway regular social media users.

As highlighted in Tables 1 to 4, troll groups such as "YouTube@72," "X@10964," "Facebook@70033," and "TikTok@144" dominate discussions on various events. Beyond the U.S. Presidential election, these troll groups influence unrelated global narratives. For instance, "X@10964" shaped discourse around Trump's February 2024 comments threatening to reduce NATO support, aligning with Russian state media. "YouTube@72" extended its focus to the EU's tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles in June. "Facebook@70033" targeted Trump's statements about imposing tariffs on China if re-elected. Meanwhile, "TikTok@144" engaged in broader international discussions, such as the U.S. Senate's aid bill for Ukraine and Israel in February.

The analysis indicates that the dominant troll groups in each event are closely linked to foreign influences, leveraging their reach to manipulate public perceptions.

5. TikTok Troll Groups Aggressively Attack Trump and Blindly Support Biden to Continue Democratic Chaos

Unlike the criticism of Trump seen on platforms like X and Facebook, TikTok has persistently attacked Trump over various controversies, such as the hush money scandal in April and May, and the assassination attempt in July. Through intense and provocative language, the platform's users have continually attacked Trump's character, actions, and his supporters.

Criticism of Trump primarily focuses on portraying him in a negative light, labeling him as a "liar," "criminal," and "extremely selfish individual." He has also been accused of manipulating the Supreme Court to advance his personal political agenda, with the judiciary system viewed as being politicized as a result. Furthermore, terms like "**Nazi**," "**Hitler**," and "**fascist**" are frequently used to attack Trump, portraying him as a symbol of anti-democracy or even a dictatorial leader. Trump's supporters are similarly targeted, often described as "blind followers" or "zombie-like followers."

In addition to these aggressive attacks on Trump, TikTok troll groups demonstrate blind support for Biden, painting him as the "greatest president in history." Such exaggerated praise pretends to be rational support but is full of emotional and irrational arguments.

TikTok troll groups use intense and irrational emotions to persistently target Trump and portray him as a traitor. Additionally, these aggressive narratives are often accompanied by blind praise for Biden. Upon deeper analysis, it is believed that these troll narratives are designed to confuse voters about the candidates, creating cognitive disarray among the electorate.
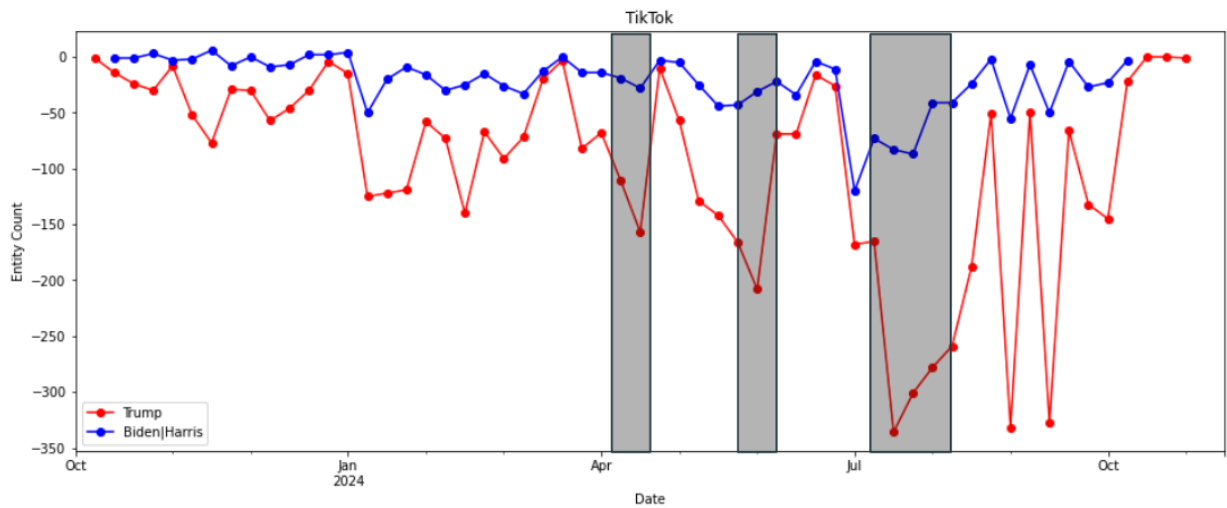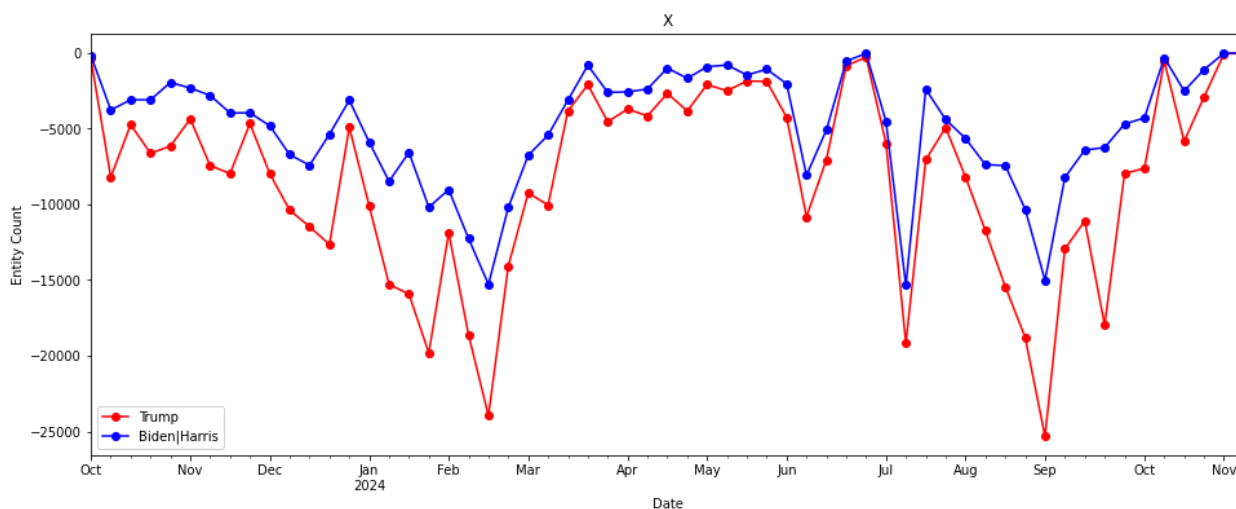
Each point represents the net total for the respective entity on a given day, calculated as the positive quantity (Entity[+]) minus the negative quantity (Entity[−]).

Graph 13: The trend changes in the operations of key figures in the presidential election on TikTok
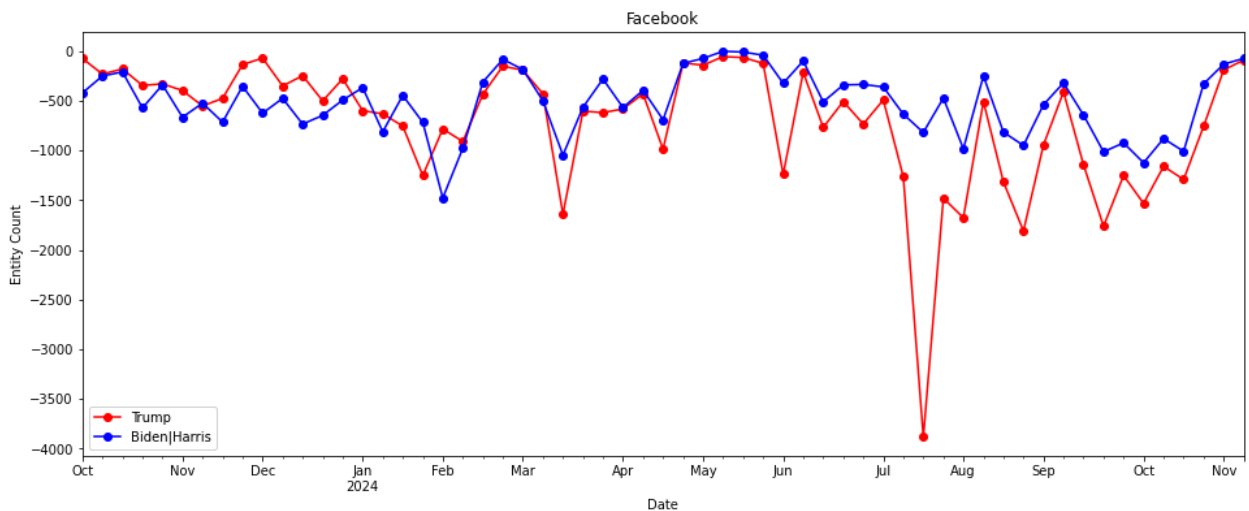
Each point represents the net total for the respective entity on a given day, calculated as the positive quantity (Entity[+]) minus the negative quantity (Entity[−]).

Graph 14: The trend changes in the operations of key figures in the presidential election on Facebook

Each point represents the net total for the respective entity on a given day, calculated as the positive quantity (Entity[+]) minus the negative quantity (Entity[–]).

Graph 15: The trend changes in the operations of key figures in the presidential election on X

6. Troll groups on X and Weibo shared identical statements aimed at manipulating border issues

Discussions about the U.S.-Mexico border issues on major social media platforms are increasingly influenced by coordinated troll groups. These groups actively work to undermine trust in political candidates and deepen political divisions by fueling polarized conflicts.

Despite operating on different platforms, these troll groups consistently push similar narratives to manipulate public opinion. They frequently highlight former President Trump's unfulfilled promise that Mexico would pay for the border wall, criticize his immigration policies as ineffective, and use charged terms like "racial discrimination" and "social division" to amplify tensions.

On platforms like X and Weibo, these groups also promote the idea of Texas independence, arguing it could handle immigration more effectively. They advocate for the purchase of weapons to defend Texas' "sovereignty" and even introduce claims of potential Chinese interference. Additionally, they evoke historical grievances, such as Texas once being part of Mexico, to further stoke divisions.

These tactics closely resemble their strategy during the COVID-19 era, when they incited gun purchases and used inflammatory rhetoric to escalate internal tensions and provoke action.

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Narratives of Troll Group	
Platform	**Narratives**
Weibo	坚决支持德州共和国！ 支持德州独立！！！德州人应该誓死捍卫自己的权利 支持德州人们拿起枪杆子，脱离美联邦 坚决支持德州的独立决定，不用担心老拜登，觉得武器不好，我们卖！ 支持德州独立并入墨西哥
X	@disclosetv And now Texas is at war with the US government. Prove me wrong. Let's just give Texas back to Mexico. Problem solved. Bring on civil war. Go Texas I want to see Abbott shoot that gun. He'd be on his worthless ass. Abbott uses his handicap in hopes of sympathy support. But nothing will clean that black heart in his chest. He hates women and people that are not on his side. He like Trump thinks he is a king of Texas. LOL.. these are all liberals who don't know a thing about guns. People in Texas know about guns.

Table 16: The narratives of Troll Groups on Weibo and X

The Infodemic Platform

During the pandemic, Taiwan AI Labs collaborated internationally to develop trustworthy and responsible AI in healthcare while addressing the global challenge of misinformation related to the pandemic. Working with global partners, we established mechanisms to detect such activities. Taiwan AI Labs initially used AI to observe and understand the behavior of various accounts, identifying coordinated activities to detect synchronized accounts.

Troll accounts are defined as a group of accounts not operated by genuine users. These could be accounts publishing specific content as per official directives, or those controlled programmatically or through PR firms, disseminating particular narratives in a non-organic, organized manner. By leveraging generative technologies and large language models (LLMs), Taiwan AI Labs analyzed billions of social media activities to unearth over 30,000 troll groups, understanding the content and patterns of their operations across more than two million topics. This helps to uncover the targets, methods, and possible motives behind these operations.

With the growing global demand for insights into information manipulation, international partners

expressed interest in this service. Taiwan AI Labs further developed its capabilities into the Infodemic platform, providing real-time and comprehensive understanding of both domestic and international information manipulation for non-technical partners. This aids in developing digital literacy and response strategies. In recent years, Taiwan AI Labs has continued to use the Infodemic platform to observe coordinated behaviors on major social platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, X (Twitter), TikTok, Weibo, and PTT. It employs LLMs to comprehend the targets and patterns of information manipulation attacks and the responses of mainstream media. It timely records the battlefields of information warfare participated in by troll groups, along with their potential impacts.
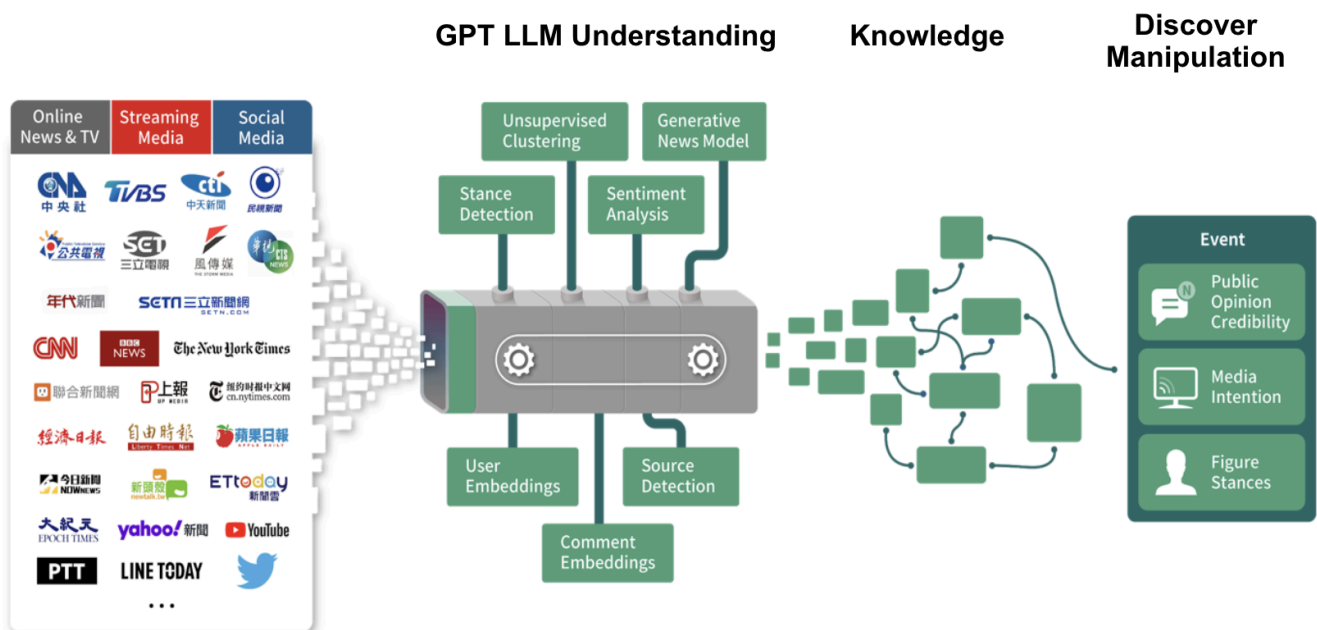
Graph 20: Overview of the data analysis process flow on the Infodemic platform.

- This report used data and tools from https://infodemic.cc
- How does the system work https://infodemic.cc/en/faq
- DISARM Disinformation Analysis and Risk Management is an open-source framework designed for describing and understanding the behavior parts of FIMI/disinformation. It sets out best practices for fighting disinformation through sharing data & analysis and can inform effective action. The Framework has been developed, drawing on global cybersecurity best practices. https://www.disarm.foundation/