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

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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 (troll 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.
Social Platform Volume	Social Platform 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 social 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.

Executive Summary

From September 1 to September 30, 2024, Taiwan AI Labs monitored 125 key battlefields and 695 media reports related to the U.S. presidential election. Among these, 89 reports (12.81%) were linked to Chinese and Russian state-affiliated media. Out of 15,760 identified troll accounts involved in the election discussions, these contributed to a total volume of 500,224 social media comments, with 6.11% (30,562) being troll-related. Three major battlefields, accounting for approximately 50% of observed troll volumes, were:

1. Putin claims to prefer Harris over Trump (23%)
2. U.S. accuses Russian propaganda outlet RT of interference in 2024 election (12%)
3. GOP strategist says Trump's false pet-eating claims at debate only hurt him (15%)

We first observed a rapid spike in Facebook and Twitter posts after Trump's "immigrants eating dogs and cats" remark during the September 11 presidential debate (Taiwan time). This battlefield sparked widespread discussion and dissemination in a short time. However, within a few hours, the impact of Twitter posts declined significantly, while Facebook posts maintained relatively stable engagement. This difference highlights a strong initial reaction on social media, with discussions on Twitter being suppressed over time, while Facebook discussions remained steady for a longer period.

On the other hand, our analysis of Russian and Chinese state-affiliated media identified three key strategies: portraying Trump and Harris as "cooperating with Russia," downplaying the threat of foreign interference, and criticizing U.S. tariff policies toward Russia and China. We further examined the troll strategies on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and Weibo, identifying the most active troll groups on each platform that aligned with these state media strategies and were influenced by foreign entities: YouTube @72, Facebook @70033, Twitter @10946, TikTok @144, and Weibo @2526. All these groups were linked to foreign influence. Below are the methods these main troll groups leveraged to echo state media narratives.

YouTube @72 attacks both Trump and Harris, portraying them as puppets controlled by Putin. It mocks the Republican Party as mere pawns of Russian interests, claiming that if Trump wins, Putin will take over the U.S. Harris is ridiculed as weak and ignorant, with Putin's support for her framed as evidence that she is a Russian spy and unfit for the presidency. Additionally, in June, YouTube @72 amplified the narrative regarding EU tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, arguing that the tariffs harm European consumers rather than China.

Facebook @70033 amplifies the narrative of Putin supporting Harris and Trump's dissatisfaction with it. It claims Putin supports Harris because a female-led U.S. would become weak, mocking Harris not only as an unfit presidential candidate but also as someone favored by Putin.

Twitter @10946 focuses on attacking Harris's campaign and downplays concerns about Russian interference in the election. It mocks the interference as a "Democratic hoax," claiming the party is reusing the Russia narrative to manipulate voters. Additionally, it amplifies the "Hunter Biden laptop" controversy, shifting focus from Russian interference to a narrative portraying the Democrats as being close to China. In February, Twitter @10946 pushed the idea that Trump threatened to stop defending NATO allies, reinforcing the image of Trump as Putin's puppet and a traitor to democracy, stoking fears that Trump might abandon NATO and empower Russia in Europe.

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TikTok @144 targets Trump's campaign, portraying him as a corrupt fraud controlled by Putin and a traitor to democracy. It ridicules Trump's debate claims about immigrants eating pets as absurd and mocks him for avoiding a second debate with Harris.

Weibo @2526 uses sarcasm to downplay concerns about Russian interference in the U.S. election, amplifying Putin's support for Harris and portraying her as colluding with Russia. It also emphasizes that the controversy around "Trump-Russia collusion" is unresolved, lauding Putin for backing both Harris and Trump, which confuses American voters and angers the Biden administration. Weibo @2526 also pushed the narrative that Trump and Biden's tariff policies harm American consumers, particularly the middle class, rather than affecting China.

Methodology

Taiwan AI Labs employs our analytical tool "Infodemic" to examine information operations across different social media platforms.

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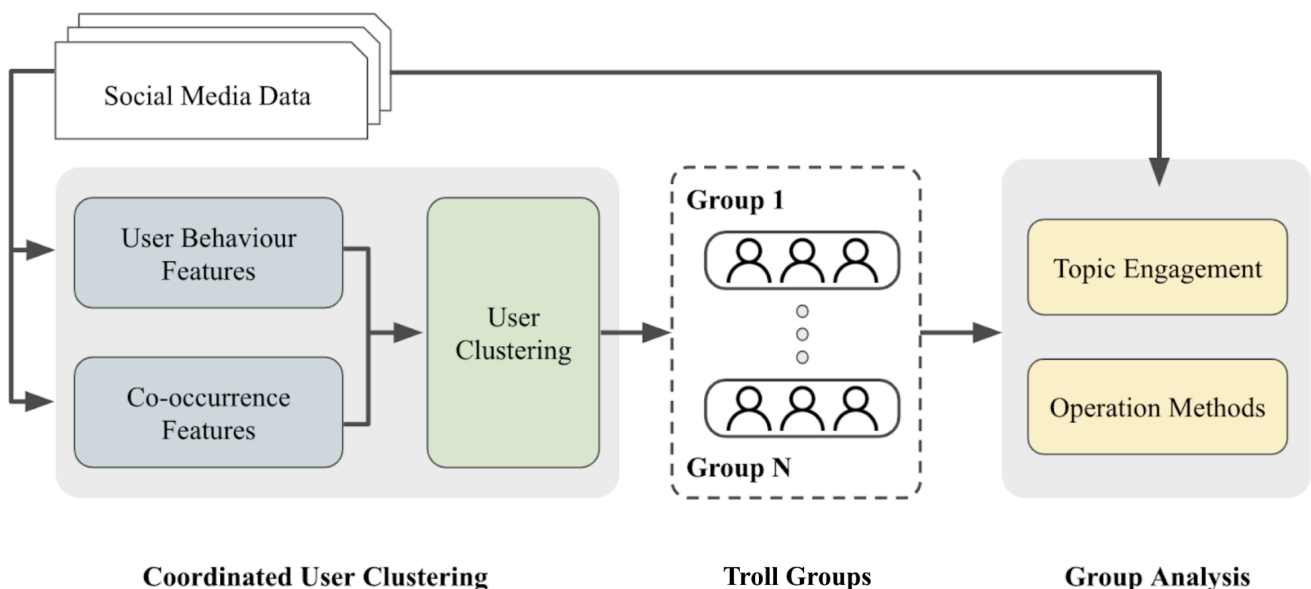
Graph 1: An overview of the coordinated behavior analysis pipeline

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 social platform 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.

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 social platform detection algorithm that identifies structures within networks based on the flow of information. Social platforms 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.

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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.

Data Coverage

Our study analyzed data from September 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024. During this period, we tracked 125 battlefields and recorded 695 instances of media engagement related to keywords associated with the U.S. Presidential Election. Of these instances, 12.81% were linked to media outputs from China and Russia. The analysis identified 15,760 troll accounts actively participating in online discussions across various social media platforms. Out of a total social platform volume of 500,224, 6.11% were attributable to these troll accounts.

Battlefields	Media Volume	(PRC) State-affiliated Media (%)	Troll Accounts	Social Platform Volume	Troll Volume (%)
125	695	89 (12.81%)	15,760	500,224	30,562 (6.11%)

Table 1: Analyzed data quantity of the U.S. Presidential Election in September, 2024 (from https://infodemic.cc)

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Timeline

Date	Top Troll Participated Battlefields (accumulated %)
September 2024	• Putin claims to prefer Harris over Trump (23%) • U.S. accuses Russian propaganda outlet RT of interference in 2024 election (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 2: Analyzed top battlefields of the U.S. Presidential Elections in September, 2024
(from https://infodemic.cc)

Analysis of Trump's "Immigrants eating dogs and cats" Remark

We first conducted an "R0 analysis" to evaluate the impact of individual posts, aiming to observe any platform bias during specific events. We assessed post interactions across different platforms, assigned relevant indicator scores, and calculated a total score for each post. To minimize bias from particular user groups, we adjusted the data and applied weighted calculations to the day's total post scores. After excluding some outliers, we derived an average influence index for posts related to specific events.

Graph 2 shows the R0 analysis results following Trump's "immigrants eating dogs and cats" remark during the presidential debate on the morning of September 11 (Taiwan time). The debate began at 9 a.m., and after Trump's statement, R0 values on both Facebook and Twitter surged, indicating a sharp increase in posts focusing on the event. This suggests that the remark quickly triggered widespread discussion and dissemination on both platforms. However, in the hours that followed, Twitter's R0 value declined significantly, suggesting that the influence of the discussion was suppressed. In contrast, Facebook's R0 value remained relatively stable, indicating that the conversation persisted for a longer period. This contrast shows that, while the event initially sparked a strong reaction, the intensity of discussions varied notably between platforms.

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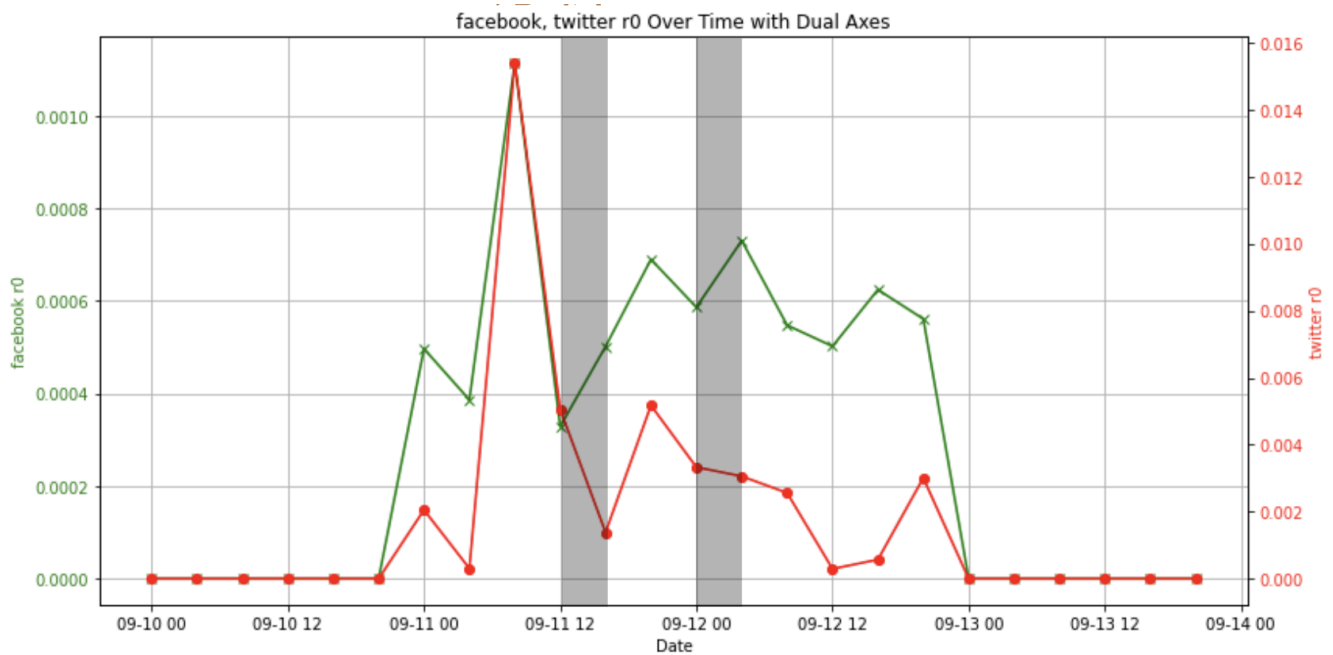
*The green line represents the average virality of Facebook posts, while the red line represents that of Twitter posts.
Graph 2: R0 analysis regarding Trump's "Immigrants eating dogs and cats" Remark

Analysis of State-Affiliated Media

Russian state media *RT*, which has been banned from Meta platforms for deceptive activities, employs a strategy that portrays Putin's sarcastic endorsement of Harris as a form of "trolling." This narrative aims to associate Harris with Russia, a country accused of meddling in past U.S. elections, potentially undermining voter trust in her candidacy. *RT* further emphasizes the Kremlin's denial of interest in U.S. politics, framing Putin's remarks as harmless humor.

Chinese state media, like *Xinhua, Reference News* and *Huanqiu*, echo *RT*'s reporting, underscoring Putin's sarcastic endorsement of Harris during the Eastern Economic Forum. By amplifying these comments, Chinese outlets aim to emphasize Russia's purported neutrality in U.S. elections while also highlighting the U.S. administration's frustration. These narratives work in tandem to undermine the credibility of the U.S. electoral process, sowing doubt about media and political fairness. Both Russian and Chinese outlets emphasize Putin's humor and Russia's respect for U.S. democracy, but the underlying strategy subtly questions the legitimacy and stability of the U.S. political system.

Example of Chinese State Media

Chinese state media *Xinhua* reported that during the first presidential debate on September 10, Harris and Trump repeatedly accused each other of lying. *Xinhua* also shared a video highlighting these moments.

Harris, Trump accuse each other of telling lies in first presidential debate

Source: Xinhua   Editor: huaxia   2024-09-11 13:33:15

"Lie," "lies," "lie," "lies," ...

Here's how Kamala Harris and Donald Trump accuse each other of telling lies in their first presidential debate.

Graph 3: Key Points from Xinhua Outlets
(from https://english.news.cn/20240911/2c65b1cd6daf4aaebfc5ed2dce2369bf/c.html)

Reference News, referencing *RT*, emphasizes Putin's remarks during the Eastern Economic Forum, where he humorously stated that Russia would support Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in the U.S. presidential election, following President Biden's recommendation. Putin's comments, framed lightheartedly, were reported by RT as part of his broader stance that Russia respects the decision of the American people in their elections. Trump's response to Putin's statement was one of uncertainty, as he expressed confusion over whether he should feel insulted or helped by the endorsement. The report further highlighted the White House's call for Putin to avoid commenting on the U.S. election.

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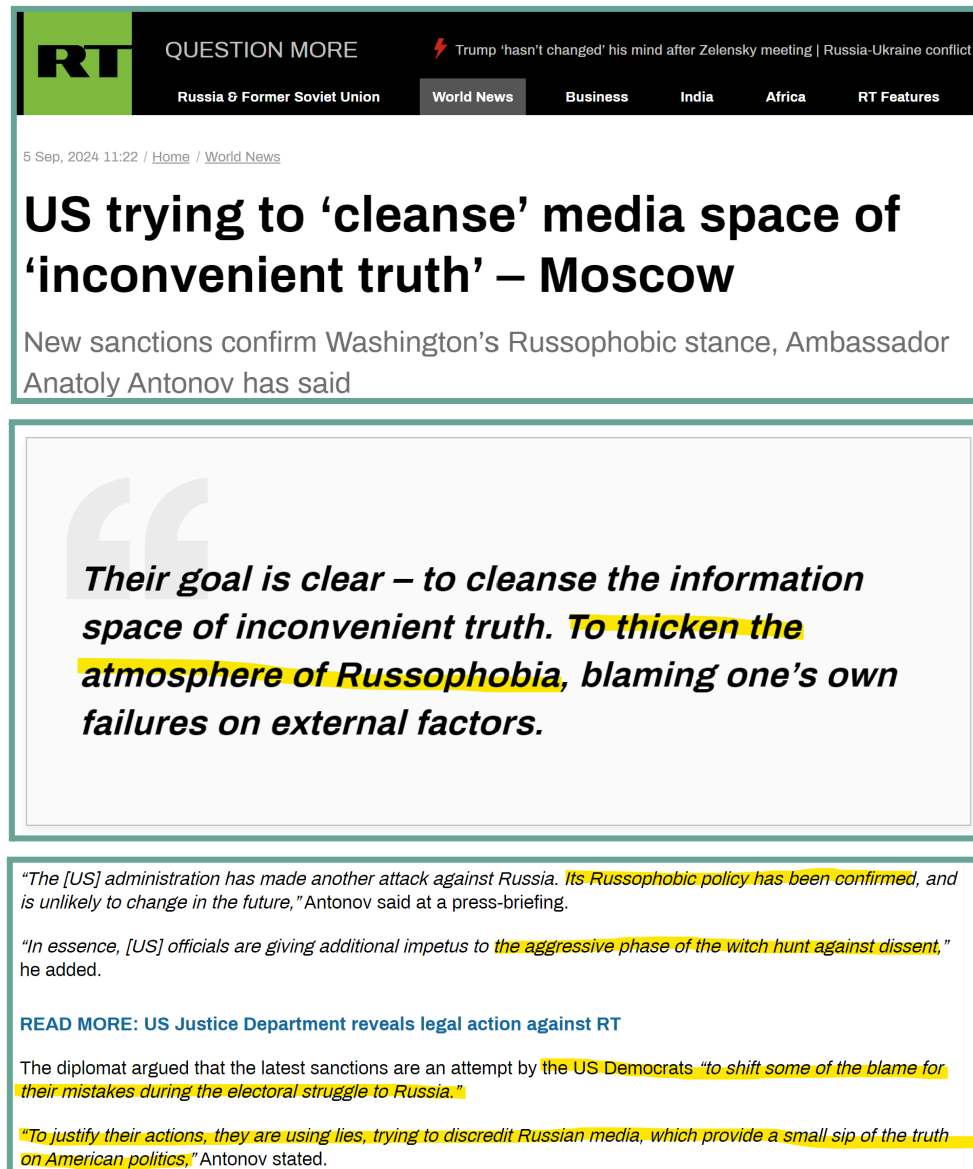(from https://www.guancha.cn/internation/2024_09_06_747451.shtml)

Huanqiu, citing *TASS*, focuses on Putin's sarcastic remarks about "supporting" Harris in the presidential election after Biden's withdrawal. *TASS* reports that these comments triggered a sharp response from the White House, with National Security Council's John Kirby urging Putin to "stop talking about the U.S. election," while further emphasizing Russia's consistent denial of interfering in U.S. elections, highlighting that Russia has no intention of influencing the election.

Graph 5: Key Points from Huanqiu Outlets
(from https://world.huanqiu.com/article/4JKWKv0j2wv)

Russian State Media: Example of Foreign Influence

In early September, the U.S. government accused Russian state media *RT* of interfering in the 2024 presidential election. The Russian Ambassador to the U.S. claimed the sanctions reflect Washington's ongoing "Russophobic" policies, aimed at deflecting blame for domestic political issues onto Russia and escalating an alleged "witch hunt" against dissenting voices. *RT* also viewed the sanctions as evidence of the U.S.'s decline into a "totalitarian neoliberal dictatorship," framing them as part of a broader effort to suppress Russian perspectives in the global media landscape.

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/)

Secondly, *RT* reported that Trump criticized *ABC News* for its "dishonest" moderation of his debate with Harris, telling *Fox* he would only consider a rematch on a "fair network." Despite a *CNN* poll showing 63% of viewers favored Harris, Trump claimed victory and dismissed Harris's call for a second debate. He accused *ABC* of bias and fact-checking him unfairly, particularly on his claim that Haitian migrants were eating pets in Ohio, which local authorities denied. Trump also expressed frustration that Harris wasn't fact-checked on statements tying him to 'Project 2025' and his remarks on neo-Nazis and white nationalists.

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

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11 Sep, 2024 13:59 / Home / World News

Debate 'was rigged' – Trump

The former president has condemned ABC News for letting Kamala Harris "say anything she wanted"

Speaking to Fox News on Wednesday morning, Trump slammed the debate as "totally rigged," and called ABC the "most dishonest news organization."

"So many things I said were debunked, like totally debunked," he told Fox. "But she could say anything she wanted. My stuff was right, but they would correct you."

Read more: 'Dog-eating immigrants,' clashes over Ukraine, and economic blame game: Key takeaways from the Harris-Trump debate

Trump was repeatedly interrupted and fact-checked by Muir and Davis throughout the debate, for instance when he claimed that Haitian migrants are "eating the pets" of people in Ohio. While multiple locals have testified that pet cats and wild birds are being eaten by the migrants, local police say they have received no reports of such incidents.

Harris was not fact-checked when she repeatedly tied Trump to 'Project 2025', a conservative manifesto explicitly disavowed by the former president. Nor was she corrected when she claimed that Trump once referred to neo-Nazis as "fine people." In reality, Trump said there were "very fine people on both sides" of a right-wing rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, but that he was "not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists, because they should be condemned totally."

Graph 7: Key Points from RT Outlets
(from https://www.rt.com/news/603857-trump-second-debate-harris/)

Last but not least, *RT* reported that Trump was angered by claims that "Putin endorsed Harris." *RT* also noted that some American institutions suggested Putin was "simply trolling" Harris, while the Kremlin denied any major interest in U.S. politics. The potential motivation behind Putin's "trolling" of Harris could be to link her to Russia — a foreign power accused of malicious interference in the previous U.S. election and a perceived enemy of democracies—aiming to undermine voter trust in Harris.

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

Cross-Platform Analysis of Main Troll Groups

Troll Group: YouTube @72

YouTube @72, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on YouTube, with 4,355 accounts participating in 6,103 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Overall Operated Stories	Target entities
4,355	6,103	3,463

Table 3: Summary of YouTube @72 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/youtube@72)

YouTube @72's Strategies Regarding Foreign Influence

The troll strategies on YouTube @72 and the tactics of Russian state media *RT* share a common goal: to undermine trust in both U.S. political candidates and the institutions that support them. *RT*'s portrayal of Harris as potentially linked to Russia mirrors the trolls' narrative of both Trump and Harris being pawns of Putin. In the case of Trump, trolls label him as "Putin's puppet," reinforcing the idea that he is certainly connected to foreign powers. YouTube trolls' parallel rhetoric serves to erode public confidence in both candidates, implying that no matter who wins the presidency, the U.S. is vulnerable to foreign manipulation.

YouTube @72 also echoed *RT*'s broader information manipulation strategies by attacking U.S. media outlets like *CBS*, *CNN*, and *FOX*, accusing them of spreading "Putin propaganda." This aligns with *RT*'s efforts to cast doubt on American media's integrity, amplifying distrust in mainstream sources. Both trolls and Russian state-affiliated media aim to deepen political divides, fostering confusion and amplifying speculations, fear, and distrust in the U.S. election. Through calculated disinformation, they seek to destabilize the electoral process, making both candidates appear as untrustworthy.

Entity (Sentiment)	Key Narratives Overview
Trump –	• The countdown is on now for Trump to go to jail!!! 👏👏👏 • Trump has known for a while that he couldn't win an election fair

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	and square. He plans to try and steal it. That's not going to happen either ● The republican party is like anything else Trump gets involved with, ruined!!!! The toxic loser killed that party. ● Trump has a criminal mind. He commits crimes ● Just as well that Trump is a chicken 🐔. How is Harris supposed to debate lies? The "Harris Regime?!" Trump's got so many authoritarian dog whistles, even childless cat ladies can hear them! ● he is not drunken. but he is an idiot and a complete moron. Elon is just as stupid as stupid trump. they suck. with this disgraceful and immoral orange ass. in prison America will be free and great.
Harris –	● Her own staff didn't trust Harris. ● Why? What has Harris ever accomplished? Talk is cheap. Trump is action. Bunch of phonies. ● That's hilarious. Trump is dying to debate Harris. She's the one running from questions. ● The border is already a mess and a dangerous situation, thanks to Biden and Harris. Crossings have slowed now that they are flying them in on the taxpayers. ● Lot more democrats dumped Harris. Of course you won't report that. ● Harris never changed the polls with her variety show. It was a joke.

Table 4: Key Narratives Overview of YouTube @72 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/youtube@72)

YouTube @72's Operations Regarding the EV Tariff Issue

YouTube @72 mirrored the narratives of Chinese state media *CGTN* in criticizing tariff policies. Both criticized the tariffs imposed by Western democracies—*CGTN* focusing on the EU's tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, while the trolls highlighted Trump's tariffs on China. They emphasized the negative impact of these tariffs on U.S. consumers and local industries, aiming to undermine trust in Western democracies. Notably, other Chinese state media and trolls on Weibo have suggested that both Trump and Biden's tariff policies primarily harm domestic consumers, particularly the middle class, rather than affecting China. Given that the middle class constitutes the majority of U.S. voters in the 2024 presidential election, these narratives could foster discontent and skepticism towards U.S. leaders, deepening political polarization and weakening public confidence in the entire U.S. government.

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 ally 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

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	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 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁳󠁣󠁴󠁿🇺🇸🙏💙 ● 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 5: Key Narratives Overview of YouTube @72 Regarding the EV Tariff Issue
(from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/youtube@72)

Targets of YouTube @72 Troll Activities

Graph 9: Troll Activity Targets of YouTube @72 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/youtube@72)

Troll Group: Facebook @70033

Facebook @70033, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on Facebook, with 385 accounts participating in 7,368 stories overall.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
385	7,368	1,384

Table 6: Summary of Facebook @70033 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/facebook@70033)

## Facebook @70033's Strategies Regarding Foreign Influence

Facebook @70033 seeks to undermine public trust in both Trump and Harris, deepen political polarization, and sow discord among voters. Through emotional manipulation, mockery, and accusations of media bias, these troll-driven narratives foster a cycle of attacks on both candidates, creating a sense of cynicism and implying that neither is trustworthy. This strategy ultimately aims to weaken democratic participation by eroding voter confidence in the electoral process.

For Trump, Facebook @70033 employs negative characterizations and defamation, labeling him a "treasonous lying POS" and "loser." In contrast, it portrays Harris as incompetent and dishonest, framing her as someone who avoids public scrutiny and suggesting that her policies will lead to economic hardship.

Entity (Sentiment)	Key Narratives Overview
Trump–	- Trump is a treasonous lying POS - Trump, what a loser! - Don't tell Trump, he hates South Korea and loves the North. - Trump is a loser and will lose to Harris - ABC propaganda for the left. Another hit piece designed for political targeting. ABC is an arm of Kamala Harris's reelection campaign. Trump puts himself OUT THERE! Talking to us and taking questions. Kamala hides. And Walz steals valor not earned. But ABC 'presses' on! - Remember the last time a foreign government meddled in our presidential election - Trump defended that foreign interference.
Harris –	- Harris can't even get in front of the Camera to give a speech explaining how and why the country is in the shape it's in because of her and Bidens policies. - Harris stays silent because of her record. Indefensible. Walz runs from the press because he is used to running from things. It's a habit like lying about his military record and status. - This is hilarious! Vote for whichever candidate you wish, at the end of the day if you vote for Harris don't be crying about the fact that you can't feed your family. You can feel good as your stomach growls! lol - Kamala can bury Putin under a million sanctions, but if you don't enforce them, they are meaningless. - Avoiding the press is Kamala's strategy. - Kamala is telling new lies.

Table 7: Key Narratives Overview of Facebook @70033 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/facebook@70033)

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Targets of Facebook @70033 Troll Activities
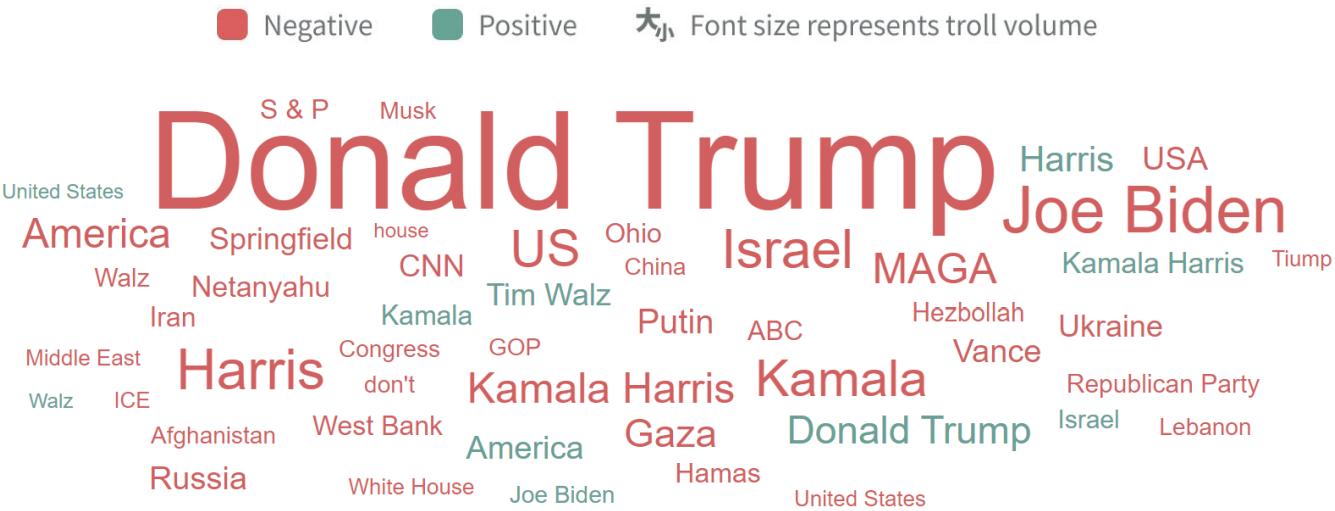
Graph 10: Troll Activity Targets of Facebook @70033 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/facebook@70033)

Troll Group: Twitter @10946

Twitter @10946, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on Twitter, with 984 accounts participating in 9,327 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
984	9,327	1,739

Table 8: Summary of Twitter @10946 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/twitter@10946)

Twitter @10946's Strategies Regarding Foreign Influence

Twitter @10946's strategies and the Russian state media strategy share key elements of undermining public trust in the U.S. electoral process and downplaying concerns of foreign interference. Both strategies focus on discrediting accusations of Russian meddling by framing them as part of a broader political agenda. Russian state media, *RT*, portrays U.S. accusations as "Russophobic" deflections from domestic issues and criticizes U.S. policies as part of a "totalitarian neoliberal dictatorship," painting Russia as a victim of Western censorship. Similarly, Twitter trolls dismiss Russian interference as a "hoax," accusing mainstream media, particularly *CNN*, of using recycled "Democrat playbook" tactics to manipulate voters.

Both strategies aim to shift the narrative away from foreign influence, redirecting public attention to internal political issues like the Hunter Biden laptop controversy, which trolls portray as evidence of U.S. media corruption. In both cases, the goal is to erode trust in democratic institutions, dismiss concerns about foreign interference, and deepen political divisions. While *RT*'s focus is on positioning Russia as a suppressed voice in the global media, Twitter trolls subtly reinforce support for Trump by attacking Harris and discrediting the media, without directly advocating for Trump.

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Entity	Key Narratives Overview
Mainstream Media –	● The New York Times is trash. NYT only endorsed Harris so they can now claim that every BS they write about Harris is now legitimate since they also endorsed her. people are being played again. ● No. ABC showed Kamala is a liar, like Axelrod. ● The media applies a completely different standard to Trump. ● I feel the same way! I'm not watching squat on CNN! ● @CNN You are as morally bankrupt as the creature you apologize for.
Harris –	● So now Putin and a war criminal support Kamala ● 😂😂 Putin endorsed Kamala! You're on the same side as Putin… Dawg… https://t.co/i3aNwCQVb7 ● Russia, Russia, Russia... All dems have are lies... https://t.co/RdVeUFdEdG ● LOL. Harwood is another "Russia-Russia-Russia" idiot. How about the spreading of the non-existent, "Trump Project 2025"? ● Give Harris a House full of Democrats so that she can finish the job ● Why haven't Harris and Biden worked on it while in office already? Are y'all REALLY that naive? ● Proof that the Biden/Harris administration had control over the border the entire time. The first three and a half years of the Democrat administration Biden/Harris used their control of the border to allow an invasion of tens of millions of people, some that want to harm and kill us. ● With Harris, it will be ushered in quickly. Only morons vote Democrat #OnlyMoronsVoteDemocrat

Table 9: Key Narratives Overview of Twitter @10946 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/twitter@10946)

Twitter @10946's Operations Regarding the NATO-Russia Issue

Both Russian state-affiliated media *RT* and Twitter@10946 aim to manipulate perceptions of Trump's relationship with NATO and Russia to further Russian interests. By portraying Trump as a threat to NATO's integrity, they seek to:

1. Weaken Transatlantic Trust: They undermine confidence in the U.S. commitment to NATO security, potentially weakening trust within the Democratic alliance.
2. Divert Attention from Russian Interference: By criticizing Trump while supporting the Biden administration, they focus on Trump's alignment with Putin, thereby shifting the narrative to internal U.S. political conflicts. This strategy casts doubt on NATO, downplays legitimate concerns about Russian meddling, and positions Russia as a passive actor rather than a threat.

Overall, these tactics aim to destabilize NATO and weaken the U.S. political system from within.

Entity	Twitter @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

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	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 10: Key Narratives Overview of Twitter @10946 Regarding the NATO-Russia Issue
(from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/twitter@10946)

Targets of Twitter @10946 Troll Activities
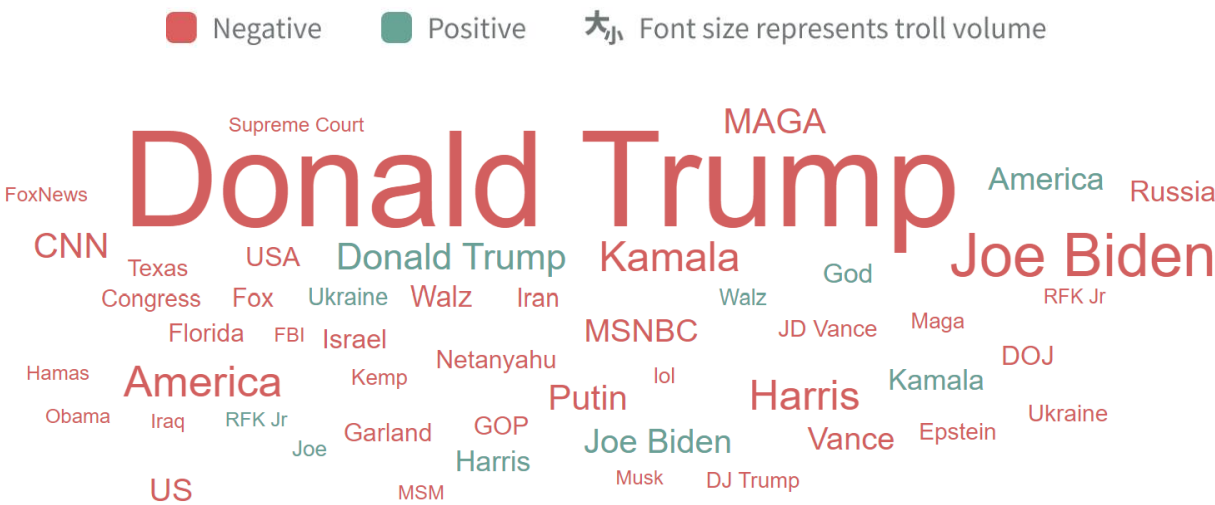
Graph 11: Troll Activity Targets of Twitter @10946 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/twitter@10946)

Troll Group: TikTok @144

TikTok @144, observed by AI Labs, is the most active troll group on TikTok, with 292 accounts participating in 2,144 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
292	2,144	352

Table 11: Summary of TikTok @144 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/tiktok@144)

TikTok @144's Strategies Regarding Foreign Influence

TikTok @144 closely echoes the approaches employed by state media from China and Russia, reinforcing the overarching themes of foreign influence and information operations aimed at interfering in the U.S. presidential election. Both the trolls and state media share a fundamental goal: to undermine public trust in mainstream media while amplifying narratives that align with their geopolitical interests. TikTok trolls aggressively target *ABC, CNN*, and *Fox News*, accusing them of bias—similar to how *RT* frames the debate as rigged against Trump while dismissing unfavorable coverage from *CNN*. This
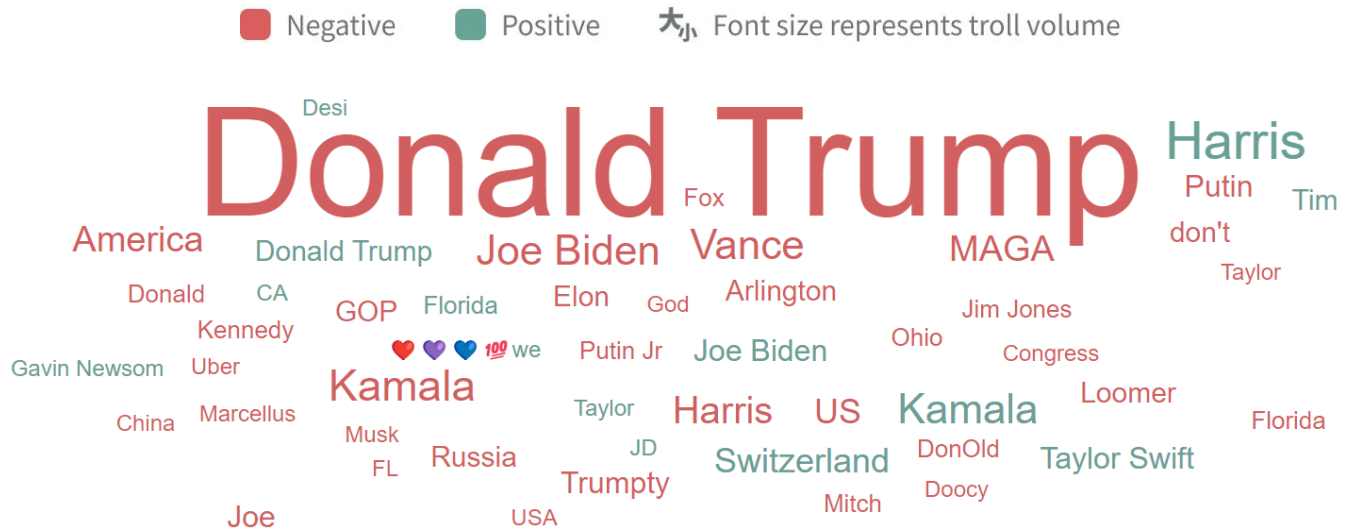
alignment of narratives creates a cohesive front that questions the integrity of U.S. media, fostering skepticism among the audience.

Xinhua sensationalizes the chaotic back-and-forth between Harris and Trump to highlight the disarray in U.S. politics, while TikTok @144 aggressively attacks Trump's character, labeling him a "clown" who crumbles under pressure. By portraying him as a leader paralyzed by fear and insinuating that he's a pawn of Putin in a corrupt game, TikTok @144 erodes Trump's credibility and rallies opposition as the election approaches. Both TikTok @144 and state media amplify their assault on political figures, especially Trump, aiming to sway public sentiment and enhance foreign influence in the electoral process.

Entity	Key Narratives Overview
Mainstream Media –	- What does CNN and Fox News have in common? - Who watch Fox news anyway - ABC is biased
Trump –	- Trump is a traitor. - Trump knows that winning is the only thing that will keep him out of prison. When he loses in November, he and his cult are capable of anything. - He likes dictators. Trump is a traitor. Trump is disastrously stupid. Trump is pure evil. All facts. Vote 💙 - Trump will find a way to give this break to the extreme wealthy by saying no tax on bonuses. NEVER TRUST MAGA - And Trump is offering to pardon the traitors who stormed the capitol - First off, Trump is a liar. If he said he would do reparations only an idiot would believe that he would actually do that - Mainstream/legend or the right have never held Trump accountable for his babbling, word salads or insane, sometimes vile, violent or just plain untrue. Never. - Trump and Vance are terrorizing Springfield and no one can do anything about it, and that is what will happen to the entire US if they win - Putin owns him & he will sell the USA to Putin also😳 VOTE BLUE TO SAVE DEMOCRACY - The left is basically the old right. MAGA is so far right that they like Putin and dictators

Table 12: Key Narratives Overview of TikTok @144 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/tiktok@144)

Targets of TikTok @144 Troll Activities

🟥 Negative 🟩 Positive 大小 Font size represents troll volume

Graph 12: Troll Activity Targets of TikTok @144 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/tiktok@144)

Troll Group: Weibo @2526

Weibo @2526, observed by AI Labs, is one of the most active troll groups on Weibo, with 1,048 accounts participating in 3,683 stories recently.

Troll Accounts	Operated stories	Target entities
1,048	3,683	578

Table 13: Summary of Weibo @2526 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/weibo@2526)

Weibo @2526's Strategies Regarding Foreign Influence

Weibo @2526 closely aligns with the state media strategies of Russia and China, both aimed at downplaying narratives about Russian interference in the U.S. election. While Russian and Chinese state media use a more formal approach to suggest Putin's endorsement of Harris has angered the White House, they simultaneously deny Russia's involvement in U.S. politics, creating confusion and distrust. Similarly, Weibo @2526 employs sarcasm and humor to trivialize concerns of Russian interference by framing Putin's support as "reverse psychology," reinforcing the notion that both Trump and Harris are linked to Moscow. Both strategies ultimately seek to undermine confidence in the U.S. electoral process, deflect attention from the seriousness of foreign influence, and deepen political divisions by casting doubt on the legitimacy of all candidates.

Entity	Key Narratives Overview
America −	● 普京是会表态的，川普的通俄门还没解决，哈里斯也通俄了，原来美国总统是俄罗斯安排的 ● 普京一句话把特朗普和哈里斯都整迷糊了 ● 俄国干涉美丽国大选石锤

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	● 普京操纵美国大选实锤 ● 川普还是懂普京的，确实是帮他了 ● 普京反向操作啊

Table 14: Key Narratives Overview of Weibo @2526 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/weibo@2526)

Targets of Weibo @2526 Troll Activities

Graph 13: Troll Activity Targets of Weibo @2526 (from https://infodemic.cc/en/collab/weibo@2526)

Troll Activities Comprehensive Analysis

In sum, the troll strategies of YouTube @72, Facebook @70033, Twitter @10946, TikTok @144, and Weibo @2526 reveal clear signs of foreign influence. These efforts not only downplay the threat of Russian interference in the U.S. election but also echo narratives from Russian and Chinese state media, portraying both Trump and Harris as "controlled by Russia" and "cooperating with Putin." Their tactics seek to convince voters that regardless of who wins, authoritarian influence is inevitable, thereby undermining trust in the U.S. electoral system and weakening public confidence in American democracy.

Additionally, Twitter @10946 amplifies fears of Trump abandoning NATO, fueling concerns about divisions within democratic alliances and threats to international security. Meanwhile, YouTube @72 and Weibo @2526 manipulate the issue of U.S. and EU tariffs on China to stir discontent among the middle class toward the U.S. government. Notably, Weibo, typically a platform for China's internal propaganda, externalizes China's domestic economic struggles to divert attention from its ongoing economic decline.
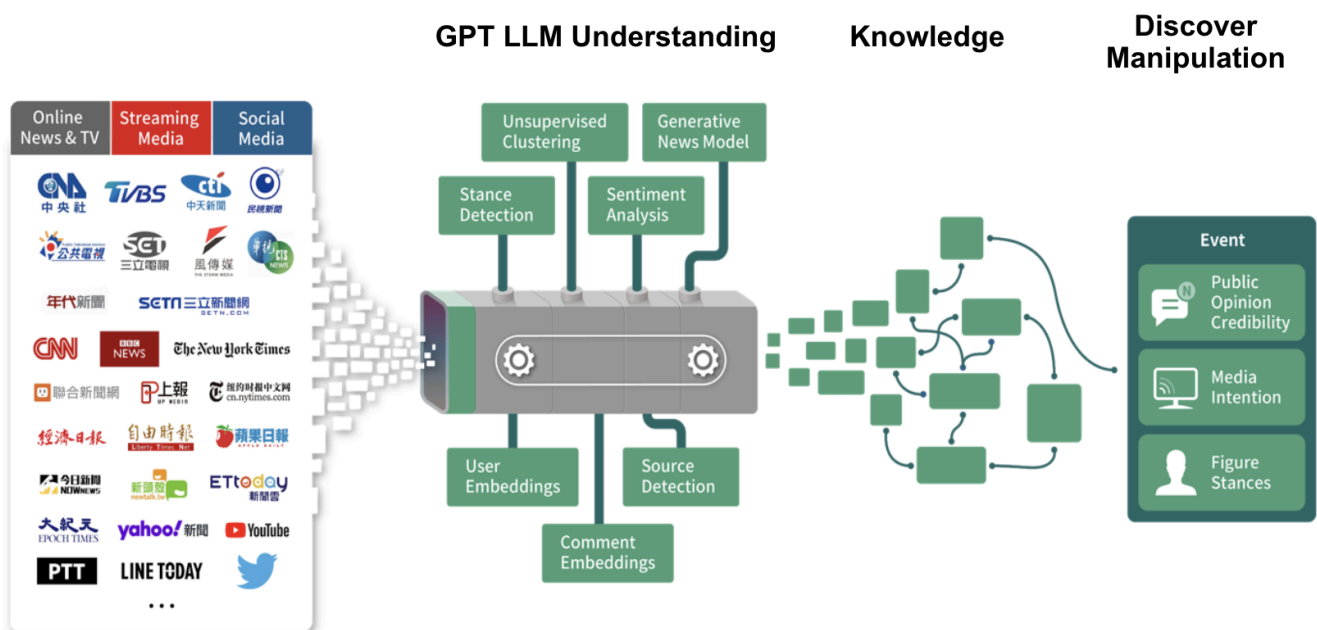
The Infodemic Platform

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 Taiwanese social platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, X (Twitter), TikTok, 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 14: 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