Overheated: Mapping Climate and the Culture Wars Online

EU DisinfoLab Summit
27 October 2021
Why Climate?

Climate as a new **hybridised threat**, merging traditional climate deniers/delayers with a broader universe of extremist and conspiracy movements, disinformation actors, ‘outrage merchants’ and right-wing media outlets.
The Challenge

Build a system for real-time monitoring and analysis of climate debate across social media

*What are the emerging narratives/tactics in the anti-climate space? How do they intersect with pre-existing movements, ideologies and information ecosystems online?*

**Quantify the volume and influence of anti-climate content**

*Is anti-climate messaging penetrating the mainstream? If so, how/where and can we evidence a through-line to key events or legislative agendas (e.g. German Federal Elections; COP26; Biden’s ‘Build Back Better’ Bill)?*

**Support the climate sector to integrate data into their ongoing work (e.g. counter-comms; advocacy; public education; media outreach)**

*How can we action this live and ever-expanding body of evidence around anti-climate activity, amplifiers and impact? What are the related calls to action, and for whom?*
‘Climate Lockdown’
The Birth of a New Conspiracy

A new type of disinformation that claims government overreach / ‘green tyranny’ will be enforced under the pretext of climate change to strip people of civil liberties, using language explicitly linked to the Covid-19 pandemic.
Timeline of Major Events and Key Actors

April 12th 2020: Guardian Article

September 23rd 2020: Project Syndicate Article

February 26th 2021: WEF tweet

March 3rd 2020: Guardian: Headline ‘Lockdown every 2 years’

April 15th 2020: TIME magazine piece

Steve Milloy: @TruthSquads
Marc Morano: @ClimateDepot.com
Laura Ingraham: @LauraIngraham
Brettart News: @BlaetzNews
Fox News: @FNC
Tucker Carlson: @TuckerCarlson
Marc Morano: @ClimateDepot.com
Steve Milloy: @TruthSquads

Sky News Australia: @SkyNewsaus
Zarateodge: @Zarateodge
Fox News Australia: @FoxNews
Fox News: @FoxNews
Paul Joseph Watson: @PaulJosephW
Amy Metz: @AmyMetz
Laura Ingraham: @LauraIngraham

Newsbusters: @Newsbusters
CBSNews: @CBSNews
Media Research Center: @MedResCen
Merica: @Merica
One America News: @OneAmerica
The Washington Times: @WrightTimes
Ice Age Farmer: @IceAgeFarmer
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Marc Morano: @ClimateDepot.com

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Key Takeaways

• **Antagonism with a perceived ‘mainstream media’** can prove essential to kick-start a conspiracy and gain traction online.

• Disinfo actors are incredibly **opportunistic and adept at coopting current affairs** to push a pre-existing idea into the mainstream.

• Covid-19 language and related experiences are hugely powerful as a **launch pad for unrelated agendas**, misinformation campaigns and attempts to fuel social division.

• There is a **growing convergence of diverse actors, issue sets and ideologies** under a broad ‘anti-government’ frame.

• **Current Terms of Service and enforcement mechanisms** on social media platforms are wholly ill-equipped to tackle the level and velocity of climate mis- and disinformation.
COP26 War Room
Rapid Response Unit - Monitoring Information Attacks

Actor-Led Dashboard

Data from all key ‘bellwether’ accounts across priority geographies on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, Telegram and YouTube as relevant (e.g. Ambassadors, media outlets, influential pundits)

Filter by ‘user category’ (i.e. all accounts from a specific geography)

Option to segment messages by threat e.g. What is our monitored Chinese network saying about enhanced transparency frameworks? Are attacks on Article 6 increasing among our Brazilian actors compared to yesterday?

COP26 Topic Dashboard

All data explicitly referencing COP26 and related keywords across social media (e.g. #COP26, “Glasgow Summit”, “climate summit”, “UNFCCC”)

Option to segment messages by threat area e.g. What volume of content is circulating on social media re: COP26 and Article 6? How much is explicitly disinformation and who are the key amplifiers?

‘Dynamic Threats’ Dashboard

Data across social media referencing any of our key threat narratives (Article 6, Loss and Damage, Cost of Living etc.), with the option to include new threats identified during the course of the summit as needed

Option to segment messages by threat, platform, language etc.

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Thank you.