

Press Release of Intelligence Committee



New Reports Shed Light on Internet Research Agency's Social Media Tactics

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, third-party experts released two independent analyses of social media tactics used by Russia's Internet Research Agency (IRA) in their attempts to influence U.S. political discourse. The reports are the first comprehensive analyses of their kind conducted by entities other than social media companies themselves, and are based in part on data provided by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI).

The reports, titled "[The Tactics and Tropes of the Internet Research Agency](#)" and "[The IRA and Political Polarization in the United States, 2015-2017](#)," were authored by New Knowledge, and University of Oxford and Graphika, respectively.

Statement from Committee Chairman Richard Burr (R-NC):

"Increasingly, we've seen how social media platforms intended to foster open dialogues can be used by hostile foreign actors seeking to manipulate and subvert public opinion. This newly released data demonstrates how aggressively Russia sought to divide Americans by race, religion and ideology, and how the IRA actively worked to erode trust in our democratic institutions. Most troublingly, it shows that these activities have not stopped. As we work to address these threats, these reports are proof positive that one of the most important things we can do is increase information sharing between the social media companies who can identify disinformation campaigns and the third-party experts who can analyze them."

Statement from Committee Vice Chairman Mark Warner (D-VA):

"These reports demonstrate the extent to which the Russians exploited the fault lines of our society to divide Americans in an attempt to undermine and manipulate our democracy. These attacks against our country were much more comprehensive, calculating and widespread than previously revealed. This should stand as a wake up call to us all that none of us are immune

from this threat, and it is time to get serious in addressing this challenge. That is going to require some much-needed and long-overdue guardrails when it comes to social media. I hope these reports will spur legislative action in the Congress and provide additional clarity to the American public about Russia's assault on our democracy."

Background:

The third-party reports released today are based in part on data provided by the Committee under its Technical Advisory Group, whose members serve to provide substantive technical and expert advice on topics of importance to ongoing Committee activity and oversight. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented within are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Senate Intelligence Committee or its Membership.

Separate from the Technical Advisory Group, the Committee is conducting an ongoing investigation into the extent of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections. As part of its investigation, the Committee has held several [open hearings](#) on the use of social media by foreign influence campaigns, including recent hearings with third-party experts in [August 2018](#) and social media company officials in [September 2018](#). The Committee will release its own report on social media with its findings as an installment of its investigation.

To read New Knowledge's report, "*The Tactics and Tropes of the Internet Research Agency*," [click here](#).

To read University of Oxford and Graphika's report, "*The IRA and Political Polarization in the United States, 2015-2017*," [click here](#).

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