Weapons of Mass Distraction
Sock Puppetry for Fun & Profit
'A must-read for those who want to know more about the future of the Internet'

Josh Siverman, CEO, Skype

THE MASTER SWITCH

THE RISE AND FALL OF INFORMATION EMPIRES

Tim Wu
Already seen clear signs of this
Egypt Cuts Off Most Internet and Phone Service

Autocratic governments often limit phone and Internet access. But the Internet has never faced anything like what happened in Egypt on Friday, when the government cut off access to the network and shut down cellphone service for the entire country.

Libya cuts off Internet service: network monitor

(Reuters) - Internet service has been cut off in Libya for a second consecutive day as protesters step up demonstrations against longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi, a U.S. company that monitors Internet traffic said on Saturday.
Amateurs cut access
Tunisia plants country-wide keystroke logger on Facebook

Gmail and Yahoo! too

By Dan Goodin, 25 Jan 2011

Malicious code injected into Tunisian versions of Facebook, Gmail, and Yahoo! stole login credentials of users critical of the North African nation's authoritarian government, according to security experts and news reports.

The rogue JavaScript, which was individually customized to steal passwords for each site, worked when users tried to login without availing themselves of the secure sockets layer protection designed to prevent man-in-the-middle attacks. It was found injected into Tunisian versions of Facebook, Gmail, and Yahoo! in late December, around the same time that protestors began demanding the ouster of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, the president who ruled the country from 1987 until his ouster 10 days ago.

Danny O'Brien, internet advocacy coordinator for the Committee to
Law enforcement technology

London police use smartphones, social network to identify rioters

Published 10 August 2011

The rioters in London — and now, in other British cities — have been using Blackberries to outmaneuver the police; communicating via BlackBerry instant-message technology, as well as by social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, the rioters repeatedly signaled fresh target areas to those caught up in the mayhem; RIM has now agreed to cooperate with Scotland Yard to turn over protestors using the service to coordinate their assaults; the police is also releasing CCTV images of the rioters to a group using face recognition technology to identify and condemn rioters; the police is also using Flickr, Tumblr, and Twitter to spot and identify participants in the riots.

Smartphones, especially Blackberries, have been a helpful information transmission and coordination tool for anti-government activists in a score of Arab countries — and they have played a major role in helpful information transmission and coordination tool for anti-government activists in a score of Arab countries — and they...
‘A must-read for those who want to know more about the future of the Internet’

Josh Siverman, CEO, Skype

**THE MASTER SWITCH**

**THE RISE AND FALL OF INFORMATION EMPIRES**

Tim Wu
Overt censorship is routed around
UGC - User Generated Content
UGC is a new(ish) paradigm
Nothing truly new under the sun
rent-a-crowds
How will Censorship handle UGC?
“So it’s not only certain people have a license to speak, now everyone has a license to speak. It’s a question of who gets heard.”
Censorship 2.0
Censorship 2.0
This is Profoundly Important
Censorship 2.0
This is Profoundly Important
rent-a-crowds
sock puppet
noun
a false online identity, typically created by a person or group in order to promote their own opinions or views: *both sides in the debate use sock puppets to make it seem as if scores of people are arguing a point.*

DERIVATIVES
sock puppetry noun
If we were evil-corp (or evil.gov)
what can be done?

what will be done?

what is being done?
Challenge:
How to measure efficacy
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Why mailing lists?

• “Interesting” people still use it
• Personal curiosity
what we wanted to do
Assume:
An email is going to a mail list

Can we make more people read it?
Assume:
An email is going to a mail list

Can we make less people read it?
How do we measure if more (or less) people read our mail?
Link Clicks
How do we write mail content worth clicking on?
Plagiarize, Pilfer, Plunder & Pitch*

*but don’t be too exciting
Control email

1. Send email with link
2. Wait 48 hours
3. Count clicks

Experimental email

1. Send email with link
2. Puppets send several replies to make a longer discussion thread
3. Wait 48 hours
4. Count clicks
• [liberationtech] Breaking Tor for $3K  Maxim Kammerer
  • [liberationtech] Breaking Tor for $3K  Griffin Boyer
  • [liberationtech] Recent iOS privacy checks  Cody Tarrant
    o [liberationtech] Recent iOS privacy checks  Amin Sabeti
  • [liberationtech] Recent iOS privacy checks  Keira Cran
    • [liberationtech] Recent iOS privacy checks  Todd Weiler
    • [liberationtech] Recent iOS privacy checks  duncan at openmailbox.org
    • [liberationtech] Recent iOS privacy checks  Keira Cran
  • [liberationtech] [cryptome] Cryptome Kickstart Project  Eugen Leitl
  • [liberationtech] The Ex-Google Hacker Taking on the World’s Spy Agencies  Eugen Leitl
  • [liberationtech] data mine the snowden files [was: open the snowden files]  coderman
Control email

1. Send email with link
2. Wait 48 hours
3. Count clicks

Experimental email

1. Send email with link
2. Sock puppets send several separate emails starting new threads
3. Wait 48 hours
4. Count clicks
[liberationtech] New Citizen Lab report on Hacking Team's Government Surveillance Malware
  - Ronald Deibert
  - Rich Kulawiec

[liberationtech] RIPE NCC Internet-wide measurement project
  - duncan at openmailbox.org

[liberationtech] Nsa-observer: organising nsa leaks by attack vector
  - Todd Weiler
  - Alexey Zakhlestin
  - Tom Ritter

[liberationtech] Mapping out physical surveillance across a city
  - Cody Tarrant
    - duncan at openmailbox.org
    - Seeta Peña Gangadharan
      - Tim Schwartz
      - Lucas Gonze
      - Patrick
      - Lucas Gonze
      - coderman
      - Blibbet
      - Axel Simon
      - Dan O'Huiginn
    - The Doctor

[liberationtech] New open access journal from Usenix
  - Ryan Bartos

[liberationtech] [SPAM:] FSF email self defence project
  - Greg White

[liberationtech] The Hacking Team Commercial and are there others?
  - Karen Dunnes

[liberationtech] Viber features being blocked by the Gambian govt?
  - Mary Bukowski
“rai” also had another success
- Mac OS X stack_chk_guard not always safe from overwrite rai (May 15)

- CVE-2014-3719 SQL Injection Vulnerability shady.liu (May 15)

- [CVE-2014-3749] Construtiva CIS Manager CMS POST SQLi Edge (May 16)

- check_dhcp - Nagios Plugins <= 2.0.1 Arbitrary Option File Read Dawid Goluski (May 16)

- UPS Web/SNMP-Manager CS121 authentication bypass, credentials leak, ... jkmac (May 16)

- CA20140413-01: Security Notice for OpenSSL Heartbleed Vulnerability Williams, James K (May 16)

- HP Release Control Authenticated Privilege Escalation and XXE Brandon Perry (May 16)

- Information Exposure via SNMP on ARRIS / Motorola SBG6580 Cable Modem Gateway Inokii Security Advisory (May 19)

- Re: [CVE-2014-3719] ALEPH500 (Integrated library management system) SQL Injection shady.liu (May 19)

- JavaMail SMTP Header Injection via method setSubject [CSNC-2014-001] Alexandre Herzog (May 19)
VulDB: Apple Mac OS X up to 13.1.0 Stack Guard stack_chk_guard buffer overflow

General

scipID: 13247
Affected: Apple Mac OS X up to 13.1.0
Published: 05/15/2014 (rai)
Risk: problematic

Created: 05/18/2014
Entry: 74.7% complete

Summary

A vulnerability was found in Apple Mac OS X up to 13.1.0. It has been rated as problematic. This issue affects the function stack_chk_guard of the component Stack Guard. The manipulation with an unknown input leads to a buffer overflow vulnerability. Impacted is confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

The weakness was disclosed 05/15/2014 by rai as Mac OS X stack_chk_guard not always safe from overwrite as mailinglist post (Full-Disclosure). The advisory is shared for download at seclists.org. The vendor was not involved in the public release. The advisory contains:

All credit due to the anon pastebin poster.

The exploitation is known to be difficult. Attacking locally is a requirement. A single attack is needed for exploitation. Technical details as well as a public exploit are known.

A public exploit has been developed by rai in ANSI C and been published immediately. It is declared as proof-of-concept. The exploit is shared for download at maker.fea.st. The code is:

```c
#include

extern long __stack_chk_guard;
```
Improved Distract Att From X

• combine both approaches

• when a email on X appears, start several distraction threads

• attract attention to the distractor threads by lengthen the threads with sock puppet mails

• prepare juicy distractor threads ahead of time
Uses for evil.{corp,gov}

- start distractor threads around emails from opponents others you wish not to get as much attention
- add light discussion to attract attention to your emails
- discredit opponents by doing a bad sock puppetry operation on their behalf
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Why Polls?

- Used by a few major news sites
  - Huffington Post, Al Jazeera, etc.
  - Many more random bloggers
  - Even a Golden Globe movie awards poll
- Readers see the results of polls
In a stunning result, the winner of the third annual TIME 100 poll and new owner of the title World's Most Influential Person is moot. The 21-year-old college student and founder of the online community 4chan.org, whose real name is Christopher Poole, received 16,794,368 votes and an average influence rating of 90 (out of a possible 100) to handily beat the likes of Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin and Oprah Winfrey. To put the magnitude of the upset in perspective, it's worth noting that everyone moot beat out actually has a job.
In a stunning result, the winner of the 2013 TIME Most Influential Person poll is moot. The poll was won by a college student and founder of the online forum 4chan.org, whose real name is Christopher Chan. He received 16,794,368 votes and an average rating of 87 (out of a possible 100) to beat out the likes of Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, and Oprah Winfrey. To put the magnitude of the result in perspective, it's worth noting that every other person listed beat out actually has a job.
Surely this is a solved problem
Landslide Win

Subtle Win
HuffPo Readers Poll

How closely are you following news about the group known as the Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL that has been operating in Syria and Iraq?

- Very closely: 27%
- Somewhat closely: 41%
- Not very closely: 19%
- Not closely at all: 13%

YouGov: All Americans 18+  HuffPost Readers
**THE HUFFPOST/YOUGOV POLL**

How closely are you following news about the group known as the Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL that has been operating in Syria and Iraq?

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<td><strong>Very closely</strong></td>
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<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not very closely</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not closely at all</strong></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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How closely are you following news about the group known as the Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL that has been operating in Syria and Iraq?

- Very closely: 27% (YouGov: All Americans 18+) | 21% (HuffPost Readers)
- Somewhat closely: 41% (HuffPost Readers) | 13% (YouGov: All Americans 18+)
- Not very closely: 19% (YouGov: All Americans 18+) | 3% (HuffPost Readers)
- Not closely at all: 63% (HuffPost Readers) | 13% (YouGov: All Americans 18+)
these polls have a serious credibility problem
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![thinkst logo](thinkst-applied-research)
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in 140 seconds..
TL;DR
Gilad Lotan bought followers and did some cool analysis of the network graph*.

*https://medium.com/i-data/fake-friends-with-real-benefits-eec8c4693bd3
Timeline Crowding
Balaji Srinivasan @balajis 11h
These communications were:
- too trivial for movies
- too voluminous for mail
- too scandalous for news
Only feasible w/ decentralization.

Balaji Srinivasan @balajis 11h
New transactions of many kinds to appear. Will there be Bitcoin analogs for the:
- upvote
- like
- tweet
- blogpost
- email
- chat room
- IM

Balaji Srinivasan @balajis 11h
That is, what new transactions are akin to new kinds of communications (likes, tweets, blog posts) newly feasible in decentralized channels?

Balaji Srinivasan @balajis 11h
Internet permitted new comm types: trivial, voluminous, scandalous. What new txs does Bitcoin permit?
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TIL When Alan Shepard was asked what he thought about as he sat atop the Redstone rocket, waiting for liftoff, he had replied, "The fact that every part of this ship was built by the low bidder."
Check this very active LIVE feed for the latest on Occupy Central in Hong Kong.

1. **Greece Is In Full Blown Stock Market Collapse** (businessinsider.com)
   - Up 2156
   - submitted 4 hours ago by yam12
   - 619 comments

2. **‘Anonymous’ Hacker Group Goes After ISIS** (anonyq.com)
   - Up 1550
   - submitted 3 hours ago by Nedrin
   - 336 comments

3. **Hong Kong Police filmed beating protester** (online.wsj.com)
   - Up 3709
   - submitted 11 hours ago by L33tmaster
   - 601 comments

4. **Saddam-Era Chemical Weapons Now Under ISIS Control**
   - Up 2382
   - submitted 8 hours ago by flgs
   - 1175 comments

5. **Iconic 2,500 year old Siberian princess 'died from breast cancer', reveals MRI scan.**
   - Up 677
   - Submitted 2 hours ago by Acanthas
   - 65 comments

6. **Activists use GPS to track illegal loggers in Brazil’s Amazon rainforest:**
   - Hi-tech undercover operation used GPS tracking on timber trucks for the first time, as well as satellite and aerial images to reveal extent of illegal logging in Brazilian Amazon.
   - Up 725
   - Submitted 2 hours ago by Acanthas
   - 65 comments
Score factors
Upvote articles we want to promote
Downvote articles we want to kill
So first we needed accounts..
Our accounts seemed broken

reddits secret sauce
But we have > 50 accounts

What we can do with 50 accounts?
On small subreddits it’s easy to get a new article on to front page by up voting.
TCP reassembly bug in FreeBSD can cause kernel crash, possible memory disclosure. ([freebsd.org](http://freebsd.org))

How to Safely Generate a Random Number (like 6ae51281cde590) ([sockpuppet.org](http://sockpuppet.org))

Tails 1.0 released! ([tails.boum.org](http://tails.boum.org))

OpenSSH make compiling against OpenSSL optional ([article.gmane.org](http://article.gmane.org))

An overview of how reddit's new CSS filter works. ([self.netsec](http://self.netsec))

Revocation still doesn't work ([imperialviolet.org](http://imperialviolet.org))

How To Setup Darkcomet RAT with download! ([skullforums.com](http://skullforums.com))
On large subreddits like worldnews, 50 isn’t enough for a full win
Upvote articles we want to promote
Downvote articles we want to kill
Let’s also try down voting..
downvote stuff to knock into moderation queue
below user/subreddit preference
Trickle Downvoting: only down vote as many up votes as new articles have
Up-vote our target
Trickle down-vote others
WINNING
Mass-DownVoting

What would happen if we down voted all new articles as they appeared?
Began with worldnews
In eastern Ukraine, the mob rules

Note: We may remove bigoted or hateful comments, including those directed towards any race, religion, ethnic group, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. Repeat offenders may be banned.

How the heck is this at 56 downvotes after 4 minutes?!
Then..
attackers, so the admins can solve the problem faster.

We apologize for the disruption, we appreciate your patience, and we welcome any tips you have for how we can improve the /r/worldnews user experience in this time of difficulty.

1764 comments  share

other discussions

5/5/14  r/worldnews  "/r/worldnews is currently under a downvote attack - here's what you need to know, and what you can do"  (reddit.com)
submitted 5 months ago by EdgyUsernameGoldPiz  to /r/PanicHistory
16 comments  share

33  /r/worldnews is currently under a downvote attack  (reddit.com)
submitted 5 months ago by MrsSippy  to /r/conspiracy
14 comments  share

WE'RE UNDER ATTACK, COMRADES! STAY CALM AND DON'T MOVE - WE'RE FIGHTING THIS THING WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT!  (reddit.com)
submitted 5 months ago by jamie_byron_dean  to /r/circlebroke2

[3 days ago]  "/r/worldnews is currently under a downvote attack - here's what you need to know, and what you can do"  (reddit.com)
submitted 5 months ago by cojoco  to /r/RedditCensorship
comment  share

/r/WorldNews is currently under a downvote attack  (reddit.com)
submitted 5 months ago by sage_joch  to /r/Orwellian
comment  share
Everyone, meet my little brother (imgur.com)
submitted 2 hours ago by Slothduction to /r/AdviceAnimals
71 comments share save hide report

This duck sucks. (imgur.com)
submitted 6 hours ago by Bodysalt to /r/funny
568 comments share save hide report

Amazing what mods can do for a 10 year old game (HL2) (imgur.com)
submitted 5 hours ago by DrSlappyPants to /r/gaming
955 comments share save hide report

Early Movie Concept Arts (imgur.com)
submitted 5 hours ago by cheths to /r/movies
640 comments share save hide report

GOOD BOY (imgur.com)
submitted 7 hours ago by CORNLORD to /r/gifs
644 comments share save hide report

This year's birthday treasure hunt for my son. (imgur.com)
submitted 7 hours ago by crujo134 to /r/pics
467 comments share save hide report

John Oliver reads an unexpected and hilarious response from POM Wonderful after skewering them on his show
submitted 5 hours ago by theruins to /r/videos
188 comments share save hide report

While I was drinking coffee this morning, my dog brought me this. I have no idea where it came from. (imgur.com)
submitted 7 hours ago by NikonNights to /r/aws
509 comments share save hide report

/r/worldnews is currently under a downvote attack - here's what you need to know, and what you can do
submitted 4 hours ago by slachopsuey to /r/worldnews
794 comments share save hide report

TIL researchers have invented a helmet that gives humans simulated 360° of vision, allowing a person to avoid object tossed outside the normal human field of view. (risa.fr)
submitted 6 hours ago by hans_grouper to /r/todayilearned
291 comments share save hide report
You've probably noticed that the up/down vote numbers have suddenly turned very strange in the past few hours, with everything being downvoted below zero. This is because /r/worldnews is under attack. The source of the downvoting is currently unknown but we and the admins are investigating and doing our best to find out.

The purpose of this attack is to disrupt the subreddit. It does this by delivering enough downvotes to render posts invisible by reddit's default settings, and to discourage your participating by downvoting everything below zero.

Here's what you need to know:

- Don't worry about the downvotes affecting your karma. The unusual votes (in this case, downvotes) will be wiped out when the source of the problem is identified. This will probably take a few days.
- One of the goals of the attack is to render posts invisible by downvoting them below the default threshold in users' preferences settings. The way you can neutralize that part of the attack is by changing the threshold of invisibility in your user preferences. Here's how: 1. In the upper right of your screen in the area with your username, click preferences. 2. In preferences, go to the "link options" section, and change the final line, where it says "don't show me sites with a score of less than ___". You can set it to any negative number (ex. -100), but even better than filling in a negative number is just leaving the box blank. By leaving the box blank you will completely neutralize the attackers' ability to make posts invisible.
- The "hot" tab will be broken for the duration of the attack, but we recommend browsing by the "new" tab (/r/worldnews/new).
- We also recommend voting; obviously we can't tell you how to vote, but human votes help minimize the impact of the attackers, and it only takes a fraction of a second to click the arrows.

If you like reading and participating in /r/worldnews, following the above tips can help restore most of the everyday /r/worldnews experience for you, and with your participating in voting, you can help to weaken and expose the attackers, so the admins can solve the problem faster.

We apologize for the disruption, we appreciate your patience, and we welcome any tips you have for how we can improve the /r/worldnews user experience in this time of difficulty.
Much speculation ensued ..
*** For the record, we had nothing to do with /r/technology
Simultaneously, we ran the same thing on netsec...
But netsec moderators responded with intelligent discussion and roped in official reddit admins to talk about the problem.
You had a group of about 20 bots that were being used to downvote posts in the subreddit. We rendered the voting from those accounts ineffective, but to make it more difficult for the controller of the bots to realize that they've been disabled, we still need to make it look like their votes are applying. If we just throw away their votes entirely, the controller's going to see that their bots have been blocked, and change up what they're doing immediately.

Because there's no way to tell which viewers are associated with the blocked voters, we have to show a score to everyone that looks like the votes are still applying (even though, as you said, we don't actually rank using it internally). The fake score can't be only shown to bot accounts. If the controller opens a submission in an incognito window via TOR or something, we'd have no way of linking them back to the bots. So when their 20 downvotes are gone there, they'd know what happened. This is /r/netsec, I'm sure I don't need to elaborate on how many other options there are for separating yourself from this sort of thing. The only feasible option is showing the fake scores to everyone unless we want detection to be trivial.

Being able to hide scores on submissions temporarily like you suggested might help some, but it really just delays the problem, it doesn't solve it. There are also various undesirable side effects from hiding submission scores that don't apply as much to comments. Over the years, a number of subreddits have tried experiments with hiding all submission scores using CSS like you've done, and they pretty much universally decided that it was a bad idea. Because the "hot" ranking involves both score and time, with things dropping in rank based on how old they are, being able to see the scores lets the viewer easily get an idea of how popular/significant different submissions are. Without that information available, it becomes extremely difficult for someone to look at a subreddit's front page and quickly figure out which submissions were the most popular recently.

I was the one that added the ability for moderators to temporarily hide comment scores, and I've definitely thought about extending it to submissions as well. But seeing how poorly all of those experiments that tried to do the same thing with CSS ended up going has made me hesitant about it. We do already have a very "light" score-hiding for submissions, where you can't see the score for the first 2 hours unless you actually visit the comments page. I'm not fully convinced that allowing true hiding like we have for comments would be a good thing, and most likely especially not for longer time periods since it makes the front page more and more confusing the longer the scores are hidden for.
This should have been much easier to spot
This should have been much easier to spot

- voting in synch
- signup times
- some common email domains
- pattern of names
- ip-addresses from known open proxies
- user-agents: headers
- low karma interactors
BTW... Two months later

to
This should have been much easier to spot

- voting in synch
- signup times
- some common email domains
- pattern of names
- ip-addresses from known open proxies
- user-agents: headers
- low karma interactors
Growing Personas for Karma
Everything i needed to know about managing hackers, i learnt from my DVD collection...

Does twitter kill the blogging star?

Memory Corruption Attacks. The (almost) complete history..

Some Computer Security Prezi's

Anonymity loves Company

Tell HN: Toy app thrown together for fun

Too many InfoSec Conferences? (Infographic Inside)

Tell HN: Subscription Service that covers InfoSec Happenings..

What Anonymous taught us about Cyber War

Searchable Security Conference Site

LulzSec will be used to Usher in Regulation (few of us will like)

Create graphs/nodes/edges in JavaScript (an arbor.js tutorial)

Automated Shoulder Surfing Attacks (Computer Vision meets on screen keyboards)

BlackHat 2011 (according to Twitter)

(Simple) Chrome plugin for GPG/PGP in GMail

Update: (Simple) Chrome plugin to enable GPG in Gmail

Oracles Mary Ann Davidson lashes out at Security Firm

Poll: Spotted the Polls/Karma Link?

Etsy's Office-Hacker Job shows established companies the way..

You and Your Research, a modern take
23 Links - Karma: 99
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| online polls | <img src="checkmark.png" alt="✓" /> | <img src="checkmark.png" alt="✓" /> |
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Thinkst Applied Research
Why News Sites?
Cyclone Hudhud leaves trail of devastation; 6 killed in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha

Cyclone Hudhud pounded the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha with heavy rain and winds of almost 195 kmph leaving six people dead and a trail of devastation with Visakhapatnam, where the very severe storm made landfall, bearing the brunt. NDREF help lines: 01126107953; 09711077372

Pakistan targets 15 posts in Jammu, seeks UN intervention

Pakistan heavily shelled 15 border outposts and hamlets in Arnia sector of Jammu and Kashmir early Sunday even as it wrote to UN chief Ban Ki-moon blaming India for the escalation in border clashes and sought UN intervention on Kashmir.

Rahul Gandhi to do a BJP, veterans will make way for Gen Next

In what may set off alarm bells for many powerful Congress veterans, Rahul Gandhi is learnt to be planning to introduce some drastic measures, including bringing up a new set of leaders to replace the existing ones in

don't miss

In pics: Hudhud takes India by storm

Cyclone Hudhud hit India's east coast with monstrous ferocity on Sunday, killing at least six people and leaving behind a trail of destruction in Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring Odisha.

Indian astronomer finds galaxy that pumps...
Can we influence this panel? Get articles on it or keep articles off it?
Megachurches: The hidden pillar of Nigeria's economy

Exactly how much of Nigeria's $510bn GDP megachurches make up is difficult to assess, since they are, like the oil sector, largely opaque entities.

comments (0)

• TB Joshua's church: Built, like others, on shifting sands
• ANCYL to block TB Joshua from entering SA
• Press pause on prophet TB joshua's power

Obituary: The warmth and laughter of Chris van Wyk

Why is Ebola being treated as an 'African disease'?

The head of the African Development Bank has criticised the international response to the Ebola outbreak as too little, too late.

comments (2)
Panel features recent articles with the most page views
Page views we can control!
Zuma could testify before Nkandla disciplinary

The PSA has not ruled out the possibility of President Jacob Zuma being called to testify during the public works departmental hearings.

comments (4)

No timeline for return of Nigerian church collapse bodies

NATIONAL | SAPA
Hong Kong withdraws riot police
In Zimbabwe, preaching is politics
The art of twar: Malema vs Mbalula
Botswana’s clean image hides the dirt
The U.S. credit-card industry has found its sweet spot: a combination of moderate economic growth, low interest rates and consumers who have struck a balance between spending more and paying their bills on time. 23 min ago

Retailers See Winds Filling Holiday Sales
Ahead of the Tape: The National Retail Federation is expecting a 4.1% rise in holiday sales overall. With pump prices near three-year lows, more dollars should find their way to the mall.

Irish Tax Loophole Could Close
Ireland is expected on Tuesday to unveil changes to its tax code that could eventually close a well-known corporate-tax loophole, the Double Irish.

OPEC Members’ Rift Deepens
A rift between OPEC members deepened over the weekend, as rival producers in the cartel moved in sharply different directions amid recently falling oil prices.

Banks Back Crisis Plan

U.K. Government Launches Sale of Eurostar Stake

Fed’s Tarullo Concerned About U.S. Productivity

‘Gone Girl’ Leads Box Office Again

Asia Makes a Move in Gold Trading

Hyundai Land Deal: Short on Oversight

CVC to Start Taking Share Orders for

Judges Step Up Electioncraling
Out-of-state groups are pouring money into judicial elections, upsetting genteel traditions under which judges in some states faced little opposition and avoided the ethnically tricky process of stumping for votes.

World

In Hong Kong, Both Sides Dig In
Protest leaders and authorities dug in over the weekend, as Hong Kong’s pro-democracy demonstration looked to start a third week with increasingly pointed rhetoric and key roads still blocked.

China, U.S. Standoff Deepens Over Protests

Bolivian Leader Poised for Third Term

Silva Endorses Former Rival for Brazilian Presidency

Moscow, Kiev Take Steps to Ease Tensions

Popular Now

1 CDC Confirms Texas Health Worker Has Ebola

2 A Musical Fix for American Schools

3 Canadian Pacific Approached CSX About Merger

4 ‘Maximizer’ or ‘Satisficer’—Which Are You?

5 OPEC Members’ Rift Deepens Amid Falling Oil Prices

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Laila Blunt @LailaBlunt · Jun 26
Only if for 1623 online.wsj.com/articles/losse...
## Coulson Guilty, Brooks Cleared in Tabloid Trial
Two former senior News Corp editors met sharply different fates in the long-running phone-hacking case, as the jury cleared Rebekah Brooks of all charges but found Andy Coulson guilty of illegally intercepting voice-mail messages.
- Prosecutors Have Little to Show
- Cameron Issues Apology
- Graphic: Verdicts in the Trial

## At Least 90 More Kidnapped in Nigeria

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<td>Syrian Warplanes Strike in Western Iraq, Killing at Least...</td>
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<td>Opinion: Fouad Ajami, Great American</td>
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<td>Food Makers' Secret Ingredient: Less Salt</td>
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Deep Germany Ready to Break U.S. Hearts

For the millions of Americans who have gotten swept onto the U.S. soccer bandwagon, be warned before this critical third game of the 2014 World Cup—Germany is the international soccer version of a bucket of cold water.

Google Readies TV Set-Top Box

Google is to unveil a new television set-top box on Wednesday as it races Amazon.com, Apple and others to control digital content in the home.

1. Opinion: Fouad Ajami, Great American
2. U.S. Set to Export First Oil Since '70s
3. Social Media Fail to Live Up to Early Marketing Hype
4. Google Readies TV Set-Top Box
5. The Gluten-Free Craze: Is It Healthy?
The New York Times
but we need an account on the site to share the article
At the time of writing, we have at least 30,000 accounts

** NYT Admins - Sorry!
15. **OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR**

**An Adirondack Wilderness Imperiled**

By **EDWARD ZAHNISER**

A plan set in motion by Gov. Andrew Cuomo would allow an open pit mine in forest preserve land.

*Go to Article | Email*

---

16. **Making Quinoa and Rice Bowls**

By **Jenny Woodward**

Melissa Clark assembles a hearty meal with quinoa, kale, kimchi, egg and a simple dressing.

*Go to Article | Email*

---

17. **YOUR MONEY**

**Beware of Shifting Options Within Medicare Plans**

By **TARA SIEGEL BERNARD**

Open enrollment for Medicare starts Oct. 15, and offers older Americans a dizzying array of health care options.

*Go to Article | Email*

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18. **MUSIC REVIEW**

**Swept Up in Bach’s All-Consuming Passion**

By **ANTHONY TOMMASINI**

The Berlin Philharmonic’s performance of “St. Matthew Passion” at the Park Avenue Armory, conducted by Simon Rattle, showed why Bach chose other ways besides opera to tell stories through music.

*Go to Article | Email*

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19. **A Twist Adds Complexity to a Pasta Dish**

By **MARK BITTMAN**

Mark Bittman’s take on a great pasta dish for the fall, pasta alla Norma.

*Go to Article | Email*

---

20. **Restaurant Cocktails That Aim Too High**

By **PETE WELLS**

New restaurants in New York City are offering cocktail lists that are becoming more creative, and not in a good way.

*Go to Article | Email*
14. Cave Paintings in Indonesia May Be Among the Oldest Known
By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD
The paintings of hands and animals in seven limestone caves on Sulawesi had previously been dismissed as no more than 10,000 years old.
NYT spends millions on their news gathering apparatus
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NYT spends millions on their news gathering apparatus

Cost to register 30k accounts: $0.12
NYT spends millions on their news gathering apparatus

Cost to register 30k accounts: $0.12
Cost to share 30k stories: $0.18
NYT spends millions on their news gathering apparatus

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<td>Trivially manipulate the NYT front page</td>
<td>Priceless</td>
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NYT spends millions on their news gathering apparatus

Cost to register 30k accounts: $0.12
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Trivially manipulate the NYT front page: Priceless
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In Brief

• Disqus let’s you drop a few lines of .js in your page which magically gives you an entire commenting system.

• Comments can be voted up/down which affects order.

• User profiles are visible across sites and your comments are gathered in your Disqus profile page.

• Admins get a nifty interface to moderate and maintain their comment threads.
Used by Wordpress blogs, Tumblrs, soccer mom forums
They don’t control the full message
• Login: left as an exercise for the reader

• Mass post:

```bash
export thread="threadid";export msg="mymessage"; (for i in `seq -f "userprefix%g" 1 100`;do echo "curl -b "${i}.cookies" -d "thread=${thread}&message=${msg}&api_key=${API_KEY}" http://disqus.com/api/3.0/posts/create.json";done;)|parallel
```

• Mass vote:

```bash
export post="postid";export vote="1"; (for i in `seq -f "userprefix%g" 1 100`;do echo "curl -b "${i}.cookies" -d "post=${post}&vote=${vote}&api_key=${API_KEY}" http://disqus.com/api/3.0/posts/vote.json";done;)|parallel
```
• Mass downvote:

export post="postid";export vote="-1"; (for i in `seq -f "userprefix%g" 1 100`;do echo "curl -b "${i}.cookies" -d "post=${post}&vote=${vote}&api_key=${API_KEY}" http://disqus.com/api/3.0/posts/vote.json";done;) | parallel

• Bonus: Flag posts to temporarily make them disappear

export post="postid"; (for i in `seq -f "userprefix%g" 1 100`;do echo "curl -b "${i}.cookies" -d "post=${post}&api_key=${API_KEY}" http://disqus.com/api/3.0/posts/report.json";done;) | parallel
abbot:disqus marco$
Pretty much complete control of Disqus forums (with 1 line of bash script)
Wut?
• User registration isn’t IP-limited that we’ve encountered

• Email verification isn’t a requirement

• Guest voting _is_ IP-limited

• Open proxy lists bypass this trivially
ALL OF THE SAME ATTACKS
Thanks Obama!
Flag as spam 4/5 times to remove
(try it yourself on fox news : )
livefyre: one more thing..
There might still be some adjustments to my schedule moving forward. I definitely need to play well for that to happen. If I don’t play well, I guess I can also play everything,” he said.

Federer could reach No. 2 with a good performance in Shanghai.

---

Dan Last

I pretty much doubt that he will skip Basel or Paris if he does well in Shanghai and could gain points on Novak. If he has a chance to end year end No.1 he will play as much as he can.

This would be his ultimate achievement, to get back that year end No 1 and he is close, considering that Novak may take some time off due to his private situation.

If Novak wins Shanghai he probably will end up No 1 as his lead over Fed would be at least 2,000 pts with only about 3,000 pts up for grab for the rest of the season.

Rafa pretty much has no more chance to end as year end No 1. He would have to win everything and hope Novak does not bag more than 1000 points in the 4 events. Given Nadal’s injury, form and also past history at indoor events I just don’t see that. He never won London but would have to win all 5 matches at London to get the 1,500 pts needed.
GET /lftoken/eyJhbGciOiAiSFMyNTYiLCAnImljOTk2LjEwLjEwIjogIkpXVCJ9.eYJkb21haW4iGn0TgsICjIc2VY2lkIjogIkJ1cDY2NDY3ODUyIn0.CwvDr6oXnz1d0P8rch4-jzfU4jqR2VNVdzo6bkopAD0?r=e1ws1nel3lw HTTP/1.1
normaluser4

"We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception." Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion
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Are these attacks happening?
4chan polls
Palestine in Chile

HamBaconEggs • 7 months ago
"The jew cries out in pain as he strikes you." - Polish proverb

DeShawn S. Williams
Pro-White/Black, anti-jew

Join Date: Mar 2009
Location: ill
Posts: 1,468

Palestine in Chile

HamBaconEggs • 7 months ago
ergengekr@gmail.com
If you don't like what you see here, Shlomo, then go hide in your synagogue and study Talmud all day. Progressives, among others, are sick and tired of Zionist Jews committing heinous crimes and then using their disproportionate financial and media control to justify or underwrite them. The constant use of "anti-Semitism" is just a way to shut up those who call you out on your tactics. Time to stop acting as though you're better than the "goyim." You're no better than anyone else; indeed, a majority of your tribe have proven themselves far worse.

HamBaconEggs • Guest • 10 months ago
Just imagine how many millions of people would have been saved from the scourge of Judeo-imperialist wars and Jewish financial predations had Hitler actually finished the job.

http://www.commondreams.org/hambaconeggs
Palestine in Chile

HamBaconEggs • 7 months ago
"The jew cries out in pain as he strikes you." -Polish proverb

DeShawn S. Williams
Pro-White/Black, anti-jew

HamBaconEggs • 7 months ago
If you don't like what you see here, Shlomo, then go hide in your synagogue and study Talmud all day. Progressives, among others, are sick and tired of Zionist jews committing heinous crimes and then using their disproportionate financial and media control to justify or underwrite them. The constant cries of "anti-Semitism" is just a way to shut up those who call you out on your tactics. Time to stop acting as though you're better than the "goyim." You're no better than anyone else; indeed, a majority of your tribe have proven themselves far worse.

HamBaconEggs • Guest • 10 months ago
Just imagine how many millions of people would have been saved from the scourge of Judeo-imperialist wars and Jewish financial predations had Hitler actually finished the job.

http://www.commondreams.org/hambaconeggs
Remember:

We discovered that flagging posts got them killed?
Please help us by marking any antisemitic and anti Israeli comments as spam!

434 Likes  86 Comments

IDF
Saturday at 12:10 PM • ✨

Will you help?

IDF
July 7 at 2:04 PM • ✨
EFFECTS: Definition

- “Using online techniques to make something happen in the real or cyber world”
- Two broad categories:
  - Information Ops (influence or disruption)
  - Technical disruption
- Known in GCHQ as Online Covert Action
- The 4 D’s: Deny / Disrupt / Degrade / Deceive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swamp Donkey</td>
<td>is a tool that will silently locate all predefined types of file and encrypt them on a target's machine.</td>
<td>Ready to fire (but see target restrictions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tornado Alley</td>
<td>is a delivery method (Excel Spreadsheet) that can silently extract and run an executable on a target's machine.</td>
<td>Ready to fire (but see target restrictions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underpass</td>
<td>Change outcome of online polls (previously known as NUBILO)</td>
<td>In development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vipers Tongue</td>
<td>is a tool that will silently Denial of Service calls on a Satellite Phone or a GSM Phone.</td>
<td>Ready to fire (but see target restrictions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warpath</td>
<td>Mass delivery of SMS messages to support an Information Operations campaign</td>
<td>Ready to fire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Flow Management**

- **Underpass**: Change outcome of online polls (previously known as NUBILO) - In development.
Disqus seems ripe for the picking.
So we went looking active armies.
Most commented thread on CNN’s highest voted comment

Mimi Satterlee  ·  3 months ago

I wish you a speedy and full recovery from your condition.

Thanks Son.

665  ·  Share
Most commented thread on CNN's highest voted comment

46324 Comments

Sort by Best

octo

664 Guest Votes

Thanks Sort.

665 ↑ | ↓ · Share ›
Approach
Pick slightly controversial topic
Pick news orgs that cover this topic
Then

• Use Disqus API to get a list of popular stories
• For each story, use the API to pull user info
• Link users to stories they commented on
• and...
SETEC REAL WOOF CRETS
Cue a bunch of similar attempts to look at the data
Decided to focus on voting
Voting metric

• Pull all comments for random story.

• For each comment pull the non-guest voters.

• For each voter retrieve their registration time.

• Calculate the variation in voter age on each comment.
What stood out

• Accounts had been registered within minutes of each other.

• Their usernames and profile names had a regular pattern:
  • Username: <Firstname><Surname>
  • Profile name: <Firstname> <Surname>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Username</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date/Timestamp</th>
<th>Likes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NatalyaMcalpin</td>
<td>Natalya Mcalpin</td>
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<td>117d</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Paige Swanger</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>117d</td>
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<td>2014-06-05T17:47:07</td>
<td>117d</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>117d</td>
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<td>TerinaTurrell</td>
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<td>117d</td>
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<td>Thao Mcanulty</td>
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<td>Valliere</td>
<td>2014-06-05T17:50:54</td>
<td>117d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guests Likes: 23
Meanwhile, ISIS rapists and kidnappers are admired followers of ISIS's

Rodger Ransom
Rosette Richards
Russell Dipaolo
Theodora Tippin

15 days ago

Indeed, for Haditha massacre. Although US is

not only because right wing there does not

necessarily they would be worse than IS. World

has still not forgotten Hitler.

Not exactly convincing
What about their emails addresses?

(Hint: you really shouldn’t be able to retrieve a Disqus user’s email address)
We found an unmask attack that returns an email address for a profile name*

*Already reported and fixed
Supposed puppets had emails in the form:
<Firstname><Surname>@gmail.com
We had our suspicions, but thought the puppet army would be larger.

Time to enumerate.
User Enumeration

- Disqus users get a unique ID
- This ID is a counter (yay!)
- There are unrestricted APIs to query user information (yay! yay!)
  - https://disqus.com/api/3.0/users/details.json
- We can lookup email addresses for each enumerated user with our unmask attack (yay! yay! yay!)
- So we pick a lower and upper bound beyond the lowest and highest known puppet IDs, making a range of 5k users.
- Pull details for all users.
5k users. Now what?

- Filter on known values:
  - Must have username, name and email patterns, and not be verified.
  - Age is already taken into account with the ID, so less relevant.
AlainaDartez@gmail.com (AlainaDartez) 117 2014-06-05T17:35:45
AleciaAxley@gmail.com (AleciaAxley) 117 2014-06-05T17:35:49
AleshaHepner@gmail.com (AleshaHepner) 117 2014-06-05T17:35:54
AllynAlfrey@gmail.com (AllynAlfrey) 117 2014-06-05T17:35:58
AlmaArmwood@gmail.com (AlmaArmwood) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:03
AlvinNolan@gmail.com (AlvinNolan) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:07
AmadoGorman@gmail.com (AmadoGorman) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:12
AngelinaCrespo@gmail.com (AngelinaCrespo) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:17
AngelynAleman@gmail.com (AngelynAleman) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:22
AntoinetteAlcorn@gmail.com (AntoinetteAlcorn) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:27
ArdenApril@gmail.com (ArdenApril) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:32
BeatrizBuchholtz@gmail.com (BeatrizBuchholtz) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:37
BelvaSeckman@gmail.com (BelvaSeckman) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:42
BriceBosket@gmail.com (BriceBosket) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:46
BrookePlate@gmail.com (BrookePlate) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:50
BryannaCallanan@gmail.com (BryannaCallanan) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:55
CarmanComan@gmail.com (CarmanComan) 117 2014-06-05T17:36:59
CatarinaCountryman@gmail.com (CatarinaCountryman) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:04
CherelleCostner@gmail.com (CherelleCostner) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:08
ChristeenChien@gmail.com (ChristeenChien) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:13
ChristelDecola@gmail.com (ChristelDecola) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:17
ChrystalCryan@gmail.com (ChrystalCryan) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:22
CicelyCorrell@gmail.com (CicelyCorrell) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:26
ClarineChavarria@gmail.com (ClarineChavarria) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:32
ClarineHeeren@gmail.com (ClarineHeeren) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:37
CletaEvans@gmail.com (CletaEvans) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:42
ConnieCola@gmail.com (ConnieCola) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:48
CynthiaFally@gmail.com (CynthiaFally) 117 2014-06-05T17:37:52
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<td>Alaina Dartez</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Alecia Axley</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ConnieCola@gmail.com">ConnieCola@gmail.com</a> (ConnieCola)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inter-registration time

Time (s)

Registration number
So Far

- Accounts with
  - Patterned profile names
  - Patterned usernames
  - Patterned emails
  - Similar registration times
  - Regular inter-registration delays
  - Alphabetical progression in usernames
Disqus lets us map usernames to forums where they’re active
Disqus also lets us map usernames to comments*

*Including “Private” profiles
There no hasbaRats defending the indefensible i
So Far

- Accounts with
  - Patterned profile names
  - Patterned usernames
  - Patterned emails
  - Similar registration times
  - Regular inter-registration delays
  - Alphabetical progression in usernames

- And
  - Active on the same set of sites
  - Shared duplicate comments across accounts
  - Vote for each other’s comments to push them up
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puppet army size</th>
<th>186 confirmed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period of activity</td>
<td>Four months (2014-06-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments posted</td>
<td>7269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique comments</td>
<td>5782 (1487 dups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary targeted forums</td>
<td>CNN, Al Jazeera, Jerusalem Post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are they saying?
Consistent multi-faceted views

- Pro-Palestine
- Anti-Israel
- Anti-ISIS/L
- Writes “We (USA)”, presents as Western
- Anti-Syria
- Anti-Obama
- Pro-Islam (Writes “I am Christian and I know that Christianity is worst religion in the world” :)

So who is this?
No idea. Anything is pure speculation.
Ways out?
Shut down this puppet army
**DISQUS**

**Notifications**

- **Aboubakr** and 4 others upvoted you on **ISIL under heavy assault by Kurds in Iraq** • a day ago

  **Soraya Piotrowski** • 2 days ago **Pending**
  Congratulations O muslims on the advent of the auspicious occasion of Eid (Saturday) as well as the…

- **Bruisse** upvoted you on **Arabs in Israel decry racial discrimination** • 2 days ago
Disqus limiting their API. (This would be a bad idea.)
• Puppetry is very likely happening in other places.

• But without the same amount of data, we can’t tell.

• Disqus’ open data approach is great for identifying these relationships and patterns, and we want to give them shouts for it.

• (But fix the unmask attacks.)
Summary ?
• Without exception, all of the UGC sites we have looked at have proven to be fairly trivial to manipulate

• It is clear that this abuse is already taking place on many of them
  
  • Be aware of it;
  
  • Build tools to help deal with it;