

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

Fall Student Research Symposium 2022

Fall Student Research Symposium

12-8-2022

Addressing the Dangers of the Online Alt-Right

Paul Harrison

Utah State University, pharrison31415@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2022>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harrison, Paul, "Addressing the Dangers of the Online Alt-Right" (2022). *Fall Student Research Symposium 2022*. 86.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2022/86>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Fall Student Research Symposium at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall Student Research Symposium 2022 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



Addressing the Dangers of the Online Alt-Right

Paul Harrison

The alt-right phenomenon causes problems in the United States that need addressing.

Problems

- Spreading hateful misinformation
- Promotion of violence
- Growth in alt-right engagement in young American men

Solutions

- Legislation regulating social media recommendation algorithms
- Teachers and parents monitoring individual student/child's mental health

Why is the online alt-right a problem?

Online alt-right communities encourage people to commit violent crimes

- Payton Gendron, 2022 Buffalo Shooter was radicalized by online conspiracy theories (Wang, Sotomayor, Bella. 2022).
- Charlottesville, VA: Man drives a car through a group of protestors (Lavoie. 2021).
- January 6th attack on U.S. Capitol. Proud Boys, Oath Keepers organized violence (Cheney. 2022).

Online alt-right communities' appeal towards young men

- Video game with voice-chat rooms. Misogyny and racist remarks in gaming communities are normalized for new gamers (Kamentz. 2018).
- Internet meme humor. Repeated antisemitic or anti-black jokes are often interpreted as "ironically racist" by younger audiences, normalizing hateful humor (Askanius. 2021).

Several solutions to bring to the table

Legislation regulating social media recommendation algorithms

- Youtube is largest contributing platform to alt-right pipeline
- "Up next" feature is responsible for more than 70% of user engagement.
- Social media business model rewards provocative videos with exposure

(Roose. 2019)

Ideally, creators would still be allowed to produce radical or misleading content; this content would just not be recommended to users.

Teachers and parents monitoring individual student/child's mental health

- Young men with poor social activity, faltering academic ability, or declining psychological health are vulnerable to "falling down" the alt-right pipeline.
- Parent or teacher can take note of a child or student exhibiting these behaviors and pave access to professional mental health care.

(Kamentz. 2018)

Effectivity ensured: Teachers and parents have the most influence on a student's ability to gain access to mental health (Carrillo. 2022).

Thank you. Key points are provided for your convenience if you have questions

Problems

- Spreading hateful misinformation
- Promotion of violence
- Growth in alt-right engagement in young American men

Solutions

- Legislation regulating social media recommendation algorithms
- Teachers and parents monitoring individual student/child's mental health

Works Cited

- Askanius, T. (2021). On Frogs, Monkeys, and Execution Memes: Exploring the Humor-Hate Nexus at the Intersection of Neo-Nazi and Alt-Right Movements in Sweden. *Television & New Media*, 22(2), 147–165.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420982234>
- Carrillo, S. (2022, August 22). Keep an eye on your student’s mental health this back-to-school season. NPR.
<https://www.npr.org/2022/08/22/1118485445/keep-an-eye-on-your-students-mental-health-this-back-to-school-season>
- Cheney, K. (2022, October 6). Proud Boys leader pleads guilty to seditious conspiracy over Jan. 6 actions. POLITICO.
<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/06/proud-boys-leader-pleads-guilty-to-seditious-conspiracy-over-jan-6-actions-00060819>
- Kamenetz, A. (2018, November 5). Right-Wing Hate Groups Are Recruiting Video Gamers. *All Things Considered* - NPR.
<https://www.npr.org/2018/11/05/660642531/right-wing-hate-groups-are-recruiting-video-gamers>
- Lavoie, D. (2021, November 8). Woman recalls total “terror” of Charlottesville car attack. AP NEWS.
<https://apnews.com/article/sports-violence-lawsuits-race-and-ethnicity-racial-injustice-1e2d3e8ee3662494093ff9ebfc829a50>

Works Cited (cont.)

- Roose, K. (2019, June 8). The Making of a YouTube Radical. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/08/technology/youtube-radical.html>
- Wang, A., Sotomayor, M., & Bella, T. (2022, June 8). Mom of Buffalo shooting victim testifies, “This is exactly who we are.” Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/06/08/zeneta-everhart-buffalo-shooting-congress-testimony/>