

# U.S. Think Tank's Tiny Lab Helps Facebook Battle Fake Social Media | Reuters

By Joseph Menn

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The Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab is based in a 12-foot-by-12-foot office in the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the nearly 60-year-old Council [www.atlanticcouncil.org](http://www.atlanticcouncil.org), a think tank devoted to studying serious and at times obscure international issues.

Facebook is using the group to enhance its investigations of foreign interference. Last week, the company said it took down 32 suspicious pages and accounts that purported to be run by leftists and minority activists. While some U.S. officials said they were likely the work of Russian agents, Facebook said it did not know for sure.

It fell to the lab to point out similarities to fake Russian pages from 2016 during Facebook's news conference last week.

Facebook began looking for outside help amid criticism for failing to rein in Russian propaganda ahead of the 2016 presidential elections. The U.S. Justice Department won indictments against 13 Russians and three companies for using social media in that election to influence voters. U.S. President Donald Trump's national security team warned last week of persistent attempts by Russia to use social media against the 2018 congressional elections as well.

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