

How Americans Adopted Russia's Election Disinformation Playbook | The New York Times

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A deluge of misinformation is hitting the U.S. elections, and this time election experts are more worried about it coming from Americans.

Back in 2016, Kremlin-linked Russian trolls surprised social media companies with an online disinformation campaign. Russian trolls developed an effective playbook — they used a large network of fake accounts to spread incendiary political content to millions of Americans, took advantage of existing divisions in American society and sowed doubt about the election process. In the years since, the U.S. intelligence community, social media companies and the public have become aware of the threat of foreign disinformation campaigns. But America's election information problem has evolved.

"We see that playbook being used by political operatives in the U.S. and we see that same playbook being used by individuals in their basements who are angry and frustrated with life," said Claire Wardle, the U.S. director of First Draft, a nonprofit organization focused on addressing misinformation and disinformation.

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