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News Item

The Grim Consequences of a Misleading Study on Disinformation | WIRED

By Emma Briant
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> Last month the esteemed Oxford Internet Institute announced a major report on disinformation and "cyber troops" with a press release describing an "industrial-scale problem." Worldwide press coverage echoed claims that OII had revealed the "increasing role" private firms play in spreading computational propaganda. Actual evidence presented in the annual "survey" of social media manipulation, however, is much thinner than the hype.
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> While the report's website declares, "Cyber troop activity continues to increase around the world," inside the report, OII claim they show "publicly identified" cases of disinformation operations have "grow[n] in number over time." They point to their own studies counting public reporting as evidence of actual operations increasing since 2017. Citing OII's last report, which was based on similar evidence, *The New York Times* in 2019 heralded that "the number of countries with political disinformation campaigns more than doubled to 70 in the last two years."
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