

# Disinformation for profit: scammers cash in on conspiracy theories | The Guardian

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When Facebook removed dozens of groups dedicated to Canada's anti-government "Freedom Convoy" protests earlier this month, it didn't do so because of extremism or conspiracies rife within the protests. It was because the groups were being run by scam artists.

Networks of spammers and profiteers, some based as far afield as Vietnam or Romania, had set up the groups using fake or hacked Facebook accounts in an attempt to make money off of the political turmoil.

That foreign networks of social media scammers had seized on a divisive political issue may feel like somewhat of a throwback. Before investigations into Russian troll factories' operations during the US presidential election and culture war conflicts over content moderation, one of the biggest challenges facing social media platforms was profiteers pushing fake news articles and spam for easy money. Hundreds of websites mimicking US news outlets pushed their content on social media, reaping ad revenue from the traffic they generated.

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