News Item

# Facebook Has a Superuser-Supremacy Problem | The Atlantic

By Matthew Hindman, Nathaniel Lubin, and Trevor Davis

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> If you want to understand why Facebook too often is a cesspool of hate and disinformation, a good place to start is with users such as John, Michelle, and Calvin.
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> John, a caps-lock devotee from upstate New York, calls House Speaker Nancy Pelosi "PIGLOSI," uses the term *negro*, and says that the right response to Democrats with whom they disagree is to "SHOOT all of them." Michelle rails against the "plandemic." Calvin uses *gay* as a slur and declares that Black neighborhoods are always "SHITHOLES." You've almost certainly encountered people like these on the internet. What you may not realize, though, is just how powerful they are.
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> For more than a year, we've been analyzing a massive new data set that we designed to study public behavior on the 500 U.S. Facebook pages that get the most engagement from users. Our research, part of which will be submitted for peer review later this year, aims to better understand the people who spread hate and misinformation on Facebook. We hoped to learn how they use the platform and, crucially, how Facebook responds. Based on prior reporting, we expected it would be ugly. What we found was much worse.
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