

How a viral photo of USPS collection boxes became a lesson in misinformation | Vox

By Rebecca Heilweil

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Beware of what you retweet.

Amid a slew of very concerning stories [about the state of the US Postal Service](#), one particularly alarming photo recently went viral. It shows piles of blue USPS collection boxes stacked up behind a fence in what sort of looks like a dump. Amid mounting concerns about the prospect of the Postal Service processing a record number of mail-in ballots in the November election, to some the image might look like evidence of voter suppression. But it's not — not quite, anyway.

As anxiety over President Trump potentially sabotaging the mail service mounts, this photo of collection boxes represents a particularly dangerous form of misinformation, one that social media companies are still figuring out how to moderate. One [tweet](#), which has now been retweeted nearly 80,000 times, uses the image to illustrate a bold point:

Photo taken in Wisconsin. This is happening right before our eyes. They are sabotaging USPS to sabotage vote by mail. This is massive voter suppression and part of their plan to steal the election.

pic.twitter.com/QXLWGIHTrz

— Thomas Kennedy (@tomaskenn) [August 15, 2020](#)

But the problem is that the collection boxes in the image aren't in a dump. They're on a lot operated by a company called Hartford Finishing, which regularly refurbishes mailboxes for the Postal Service. In other words, the viral image shows a place where it's not unusual at all to see stacks of collection boxes. It does not reveal an apparent effort to sabotage the election.

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Source: [Photos of USPS mailboxes being removed aren't always what they seem - Vox](#)