

New White Paper on GRU Online Operations Puts Spotlight on Pseudo-Think Tanks and Personas | Stanford Internet Observatory

By Stanford Internet Observatory

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Today the Stanford Internet Observatory published a [white paper on GRU online influence operations from 2014 to 2019](#). The authors conducted this research at the request of the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) and began with a data set consisting of social media posts provided to the Committee by Facebook. Facebook attributed the Pages and posts in this data set to the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Главное управление Генерального штаба Вооружённых сил Российской Федерации), known as the GU, or by its prior acronym GRU. It removed the content in or before 2018. The data provided by Facebook to SSCI consisted of 28 folders, each corresponding to at least one unique Facebook Page. These Pages were in turn tied to discrete GRU-attributed operations. Some of these Pages and operations were significant; others were so minor they scarcely had any data associated with them at all.

While some content related to these operations has been unearthed by investigative journalists, a substantial amount has not been seen by the public in the context of GRU attribution. The SIO white paper is intended to provide an overview of the GRU tactics used in these operations and to offer key takeaways about the distinct operational clusters observed in the data. Although the initial leads were provided by the Facebook data set, many of these Pages have ties to material that remains accessible on the broader internet, and we have attempted to aggregate and archive that broader expanse of data for public viewing and in service to further academic research.

[...]

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