

# Russia Is Having Less Success at Spreading Social Media Disinformation | Scientific American

By Sophie Bushwick

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Days after Russia invaded Ukraine, multiple social media platforms—including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube—[announced](#) they had dismantled coordinated networks of accounts spreading disinformation. These networks, which were comprised of fabricated accounts disguised with fake names and AI-generated profile images or hacked accounts, were sharing suspiciously similar anti-Ukraine talking points, suggesting they were being controlled by centralized sources linked to Russia and Belarus.

Russia's Internet Research Agency [used similar disinformation campaigns](#) to amplify propaganda about the U.S. election in 2016. But their extent was unclear until after the election—and at the time, they were conducted with little pushback from social media platforms. “There was a sense that the platforms just didn’t know what to do,” says Laura Edelson, a [misinformation researcher](#) and Ph.D. candidate in computer science at New York University. Since then, she says, platforms and governments have become more adept at combating this type of information warfare—and more willing to deplatform bad actors that deliberately spread disinformation. Edelson spoke to *Scientific American* about how an information war is being waged as the conflict continues.

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