

The “broadcast” model no longer works in an era of disinformation | First Draft

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After November 3, some believers in the conspiracy theory that the US presidential election was rigged joined together, undeterred by official assurances of a fair and secure vote, to crowdsource evidence of massive fraud. They organized under hashtags like #DominionWatch, staking out election facilities in Georgia and doxxing voting-machine technicians. The ad hoc group investigation recalled the offline spillover of the QAnon-promoted #saveourchildren, which led participants to flood the hotlines of child welfare services with questionable tips about what they claimed was a vast child-trafficking conspiracy.

Empowering members to be an active part of a conspiracy theory’s development is fundamental to the QAnon community, which has been likened to “a massive multiplayer online game,” complete with “the frequent introduction of new symbols and arcane plot points to dissect and decipher.” And as the year closes, the community model of conspiracy theories has also energized #theGreatReset, which encourages participants to connect the dots between geopolitical events to form a picture of a nefarious plot by a shadowy world government to enslave the human race.

[...]

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