

# The Follower Factory | The New York Times

By Nicholas Confessore

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[Fake social media] accounts are counterfeit coins in the booming economy of online influence, reaching into virtually any industry where a mass audience — or the illusion of it — can be monetized. Fake accounts, deployed by governments, criminals and entrepreneurs, now infest social media networks. By [some calculations](#), as many as 48 million of Twitter's reported active users — nearly 15 percent — are automated accounts designed to simulate real people, though the company claims that number is far lower.

Source: [The Follower Factory - The New York Times](#) By Richard Harris and Danny DeBelius