

Trollfare: Russia's Disinformation Campaign During Military Conflict in Ukraine | International Journal of Communication

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In this study, we explore online informational warfare by the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA) against Ukraine during the military conflict in Donbass. Introducing a digital dimension to the long-standing Russian disinformation strategy of reflexive control as a historic and theoretical framework, we investigate how the IRA combined online news and social media platforms to promote propaganda to its growing number of followers. Combining computational and qualitative content analyses with time series modeling, we demonstrate how the IRA blurs distinctions between fact and fiction through interlinks among digital platforms, and we expose its successful strategies for follower growth on Twitter. We conclude with implications for understanding and promptly identifying modern hybrid warfare strategies, with a focus on coordinated multiplatform efforts that spread disinformation through the hybrid media ecosystem.

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