

West hits Vladimir Putin's fake news factories with wave of sanctions | The Guardian

By Jon Ungood-Thomas

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Twelve key disinformation outlets used to bolster Vladimir Putin have been hit with sanctions in an online crackdown on "false and misleading" reports claimed to be orchestrated by Russian intelligence.

The Foreign Office announced last week that sanctions would be imposed on the Internet Research Agency, the notorious Russian-based troll factory. Two other alleged disinformation websites, New Eastern Outlook and Oriental Review, were also targeted.

The Internet Research Agency has been exposed in the past for paying Russia-based bloggers £500 a month to flood the internet with pro-Putin comments on chat forums, social networks and the comment sections of western publications. Government investigators also claim Russian intelligence supports international news and analysis websites which promote the Kremlin's view of the Ukraine invasion.

Tom Southern, of the Centre for Information Resilience, a non-profit UK social enterprise which counters disinformation, said the impact of Russian information manipulation campaigns in the Ukraine conflict was being blunted by concerted action by governments and social media companies. "This seems to be a turning point against this fake news," he said.

[...]

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