News Item

Why Instagram could be a 2020 disinformation weapon | Axios

By Alexi McCammond
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> Instagram could become a new platform for the sharing of disinformation around the 2020 election because of the way propagandists are relying on images and proxy accounts to create and circulate fake content, leading social intelligence experts tell Axios.
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> **The big picture:** "Disinformation is increasingly based on images as opposed to text," said Paul Barrett, the author of an NYU [report](#) that's prompted a renewed look at the problem. "Instagram is obviously well-suited for that kind of meme-based activity."
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> **How it works:** A false claim about the Odessa shooter in Texas being a Beto O'Rourke supporter appeared as a tweet from a far-right account called @UncleSamsChild, which has nearly 30k followers.

> - This tweet quickly turned into screenshot images [shared](#) on Instagram from proxy accounts for @UncleSamsChild, whose accompanying Instagram account has zero posts, presumably because [it was taken down](#) for violating Instagram's rules.
> - The group's hashtag #UncleSamsMisguidedChildren appears on over 31,000 posts, meaning they have a healthy following on Instagram despite not having any actual posts on their own account.
> - So it was a tweet made to look like an Instagram post that was also shared by various people on Facebook — all as images and by accounts other than the main disinformation culprit, @UncleSamsChild.
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