Internet subcultures take advantage of the current media ecosystem to manipulate news frames, set agendas, and propagate ideas.

Far-right groups develop techniques of “attention hacking” to increase the visibility of their ideas through the strategic use of social media, memes, and bots—as well as by targeting journalists, bloggers, and influencers to help spread content.

The media’s dependence on social media, analytics and metrics, sensationalism, novelty over newsworthiness, and clickbait makes them vulnerable to such media manipulation.

While trolls, white nationalists, men’s rights activists, gamergaters, the “alt-right,” and conspiracy theorists may diverge deeply in their beliefs, they share tactics and converge on common issues.

The far-right exploits young men’s rebellion and dislike of “political correctness” to spread white supremacist thought, Islamophobia, and misogyny through irony and knowledge of internet culture.

Media manipulation may contribute to decreased trust of mainstream media, increased misinformation, and further radicalization.

Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online is a new report from Data & Society which offers comprehensive insight into why the media was vulnerable to manipulation from radicalized groups that emerged from a variety of internet subcultures in 2016.

You can read the full report at https://datasociety.net/output/media-manipulation-and-disinfo-online

**KEY FINDINGS**

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Data & Society is a nonprofit research institute focused on the social and cultural issues arising from data-centric technological development. With an approach that considers both human and technical elements, Data & Society is uniquely placed to analyze the intersection of these communities, and the technologies that enable the vectors of attack for these manipulations to occur. Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online points to a potentially significant shift in democratic norms, and indicates emerging opportunities for platforms and news organizations to better understand and address their role in a landscape of increasing public distrust.