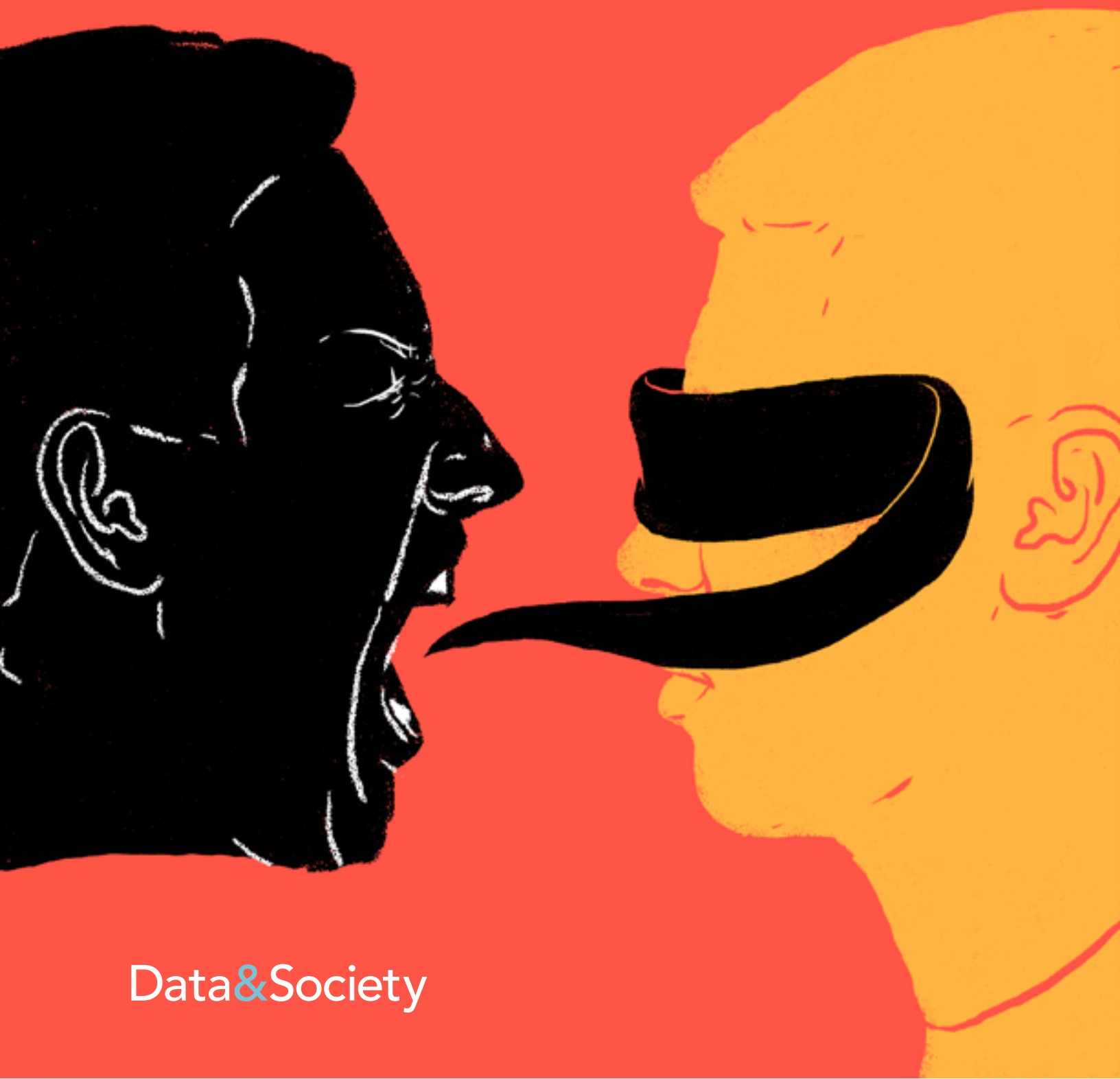


# Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**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

- 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.

**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.