



Search...



From Bad to Worse:

Auto-generating & Autocompleting Hate

Research Study Two

Tech
Transparency
Project_

ADL

CENTER FOR
TECHNOLOGY
& SOCIETY

Our Mission

To stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.

ABOUT

CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

ADL Center for Technology & Society is a research-driven advocacy center that works to end the proliferation of online hate and harassment. Our team partners with industry, civil society, government, and targeted communities to expose these harms, hold tech companies accountable, and fight for just, equitable online spaces.

CTS plays a unique role in civil society by recommending policy and product interventions to elected officials and technology companies to mitigate online hate and harassment; driving advocacy efforts to hold platforms accountable and to educate their staff on current threats and challenges; producing data-driven applied research by analysts and a network of fellows, shedding new light on the nature of antisemitism, as well as the impact of broader hate and harassment on vulnerable communities; and empowering targets of harassment by responding to online incidents. We work with platforms to create online spaces that are safe for all.



ADL

ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913, its timeless mission is “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

TECH TRANSPARENCY PROJECT

Tech Transparency Project (TTP) is an information and research hub for journalists, academics, policymakers and members of the public interested in exploring the influence of the major technology platforms on politics, policy, and our lives.

TTP provides the tools to understand the impact of technology platforms on our public policies and everyday lives. Using public records research, data analysis, open-records requests and more, our in-depth research empowers the public to demand that the technology platforms serve us, instead of the other way around.

TTP is a research initiative of Campaign for Accountability (CfA), a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan, nonprofit watchdog organization that uses research, litigation, and aggressive communications to expose misconduct and malfeasance in public life.

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Foreword

The question of who is accountable for the proliferation of antisemitism, hate, and extremism online has been hotly debated for years. Are our digital feeds really a reflection of society, or do social media platforms and tech companies actually exacerbate virulent content themselves? The companies argue that users are primarily responsible for the corrosive content soaring to the top of news feeds and reverberating between platforms. This argument serves to absolve these multi-billion-dollar companies from responsibility for any role their own products play in exacerbating hate.

A new pair of studies from ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) and TTP (Tech Transparency Project) show how some of the biggest social media platforms and search engines at times directly contribute to the proliferation of online antisemitism, hate, and extremism through their own tools and, in some cases, by creating content themselves. While there are many variables contributing to online hate, including individual users' own behavior, our research demonstrates how these companies are taking things from bad to worse.

For these studies, we created male, female, and teen personas (without a specified gender) who searched for a basket of terms related to conspiracy theories as well as popular internet personalities, commentators, and video games across four of the biggest social media platforms, to test how these companies' algorithms would work. In the first study, three of four platforms recommended even more extreme, contemptuously antisemitic, and hateful content. One platform, YouTube, did not take the bait. It was responsive to the persona but resisted recommending antisemitic and extremist content, proving that it is not just a problem of scale or capability.

In our second study, we tested search functions at three companies, all of which made finding hateful content and groups a frictionless experience, by auto-completing terms and, in some cases, even auto-generating content to fill in hate data voids. Notably, the companies didn't auto-complete terms or auto-generate content for other forms of offensive content, such as pornography, proving, again, that this is not just a problem of scale or capability.

What these investigations ultimately revealed is that tech companies' hands aren't tied. Companies have a choice in what to prioritize, including when it comes to tuning algorithms and refining design features to either exacerbate or help curb antisemitism and extremism.

As debates rage between legislators, regulators, and judges on AI, platform transparency, and intermediary liability, these investigations underscore the urgency for both platforms and governments to do more. Based on our findings, here are three recommendations for industry and government:

01

Tech companies need to fix the product features that currently escalate antisemitism and auto-generate hate and extremism. Tech companies should tune their algorithms and recommendation engines to ensure they are not leading users down paths riddled with hate and antisemitism. They should also improve predictive autocomplete features and stop auto-generation of hate and antisemitism altogether.

02

Congress must update Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to fit the reality of today's internet. Section 230 was enacted before social media and search platforms as we know them existed, yet it continues to be interpreted to provide those platforms with near-blanket legal immunity for online content, even when their own tools are exacerbating hate, harassment and extremism. We believe that by updating Section 230 to better define what type of online activity should remain covered and what type of platform behavior should not, we can help ensure that social media platforms more proactively address how recommendation engines and surveillance advertising practices are exacerbating hate and extremism, which leads to online harms and potential offline violence. With the advent of social media, the use of algorithms, and the surge of artificial intelligence, tech companies are more than merely static hosting services. When there is a legitimate claim that a tech company played a role in enabling hate crimes, civil rights violations, or acts of terror, victims deserve their day in court.

03

We need more transparency. Users deserve to know how platform recommendation engines work. This does not need to be a trade secret-revealing exercise, but tech companies should be transparent with users about what they are seeing and why. The government also has a role to play. We've seen some success on this front in [California](#), where transparency legislation was passed in 2022. Still, there's more to do. Congress must [pass federal transparency legislation](#) so that stakeholders (the public, researchers, and civil society) have access to the information necessary to truly evaluate how tech companies' own tools, design practices, and business decisions impact society.

Hate is on the rise. [Antisemitism](#) both online and offline is becoming normalized. A politically charged U.S. [presidential election](#) is already under way. This is a pressure cooker we cannot afford to ignore, and tech companies need to take accountability for their role in the ecosystem.

Whether you work in government or industry, are a concerned digital citizen, or a tech advocate, we hope you find this pair of reports to be informative. There is no single fix to the scourge of online hate and antisemitism, but we can and must do more to create a safer and less hate-filled internet.

Yaël Eisenstat, Vice President,
ADL Center for Technology and Society

Katie Paul, Director,
Tech Transparency Project

Executive Summary

Do social media and search companies exacerbate antisemitism and hate through their own design and system functions? In this joint study by the ADL Center for Technology and Society (CTS) and Tech Transparency Project (TTP), we investigated search functions on both social media platforms and Google. Our results show how these companies' own tools—such as autocomplete and auto-generation of content—made finding and engaging with antisemitism easier and faster.¹ In some cases, the companies even helped create the content themselves.

Our researchers compiled a list of 130 hate groups and movements from ADL's Glossary of Extremism, picking terms that were tagged in the glossary with all three of the following categories: "groups/movements," "white supremacist," and "antisemitism."² The researchers then typed each term into the respective search bars of Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, and recorded the results.

¹ <https://archive.ph/miY0U>

² <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/adl-launches-first-its-kind-online-glossary-extremism>
<https://extremismterms.adl.org>

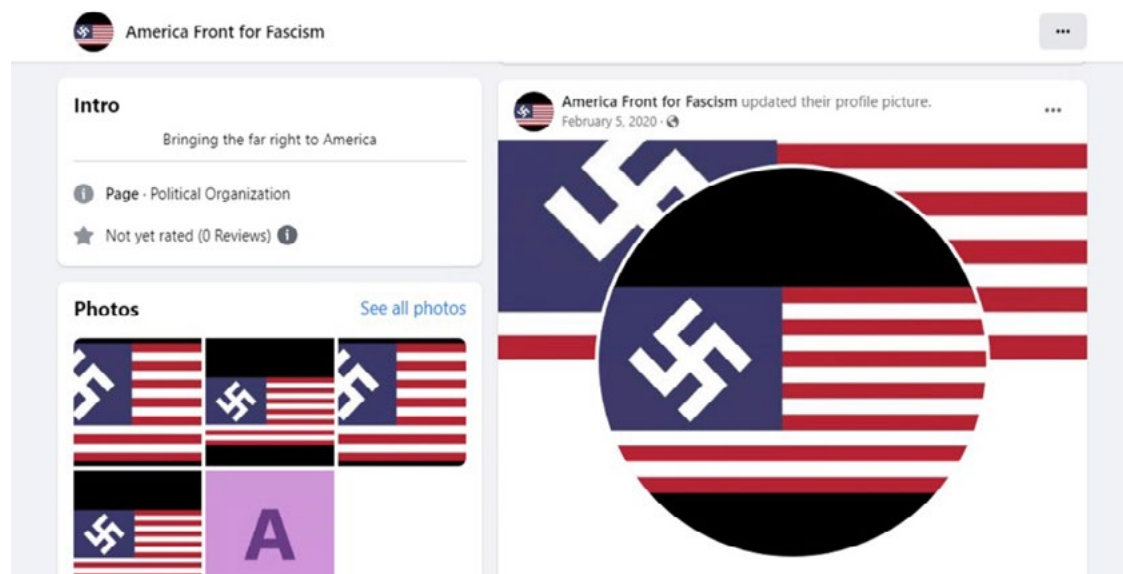
KEY FINDINGS:

- Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are each hosting dozens of hate groups and movements on their platforms, many of which violate the companies' own policies but were easy to find via search. Facebook and Instagram, in fact, continue hosting some hate groups that parent company Meta has previously banned as "dangerous organizations."
- All of the platforms made it easier to find hate groups by predicting searches for the groups as researchers began typing them in the search bar.
- Facebook automatically generated business Pages for some hate groups and movements, including neo-Nazis. Facebook does this when a user lists an employer, school, or location in their profile that does not have an existing Page—regardless of whether it promotes hate.
- The study also found that YouTube auto-generated channels and videos for neo-Nazi and white supremacist bands, including one with a song called "Zyklon Army," referring to the poisonous gas used by Nazis for mass murder in concentration camps.
- In a final test, researchers examined the "knowledge panels" that Google displays on search results for hate groups—and found that Google in some cases provides a direct link to official hate group websites and social media accounts, increasing their visibility and ability to recruit new members.

Facebook: Helping You Find Hate

Researchers searched Facebook for the 130 hate groups and movements from ADL's Glossary of Extremism and found that more than a third—51—had a presence on the platform in the form of Pages or Groups that appeared to be directly connected to, or in support of, specific hate groups. All of these groups violate Meta's policies, and Facebook itself has banned 15 of them, according to a company list of dangerous individuals and organizations leaked by The Intercept in October 2021.³

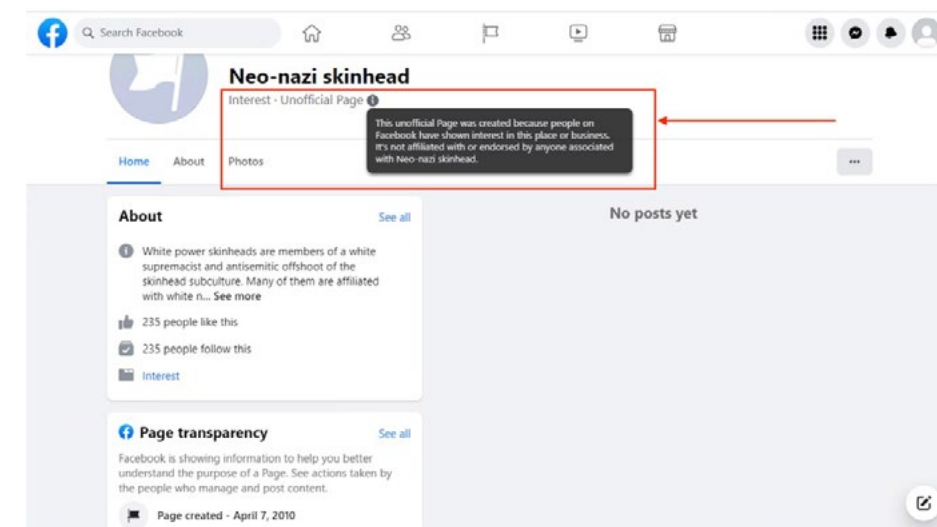
For example, a search for American Front—one of the oldest racist skinhead groups, which is included on Facebook's dangerous organizations list—surfaced a Facebook Group for American Front for Fascism and a Facebook Page for America Front for Fascism.⁴ Both were created in 2020 and feature a cover photo of an American flag with a swastika in place of stars.



A search for the neo-Nazi National Socialist Legion yielded a Facebook Page for the group as the top result.⁵ The Page, which was created in March 2022, has National Socialist Legion's logo as its profile photo and features a collage of well-known Nazis and white supremacists in its cover photo. The figures include Adolf Hitler, Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels, the founder of the American Nazi Party George Lincoln Rockwell, Norwegian far-right mass murderer Anders Breivik, and white supremacist mass shooter Dylann Roof.⁶



More than half of the hate groups and movements identified on Facebook—32 of the 51—took the form of Pages, which are publicly accessible to anyone and can be viewed without a Facebook account.⁷ Another 11 took the form of Facebook Groups. An additional eight had a presence on Facebook through both Pages and Groups. This investigation found that some of the 51 hate groups and movements with a presence on Facebook appeared multiple times, totaling 96 Pages and 32 Groups.



³ <https://legacy.theintercept.com/document/2021/10/12/facebook-dangerous-individuals-and-organizations-list-reproduced-snapshot/>
<https://theintercept.com/2021/10/12/facebook-secret-blacklist-dangerous/>

⁴ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/american-front>

⁵ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/national-socialist-legion>

⁶ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/american-nazi-party>
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/18/norwegian-mass-killer-anders-breivik-begins-parole-hearing>
<https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/hardcore-white-supremacists-elevate-dylann-roof-cult-hero-status>

⁷ <https://archive.ph/EJ5Kh>

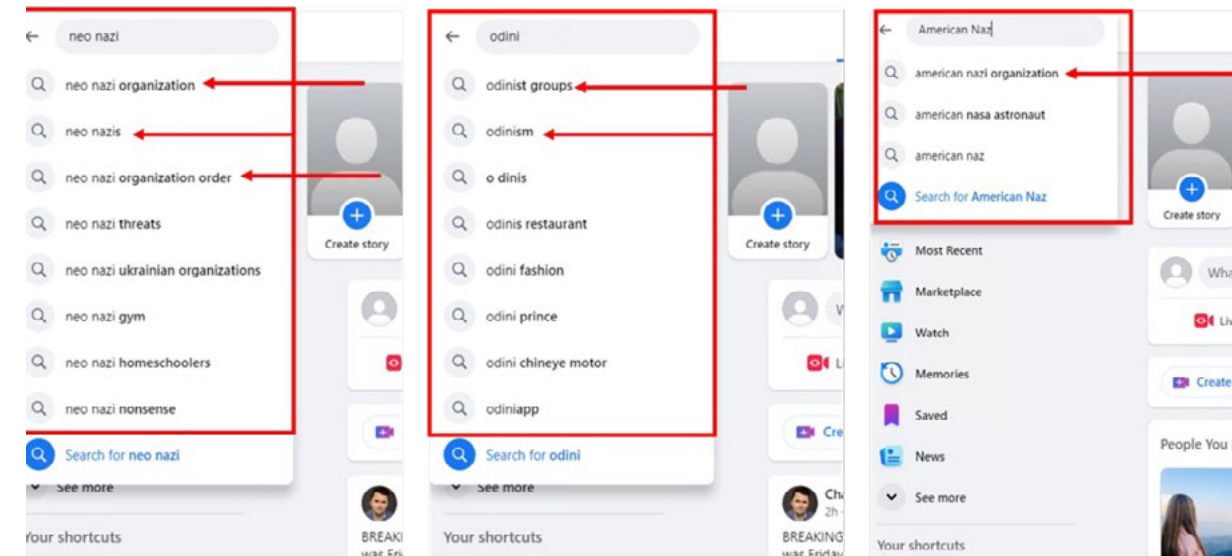
Facebook: Helping You Find Hate Continued

In a seeming acknowledgement that this content is dangerous, Facebook in 2019 announced an effort to redirect users searching for white supremacy content to anti-hate resources.⁸ The move followed the Christchurch attack, in which a gunman used Facebook to livestream the massacre of 51 people at two mosques in New Zealand.⁹ In light of this policy, we examined whether searches for hate groups on Facebook produced warnings or redirects. Only 20 of the 130 searches generated a warning label or redirect. Of those 20, 14 were for groups on Meta’s own dangerous organizations list.

Our investigation found this is more than just a content moderation or scale problem; it is also baked into Facebook’s automated systems. The study found that, in some cases, Facebook’s search prediction feature automatically suggested hate-related terms when researchers typed the names of hate groups in the platform’s search bar.¹⁰ This occurred with 17 hate groups and movements, including five that have been banned by Facebook: American Nazi Party, Aryan Nations, Blue Eyed Devils, Ku Klux Klan, and The Hammerskin Nation.

Facebook appears to be capable of blocking these search predictions; the terms “porn” and “cocaine,” when fully typed out in Facebook’s search bar, produce no suggested search terms, presumably because they violate the company’s policies or do not align with its stated values. Facebook has said that it removes references to Pages and Groups that discuss Holocaust denial from its search predictions.¹¹ But Facebook didn’t do this with all the hate groups in the study.

For example, Facebook predicted a variety of search terms for neo-Nazis when a researcher entered that phrase into the search bar. Facebook also predicted “odinist groups” and “odinism” when a researcher was typing out a search for “Odinism,” a racist religious sect popular with white supremacists.¹² When a researcher typed out most of “American Nazi Party,” Facebook suggested “american nazi organization” as the first result.¹³



Even more concerning, seven of nine neo-Nazi Pages identified by researchers were actually created by Facebook’s own systems—not users. Facebook automatically generates business Pages when a user lists an employer, school, or location in their profile that does not have an existing Page. These auto-generated Pages are identifiable by a small “Unofficial Page” icon that, when hovered over, produces a pop-up box that explains the Page was created because people on Facebook have “shown interest” in it. As TTP has previously reported, Facebook auto-generates Pages even when they refer to a terrorist or extremist group.¹⁴ This practice has resulted in Facebook creating Pages for white supremacist and terrorist organizations that, in many cases, violate Facebook’s own policies.¹⁵

Nearly half of the 96 hate group Pages identified in this investigation were auto-generated by Facebook. This means that the company itself is creating and recommending neo-Nazi and white supremacist content; it is not just that their content moderation tools are missing user-generated content.

⁸ <https://archive.ph/k77aZ>

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53919624>

¹⁰ <https://archive.ph/F8p2R>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/16/facebook-algorithm-found-to-actively-promote-holocaust-denial>

¹² <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-term/odinism-asatru>

¹³ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/american-nazi-party>

¹⁴ <https://www.techtransparencyproject.org/articles/meta-creates-pages-for-isis-undermining-anti-terrorism-efforts>

¹⁵ <https://www.techtransparencyproject.org/articles/facebook-creates-pages-terrorists-and-extremists>

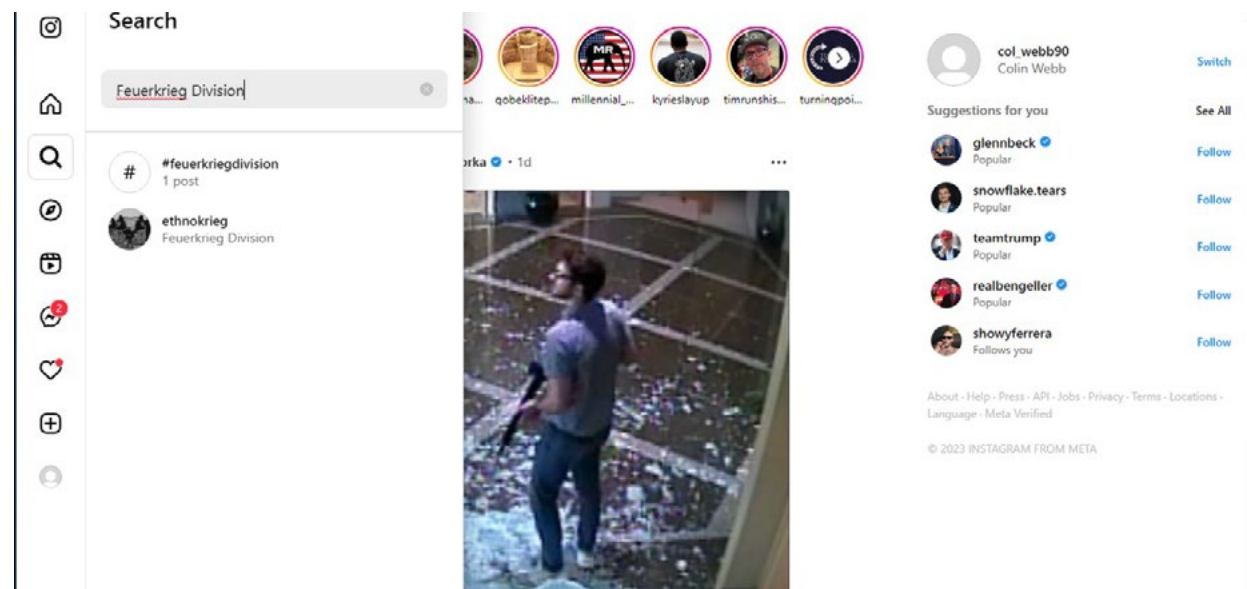
Instagram's #Hate Problem

Researchers typed each of the 130 hate groups and movements from ADL's Glossary of Extremism into Instagram's search bar and found that 69 had a presence on the platform in the form of related accounts or hashtags.¹⁶ Of those groups, 27 have been banned by Instagram's parent company Meta (formerly Facebook), according to the company's list of dangerous individuals and organizations leaked by The Intercept in October 2021.

This undermines statements that Instagram has made about the safety of its platform. In an August 2021 blog post, Instagram CEO Adam Mosseri said the platform removes accounts, hashtags, and posts that violate the platform's Community Guidelines, "which prevents them from showing up in Search."¹⁷ The guidelines state that "Instagram is not a place to support or praise terrorism, organized crime, or hate groups."¹⁸

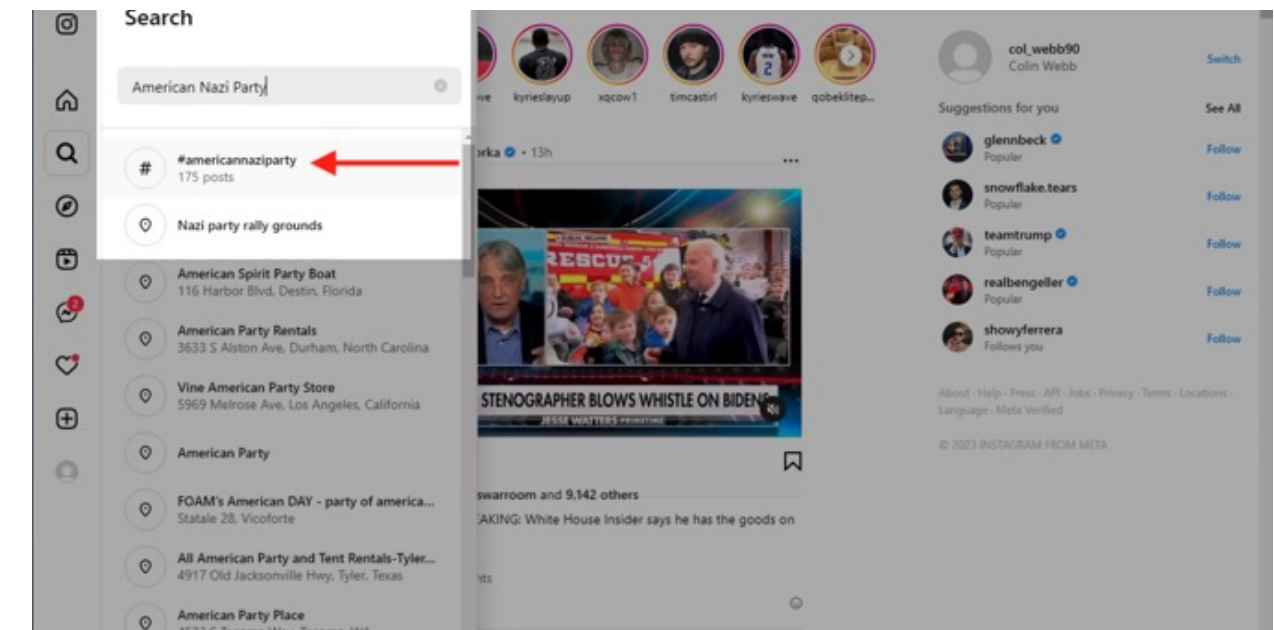
Instagram also follows parent company Meta's policies, which state that any content representing hateful ideologies including Nazism, white supremacy, white nationalism, and white separatism is not allowed and will be removed.¹⁹

The hate group Feuerkrieg Division, an international neo-Nazi group that advocates for a race war, provides a good illustration of the dynamic on Instagram.²⁰ It has been banned by Meta. But a search for the group on Instagram produced an account called Feuerkrieg Division with the handle @ethnokrieg and a hashtag for #feuerkriegdivision. The account is private, but its profile photo includes an image of five men wearing sweatshirts with the hate group's logo and holding up a flag for Active Clubs, a network of white supremacist fight clubs.²¹



Meanwhile, a search for "identitarianism," a racist, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant movement, produced three accounts and two hashtags that identify as identitarian.²² Multiple groups associated with the identitarianism movement are banned by Facebook.²³

Hashtags are an important way for users to discover content on Instagram outside of the accounts they follow. Following a hashtag allows users to see posts with that hashtag in their main feed. The investigation found that 40 of the 69 hate groups and movements that have a presence on Instagram came in the form of hashtags. An additional 24 had a presence through both accounts and hashtags, and five were solely represented by accounts.



Like Facebook, Instagram did not block content associated with the American Nazi Party, one of the Meta-banned groups. A search for the organization on Instagram produced the hashtag #americannaziparty as the top result.

Instagram's system says there are 175 posts associated with #americannaziparty. The hashtag page included posts that complain whites are "blamed for all of the world's problems" and share historical images of German and American Nazi Party members. Some posts with the hashtag carry anti-racist messages.

¹⁶ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/>

¹⁷ <https://archive.ph/QjutM>

¹⁸ <https://archive.is/KX14P>

¹⁹ https://transparency.fb.com/policies/community-standards/dangerous-individuals-organizations/?source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fcommunitystandards%2Fdangerous_individuals_organizations

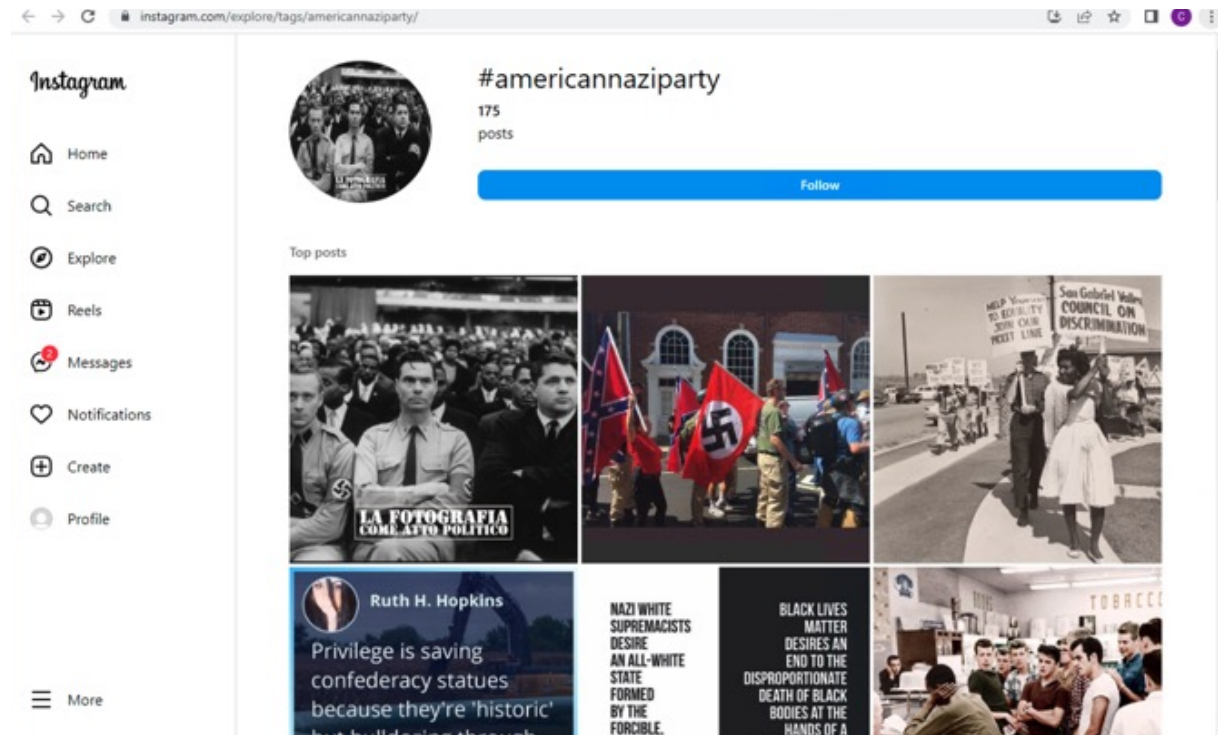
²⁰ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/feuerkrieg-division-fkd>

²¹ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/active-clubs>

²² <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/identitarianism>

²³ <https://legacy.theintercept.com/document/2021/10/12/facebook-dangerous-individuals-and-organizations-list-reproduced-snapshot/>

Instagram's #Hate Problem



The investigation found some of the 69 hate groups and movements with a presence on Instagram had multiple hashtags and accounts, totaling 40 Instagram accounts and 71 hashtags.

In some cases, Instagram even auto-filled search results for accounts and hashtags connected to hate groups and their supporters. The platform auto-fills this content below the search bar as a user begins typing.²⁴ According to a June 2023 blog post from Meta, Instagram's search feature uses artificial intelligence to predict and suggest search results that a user will find "most relevant and valuable."²⁵ To make these predictions, Instagram's systems make recommendations that produce "an initial list of suggestions that appear as you type in the search bar."²⁶ Instagram was the only platform that auto-filled search results for more than half of the 130 searches entered.

Additionally, Instagram was worse than Facebook at redirecting users away from hateful content. None of the 130 Instagram searches for hate groups generated a warning or redirect notice. In one case, a hashtag for #neonazi led to a broken page link, but the Instagram search results also pointed to #neonazism and #neonazismo, which together had thousands of posts.

²⁴ <https://archive.ph/QjutM>

²⁵ <https://archive.ph/wip/GyAhh>

²⁶ <https://archive.ph/wip/GyAhh>

YouTube's Nazi Channels

Researchers searched YouTube for the 130 hate groups and movements and found that roughly a third—42—had a presence on the platform in the form of YouTube channels that appeared to be directly connected to, or in support of, specific hate groups.

Some of the channels displayed antisemitic symbols or Nazi iconography in their profile photos. For example, a search for "neo-Nazi" yielded a YouTube channel called Neo-Nazi Ultra Fascist with a swastika as its profile photo. The only video on the channel, which was created on May 16, 2023, was titled (in Portuguese), "The Tenure of Adolf Hitler: From the Incredible Rise to the Fall Empowered by the Global Jewish Elite."

The same search surfaced a channel called AtomWaffen44 [NZGR], which had a profile photo and cover photo showing iconography of the neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen Division.²⁷ The two lightning bolt emojis at the end of the channel's name are a neo-Nazi symbol derived from the Schutzstaffel (SS) of Nazi Germany.²⁸

The content and symbols on these channels appear to violate YouTube's hate speech policy, which prohibits hatred against groups based on ethnicity, religion, or other attributes. YouTube also says profile pictures must follow its Community Guidelines, which includes the hate speech policy.^{29,30}

A search for Blood and Honour, an international racist skinhead umbrella group, yielded a YouTube channel called 14sacredwords.³¹ The channel's name is a reference to a slogan from white supremacist and convicted terrorist David Lane, and its profile photo featured a sonnenrad, the sunwheel image associated with the Nazis.³² The channel's About section shows a swastika design and tells visitors to "put this rune on your channel if you support White Pagan Europe."

Researchers found that some of the 42 hate groups and movements with a presence on YouTube had multiple channels, resulting in a total of 87 channels. Some appeared to be official channels for hate groups or their affiliates, while others actively promoted the groups or movements in question. Some were created more than ten years ago while others date to as recently as May 2023.

The white supremacist group Patriot Front provides a good illustration of how hate groups are associated with multiple channels on YouTube.³³

²⁷ <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/atomwaffen-division>

²⁸ <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/ss-bolts>

²⁹ https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801939?hl=en&ref_topic=9282436

³⁰ <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10456525?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop#zippy=%2Cchange-your-profile-picture%2Cchange-your-banner-image>

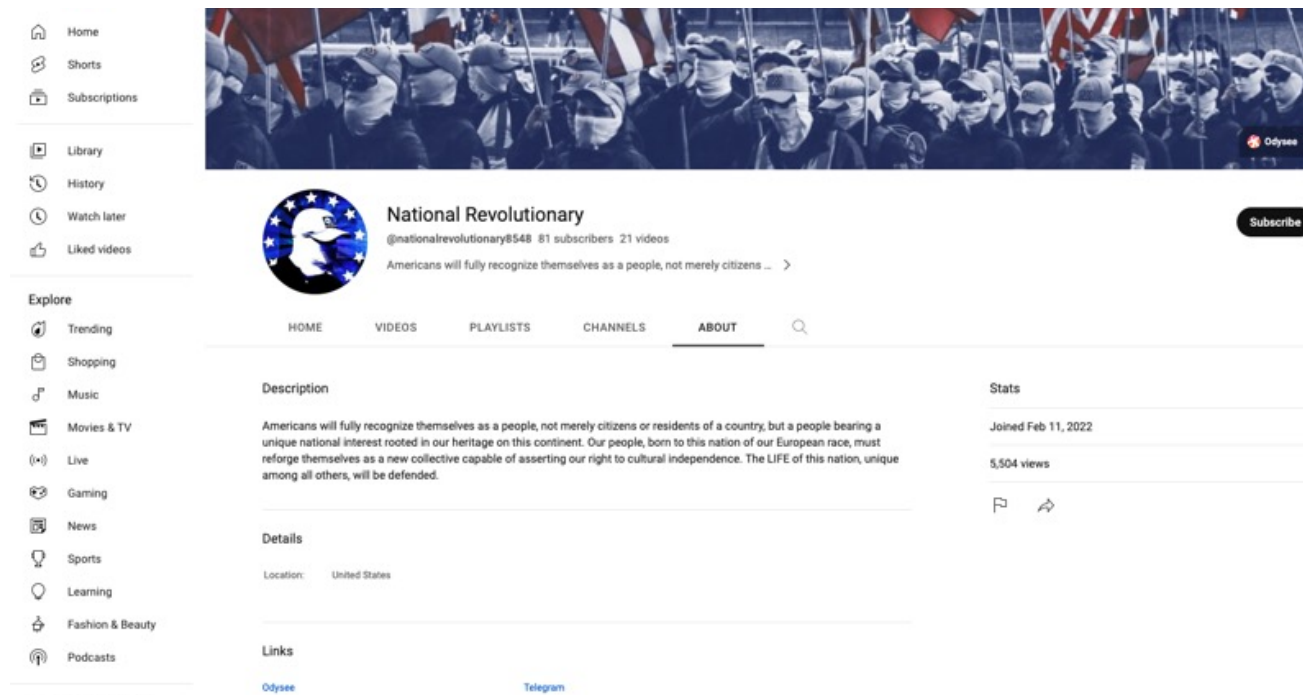
³¹ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/blood-honour>

³² <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/14-words>

<https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/sonnenrad>

³³ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/patriot-front>

YouTube's Nazi Channels Continued



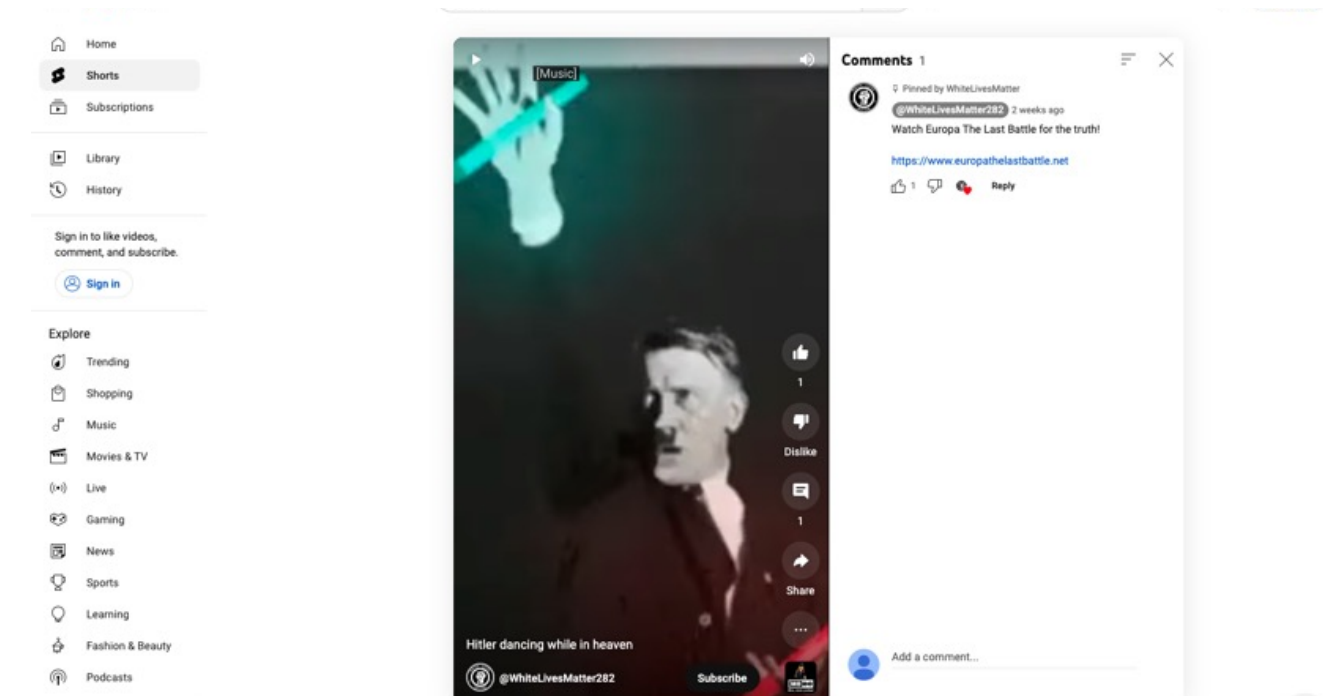
A YouTube search for Patriot Front produced the channels National Revolutionary and WhiteLivesMatter, which both promote Patriot Front. The National Revolutionary channel's cover photo shows what appears to be Patriot Front members at a march. (The marchers are all wearing ball caps with the group's logo, sunglasses, and white gaiters covering the lower half of their faces—the group's preferred uniform for public appearances.)³⁴

Most of the channel's videos focus on Patriot Front actions across the country, with some featuring the group's founder and leader, Thomas Rousseau. The channel's About section states, "Our people, born to this nation of our European race, must reforge themselves as a new collective capable of asserting our right to cultural independence"—a statement consistent with Patriot Front's ideology.³⁵ The channel also links to Patriot Front-themed channels on Odyssee, Telegram, and Bitchute.

³⁴ <https://www.masslive.com/boston/2022/07/who-are-the-patriot-front-white-nationalist-group-marched-in-boston-fourth-of-july-weekend.html>

³⁵ <https://www.adl.org/resources/background/patriot-front>

The WhiteLivesMatter channel also features videos promoting Patriot Front as well as a series of Nazi-oriented YouTube Shorts, or short-form videos. Two of the YouTube Shorts show NSC-131, the New England-based neo-Nazi group, engaged in street clashes; other Shorts depict "Hitler dancing while in heaven" and equate Judaism with satanism.³⁶ Created on May 11, 2023, the WhiteLivesMatter channel directs visitors to a (now broken) link for "Europa the Last Battle," an antisemitic revisionist film claiming that Jews deliberately caused both world wars.³⁷ The film is popular in antisemitic and white supremacist circles.



A search for the neo-Confederate white supremacist group League of the South produced a channel for the group's Florida chapter, which featured videos of group meetings and speeches by the well-known American racist and antisemite David Duke.³⁸ Duke was banned by YouTube in 2020.³⁹ The channel, which has been active since January 2017, also included videos calling for war against liberals and the LGBTQ+ community.

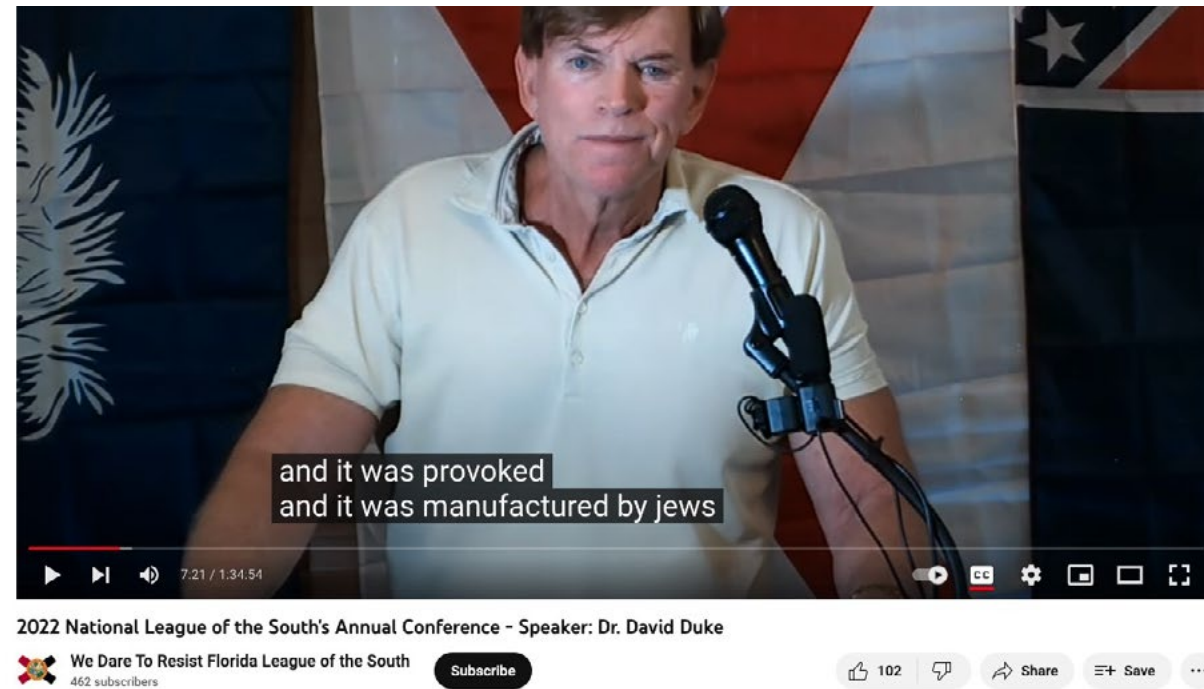
³⁶ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/nationalist-social-club-nsc>

³⁷ <https://www.adl.org/glossary/europa-last-battle>

³⁸ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/league-south-los>
<https://www.adl.org/resources/profile/david-duke>

³⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jun/30/youtube-bans-david-duke-and-other-us-far-right-users>

YouTube's Nazi Channels Continued

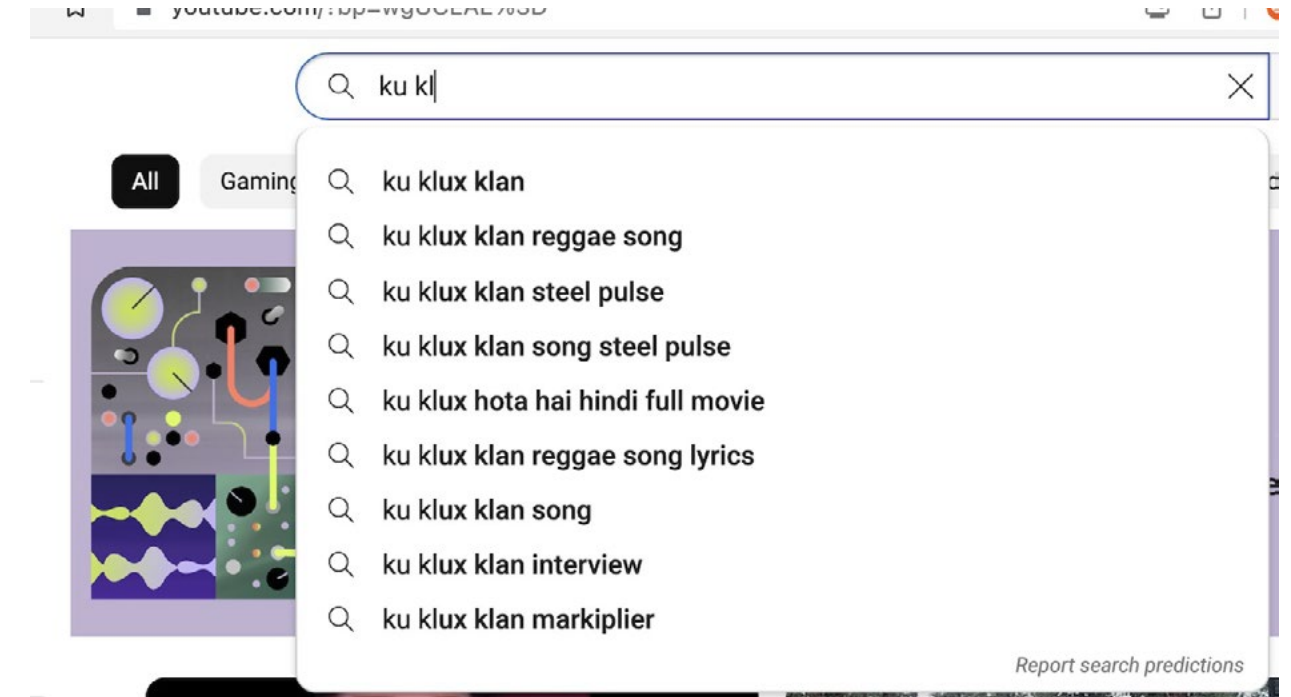


Once again, this is more than merely a content moderation or scale problem. Like other online platforms, YouTube uses search prediction to automatically suggest search terms as a user begins typing in the search bar.⁴⁰ YouTube says it may not generate search predictions in certain circumstances, including if they violate parent company Google's policies against hateful content that "promotes or condones violence, promotes discrimination, disparages or has the primary purpose of inciting hatred against a group."⁴¹

But the study found that YouTube's prediction feature suggested search terms for 36 of the 130 hate groups and movements. For example, when a researcher began typing Ku Klux Klan into the YouTube search bar, the platform recommended the full name of the movement after only a few letters were entered.

⁴⁰ <https://archive.ph/lusOP>

⁴¹ <https://archive.ph/Dwq4Y>
<https://archive.ph/Sqqi2>



Even more concerning, the investigation revealed the presence of questionable channels that were created by YouTube itself. For example, a YouTube search for National Socialist Movement, the name of a Florida-based neo-Nazi group, produced a YouTube-generated channel for the Finnish black metal act Satanic Warmaster.⁴² According to a 2015 report published by Vice, the band has been linked to a musical subculture known as "National Socialist Black Metal" and produced songs that hint at antisemitic and white supremacist themes:

There's also been instances where the band have seemingly supported Nazi ideology themselves, having penned lyrics about "torching the Jewish creation," the "purest essence of the cult of our blood" and "one state, one folk, one leader." The last two come from a song called "My Dreams of 8" (below), which may sound innocuous enough, except for when you consider that the number eight is a standard far-right euphemism for Hitler (with H being the eighth letter of the alphabet).⁴³

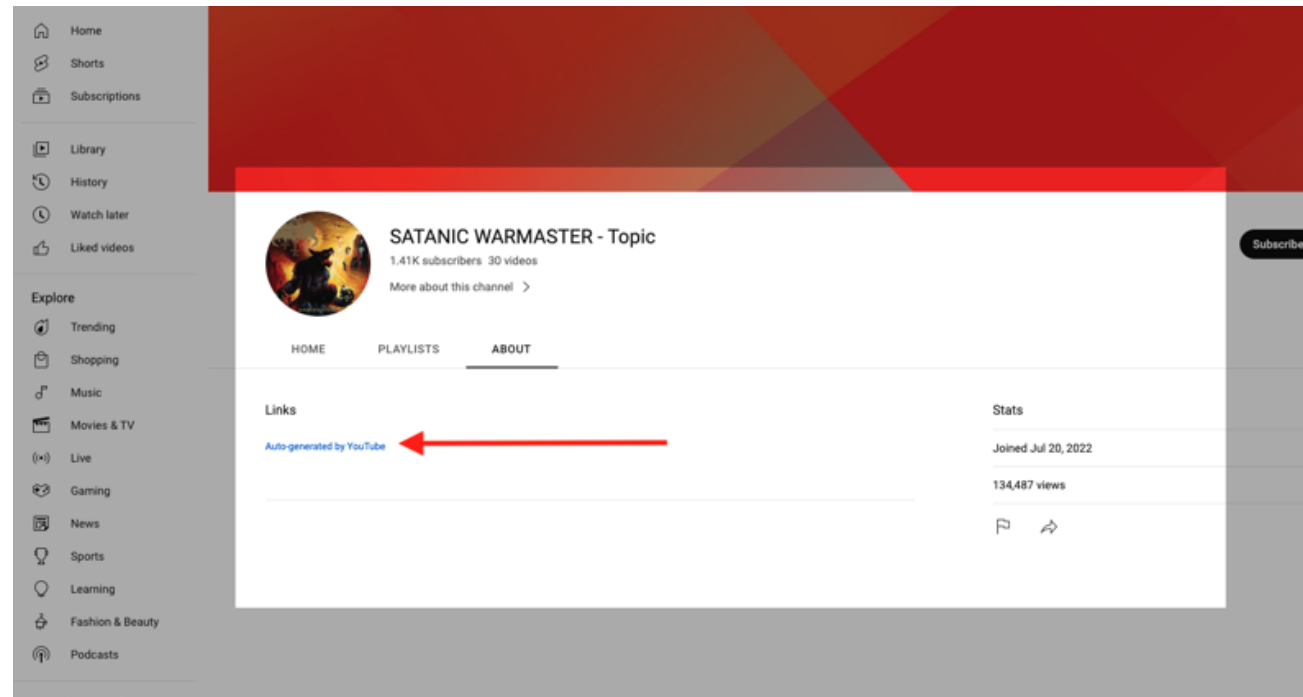
The Satanic Warmaster channel—which dates to July 20, 2022—has a label in its profile indicating that it was "Auto-generated by YouTube." YouTube creates these "Topic" channels for artists "when they have a significant presence" on the platform and even populates them with content: "Using algorithms, YouTube figures out the central topics in a video and uses that info to develop video collections for an artist."⁴⁴ YouTube users can subscribe to, like, and share these auto-generated channels, just like they would with other YouTube content.

⁴² <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/national-socialist-movement>

⁴³ <https://archive.ph/xM4fk>

⁴⁴ <https://archive.ph/EQg9Z>

YouTube's Nazi Channels Continued



Following the discovery of the auto-generated Satanic Warmaster channel, researchers conducted a series of additional searches to investigate whether YouTube had done the same for other bands known to be affiliated with National Socialist Black Metal or the white supremacist movement.

They quickly discovered that Satanic Warmaster was not an isolated case. For example, YouTube created a channel for Pugilato H_C, a Spanish white supremacist band that ADL identified last year.⁴⁵ (At the time, it was known as Pugilato NSHC, the initials standing for National Socialist Hardcore.) YouTube created this channel on Dec. 20, 2022, and its profile picture shows an image of the far-right Azov battalion of Ukraine, a military unit celebrated by white supremacists for its neo-Nazi connections.⁴⁶ One of the band's songs is dedicated to supporting the Azov battalion.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, YouTube created two channels for Wiking 1940, an Italian National Socialist Black Metal band that ADL flagged last year.⁴⁸ One of the channels, created on January 12, 2023, featured the band's single, "Sonnenrad," the Nordic symbol synonymous with the far right.⁴⁹ The song opens with audio of a Hitler speech and features antisemitic lyrics.⁵⁰ A label on the "Sonnenrad" video page indicates that it was also auto-generated by YouTube. The video consists of the "Sonnenrad" song played over a still image of cover art for the band's *Kopfjagd* album. (*Kopfjagd* is the German word for "headhunting.")

⁴⁵ <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/white-supremacist-music-prevalent-spotify-while-platform-largely-declines-act>

⁴⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/29/europe/ukraine-azov-movement-far-right-intl-cmd/index.html>

⁴⁷ <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/white-supremacist-music-prevalent-spotify-while-platform-largely-declines-act>

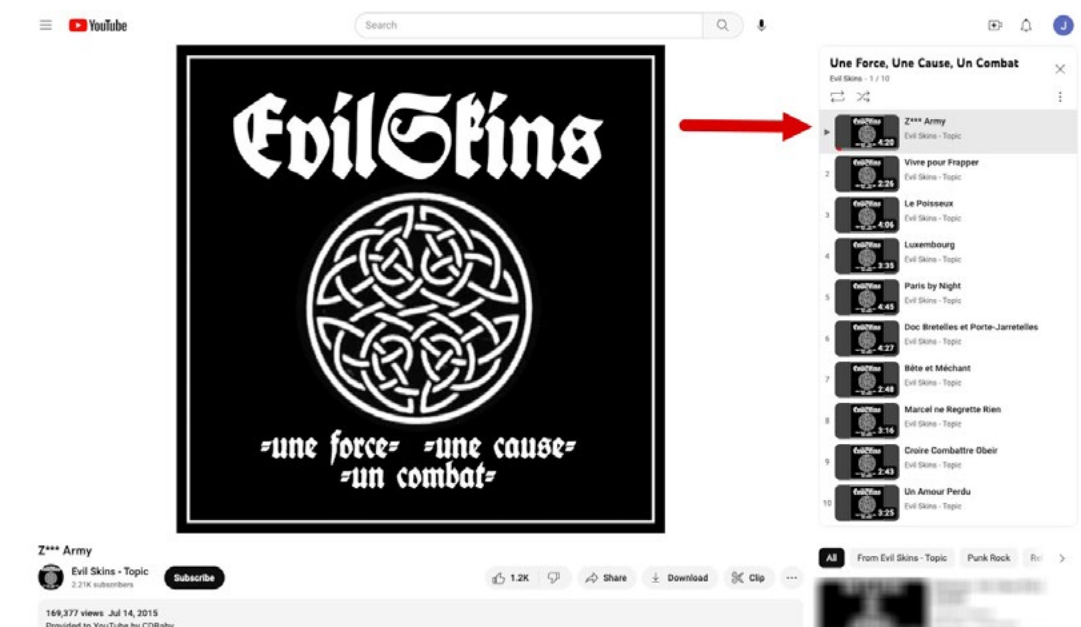
⁴⁸ <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/white-supremacist-music-prevalent-spotify-while-platform-largely-declines-act>

⁴⁹ <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/sonnenrad>

⁵⁰ <https://gizmodo.com.au/2022/09/spotify-promoted-white-supremacist-artists-including-one-with-song-featuring-adolf-hitler-speech/>

YouTube also auto-generated a channel for Evil Skins, a decades-old French band that has been described as "racist skinhead" and "neo-Nazi."⁵¹ The band's tracks include a song called "Zyklon Army," a reference to Zyklon B, the poisonous gas used by Nazis for mass murder in extermination camps.⁵² The song begins with a recitation of "Sieg Heil," the German phrase for "Hail Victory" adopted by the Nazi Party in Germany.⁵³

The Evil Skins channel, which dates to December 2013, offers a playlist of the band's songs, starting with "Zyklon Army." The song's title is partially blanked out, appearing as "Z*** Army," though the lyrics don't appear to be altered. The "Z*** Army" video and other videos in the playlist indicate that they were also auto-generated by YouTube. All the videos show what appears to be a still image of an Evil Skins album cover while songs play. The channel had over 2,200 subscribers and over 987,000 total views. The channel's auto-generated "Z*** Army" video alone had over 169,000 views.



YouTube says it generates these Topic channels for "artists," but researchers found examples of the platform creating these channels for a Nazi-linked game and general phrases associated with Nazis and white supremacists.

⁵¹ https://books.google.com/books?id=sREVDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA66&lpg=PA66&dq=%22evil+skins%22+white+power+songs.&source=bl&ots=2ZypFECvG-&sig=ACfU3U3GBxUFPKkFT_9kj-MEyXQ1oOkGHg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjHnvmFpb7_AhWBFFkFHeidB1YQ6AF6BAGlEAM#v=onepage&q=%22evil%20skins%22%20white%20power%20songs&f=false

⁵² <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/at-the-killing-centers>

⁵³ <https://archive.ph/URDJh>
<https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/sieg-heil>

YouTube's Nazi Channels Continued

For example, YouTube auto-generated a page for “Ethnic Cleansing,” a racist and antisemitic violent video game that sparked outrage when it was released more than two decades ago.⁵⁴ The game was produced by the publishing arm of National Alliance, once the largest neo-Nazi group in the U.S.⁵⁵ The Guardian described the game this way in a 2002 article:

Players kill black and Hispanic characters before descending into a subway station “where the Jews have hidden”.

*Black characters make monkey and ape noises when shot. The advertisement continues: “Then if your (sic) lucky you can blow away Jews as they scream ‘Oy Vey!’ on your way to their command centre.”*⁵⁶

The auto-generated Ethnic Cleansing channel pulled in a description from Wikipedia and populated the channel with “popular” YouTube videos about the game. The videos include commentary calling it “the most racist game ever made” as well as people playing the game. One playthrough video came from a channel called “aryan gaming.”⁵⁶

Researchers also found that YouTube auto-generated Topic channels for an apparently fictional musical artist called “DJ white power” and general phrases and figures related to Nazi Germany, including “Chancellor Adolf Hitler,” “Hitler,” and “Nazi Gang.” It’s unclear how these channels are considered “artists” with “a significant presence” on YouTube.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2002/games-extremists-play>

⁵⁵ <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/national-alliance>

⁵⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2002/feb/21/games.internetnews>

⁵⁷ <https://archive.ph/EQg9Z>

Google's ‘Knowledge Panels’

YouTube’s parent company Google is a search engine, not a social media platform, and thus did not fit neatly into the parameters of this study.

However, researchers did identify issues around Google automatically creating content for hate groups. This came in the form of “knowledge panels,” which Google displays in a dedicated box to the right of search results on desktop. On mobile, the knowledge panels appear as the top result on searches.

The knowledge panels are automatically generated by Google and are “meant to help you get a quick snapshot of information on a topic based on Google’s understanding of available content on the web,” according to the company.⁵⁸ The information is often pulled from Wikipedia, though Google says the panels draw on “various sources across the web.”⁵⁹

Google’s reliance on other “sources” beyond Wikipedia can create problems when it comes to hate groups.

The researchers conducted Google searches for the names of the 130 hate groups and movements from ADL’s Glossary of Extremism. Of those searches, 52 generated knowledge panels. A review of those knowledge panels revealed that in 11 cases, the panels provided direct links to the hate groups’ official websites or social media accounts, giving them high visibility.

For example, the knowledge panel that popped up on a Google search for the white supremacist group Patriot Front provided a prominent link to the group’s website, which states that the only true Americans are those “born to this nation of our European race” and that anyone who is foreign—i.e., not European—should not be an American.⁶⁰

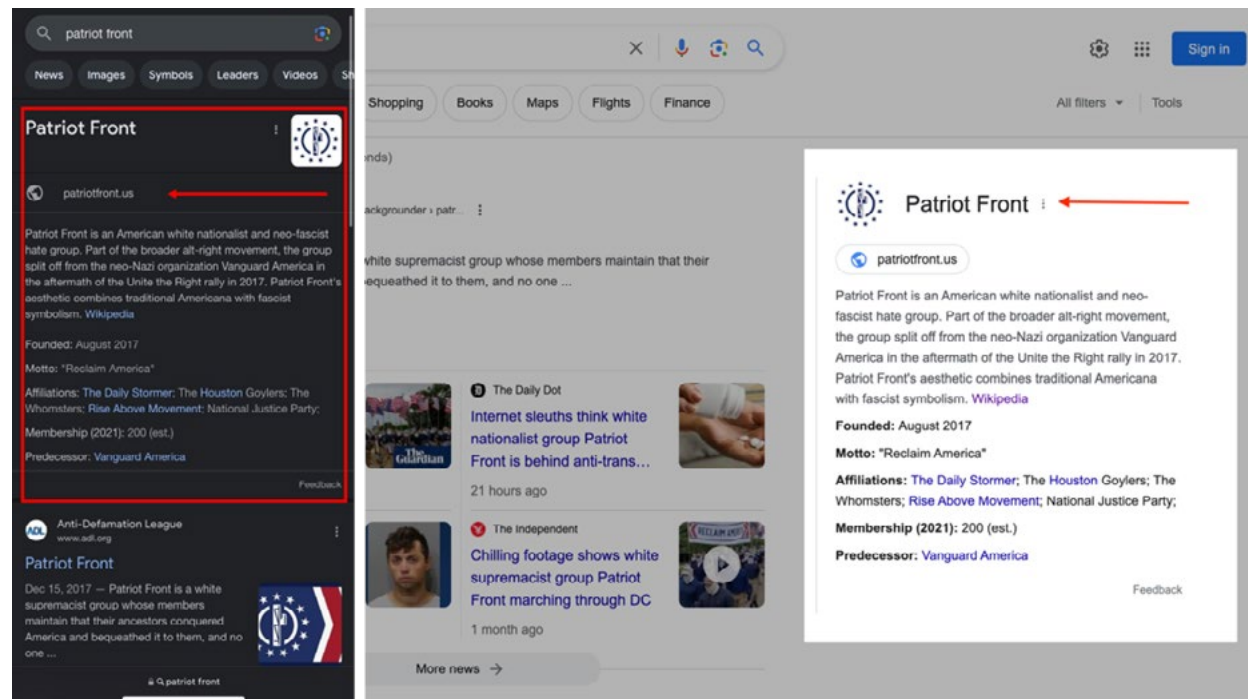
Those of foreign birth may occupy civil status within the lands occupied by the state, and they may even be dutiful citizens, yet they may not be American. Membership within the American nation is inherited through blood, not ink. Even those born in America may yet be foreign.

⁵⁸ <https://archive.ph/YWZmL>

⁵⁹ <https://www.androidpolice.com/google-wikimedia-enterprise/>

⁶⁰ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/patriot-front>

Google's 'Knowledge Panels' Continued

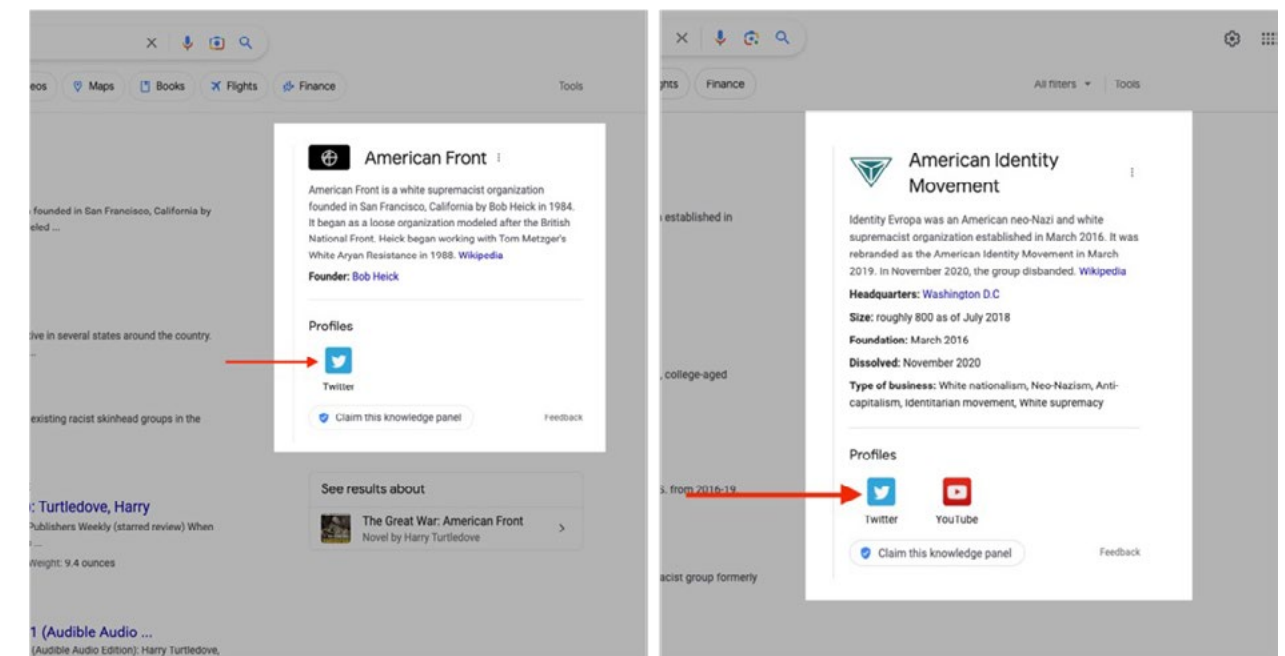


Likewise, the knowledge panel for the neo-Nazi group National Vanguard links to a website in the name of the group that is run by an organization with a similar ideology, the National Alliance.⁶¹ The site has a banner at the top that says, “Join the National Alliance — Our Real-World Intentional White Community.” Its menu tab redirects to another website for the National Alliance, which talks about “building a white world” and states, “We will do whatever is necessary to achieve this White living space and to keep it White ... [W]e realize that it is absolutely necessary for our racial survival.”

A Google search for the neo-Nazi group National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF) produced a knowledge panel with a Wikipedia blurb, but clicking on the image of the group’s swastika logo in the panel took the user to a link for an NSLF event featuring an “active member and recruiter.”⁶² The page indicates the event was canceled, but it’s noteworthy that Google was directing users to it, given the group’s neo-Nazi ideology.

In a similar vein, Google’s knowledge panel for American Front, the racist skinhead gang, provided a prominent link to a Twitter account with the same name.⁶³ The Twitter account tweeted an image of a sign threatening to shoot trespassing “natives, Indians and coloureds,” referring to the message as the “good old days.”

A knowledge panel for the white supremacist group Identity Evropa also links to Twitter and YouTube accounts of the same name.⁶⁴ (The Twitter account has been suspended and the YouTube account has no video content but still has nearly 5,000 subscribers.)



Another Google search for 211 Bootboys, an ultranationalist skinhead group active in the hardcore punk scene, produced a knowledge panel with links to platforms that stream the group’s music.⁶⁵ Google’s YouTube appeared as the first option.

These findings undermine Google’s work to address hateful content. In a series of 2021 responses to questions from Congress, Google touted its efforts to “deploy machine learning to better detect potentially hateful conduct to send for human review.”⁶⁶

The prominent placement of the knowledge panels—particularly on mobile, where they appear above other search results—means that Google is sometimes elevating links to hate group websites above authoritative information on the groups from organizations that track extremist activity.

The examination of hate group knowledge panels turned up an additional potential concern. Most of the panels indicate they can be claimed by users.⁶⁷ Once users claim the panels, they can suggest edits adding or changing the information in the boxes.⁶⁸ This raises the question of whether hate groups could manipulate the panel’s language in ways that spread hate speech or boost their recruitment efforts. Google says it reviews edit suggestions for accuracy but there is no way to tell if knowledge panels have undergone changes or edits.⁶⁹ Google’s failure to provide transparency around changes to the knowledge panels could lead to abuse of the feature.

⁶¹ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/national-vanguard>
<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/national-alliance-backgrounder>

⁶² <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/national-socialist-liberation-front>

⁶³ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/american-front>

⁶⁴ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/identity-evropa>

⁶⁵ <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/211-bootboys>

<https://gothamist.com/news/right-wing-skinheads-attack-grad-students-at-les-bar-over-antifascist-cellphone-sticker>

⁶⁶ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF16/20210325/111407/HHRG-117-IF16-Wstate-Pichais-20210325-SD004.pdf>

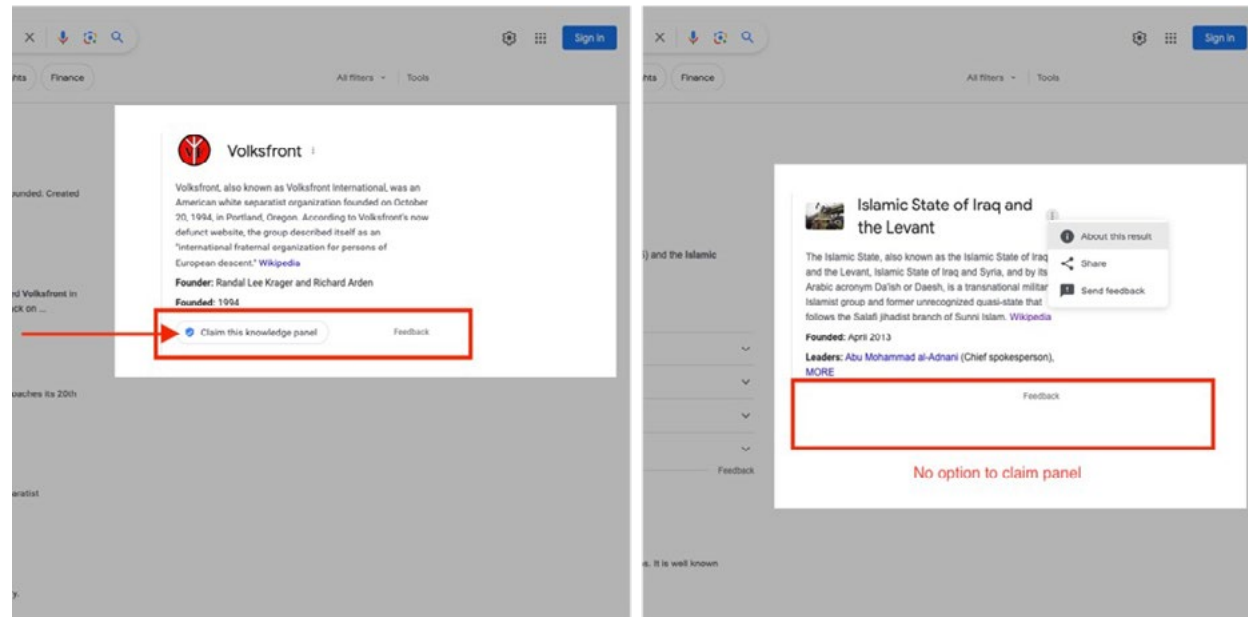
⁶⁷ <https://archive.ph/0o5Ml>

⁶⁸ <https://archive.ph/xk3gy>

⁶⁹ <https://archive.ph/oG16E>

Google's 'Knowledge Panels' Continued

Notably, Google does not provide the option to claim knowledge panels of internationally recognized terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda. This shows Google has the ability to disable this feature for extremist groups if it chooses to do so.



Researchers also found that with 46 of the 130 hate group searches, Google autocompleted the name of the group in the search box before they had finished typing.⁷⁰ This was the case even with groups with obvious connections to antisemitism or white supremacy, like American Nazi Party and Universal Aryan Brotherhood.

These results undermine Google's pledge to remove search predictions that violate its autocomplete policies—including a ban on hateful content that “promotes or condones violence, promotes discrimination, disparages or has the primary purpose of inciting hatred against a group.”⁷¹

Researchers found that with seven of the hate group searches, the knowledge panel generated by Google featured suggested searches for other hate groups. For example, the panel that came up on a search for the white supremacist prison gang 211 Crew showed that “people also searched for” groups like Aryan Circle, Aryan Brotherhood, and Nazi Lowriders.⁷²

⁷⁰ <https://archive.ph/miY0U>

⁷¹ <https://archive.ph/miY0U>
<https://archive.ph/xMf8x>

⁷² <https://extremismterms.adl.org/glossary/211-crew>

Conclusion

This study shows that not only are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube failing to enforce their policies against hateful conduct, but their own tools make finding and engaging with hate both easier and more efficient.

These companies are aiding in the proliferation of hate through various search and generation functions, including:

- The platforms’ search prediction technology, which automatically suggests search queries as users type in the search bar. Each of the platforms filled in the names of some hate groups or movements before our researchers had finished typing them.
- The auto-generation of content. Researchers found that Facebook automatically created Pages for neo-Nazis, and YouTube automatically created channels and music videos for some National Socialist and white supremacist bands—even when their songs contained obviously hateful lyrics.
- The generation of Google’s “knowledge panels,” which in some cases give hate groups increased visibility and a veneer of credibility.

While all of these issues make clear that these companies are not succeeding in enforcing their own rules, the auto-creation of content puts Facebook and YouTube in a more direct role of exacerbating online hate. Both platforms are becoming creators of hateful content themselves. As of August 14, 20 of the 23 accounts, pages, and channels and hashtags cited in this report remain active on the platforms.



Detailed Methodology

Tech platforms have multiple policies in place to ban extremist groups, hate speech, and discrimination. But those policies are often not effectively enforced. Researchers compiled a list of hate groups and movements to test the platforms’ enforcement of these policies.

Researchers used ADL’s Glossary of Extremism to identify “hate groups and movements” that were tagged as both antisemitic and white supremacist.⁷³ The resulting list included 130 hate groups and movements that were designated as antisemitic and white supremacist:

14 First Foundation (14 First)	Church of Creativity
21-2-12	Church of Jesus Christ Christian-Aryan Nations
211 Bootboys	Combat 18
211 Crew	COORS Family Skins
Active Clubs	Council of Conservative Citizens
Alabama Aryan Brotherhood	Crew 1488
America First Students	Crew 38
American Christian Dixie Knights	Daily Stormer Book Clubs (SBC)
American Defense Skinheads	East Coast Knights
American Freedom Party	Ecofascism
American Front	Esoteric Hitlerism
American Identity Movement	European Kindred
American Nazi Party	Feuerkrieg Division (FKD)
Aryan Brotherhood of Texas	Folkish Resistance Movement (FRM)
Aryan Circle	Free America Rally
Aryan Nations	Georgia Aryan Brotherhood
Aryan Strikeforce	Ghost Face Gangster
Aryan Terror Brigade	Golden State Solidarity (aka Golden State Skinheads)
Atomwaffen Division	Goyim Defense League
Blood & Honour	Groyper Army
Blue-Eyed Devils (band)	Hakenkreuz Skinheads
Bound for Glory (band)	Hammerskin Nation/Hammerskins
Brotherhood Forever	Hate Edge
Brothers of White Warriors	Honorable Sacred Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (HSK)
Christian Identity	Hundred Handers

⁷³ <https://extremismterms.adl.org>

Identitarianism	Operation Homeland
Identity Dixie	Patriot Front
Identity Evropa	Peckerwood Midwest
Imperial Klans of America	PENI (Public Enemy Number 1 (PENI))
Indiana Aryan Brotherhood	Racist skinhead
Inland Empire Skinheads	Revolt Through Tradition
International Keystone Knights	Rise Above Movement (RAM)
Iron Youth	Russia Imperial Movement (RIM)
Joplin Honkys	Sacred Separatist Group
Keystone State Skinheads/Keystone United	Sadistic Souls
Knights Party	Saxon Knights
Ku Klux Klan (KKK)	Screwdriver
League of the South (LoS)	Shield Wall Network (SWN)
Legion of Saint Ambrose (LoSA)	Silent Aryan Warriors
Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan	Soldiers of Aryan Culture
Mississippi Aryan Brotherhood	Solid Wood Soldiers
National Alliance	Sonnenkrieg Division
National Democratic Party (NPD)	Southern Brotherhood
National Justice Party	Supreme White Alliance
National Policy Institute	The Base
National Rebirth of Poland	The Creativity Movement (TCM)
National Socialist Legion	The Hated
National Socialist Liberation Front	The Order
National Socialist Movement	The Order of Nine Angles (O9A, ONA)
National Socialist Order (NSO)	Traditionalist American Knights (TAK)
National Vanguard	Traditionalist Worker Party
Nationalist Front	Traditionalist Youth Network
Nationalist Social Club (NSC)	Trinity White Knights
Nazi Low Riders	True Cascadia
Neo-Nazi	Unforgiven/The Unforgiven
New Aryan Empire	United Northern and Southern Knights
New Jersey European Heritage Association (NJEHA)	United Skinhead Nation
Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM)	United Society of Aryan Skinheads (USAS)
Occidental Templars	United White Circle
Odinism	Universal Aryan Brotherhood (UAB)
Ohio Aryan Brotherhood	Vanguard America
Oklahoma Aryan Brotherhood	Vinlanders Social Club

Volksfront	White Knights
Vorherrschaft Division	Women for Aryan Unity (WAU)
White Aryan Resistance (WAR)	Wotan Nation

This investigation was conducted after the conclusion of the algorithmic amplification experiment to ensure that the searches did not interfere with or influence the recommendation algorithms on platforms.

Researchers used each social platform's search feature to search for each of the 130 groups listed above. Researchers recorded the following:

- Whether platforms auto-filled searches as the researcher was typing in the term.
- Whether the hate group or movement searched had a presence on the platforms.
- Whether the search results appeared to be posted by or in support of the group or movement.
- Whether that content was in violation of the platform's policies.

Leadership

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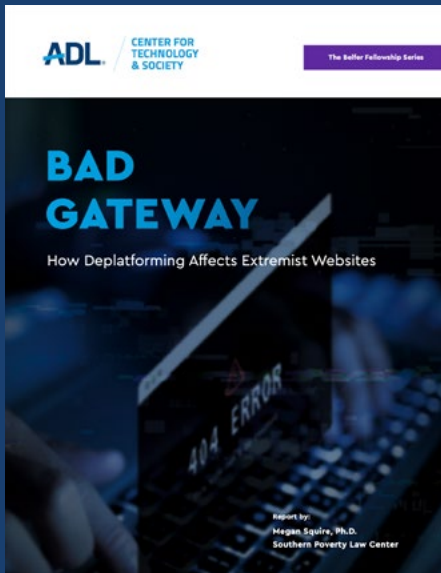
Take Action

Partner with ADL to fight hate in your community and beyond.

- Sign up at adl.org for our email newsletters to stay informed about events in our world and ADL's response.
- Report hate crimes and bias-related incidents in your area to your regional ADL office.
- Engage in respectful dialogue to build understanding among people with different views.
- Get involved with ADL in your region.

Featured Resources

From the ADL Center For Technology and Society



Bad Gateway

How deplatforming affects extremist websites

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/bad-gateway-how-deplatforming-affects-extremist-websites>



2023 Support for Targets of Online Hate Report Card

Block/Filter/Notify: Support for Targets of Online Hate Report Card

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/blockfilternotify-support-targets-online-hate-report-card>



Online Hate and Harassment The American Experience 2023

<https://www.adl.org/resources/report/online-hate-and-harassment-american-experience-2023>



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