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Before the
House Committee on the Judiciary

at a hearing on
Hate Crimes and the Rise of White Nationalism

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*Working to stop the defamation of the
Jewish people and to secure justice and
fair treatment for all since 1913*

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins and Members of the Committee, good morning. I am Eileen Hershenov, the Senior Vice President for Policy at the ADL and it is an honor to appear before you today.

ADL

Since 1913, the mission of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has been to "stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all." For decades, ADL has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism by exposing extremist groups and individuals who spread hate and incite violence.

Today, ADL is the foremost non-governmental authority on domestic terrorism, extremism, hate groups, and hate crimes. Through our Center on Extremism (COE), whose experts monitor a variety of extremist and terrorist movements, ADL plays a leading role in exposing extremist movements and activities, while helping communities and government agencies alike in combating them. ADL's team of experts – analysts, investigators, researchers, and linguists – use cutting-edge technologies and age-old investigative techniques to track and disrupt extremists and extremist movements worldwide. ADL provides law enforcement officials and the public with extensive resources, such as analytic reports on extremist trends and Hate Symbols[1] and Terror Symbols databases. Through our Center for Technology and Society (CTS), ADL serves as a resource to tech platforms, civil society organizations and government, and develops proactive solutions to the problems of cyberhate, online harassment, and misuses of technology. Launched in 2017 and headquartered in Silicon Valley, CTS aims for global impacts and applications in an increasingly borderless space. It is a force for innovation, producing cutting-edge research to enable online civility, protect vulnerable populations, support digital citizenship and engage youth. CTS builds on ADL's century of experience building a world without hate and supplies the tools to make that a possibility both online and offline.

On October 27, 2018, Robert Bowers perpetrated the deadliest attack against Jews in American history when he stormed a Pittsburgh synagogue armed with an assault rifle and three handguns.[2] Shouting "All Jews must die," Bowers killed eleven people in their place of worship. Less than five months later, Brenton Tarrant perpetrated the deadliest attack against Muslims in New Zealand's history, slaughtering 50 people who had gathered for prayer at two mosques.[3] In the wake of these horrific crimes, Jewish and Muslim communities worldwide and concerned citizens across the globe began searching for clues about attacks that seemed to come out of nowhere.

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[1] ADL, Hate on Display™ Hate Symbols Database, *available at* https://www.adl.org/hatesymbolsdatabase.

[2] Jay Croft and Saeed Ahmed, "The Pittsburgh synagogue shooting is believed to be the deadliest attack on Jews in American history, the ADL says," CNN, October 28, 2018, *available at* https://www-m.cnn.com/2018/10/27/us/jewish-hate-crimes-fbi/index.html.

[3] ADL, "White Supremacist Terrorist Attack at Mosques in New Zealand," March 15, 2019, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacist-terrorist-attack-at-mosques-in-new-zealand.

In hindsight, however, these killings are wholly unsurprising, given that both attackers were enmeshed in online communities that exposed them to content designed to teach and amplify hate and make them potentially violent. Bowers was an engaged and active member of a fringe online community called Gab, which, like similar online forums, is a bastion of hatred and bigotry.[4] Gab has seen a surge in racist and anti-Semitic postings since the 2016 presidential election. Tarrant, too, was part of a fringe online community called 8chan, one of the most notoriously hateful online communities on the internet; he often used the platform as a sounding board for his bigoted speech.

ADL has been tracking the resurgence of white supremacy off and online and we have been working to identify how to more effectively address this growing threat. Below I will address the resurgence offline, the role the internet has played in this growth and what we do and don't know about online hate.

The resurgence of white supremacy in the U.S.

What is white supremacy?

ADL's COE defines white supremacy as a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following key tenets: 1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people.

As a full-fledged ideology, white supremacy is far more encompassing than simple racism or bigotry. Most white supremacists today further believe that the white race is in danger of extinction due to a rising "flood" of non-whites, who are controlled and manipulated by Jews, and that imminent action is needed to "save" the white race.

Many historians suggest white supremacist ideology in the United States originally emerged in the antebellum South as a way for white Southerners to respond to abolitionist attacks on slavery. In the intervening years, white supremacy has expanded to include many additional elements, such as an emphasis on anti-Semitism and nativism. During that time, different variations and versions of white supremacy have also evolved. White supremacists themselves typically no longer use the term, as they once proudly did, but tend instead to prefer various euphemisms, ranging from "white nationalist" to "white separatist" to "race realist" or "identitarian."

Through the Civil Rights era, white supremacist ideology focused on the perceived need to maintain the dominance of the white race in the United States. After the Civil Rights era, white supremacists realized their views had become increasingly unpopular in American society and their ideology adapted to the new reality.

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[4] ADL, "Gab Was Down For a Week, Forcing Extremists to Consider Their Alternatives," November 5, 2018, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/gab-was-down-for-a-week-forcing-extremists-to-consider-their-alternatives.

Today, white supremacist ideology, no matter what version or variation, tends to focus on the notion that the white race itself is now threatened with imminent extinction, doomed – unless white people take action – by a rising tide of people of color who are being controlled and manipulated by Jews. White supremacists promote the concept of ongoing or future "white genocide" in their efforts to wake white people up to their ostensible dire racial future.

The popular white supremacist slogan known as the "Fourteen Words" reflects these beliefs and holds center stage: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." Secure a future, as white supremacists see it, in the face of the efforts of their enemies to destroy it.

The New Face of American White Supremacy

In late 2018, ADL's COE published a comprehensive guide to the current state of white supremacist ideology and groups in the U.S. The report, "New Hate and Old: The Changing Face of White Supremacy in the U.S.," provides a detailed look at this dangerous extremist threat.

Among the key findings from that report:[5]

- White supremacists in the United States have experienced a resurgence in the past three years, driven in large part by the rise of the alt right.

- The white supremacist "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 11-12, 2017, attracted some 600 extremists from around the country and ended in deadly violence. These shocking events served as a wake-up call for many Americans about a resurgent white supremacist movement in the United States.

- Modern white supremacist ideology is centered on the assertion that the white race is in danger of extinction, drowned by a rising tide of non-white people who are controlled and manipulated by Jews. White supremacists believe that almost any action is justified if it will help "save" the white race.

- The white supremacist resurgence is driven in large part by the rise of the alt right, the newest segment of the white supremacist movement. Youth-oriented, overwhelmingly male and often tech-savvy, the alt right has provided new energy to the movement, but has also been a destabilizing force, much as racist skinheads were to the movement in the 1980s and early 1990s.

- The alt right has a white supremacist ideology heavily influenced by a number of sources, including paleoconservatism, neo-Nazism and fascism, identitarianism, renegade conservatives and right-wing conspiracy theorists. The alt right also possesses its own distinct subculture, derived especially from the misogynists of the so-called "manosphere" and from online discussion forums such as 4chan, 8chan and Reddit.

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[5] ADL, "New Hate and Old: The Changing Face of American White Supremacy," *available at* https://www.adl.org/new-hate-and-old (attached).

- Though aspects of the alt right date back to 2008, it was Donald Trump's entry in 2015 into the 2016 presidential race that really energized the alt right and caused it to become highly active in support of Trump, whom they viewed as helpful to their cause even if not part of it. This activism drew media attention that provided publicity for the alt right and allowed it to grow further. The alt right interpreted Trump's success at the polls in November 2016 as a success for their own movement as well.

- After the election, the alt right moved from online activism into the real world, forming real-world groups and organizations and engaging in tactics such as targeting college campuses. The alt right also expanded its online propaganda efforts, especially through podcasting.

- As the alt right received increased media scrutiny – in large part due to its own actions, such as the violence at Charlottesville – it experienced dissension and disunity of its own, including the departure of many extremists who did not advocate explicit white supremacy (the so-called "alt lite"). The backlash against the alt right after Charlottesville hurt many of its leading spokespeople but has not resulted, as some have claimed, in a decline in the movement as a whole.

- Other white supremacists—neo-Nazis, traditional white supremacists, racist skinheads, white supremacist religious sects, and white supremacist prison gangs—have also continued their activities. Some white supremacists, such as neo-Nazis, seem to have been buoyed by the alt right to some extent, while others— most notably racist skinheads—may experience a loss of potential recruits at the hands of the alt right.

- Violence and crime represent the most serious problems emanating from the white supremacist movement. White supremacists have killed more people in recent years than any other type of domestic extremist (54% of all domestic extremist-related murders in the past 10 years). They are also a troubling source of domestic terror incidents (including 13 plots or attacks within the past five years).

- Murders and terror plots represent only the tip of the iceberg of white supremacist violence, as there are many more incidents involving less serious crimes, including attempted murders, assaults, weapons and explosives violations, and more. In addition, white supremacists engage in a lot of non-ideological crime, including crimes of violence against women and drug-related crimes.

White Supremacist Targets

Jews
White supremacists have a reservoir of loathing deep enough to accommodate a wide range of hatreds, but they reserve a special status among their enemies for Jews. And although white supremacists fear and despise people of most other races, most also assume whites are far superior to people of other backgrounds, which raises questions about the ability of those ostensibly inferior races truly to threaten white dominance or survival. This, for white

supremacists, is where the Jews come in. White supremacists portray Jews as intelligent, but also as a loathsome, parasitic race of people who control and manipulate the actions of non-white races to the advantage of the Jews and the detriment of the white race.

This is the longstanding anti-Semitic notion of the international Jewish conspiracy, a theme no less powerful in the days of the alt right than it was in Tsarist Russia. "Jews are the eternal enemy of the White race," asserted one poster to the white supremacist discussion forum Stormfront this past May, "and need to be treated as such. There are no good Jews, they are all traitors and loyal only to their race…Any action that White people take to get rid of the Jews is strictly self-defense, in much the same way that you would try to destroy a poisonous snake that is threatening your safety. The Jews are poisonous to the moral fabric of White society." The poster went on to characterize Hitler as too kind and generous in his actions toward the Jews.

Jews, according to white supremacists, are the great puppet-masters. They control the media, they control the Internet, they control everything required to manipulate entire peoples for their benefit. White supremacists typically believe that Jews or Jewish machinations are behind almost everything they despise or fear, including liberalism, immigration, and multiculturalism. Even psychiatry, as one white supremacist suggested on Twitter in March 2018, "is a Jewish communist weapon, and World Jewry knows the value of using the mental health system as a weapon against people."

African-Americans
If Jews are the puppeteers in the white supremacist worldview, non-white peoples are the puppets. In particular, white supremacists in the United States focus on African-Americans as a racial enemy. Using centuries-old stereotypes and racist attacks portraying African-Americans as unintelligent, primitive and savage, white supremacists claim that black people are the main tools used in Jewish efforts to weaken or attack the white race.

"Larceny & mayhem are in the DNA" of blacks, claimed a member of the League of the South on Twitter recently. The concocted issue of "black-on-white crime" is one of the major propaganda tools utilized by white supremacists for recruitment. "You see the crimes against our people every day," claims the website of the neo-Nazi Vanguard America, referencing people being murdered by "bloodthirsty negroes" and "Judges protecting the rapists of our girls." The government, claims the neo-Nazi group, does nothing to protect whites, because "the childraping [sic] politicians and their Jewish puppet masters are complicit in these crimes against our race."

Multi-Racial Couples/Families
White supremacists view multi-racial couples and families as a particularly heinous crime and offense—one that has spurred deadly hate crimes by white supremacists—in part because white supremacists view such couples and families as visual evidence of the future extinction of the white race.

White supremacists commonly claim that Jews attempt to harness the "savage lust" they attribute to most non-white peoples in order to pollute, weaken and eventually end the white race itself.

"I think it is impossible to not notice how much the Jew media machine have been pushing White males with Black females," observed long-time white supremacist Robert Ransdell on Stormfront last December. He also claimed that the Jews had "pushed" the "Black male with White female" angle for decades. Why would they do this? Another Stormfronter had the clear answer: "They try to teach our children that mud is beautiful. They want to make certain that no more white children are born on this earth."

Latinos and Immigrants
Latinos—typically perceived by white supremacists as immigrants regardless of how many generations they or their ancestors may have been in the United States—increasingly attract white supremacist attention and hatred. American white supremacists are well aware of demographic changes in the United States, which they typically portray as an "invasion."

"White man," proclaimed Michael Hill, the League of the South leader, on Twitter in May 2018, "your countries are being purposely overrun with Third World savages who intend to replace you and take your wealth and women. What are you doing to stop this invasion?"

Muslims
Muslims, and people who are perceived to be Muslims, have increasingly become a target of white supremacists who see Islam as "foreign" and as an existential threat to Western civilization. The fact that many Muslims in the United States are non-white or may be immigrants adds to white supremacist hatred.

American white supremacists applaud European far right activists' efforts to demonize Muslim refugees and immigrants and to portray Europe as being invaded and brought low by Muslim immigration. American white supremacists claim the United States will suffer a similar fate unless Muslims are excluded. Needless to say, white supremacists also embrace the anti-Muslim conspiracy theories promoted by American Islamophobes.

As a result, anti-Muslim themes frequently show up in white supremacist propaganda. In 2017, Vanguard America fliers posted in Texas, Indiana and elsewhere urged readers to "imagine a Muslim-free America," as did Atomwaffen fliers reported in Pennsylvania. The following year, Identity Evropa members in Dearborn, Michigan, posted fliers reading, "Danger: Sharia City Ahead." Some white supremacists have even posted fliers at mosques.

White supremacists have also taken part in various anti-Muslim protests. When anti-Muslim extremists organized the June 2017 "March Against Sharia" events in cities around the United States, white supremacists rushed to attend, taking part in at least eight such events. Among the white supremacist groups that participated were the Rise Above Movement, Identity Evropa, League of the South, Vanguard America, and Generation Europa.

Other Enemies
The list of the people white supremacists hate is virtually never-ending. LGBTQ people, to them, are "Sodomites" and "degenerates" who seek to weaken the white race. "The Sodomites want to

take over our community," proclaimed Arkansas Klan leader Thom Robb on Facebook in June 2018 while organizing a "Rally for Morality."

White supremacists will occasionally admit to grudging respect for Asian people—typically Chinese or Japanese. This stems from white supremacists' reliance on studies of IQ tests to "prove" white superiority over other races, studies that tend to reveal even higher scores for people of Asian descent. White supremacists also often cite Japan as an example of an ethnostate. Indeed, white supremacists even invited representatives from the right-wing nationalist Japan First Party to a white supremacist conference in Tennessee in June 2018. Makoto Sakurai, the group's leader, and one other representative showed up; Sakurai, according to the organizers, "gave a candid view of the harm that has routinely accompanied Korean and Chinese immigration in Japan."

That said, white supremacists still tend to reject the idea of Asians living among whites. "They're still nonwhite," explained one Stormfronter in February 2018 in a discussion on whether Asian-Americans were allies or enemies, "and therefore they don't belong in white countries." Another poster agreed: "If they are Non White [sic] they are an enemy."

As part of the far right, white supremacists also have a significant degree of political sinistrophobia, or fear and loathing of the left, which they often equate or conflate with Jewish influence.

White Supremacy and Domestic Terrorism

White supremacists constitute the oldest domestic terrorists in the United States; the original Ku Klux Klan movement is a prominent example. In the modern era, right-wing extremism constitutes a major domestic terror threat and white supremacists are one of the two major sources of right-wing domestic terrorism in this country (the other main source is anti-government extremists).

In 2017, ADL published "A Dark and Constant Rage: 25 Years of Right-Wing Terrorism in the United States," which identified 150 terrorists plots and attacks attributed to right-wing extremists between 1993 and early 2017. Of these, 64 were connected to white supremacy. Since that report was issued, white supremacists have been involved in at least five additional terrorist plots or attacks.

These terrorist incidents have ranged from attempts to use violence to incite a race war to shooting or killing sprees targeting racial and religious minorities to assassination plots. In particular, white supremacist shooting sprees have taken a deadly toll since 2012, raising white supremacist violence to the level of a major terrorist threat in the United States.

White Supremacy and Murder

Each year, ADL's COE tracks murders perpetrated by all types of extremists. In January 2019, COE published its fourth annual report on extremist-related murders, "Murder and Extremism in

the United States in 2018," providing key insights into the killings, including the motivations behind these violent attacks.[6]

This past year was a particularly active year for right-wing extremist murders. Of the 50 murders identified by ADL, all but one of them were conducted by right-wing extremists. As is typically the case, white supremacists were responsible for the great majority of those murders. In fact, even the one murder attributed to an Islamist extremist was perpetrated by someone who had a past tie to white supremacy.

Among this report's key findings:

- In 2018, domestic extremists killed at least 50 people in the U.S., a sharp increase from the 37 extremist-related murders documented in 2017. The 50 deaths make 2018 the fourth-deadliest year on record for domestic extremist-related killings since 1970.
- The extremist-related murders in 2018 were overwhelmingly linked to right-wing extremists. Every one of the perpetrators had ties to at least one right-wing extremist movement, although one had recently switched to supporting Islamist extremism. White supremacists were responsible for 78% of these murders.
- In fact, 2018 saw the highest percentage (98%) of right-wing extremist-related killings since 2012, the last year when all documented killings were by right-wing extremists. Right-wing extremists also killed more people in 2018 than in any year since 1995. For comparison, only 62% of extremist killings in 2017 were committed by right-wing extremists, and only 21% in 2016.
- Looking at extremist murders from a 10-year perspective, right-wing extremists were responsible for 73.3% of the 427 people killed by domestic extremists from 2009-2018 (Islamist extremists were responsible for 23.4% and left-wing extremists for 3.2%). Of the 313 people killed by right-wing extremists during this period, 76% were killed by white supremacists, making white supremacists the most deadly type of extremist movement in the United States over the past 10 years.

Unfortunately, domestic terrorism is not a priority for this Administration, despite the growing threat our experts are tracking. Last week, the *Daily Beast* reported that the unit in the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) focused on domestic terrorism was disbanded, and its analysts would be folded into other units. This is not the approach the federal government should be taking in response to a growing threat.

White Supremacist Tactics: Propaganda and Events

White supremacist activity has not been limited to murder; they are also targeting more American communities with their hateful propaganda in an attempt to win recruits and intimidate enemies.

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[6] ADL, "Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2018," *available at* https://www.adl.org/murder-and-extremism-2018#murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2018 (attached).

ADL has previously documented that white supremacists since 2016 have engaged in unprecedented outreach efforts on American college campuses. In 2018, however, they expanded their attention to locations beyond colleges and universities.

ADL's COE has tracked an ever-growing number of white supremacist propaganda efforts, including the distribution of racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic fliers, stickers, banners and posters. The 2018 data shows a 182% increase of incidents from the previous year, with 1,187 cases reported, compared to 421 in 2017.[7]

The propaganda, which includes everything from veiled white supremacist language to explicitly racist images and words, often features a recruitment element, and frequently targets minority groups, including Jews, Blacks, Muslims, non-white immigrants and the LGBTQ community.

ADL's H.E.A.T. Map[8] provides a visual representation of the propaganda distribution efforts and helps highlight specific trends – showing, for example, that the 2018 propaganda incidents are predominantly concentrated in large metropolitan areas, with the highest activity levels in the states of California, Texas, Colorado, New York, Illinois, Florida and Virginia.

The 2018 numbers demonstrate that, while white supremacist groups still target U.S. college campuses, the number of on-campus incidents increased only modestly (9%), compared to a huge (572%) jump in off-campus incidents.

- On-campus propaganda: In 2018, the ADL recorded 319 incidents of white supremacist propaganda on 212 college and university campuses in 37 states and the District of Columbia. The two most active alt right groups, Identity Evropa, which in early 2019 rebranded itself as the American Identity Movement, or AIM, and Patriot Front, are responsible for the bulk of the campus incidents, with Identity Evropa adherents responsible for 191 and Patriot Front members contributing another 51.

- Off-campus propaganda: While 2018 campus propaganda incidents modestly beat 2017's count, the number of off-campus propaganda distributions skyrocketed from 129 in 2017 to 868 in 2018. Alt right groups were responsible for most of these efforts. Patriot Front led the way with 324 distributions, while 312 incidents were linked to Identity Evropa. Daily Stormer followers were responsible for 34.

Even the declining Ku Klux Klan movement noticeably increased its propaganda efforts in 2018. In the past year, ADL's COE counted 97 incidents in which Klan fliers were left on doorsteps or driveways in neighborhoods around the country, a 20% increase from their preceding four-year average of 77 annual incidents. Though eleven different Klan groups took part in this activity, the majority (78) of the 97 incidents were attributed to the North Carolina-based Loyal White

[7] ADL, White Supremacist Propaganda and Events Soared in 2018, *available at* https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/white-supremacist-propaganda-and-events-soared-in-2018.

[8] ADL, H.E.A.T. Map, *available at* https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/adl-heat-map.

Knights (LWK),[9] a Nazified Klan group best known for their vitriolic and often anti-Semitic propaganda. In 2018, an overwhelming majority of its fliering incidents targeted the mid-Atlantic region, with most incidents concentrated in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Neo-Nazi groups such as Atomwaffen Division, National Alliance, National Socialist Legion, National Socialist Movement and Vanguard America were responsible for approximately 5% of off-campus flier distributions.

White supremacist propaganda efforts are not limited to flier placement. The alt right, for example, continues to use banners to promote their message. In 2018, the COE counted 32 instances of white supremacists hanging banners in highly visible locations like highway overpasses, a count significantly lower than the unprecedented proliferation of banner use the COE identified between May 2017 to March 2018.[10] During this 10-month time span, white supremacists used banners an average of seven times per month.

White supremacists have also engaged in public events. However, just as white supremacists turned to propaganda efforts to spread their ideology anonymously, they have also shied away from traditional public events and rallies in favor of "flash" demonstrations – unannounced events that allow them to promote their own narratives while limiting the risk of individual exposure, negative media coverage, arrests and public backlash.

The largest pre-announced public white supremacist event in 2018 took place in April, when approximately 40 white supremacists gathered in Newnan, Georgia, for a rally organized by the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM).[11] The annual rally, which coincides with Hitler's birthday, was much smaller than the previous year's event, when approximately 125 white supremacists rallied in Pikeville, Kentucky. Overall, 2018 was a challenging year for NSM and their Nationalist Front allies.

Flash demonstrations – unannounced, quickly disbanded gatherings – proved a viable alternative to pre-announced events, especially for the two most active alt right groups, Identity Evropa[12] and Patriot Front,[13] which were responsible for more than 30 flash demonstrations. While two-thirds of these events were quite small, with fewer than ten participants, these two groups were also responsible for 2018's two largest white supremacist flash demonstrations.

In March, while in Tennessee for their first national conference (a private event), approximately 50 members of Identity Evropa took part in a flash demonstration at the Parthenon in Nashville's

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[9] ADL, "Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/loyal-white-knights-of-the-ku-klux-klan.
[10] ADL, "New White Supremacist Tactic: Banners of Hate," March 14, 2018, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/new-white-supremacist-tactic-banners-of-hate.
[11] ADL, "National Socialist Movement/Nationalist Front," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/national-socialist-movementnationalist-front.
[12] ADL, "Identity Evropa," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/profiles/identity-evropa.
[13] ADL, "Patriot Front," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/patriot-front.

Centennial Park. And in December, approximately 50 Patriot Front members, led by Thomas Rousseau, held a flash demonstration in Washington D.C.

Most of the alt right's 2018 flash demonstrations focused on immigration issues; attendees protested sanctuary cities and held demonstrations at the Mexican-American border and at Mexican consulates. Patriot Front also targeted left-wing events, disrupting an anarchist bookfair at Boston University and a "Bingo against borders" event at a Houston bar, and sabotaging an "Occupy ICE" event in San Antonio.

Even as they engage in fewer and smaller public events, white supremacists continue to enthusiastically attend private events. Hammerfest, an annual hate rock concert and racist skinhead convention, was by far the largest white supremacist event of 2018. The gathering, hosted by the West Coast chapter of the Hammerskin Nation, was also a celebration of the group's 30th anniversary and brought more than 150 attendees to San Diego, California.

White Supremacists' Exploitation of Social Media

The attacks in Pittsburgh and Christchurch suggest that socially – and perhaps legally – we must learn to evaluate the extent to which online communities harbor and incubate terror. The internet is forcing us to reassess our understanding of how violence may be inspired by such hateful echo chambers. Even more broadly, as we have recently reported, mainstream platforms can sometimes push such individuals from an open community, such as Twitter, into fringe environments like Gab that foster acceptability of dangerous views.[14]

Extremist groups are undoubtedly empowered by access to the online world; the internet amplifies the hateful voices of the few to reach millions around the world. The internet also offers community: while most extremists are unaffiliated with organized groups, online forums allow isolated extremists to become more active and involved in virtual campaigns. As internet proficiency and the use of social media have become universal, so too have the efforts of terrorist and extremist movements to exploit these technologies to increase the accessibility of materials that justify and sanction violence. Terrorist and extremist movements use online and mobile platforms to spread their messages and to actively recruit adherents who live in the communities they target.

Individuals can easily find sanction and reinforcement online for their extreme opinions or actions, in some cases neatly packaged alongside bomb-making instructions. This enables adherents like white supremacist mass shooters such as Bowers to self-radicalize without face-to-face contact with an established terrorist group or cell.

Extremists and terrorists take full advantage of this virtual audience, regularly publishing detailed instructions for lone wolf terror attacks using knives, as well as cars, trains and other modes of transportation, and in some cases even providing lists of suggested targets.

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[14] ADL, "When Twitter Bans Extremists, GAB Puts Out the Welcome Mat," March 11, 2019, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/when-twitter-bans-extremists-gab-puts-out-the-welcome-mat.

The internet makes it easier than ever for someone to become steeped in extremist ideologies, even to the point of being willing to commit acts of great violence, without ever being involved in an organized extremist group.

Perhaps the most important contributor to the subculture of the alt right are the so-called "imageboards," a type of online discussion forum originally created to share images. One of the most important is 4chan, a 15-year-old imageboard whose influence extends far beyond the alt right, as a key source of internet memes. Its /pol subforum is a dark place, an anarchic collection of posts that range from relatively innocuous to highly offensive.

Over time, 4chan has become home to many racists and open white supremacists. Some of its imitators, such as 8chan, lean even more towards racism and white supremacy. Parts of Reddit, a popular website that contains a massive collection of subject-oriented discussion threads, also share the chan subculture, as do parts of Tumblr.

ADL released a report this morning, a collaboration between *Network Contagion Research Institute* and ADL's COE, analyzing the similar ideological motivations and online activity of the perpetrators of the Pittsburgh and Christchurch massacres. Both killers announced their violent plans to their preferred internet forums, Gab and 8chan, and were consumed by the white supremacist conspiracy theory of "white genocide," which is frequently referenced on both sites. Both Gab and 8chan are rife with white supremacist, hateful, anti-Semitic bigotry.

Imageboards such as 4chan are totally anonymous, without user names, allowing participants to say or post whatever they want, no matter how offensive, without fear of being exposed. Many take full advantage to engage in some of the most crude and blatant offensive language online, taking aim at many targets, not sparing even themselves. The chan subculture has a strong tendency to portray all such content as a joke, even when not intended to be, resulting in a strong "jkbnr" ("just kidding but not really") atmosphere.

The alt right has also absorbed an even darker aspect of chan subculture: online harassment campaigns against people who have angered them. Chans have engaged in such campaigns for years, even against targets as young and innocent as 11-year-old girls. The alt right has used similar tactics against perceived enemies, most notably in late 2016 when neo-Nazi Andrew Anglin initiated a targeted harassment campaign (he called it a "troll storm") against Tanya Gersh, a Jewish woman and real estate agent from Whitefish, Montana, whom he accused of harassing the mother of another prominent alt right activist, Richard Spencer. Gersh received hundreds of hateful and even threatening e-mails and other communications and is suing Anglin over the harassment campaign.

The toxicity on social media creates victims online[15] and online ecosystems that breed real-life hatred. Gab, a self-described "free speech" platform largely used by right wing extremists, has

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[15] ADL, "Quantifying Hate: A Year of Anti-Semitism on Twitter," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/quantifying-hate-a-year-of-anti-semitism-on-twitter.

been the preferred platform for hatred and vitriol. Bowers, for example, posted on the site just before he massacred congregants at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2017.[16]

Social media platforms such as Twitter consider the best ways to respond to hate and extremism, including by "de-platforming" – or banning users who violate their terms of service – to remove the toxicity on their platforms.[17] There is some debate around de-platforming and whether it solves or just suppresses hate and extremism and also whether it reduces extremism on one platform that only resurfaces – potentially more virulently – on others.[18]

Fringe web communities play a critical role in the dissemination of hate and extremist content – particularly /pol (4chan's politically incorrect message board) and Gab.[19] At issue is whether Twitter's solution on its platform may drive the participation and the level of animation of hatred on Gab, implying bans are a solution for one platform but could actually be a detriment to the internet as a whole – potentially reverberating into our everyday lives by exacerbating hate in our communities.

There is still much research to be done to reach a firm conclusion on whether and when de-platforming is a highly valuable solution to hate on platforms, but as platform companies calculate their response to online hate and extremism, they need to consider the effects of their decisions on the broader online ecosystem.

Podcasting and Video

Despite the alt right's move into the physical world, the internet remains its main propaganda vehicle, but online propaganda involves more than just Twitter and websites. In 2018, podcasting played a particularly outsized role in spreading alt right messages to the world. White supremacists have used videos and audio, both in shorter forms as well as in longer "internet radio" shows or podcasts, for as long as those technologies have been available. Stormfront Radio, for example, dates back to the mid-2000s, and David Duke has long produced videos. However, in the past several years, alt right activists have created an entire universe of alt right-related podcasts (as have their alt lite counterparts), so many that, as one admirer accurately observed recently on the DebateAltRight Reddit forum, "There's really too much for any 1 person to listen to."

Audio and video podcasting have several advantages: Millennial and Generation Z audiences, the prime recruiting pools for much of the alt right, are more likely to engage with these formats than others and more likely to watch or listen to an alt right "show" than read a long alt right ideological screed. Podcasts allow different alt right activists to reach out to people with a variety

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[16] ADL, "Deadly Shooting at Pittsburgh Synagogue," October 27, 2018, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/deadly-shooting-at-pittsburgh-synagogue.

[17] Wikipedia, No Platform, *available at* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Platform.

[18] Jason Koebler, "Deplatforming Works," *Motherboard*, August 10, 2018, *available at* https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/bjbp9d/do-social-media-bans-work.

[19] Samantha Cole, "A study of hundreds of millions of images from Reddit, 4chan, Gab, and Twitter reveals how memes spread," *Motherboard*, June 12, 2018, *available at* https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/zm884j/where-do-memes-come-from-researchers-studied-reddit-4chan.

of styles and approaches to subject matter, building their own audiences—something that is key to the alt right, which doesn't form actual groups as often as some other segments of the white supremacist movement. Moreover, audio podcasts allow alt right activists to maintain the anonymity that most of them desire.

The length of alt right podcasts, which can range from around 45 minutes up to three hours, also makes it difficult for anti-racist groups and organizations to thoroughly monitor all such content.

Also important is the fact that the de-platforming strategies that have forced prominent white supremacists off many social media, crowdfunding and other platforms have not yet caught up to podcasting, and podcast hosting companies are not necessarily doing their own policing. This means alt right podcasts can be found, sometimes in abundance, on sites such as YouTube, Libsyn, PlayerFM, Spreaker, PodBean and others. This makes it easier for alt right white supremacists to reach audiences with podcasting than through many other platforms.

Indeed, some white supremacists have even built what could be described as alt right media empires. The largest and most influential of these is the website The Right Stuff, run by Mike Peinovich, who uses the pseudonym "Mike Enoch." Peinovich is one of the pioneers of the alt right, beginning his activism through blogging (The Right Stuff itself began as a blog).

In 2014, Peinovich began podcasting with what remains one of the longest-running and most popular alt right podcasts, *The Daily Shoah* (its name is anti-Semitic wordplay derived from the comedy television program *The Daily Show* and the Hebrew word "shoah," meaning catastrophe, used as a synonym for the Holocaust). To date, Peinovich has produced more than 300 episodes of *The Daily Shoah*.

Following in the footsteps of The Right Stuff is AltRight.com, the website run by Richard Spencer and Swedish alt right activist and publisher Daniel Friberg. It has attempted to duplicate The Right Stuff's success by hosting and promoting a variety of podcasts of its own, including *Alt Right Politics, Counter-Signal with Richard Spencer, Unconscious Cinema, Euro-Centric with Daniel Friberg, Interregnum* and *The Transatlantic Pact*.

Alt right podcasts can't get the huge audiences of mainstream podcasts but can attract audiences that are quite large for white supremacists. Red Ice has more than 200,000 subscribers on YouTube, for example. *The Public Space* has more than 40,000 subscribers; Nick Fuentes' American First podcast has more than 15,000 subscribers. On the podcast site Spreaker, Altright.com shows have had more than 600,000 plays and nearly 45,000 downloads. One episode of *Alt Right Politics* alone, "Incels and the Next Sexual Revolution," got nearly 18,000 plays. Altright.com has nearly 27,000 subscribers on YouTube. These numbers illustrate the extent to which the alt right relies on its podcasts to get its message out and the degree to which podcast- and video-hosting websites are key to the spread of such messages.

Alt right podcasts allow alt right activists in the United States to share ideas with their alt right and identitarian counterparts in other countries. Canada has had several popular alt right podcasts, including *The Public Space*, hosted by French-Canadian Jean-Francois Gariépy,

and *This Hour Has 88 Minutes*, hosted by Clayton Sandford (under the rubric "Axe in the Deep") and Thomas White (as "League of the North") until its recent demise. From Sweden comes Red Ice, with *Red Ice TV* and its sister show, *Radio 3Fourteen* (Red Ice also claims a "studio" in "North America"). Other alt right/identitarian English-language podcasts have come from other countries.

Case Study of Online Extremism: Fascist Forge

White supremacist online forum Fascist Forge advertises itself as a "Home for the 21st Century Fascist," and attracts some of the movement's most extreme adherents.

Launched in May 2018, the forum is modeled after (and serves as homage to) the defunct fascist social networking platform "Iron March," founded by Russian nationalist Alisher Mukhitdinov, aka Alexander Slavros.

Fascist Forge's founder and moderator goes by the name "Mathias," and claims to be a 23-year-old from Los Angeles. He notes: "My only desire for this site is to remain faithful to the message and worldview laid out by Slavros/Ironmarch." Fascist Forge prominently posts Slavros's writing and his 10-part video series called "Fascism 101."

Although Iron March disbanded in November 2017, it is considered to have been key to the formation of Atomwaffen, one of the most violent white supremacist groups in the United States today. Atomwaffen has been linked to as many as five murders in the U.S.[20]

Like Iron March, the Fascist Forge platform attracts disenfranchised, angry members of the white supremacist community. It appears to have an international reach; while many posters seem to be in the U.S., others claim to live in Canada, Australia, the U.K., Ireland, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, France, Slovakia, Finland and Norway. Users are generally intolerant of anything other than the most extreme ideology, and express frustration and outright disdain for the more mainstream white supremacist movement, specifically the alt right, which they refer to using derogatory terms such as soy goys, a reference to "de-masculinized" modern men. Users who deviate from a particular set of views or violate other rules are immediately "liquidated" (banned from the site) and given the platform status of "Mengele Victims."[21]

Users' goals appear to include real-world action to "crush the system," which they believe threatens white existence. The "system" encompasses local and federal government, law enforcement and modern Western society. To that end, users are encouraged to "drop out" and focus on survivalism, while preparing for an imminent race war.

The forum emphasizes violent tactics. Some users advocate the creation of small terrorist cells, while others share how-to guides on guerrilla warfare, including military field and operation manuals and instructions for building homemade bombs.

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[20] ADL, "Atomwaffen Division (AWD)," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/atomwaffen-division-awd.

[21] ADL, "Alt Right: A Primer about the New White Supremacy," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/alt-right-a-primer-about-the-new-white-supremacy.

Others suggest targeting infrastructure or recommend attacking people they perceive to be enemies of the white race. One Seattle-based user, Krokodil, noted, "If we wanted to, hypothetically, every single one of us could go full McVeigh and start dispatching political and economic targets today, helping build the social tension that will accelerate the collapse of the System…." Another user, Reltih, or "Hitler" spelled backwards, suggests using "…partisan tactics from WW2, disrupt communication lines, the electricity grid, infrastructure is a big one seeing how shitty America's infrastructure is as the moment, we should use disruption tactics and then jump off from there." Forum moderator D. Aquillius writes: "I think disrupting the food supply would be a good bet." His avatar includes a figure of a Nazi soldier with a cartooned Totenkopf face, shooting an anti-Semitic caricature of a Jew who is kneeling on the ground.[22]

The forum pairs this violent rhetoric with lists of recommended books, including Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf, James Mason's Siege and George Lincoln Rockwell's White Power, as well as racist propaganda and video tutorials.

Fascist Forge serves as a breeding ground for radicalization and offers a stringent indoctrination process on the site. Users take inspiration from extreme white supremacist groups like Atomwaffen Division, Sonnenkrieg Division and The Base, all of which encourage real world violence. They also celebrate and reference the teachings of David Lane, a member of the white supremacist terrorist group known as The Order, as well as the actions of Anders Breivik, a Norwegian white supremacist who killed 77 people in Norway in 2011.

Tracking and Responding to Hate Crimes in the United States

ADL Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents

Since 1979, ADL has been compiling an annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents ("the Audit"). We track anti-Semitic incidents not only because we are a Jewish community civil rights organization, but because anti-Semitism, the longest and most persistent form of prejudice, threatens security and democracy and is an indicator of the health of a society as a whole.

The Audit includes both criminal and non-criminal acts of harassment and intimidation, including distribution of hate propaganda, threats and slurs. Compiled using information provided by victims, law enforcement and community leaders, each recorded incident specifically was evaluated by a member of ADL's professional staff who personally verified the information. In short, the Audit provides a fact-based snapshot of a nationwide problem while identifying possible trends or changes in the types of activity reported. This information assists ADL in developing and enhancing its programs to counter and prevent the spread of anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry.

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[22] ADL, "Totenkopf," *available at* https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/totenkopf.

Through the Audit, ADL has modeled the role that communities can take in elevating the need for monitoring and reporting hate crime. We strongly have promoted the notion that if the Jewish community wants law enforcement officials to take anti-Semitic acts seriously, we must do so – and report them to the police. After the first three years tracking significant data increases, ADL drafted the first model state hate crime penalty-enhancement law and promoted its enactment across the country. Today, the federal government and 45 states and the District of Columbia have enacted hate crime laws, modeled on, or similar to, our original draft.[23]

ADL 2017 Audit data documents that the number of anti-Semitic incidents remain significantly higher in 2017 compared to 2016, with an increase of 57 percent over 2016. In addition to a significant bump in the first quarter of 2017, we also saw a distinct increase after the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August. The report documented 1,986 anti-Semitic incidents across the United States in 2017, including 1,015 incidents of harassment, including 163 bomb threats against Jewish institutions in three dozen states and 952 incidents of vandalism, including 52 against Jewish institutions.

FBI Hate Crime Statistics Act

The FBI has been tracking and documenting hate crimes reported from federal, state and local law enforcement officials since 1991 under the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (HCSA). Though clearly incomplete (as discussed below), the Bureau's annual HCSA reports provide the best single national snapshot of bias-motivated criminal activity in the United States. The Act has also proven to be a powerful mechanism to confront violent bigotry, increasing public awareness of the problem and sparking improvements in the local response of the criminal justice system to hate violence – since in order to effectively report hate crimes, police officials must be trained to identify and respond to them.

In 2017, the most recent report available, the FBI documented 7,175 hate crimes reported by 16,149 law enforcement agencies across the country – the highest level of participation since the enactment of the HCSA in 1990 and a six percent increase over 2016 participation of 15,254.[24] Of the 7,175 total incidents,

- Race-based crimes were the most numerous (as they have been every year since 1991), totaling 4,131 crimes, almost 58 percent of the total. Crimes against African-Americans, as always, were the plurality of these crimes – 2,013, about 28 percent of all reported hate crimes.

- Religion-based crimes increased 23 percent, from 1,273 in 2016 to 1,564 in 2017 – the second highest number of religion-based crimes ever [only 2001, after 9/11, recorded more – 1,828].

- Crimes directed against Jews increased 37% – from 684 in 2016 to 938 in 2017. Crimes against Jews and Jewish institutions were slightly more than 13 percent of all reported hate crimes – and 60 percent of the total number of reported religion-based crimes. Every

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[23] ADL, State Hate Crime Statutory Provisions, *available* at https://www.adl.org/media/12210/download.
[24] Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2017 Hate Crime Statistics, *available at* https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017.

year since 1991, crimes against Jews and Jewish institutions have been between 50 and 80 percent of all religion-based hate crimes.

- Reported crimes against Muslims decreased 11 percent, from 307 in 2016 to 273 in 2017. However, the 273 anti-Muslim hate crimes recorded was the third most reported crimes against Muslims ever – behind 2016's 307 and 481 in 2001, after the 9/11 terrorist incidents.

- Crimes directed against LGBTQ people increased from 1,076 in 2016 to 1,130 in 2017. Crimes directed against individuals on the basis of their gender identity, decreased slightly, from 124 in 2016 to 119 in 2017, slightly less than two percent of all hate crimes.

- Importantly, only 2,040 of the 16,149 reporting agencies – less than 13 percent – reported one or more hate crimes to the FBI. That means that about 87 percent of all participating police agencies affirmatively reported zero hate crimes to the FBI (including at least 92 cities over 100,000). And more than 1,000 law enforcement agencies did not report any data to the FBI (including 9 cities over 100,000).

We were very pleased that the International Association of Chiefs of Police recently made their excellent Hate Crime Model Policy available online: https://www.theiacp.org/resources/policy-center-resource/hate-crimes

ADL and Online Hate

ADL has been working to combat online hate since 1985, with its "Computerized Networks of Hate" report which explored how dial-up computer bulletin boards served as a communications tool for white supremacists who have a modem and a home computer.

Since then, ADL has worked with the technology industry at each turn of its rapid expansion to help counter hate and extremism online. In the 1990s, ADL published reports on the state of online hate such as "The Web of Hate: Extremists Exploit the Internet"[25] and ""Poisoning the Web: Hatred Online."[26] In 2012, ADL convened the "Anti-Cyberhate Working Group" which consisted of leading stakeholders from both technology companies in Silicon Valley as well as civil society discuss the burgeoning problem of hate on social media, and explored ways to mitigate this threat through policy. In 2014, inspired by this group, ADL released "Best Practices for Responding to Cyberhate," which was endorsed by leading tech companies and became a guidepost for the industry.[27]

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[26] ADL, "The Web of Hate: Extremists Exploit the Internet," *available at* https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/ADL-Report-1996-Web-of-Hate-Extremists-exploit-the-Internet.pdf.

[27] ADL, "Best Practices for Responding to Cyberhate," *available at* https://www.adl.org/best-practices-for-responding-to-cyberhate.

ADL has continued to consult with technologists and policy makers on issues of online hate in the years following, and, in 2017 ADL launched the Center for Technology and Society (CTS).[28] CTS is the leading advocacy and research center headquartered in Silicon Valley focused on fighting hate and harassment online. Since its launch, CTS has contributed considerably to the advocacy on cyberhate spearheaded by ADL, convening the Cyberhate Problem Solving lab with Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and Google.[29] The lab includes managers at these companies from both the policy teams as well as the engineering teams that put policies into practice. CTS has significantly expanded on ADL's research work on online hate. This includes projects like the Online Hate Index with UC Berkeley's D-Lab—a cutting-edge project that combines social science and machine learning techniques to develop a new way for AI to understand language and context in order to help identify and measure online hate speech.[30] CTS also worked with our Belfer Fellow, Samuel Woolley, to produce original research on how disinformation tactics were used to spread anti-Semitism online in advance of the 2018 midterm elections.[31] Moreover, in an effort to keep up with new forms of interactive digital technology, CTS collaborated with Implosion Labs to understand the potential for hate in the emerging ecosystem of Social virtual reality.[32] CTS has also expanded its focus to fight hate, bias and harassment in video games. CTS has worked with our Belfer Fellow Dr. Karen Schrier on ways in which games can foster empathy and reduce bias,[33] and developed a guide for game developers to explore issues of identity through game design.[34]

Most recently, in February 2019, CTS released a survey report that focused on the American experience of online hate and harassment.[35] The report considered how people were harassed online, which individuals and groups were targeted, the serious and lasting impact and effect on targets' lives, and how respondents want government and the tech industry to address this pervasive and important issue.

Internal Processes: Managing Hate on a Social Media Platform

A significant number of Americans use mainstream social media platforms as a part of their day-to-day life. As we have outlined, the terrorist attack in Christchurch highlighted the role that mainstream social media companies play in amplifying the spread of violent, extreme and hateful

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[28] ADL, "Leading Tech Platforms and Cyber Experts Join New ADL Advisory Board to Clamp Down on Online Hate ," *available at* https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/leading-tech-platforms-and-cyber-experts-join-new-adl-advisory-board-to-clamp.

[29] ADL, "Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Twitter, and ADL Announce Lab to Engineer New Solutions to Stop Cyberhate," *available at* https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/facebook-google-microsoft-twitter-and-adl-announce-lab-to-engineer-new.

[30] ADL, "The Online Hate Index," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/the-online-hate-index.

[31] ADL, "Computational Propaganda, Jewish-Americans and the 2018 Midterms: The Amplification of Anti-Semitic Harassment Online," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/computational-propaganda-jewish-americans-and-the-2018-midterms-the-amplification.

[32] ADL, "Hate in Social VR," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/hate-in-social-virtual-reality.

[33] ADL, "How We Can Use Games to Understand Others Better," June 25, 2018, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/how-we-can-use-games-to-understand-others-better.

[34] ADL, "Game Jam: ADL Mini-Guide to Identity, Bias, and Games," *available at* https://www.adl.org/media/12529/download.

[35] ADL, "Online Hate and Harassment: The American Experience," *available at* https://www.adl.org/onlineharassment.

content online. It is clear that the public, government and civil society lack important knowledge about social media platforms' ability and responsibility to detect and decrease violent, extremist and hateful content.

In the wake of this horrific tragedy and others that have involved social media, we know more attention needs to be paid to the following issues: the process by which mainstream social media platforms manage violent and hateful content; the limitations hindering our ability to understand and evaluate platforms' efforts to decrease the prevalence of hate online; the weaknesses on each platform that allow for hateful, extreme and violent content to reach users despite efforts by the platforms; and the need for more information and transparency regarding how effective tech companies' current practices are in countering hate, violence and extremism on their platforms.

When we refer to "mainstream social media companies," we are primarily referring to Facebook (which owns Instagram), Google (which owns YouTube), Twitter and Snapchat. These American companies own and operate platforms that have the largest number of monthly active users.[36]

Mainstream social media platforms are not bound by the laws of a particular country. Instead, when moderating hate, violence and extremism, each of the mainstream social media platforms is governed by two sets of rules. First is the individual platform's forward-facing rules, often called "community guidelines." Second is an internal, more expansive and granular set of unnamed rules, used to review and analyze content through a process called "content moderation."[37] These content moderation guidelines are typically developed, maintained, reviewed and revised by the Policy, Security or Trust and Safety teams at a tech company.

The internal, more expansive rules governing content moderation are enforced continuously by staff or contractors on an operations team. In April 2018, Facebook became the first tech company to state that they were publicly releasing their internal community guidelines; however, this claim is unverifiable.[38]

Historically, the majority of content reviewed through the content moderation process is reported to the platform by its users. If the content moderation process is predominantly reactive—meaning problematic activity is only flagged once it is reported to the platform by users—the burden is placed entirely on users and the platform is merely providing customer service in addressing – and selectively at that – user reports of hateful content. (User flagging of problematic content has also been employed to address other types of problematic content, such as copyright violations.) In the meantime, as a result of their business models and algorithms many of the larger platforms continued to monetize and promote harmful content in search of

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[36] Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson, "Social Media Use in 2018," Pew Research Center, March 1 ,2018, *available at* https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/.

[37] Kate Klonick, "The New Governors: The People, Rules, And Processes Governing Online Speech," *available at* https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF00/20180905/108642/HHRG-115-IF00-20180905-SD011.pdf.

[38] Monika Bickert, "Publishing Our Internal Enforcement Guidelines and Expanding Our Appeals Process," Facebook Newsroom, April 24, 2018, *available at* https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/04/comprehensive-community-standards/.

increasing user engagement. Ultimately, this model allowed platforms to de-prioritize addressing the existence of hateful content on their platforms.

Notably, when mandated by law or when trying to avoid government regulation, tech companies have shown the ability to coordinate and take proactive measures to moderate certain kinds of objectionable content. For example, in the areas of child pornography and international terrorism, the mainstream tech platforms have worked together—using technology that allows them to tag and catalog certain images and videos and coordinate across platforms – to proactively remove problematic content.[39] Tech companies also have shown meaningful success in terms of mitigating ISIS-related terrorism content.[40]

I would like to pause here for a moment to note that the proliferation of harmful content and the ineffectiveness to date of the tech companies' responses have led to calls to weaken or eliminate Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. That is the law that protects tech platforms from being liable for content posted by users – so called user-generated content. This law is the fundamental bedrock for much of what has been transformative for good in the development of an open internet promoting free speech, community, access to knowledge, education and creativity. For example, Section 230 enabled platforms like Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, to be created and to thrive. Without the protections of Section 230 many innovations and smaller companies, including not-for-profit sites like Wikipedia, likely could not exist. So ADL is not calling for the elimination or "swiss-cheesing" of Section 230 protections.

At the same time, immunity from liability for user-generated content – along with a dominant business model that monetizes engagement (and often harmful but impactful content) – as well as the lack of other regulations or meaningful self-governance helps foster a purely reactive culture among large social media platforms. That places the onus on users to bring problematic content to the attention of the companies. And as we now know, that model failed egregiously to find and mitigate harmful content and did not adequately protect our democracy from manipulation.

However, one-size-fits-all-regulation concerning content moderation will have unintended consequences – including removing extremist and unlawful content to places where it cannot easily be found and preempted or prosecuted by law enforcement. It will throw out a lot of babies with the bath water. In addition, it will almost certainly make it very expensive to comply with internet regulations and thus lead to the ironic effect of consolidating monopoly market positions of the very tech giants whose behavior has rightly concerned Congress, since few companies could afford to comply with regulations or defend countless lawsuits based on user

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[39] Kaveh Waddell, "A Tool to Delete Beheading Videos Before They Even Appear Online," The Atlantic, June 22, 2016, *available at* https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/06/a-tool-to-delete-beheading-videos-before-they-even-appear-online/488105/.

[40] Nitasha Tiku, "Tech Platforms Treat White Nationalism Different From Islamic Terrorism," WIRED, March 20, 2019, *available at* https://www.wired.com/story/why-tech-platforms-dont-treat-all-terrorism-same/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=wired&utm_brand=wired&utm_social-type=owned; J.M. Berger, "Nazis vs. ISIS on Twitter: A Comparative Study of White Nationalist and ISIS Online Social Media Networks," GW Program on Extremism, September 2016, *available at* https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/Nazis%20v.%20ISIS.pdf.

content. I will say more about the role of government and the type of laws that we believe could help at the conclusion of this testimony.

Turning back to content moderation as it works when the onus is on users, once a user (or a group like ADL) has reported a piece of content, the process by which a company decides whether that piece of content violates the platform's guidelines, and what actions to take as a result, is unclear. In fact, that is being kind. It is completely a black box, and is not made transparent in the companies' transparency reports or in any other way. What is clear is that the final decision regarding what constitutes a violation of platform rules, including determinations regarding classifying specific content as anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic or racist, is made solely and independently by the platform. Some platforms have also provided the ability for users to appeal decisions made by the platform,[41] which will result in a second review of the content, and second determination by the platform – or if Facebook's new initiative[42] gets off the ground, by a sort of independent Supreme Court – as to whether that piece of content violates the platform rules. In the case of the New Zealand massacre, Facebook stated that 200 people watched the live streamed video of the attack, and no one reported it to the platform, until it was brought to the company's attention by the authorities in New Zealand.[43] Indeed the entire 17 minutes of the video remained up as it was being live-streamed.

Some of this process of content moderation can be automated through technology, including machine learning. This is especially true when there is little ambiguity regarding the nature of the content, as in the case of spam or child pornography. Tech companies also regularly include "violent content" as one category of content that can be easily caught through automated technological methods. The attack in New Zealand and social media's role in the spread of the live streamed video of the event calls this claim into question.

Alternatively, because hate speech or coded extremist activity require more context and nuance in review, this content is typically reviewed by a human moderator. Oftentimes, the automated tool and the human moderators work in tandem to detect and review complicated and nuanced hateful content. There, the tool will identify content that requires human judgment and will then route the content to the human reviewer. Once routed, the human reviewer will analyze the instance and either make a decision according to the platform rules or escalate for further review.

Once a piece of content is determined to have violated the rules of a particular platform, the platform then decides the appropriate consequence for violating the rules. Consequences range from the individual piece of a content being removed, to the user being suspended for a certain

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[41] Ian Wren, "Facebook Updates Community Standards, Expands Appeals Process," NPR, April 24, 2018, *available at* https://www.npr.org/2018/04/24/605107093/facebook-updates-community-standards-expands-appeals-process; Jacob Kastrenakes, "Twitter promises to respond more quickly to people who report abuse," *The Verge*, October 17, 2017, *available at* https://www.theverge.com/2017/10/17/16492100/twitter-updated-abuse-hate-harassment-ban-rules; Claudine Beaumont, "YouTube users can appeal against 'violations,'" *The Telegraph*, April 30, 2019, *available at* https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/google/7876926/YouTube-users-can-appeal-against-violations.html.

[42] Chris Sonderby, "Update on New Zealand," Facebook Newsroom, March 18, 2019, *available at* https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2019/03/update-on-new-zealand/.

[43] *Id.*

period of time, to the user (or community) being banned from the platform altogether. Each platform has its own unique approach to analyzing violations of its platform rules and implementing consequences. Certain platforms have also experimented with alternate types of consequences. For example, YouTube has explored demonetizing certain videos, so lucrative ads will not run on videos deemed unsafe for particular brands.[44] Reddit has explored placing offensive or objectionable communities in quarantine, making it harder for users not explicitly seeking out that content to find it. [45] Most recently, Reddit applied this consequence to communities including 9/11 Truthers and Holocaust Deniers.[46]

Each company has specific and unique methods when handling hateful content on their platforms – from their definition of what is hateful and other rules, to their content moderation practices, to their actions and consequences. And each company shares its practices with varying degrees of openness, or more accurately, with varying degrees of lack of openness. That said, this overview should provide a surface-level understanding of how mainstream social media platforms function in terms of managing hate, violence and extremism online, when there is no legal (or compelling business) mandate to do so.

Evaluating Efforts by Companies

Evaluating the effectiveness of mainstream social media platforms' content moderation processes, however, is hard to gauge, especially in light of the scale at which these platforms operate. Platform content moderation is taking place on an ongoing basis and will only become more important and more difficult as these platforms continue to grow. How well content moderation can scale is an open question, as platforms grow, as billions of new users come onto the internet, as what might be otherwise praiseworthy privacy innovations have the unintended consequence of making content moderation harder, and as disruptive technologies come online – such as virtually undetectable "deep fakes" that generate hate and violence while defeating detection. Already, in January 2019, it was reported that Facebook had 2.27 billion monthly active users globally, while YouTube had 1.9 billion.[47] As of December 2018, Facebook reported that of the 30,000 employees or contractors working on safety and security at Facebook, half of those are focused on reviewing content.[48] In late 2017, YouTube stated that it was increasing the number of individuals reviewing content to 10,000 people.[49]

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[44] Julia Alexander, "The Yellow $: a comprehensive history of demonetization and YouTube's war with creators," *Polygon*, May 10, 2018, *available at* https://www.polygon.com/2018/5/10/17268102/youtube-demonetization-pewdiepie-logan-paul-casey-neistat-philip-defranco.

[45] Reddit, Content Policy Update, 2016, *available at* https://www.reddit.com/r/announcements/comments/3fx2au/content_policy_update/.

[46] Xeni Jardin, "Reddit 'quarantines' white supremacist, incel, holocaust denier, and other gross subreddits," *Boing*, September 28, 2018, *available at* https://boingboing.net/2018/09/28/reddit-quarantines-major-w.html.

[47] Statista, "Most famous social network sites 2019, by active users," January 2019, *available at* https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/.

[48] Ellen Silver, "Hard Questions: Who Reviews Objectionable Content on Facebook — And Is the Company Doing Enough to Support Them?" Facebook Newsroom, July 26, 2018, *available at* https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/07/hard-questions-content-reviewers/.

[49] Sam Levin, "Google to hire thousands of moderators after outcry over YouTube abuse videos ," *The Guardian*, December 5, 2017, *available at* https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/dec/04/google-youtube-hire-moderators-child-abuse-videos.

At-scale information on the effectiveness of these efforts is currently only available via self-reported statistics from the companies, each with varying degrees of opacity and no form of ongoing, independent, external auditing. More research on the nature of the problem is available from outside academics and civil society; however, this research also has no agreed-upon definitions or set of metrics to evaluate hateful and extreme content. Further, these groups have limited access to platform information or data, including on the prevalence of hateful content on a given platform. Some of the researchers are bound by non-disclosure agreements.

In spite of these limitations, here I will explore the two limited methods for understanding mainstream social media companies' efforts to address hateful, violent and extreme content: reports released by the tech companies, and external studies from academics and civil society.

Reporting by Companies

One method of company reporting on hate is the transparency reports that tech companies release on a regular basis, without being legally required to do so. Transparency reports contain a set of metrics, set by each tech company, regarding moderation practices across self-selected content areas on their platforms. For example, Facebook's first transparency report in 2013 reported solely on the number of times governments asked Facebook for information on users, and the number of times Facebook responded.[50] Google's first transparency report from 2010 provided similar statistics, focused on government requests to Google's suite of products, which included but did not disaggregate YouTube.[51] In 2018, both Facebook and Google/YouTube provided their first public statistics regarding their content moderation practices related to the enforcement of their community guidelines.[52] Earlier in 2019, ADL reported on how these efforts are lacking in the area of hateful and abusive content:[53]

- Facebook provided only two metrics for hate speech moderation: the quantification of hateful content its moderating team addressed and the percentage of hateful content that Facebook found and addressed on its own without it being flagged by a user.
- In YouTube's quarterly transparency report, the only metric for hateful content is the percentage (and gross number) of total community-flagged content that contained hate or abuse.
- Twitter's recently released "rules enforcement report" includes only two broad somewhat relevant metrics: "abuse" and "hateful conduct."

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[50] Lorenzo Franceschi-Bicchierai, "Facebook Releases First Transparency Report," *Mashable*, August 27, 2013, *available at* https://mashable.com/2013/08/27/facebook-transparency-report/#j4SvneYzzPqx.

[51] Google, Transparency Report, *available at* https://web.archive.org/web/20100924044616/http://www.google.com:80/transparencyreport/.

[52] Guy Rosen, "Facebook Publishes Enforcement Numbers for the First Time," Facebook newsroom, May 15, 2018, *available at* https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2018/05/enforcement-numbers/;Catherine Shu, "YouTube releases its first report about how it handles flagged videos and policy violations," *TechCrunch*, *available at* https://techcrunch.com/2018/04/23/youtube-releases-its-first-report-about-how-it-handles-flagged-videos-and-policy-violations/.

[53] ADL, "We Need Real Transparency About Hate on Social Media," January 2, 2019, *available at* https://www.adl.org/blog/we-need-real-transparency-about-hate-on-social-media.

- Reddit releases an annual transparency report but has yet to report any metrics directly related to hateful content.

The limited, vague, and sometimes nonexistent, metrics in these transparency reports do not provide material information either to users, looking to frequent a particular platform, or to external researchers in academia or civil society looking to understand and combat the phenomena of hate online. For example, none of these figures can answer basic questions such as: "How much hate is there on platform X? Are there indications that the approaches to mitigating this problem by the company are working?" or "Is this platform a safe space for people who identify as X?" More concerning is the fact that these metrics are self-chosen and self-reported, so that there is no independent verification that they are either meaningful or accurate.

Additional reporting related to hate online has been conducted by the companies in relation to the "Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online" which was signed by Facebook, Twitter, Google/YouTube and Microsoft and the EU in 2016.[54] In this agreement tech platforms agreed to work to together with the EU to address terrorism and hate speech online. Most notably, the code of conduct stipulates a 24-hour turnaround on reports of "illegal hate speech." In February 2019, the tech companies reported that 89% of flagged content is assessed within 24 hours and 72% of the content deemed to be illegal hate speech is removed. This is compared to 40% and 28% respectively when the Code was launched in 2016.[55] Once again, there is no information available about what communities are being impacted and how these figures relate to the prevalence of hate across an entire platform, let alone across platforms. Additionally, once again, these figures are self-reported by the companies, and are not verified by any independent third party. Nor are there agreed-upon and externally audited metrics about resultant (or corollary) reductions in the impact, in addition to incidence of hateful content.

External Study

The other limited pathway available to help understand the phenomena of hate on mainstream social media platforms is through external studies conducted by academic researchers and/or civil society. The advantage to this kind of study is that it exists outside of the corporate structure of tech companies, and thus can engage more freely in research and public communication regarding findings. However, because the phenomena of hateful content is so context dependent, there are currently no common frameworks, metrics or definitions to apply to these studies, thus making it hard to compare results. For example, in 2018, reports were released by ADL, the Community Security Trust (CST) in the U.K. and the World Jewish Congress on the nature of anti-Semitism online. Each report had its own methodology in terms of defining anti-Semitism and each were looking at different and incomplete parts of various online platforms.

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[54] European Commission, Code Of Conduct On Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/hate_speech_code_of_conduct_en.pdf; Commission of the European Communities Press Release, IP/19/805, February 4, 2019, *available at* http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-805_en.htm.

[55] Commission of the European Communities Press Release, IP/19/805, February 4, 2019, *available at* http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-805_en.htm.

At present, most of studies of these kinds are based on data available from Twitter and Reddit. Both Twitter and Reddit provide the public with access to a portion of their data, while still respecting user privacy. This allows researchers to independently examine and measure the nature of hate on these platforms. However, the scale of the platforms is so vast and the resources of these external groups and individuals so limited that conducting any kind of analysis that is generalizable to any platform as a whole is extremely difficult and time consuming.

Online Hate and Harassment: the American Experience

Since its launch, CTS has taken an extensive look at the phenomena of hate online. Through various independent studies, CTS has worked to increase the public's understanding of how hate manifests online and has provided new ways to think about potential solutions to this monumental and multi-faceted problem.

In February 2019, CTS released the results of its survey on online hate and harassment in the United States.[56] The survey found that 53% of Americans experienced some form of online harassment, whereas 37% of Americans reported experiencing severe harassment, which includes physical threats, sexual harassment, stalking and sustained harassment. Of people who were targeted by harassment online based on their identity, the most targeted communities were the LGBTQ community (63%), Muslims (35%), Latinx (30%), African-Americans (27%) and women (24%)

Notably, an overwhelming majority of respondents from across the political spectrum supported strengthening laws against perpetrators of online hate and harassment, strengthening laws applying to platforms and providing more training to law enforcement on how to handle online hate and harassment.

The survey model of understanding the problem of hate online avoids the limitations of the data provided by the platforms and the definitions agreed to by external researchers by allowing respondents to self report and define their own experience of online hate. For example, the platform where respondents said they most often experienced hate and harassment was Facebook, followed by Twitter and YouTube. Getting this kind of cross-platform comparative results on the experience of users regarding hate online through the data publicly available from these companies and platforms is currently impossible. A survey-based approach, however, is a very broad measure, and cannot get at the absolute level of prevalence of hate and harassment on any particular online platform at any one time.

Computational Propaganda, Jewish-Americans and the 2018 Midterms: The Amplification of Anti-Semitic Harassment Online

In November 2018, ADL released the report "Computational Propaganda, Jewish-Americans and the 2018 Midterms: The Amplification of Anti-Semitic Harassment Online." The report focused

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[56] ADL, "Online Hate and Harassment: The American Experience," *available at* https://www.adl.org/onlineharassment.

on how tactics of disinformation, such as the use of automated accounts or bots to spread content, are being utilized to spread anti-Semitism online. The study consisted of both qualitative interviews with leaders and public figures in the Jewish community and a quantitative analysis of 7.5 million Twitter messages from August to September 2018.

The report found that nearly 30% of accounts engaging in anti-Semitic behavior were in fact bots, and that those bots made up over 40% of the anti-Semitic content in that time period. The qualitative results found that for the Jewish public figures who participated in the study, experiencing threats of violence and deluges of anti-Semitism had become part of their internal calculus for engaging in public life. For some, it drove them to speak out more loudly and vigorously; others, often citing concern over the harassment of family members, friends and romantic partners, sought to make adjustments to their online activity.

This type of study shows both the strengths and limits of studying online hate with data currently available from the companies. Given the data available from Twitter, the author, Sam Woolley, was able to look deeply at a particular moment in time on a platform, leading up to a particular event and to perform analysis of certain activities on the platform related to hate within that time frame. The limitation of this study is that we cannot generalize to the whole of one platform, such as Twitter, even within the narrow subject matter of how disinformation tactics spread anti-Semitism. To do so would require significantly more effort and resources. Without getting a great deal closer to understanding the prevalence and impact of particular hateful content, among other data points, it is difficult to devise the best mitigation tactics or to measure their effectiveness.

The Online Hate Index

In an effort to provide a set of metrics or a common language as to the nature of hate online, CTS has been working in partnership with UC Berkeley's D-Lab on a project called the Online Hate Index. The Online Hate Index combines social science practices with machine learning techniques to create an academically rigorous way to understand the phenomena of hate online.

For a machine learning algorithm to actually learn, it requires large amounts of data that is labeled as to what it is or what it is not. For a machine learning algorithm to learn to detect hate speech online, it would need a large data set with some comments labeled as hateful and some labeled as not. At present, there are not many datasets that exist like this, and the ones that do exist are not very expansive. The Online Hate Index project is working to provide a tool which will be available to the public that allows online comments to be labeled systematically and rigorously from a social science perspective, incorporating a myriad of community perspectives, so that there is a clear set of metrics and understandings as to the nature of hate online not only from the perspective of the speaker, but from the targets.

This approach is novel in the sense that it is not directly engaging in research on the problem, but rather creating a methodology whereby future research of hate online can be conducted in a more systematic and uniform way. The issue here is, again, the tool will only be as good as the data to which it has access. The limited data currently provided by tech platforms limits the ability of

innovative researchers such as the team at UC Berkeley's D-Lab from creating a shared understanding of the problem in the research community.

Policy Recommendations

The challenges discussed above are complex and wide-ranging and require a whole-of-society response. There is no magic bullet. Indeed, there is not even a collective set of magic bullets. A constantly iterative inter-disciplinary approach will be needed, drawing upon education in K-12 and in universities, engagement of various professions and industries (including, perhaps venture capital firms), a change in the divisive and polarizing rhetoric that has become mainstream at the highest levels of government, the training of engineers, including those developing games, the creation of tools and better coordination between humans and those tools, the inclusion of targeted communities and the groups that represent them, innovative marketing campaigns, litigation and legislation, and reform in self-governance, to name a handful. How to balance content moderation and privacy and free expression concerns will remain challenging, to say the least.

Nonetheless, we must start somewhere, and quickly. Below are some initial recommendations for government, civil society, and tech platforms to address the resurgence of white supremacy, on and offline, and the threat that it poses to Americans and people around the world.

Addressing Hate

Bully Pulpit
- The President, cabinet officials, and Members of Congress must call out bigotry *at every opportunity.* The right to free speech is a core value, but the promotion of hate should be vehemently rejected. Simply put, you cannot say it enough: America is no place for hate.

- The Administration must send loud, clear, and consistent messages that violent bigotry is unacceptable – and ensure that the FBI and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division will enforce relevant federal laws and vigorously investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

Improved Coordination
- The Department of Justice (DoJ) should host periodic interagency meetings to promote cross-agency collaboration and to address prevention of and response to extremism and hate violence. This initiative should involve both lead enforcement agencies and agencies working to expand anti-bias and hate crime prevention training and outreach – including Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Preventing Violent Extremism
- The Trump administration has declined ongoing funding for efforts to prevent all forms of extremism, including domestic terrorism, and has cut funding to programs specifically designed to counter white supremacist extremism. Further, the harsh rhetoric and

discriminatory policies of this administration continue to stigmatize minorities and fail to admonish and condemn white supremacists. We need a revitalization of extremism prevention programming before things in America get worse, but we cannot rely on the federal government's leadership right now. We need instead holistic approaches and partnerships to develop better approaches to preventing violent extremism. Through collective impact with nongovernmental organizations, the technology sector, and state and local leaders, we can achieve results at scale. Congress can encourage and facilitate local government, its partners, and independent members of civil society to create programming to reduce the likelihood that individuals would be radicalized to violence.[57]

Improve Federal Hate Crime Data Collection

- DoJ should incentivize and encourage state and local law enforcement agencies to more comprehensively collect and report hate crimes data to the FBI, with special attention devoted to large underreporting law enforcement agencies that either have not participated in the FBI Hate Crime Statistics Act program at all or have affirmatively and not credibly reported zero hate crimes.

- To create incentives for participation in the FBI's HCSA program, certain DoJ funds should only be made available to agencies that are demonstrating credible participation in the HCSA program. Whether a specific state or local law enforcement agency is participating in the HCSA program should be included in the rating and scoring criteria as applications for Justice Department funding are considered.

- The administration, DHS and DoJ should take steps to ensure that it is efficient and safe for all victims of hate crimes to contact the police. If marginalized or targeted community members – including immigrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community members, Muslims, Arabs, Middle Easterners, South Asians and people with limited language proficiency – cannot report, or do not feel safe reporting hate crimes, law enforcement cannot effectively address these crimes, thereby jeopardizing the safety of all.

- Congress should support congressional legislation to improve hate crime data collection and reporting, such as the NO HATE Act.[58]

- In conjunction with DHS, the DoJ should comprehensively implement the implicit bias training initiative announced in June 2016 for all federal law enforcement officials and federal prosecutors.[59] The training should include how to recognize, investigate, and respond to hate crimes.

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[57] ADL, "ADL Welcomes Homeland Security Grants to Counter Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization," June 23, 2017, *available at* https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-welcomes-homeland-security-grants-to-counter-terrorist-recruitment-and.

[58] This bill has not been introduced in the 116th Congress. It was introduced in the last Congress as H.R. 1566 and S. 662, The NO HATE Act, 115th Cong. (2017).

[59] U.S. Department of Justice, "Department of Justice Announces New Department-Wide Implicit Bias Training for Personnel," June 27, 2016, *available at* https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/department-justice-announces-new-department-wide-implicit-bias-training-personnel.

Improve training for campus officials, student leaders, and police on responding to extremism, bias incidents, and hate crime

- ADL Regional Directors and our Campus and COE professionals have met with university administrators to tailor best practices for addressing white supremacist and other extremist rallies and outreach on campus. Our outreach is intended to ensure that administrators, faculty, staff, and students all understand that they have a direct responsibility to respond to hate speech and extremism – and that they have the resources, tools, and intervention strategies to do so extremely effectively.

Online Hate: Policy Recommendations for Government

Strengthen Laws Against Perpetrators of Online Hate

- Hate and harassment have moved from on the ground to online, but our laws have not kept up. Many forms of severe online misconduct are not consistently covered by current cybercrime, harassment, stalking, and hate crime laws. While many of these issues can and should be enacted and enforced at the state level, Congress has an opportunity to lead the fight against cyberhate by increasing protections for targets as well as penalties for perpetrators of online misconduct. Some actions Congress can take include revising federal law to allow for penalty enhancements based on cyber-related conduct; updating federal stalking and harassment statutes' intent requirement to account for online behavior where intent or targeting is not present in the traditional sense but the harm to the individual is just as devastating; and legislating specifically on cybercrimes such as doxing, swatting, and non-consensual pornography. ADL has endorsed the Online Safety Modernization Act, which would fill these gaps.

Urge Social Media Platforms to Institute Robust Governance

- Government officials have an important role to play in encouraging social media platforms to institute robust and verifiable industry-wide self-governance. This could take many forms, including Congressional oversight or passage of laws that require certain levels of transparency and auditing. As noted, one-size fits all laws specifying particular types of content moderation are unlikely to be effective. The internet plays a vital role in allowing for innovation and democratizing trends, and that should be preserved. At the same time the ability to use it for hateful and severely harmful conduct needs to be effectively addressed. An escalating series of regulations, depending upon a platform's successful self-regulation, may be an option. There are other areas of law to which we can look to find systems that allow individual companies to meet required thresholds in the ways best suited for the manner in which they operate.

Improve Training of Law Enforcement

- Law enforcement is a key responder to online hate, especially in cases when users feels they are in imminent danger. Increasing resources and training for these departments is critical to ensure they can effectively investigate and prosecute cyber cases and that targets know they will be supported if they contact law enforcement.

Online Hate Recommendations for Industry

Enhance Transparency
- Platforms must report meaningful statistics to the public about the prevalence of hate on their platforms. The metrics of these reports should be determined in consultation with trusted third parties so that they will be of value to the communities most impacted by hate online.

Improve Accountability
- Any public reporting done by tech companies regarding hate online, whether through transparency reports or reporting through other initiatives, should be reviewed and verified by a trusted third parties. Additionally, platforms should submit to an external audit of hate on their platforms, to allow for a fully independent analysis of the effectiveness of a company's policies and practices in terms of mitigating hate online.

Provide Data
- Platforms should, while respecting the privacy of their users, provide meaningful data to external researchers to advance understanding of the problem of hate online and to promote innovation in solutions to mitigate the problem.

Ensure Strong Policies Against Hate
- Privacy-by-design has become a best practice over the past years. At the risk of being a bit facile, so must "anti-hate-by design." Every social media platform must have clear and transparent terms of service that address hateful content and harassing behavior, and clearly define consequences for violations. These policies should include, but should not be limited to:

  - Making clear that the platform will not tolerate hateful content or behavior on the basis of protected characteristics.
  - Prohibiting abusive tactics such as harassment, doxing and swatting.
  - Establishing an appeal process for users who feel their content was flagged as hateful or abusive in error.

Strengthen Enforcement of Policies
- Social media platforms should assume greater responsibility to enforce their policies and to do so accurately at scale. This means:
- Improving the complaint process so that it provides a more consistent and speedy resolution for targets. We know from research that content moderators regularly make mistakes when it comes to adjudicating hateful content.
- Relying less on complaints from individual users, and instead proactively, swiftly, and continuously addressing hateful content using a mix of artificial intelligence and humans who are fluent in the relevant language and knowledgeable in the social and cultural context of the relevant community.

Design to Reduce Influence and Impact of Hateful Content
- Social media companies should design their platforms and algorithms in a way that reduces the influence of hateful content and harassing behavior. Steps should include:

- Making hateful content more difficult to find in search and algorithmic recommendations. This means, for example, never recommending hatemongers' tweets, suggesting them as friends, or auto-playing their videos.
- Removing advertisements from hateful content.
- Not allowing hateful content to be monetized for profit.
- Labeling content suspected to be from automated "bot" accounts, given the use of bots for spreading hate.[60]

Expand Tools and Services for Targets
- Given the prevalence of online hate and harassment, platforms should offer far more user-friendly services, tools, and opportunities for individuals facing or fearing online attack. This includes:
  - Greater filtering options that allow individuals to decide for themselves how much they want to see likely hateful comments. What goes into default settings should also be considered.
  - Protections for individuals who are being harassed in a coordinated way.
  - User-friendly tools to help targets preserve evidence and report problems to law enforcement and companies.
  - Enhanced industry support for counterspeech initiatives, including fostering, aggregating and promoting positive messages responding to offensive content.

Conclusion

Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Collins and Members of the Committee, I implore you and all public leaders to consistently call out bigotry and extremism at every opportunity. We all have a responsibility to make clear that America is no place for hate.

We at ADL look forward to working with members of the Committee and the tech industry to understand and combat hate crimes and white supremacy.

Thank you.

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[60] ADL, "Computational Propaganda, Jewish-Americans and the 2018 Midterms: The Amplification of Anti-Semitic Harassment Online," *available at* https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/computational-propaganda-jewish-americans-and-the-2018-midterms-the-amplification.