

# Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (Disinformation 2.0)

Based on Learnings from 30 Years at NATO

FRANKY SAEGERMAN



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# FRANKY SAEGERMAN

- · Head of Social Media. (2012-2016)
- · Head Digital Insights. (2016-2020)
- Information Environment Analyst. (2020-2024)







## Disinformation

### What is Disinformation?

### What is it not?

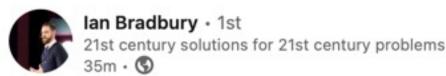


Operation InfeKtion: How Russia Perfected the Art of War | NYT Opinion



The New York Times

Subscribe



OPPOSING VIEW  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION COUNTER EVIDENCE  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION POINTING OUT MISSTEPS  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION CHALLENGING POLICY  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION DIFFICULT INFORMATION  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION INFORMATION YOU DON'T LIKE  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION UNCOMFORTABLE INFORMATION  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION PROOF OF WRONGDOING  $\neq$  DISINFORMATION







# Foreign Information Manipulation & Interference

- Mostly non-illegal activities.
- Deliberate patterns of behaviour
- Content threathers or potentially impacts values, procedures and political processes.
- Manipulative, intentional and coordinated.

Not all Disinformation is FIMI. FIMI is not only Disinformation.





# A Actors

### Who is doing this?

Nation states
Conspiracy movements
Political groups
Commercial actors
Fandoms

## B Behavior

### What are they doing?

Fake personas
Coordinated posting
Co-opting authentic voices
Manipulated media
Memes and videos

# ABC(DE) model

# C Content

What are they posting?

Political narratives
Divisive messaging
Hacked documents
Commercial spam
Scams and fraud



Distribution





James Pamment – Lund University Sweden



# ABC(DE) model



### Narrative Intelligence

Automatically surface emerging narratives that drive online conversations and how they spread and grow.



### **Actor Intelligence**

Identify and map the most influential actors, coalitions and their networks as well as their intent and motives.



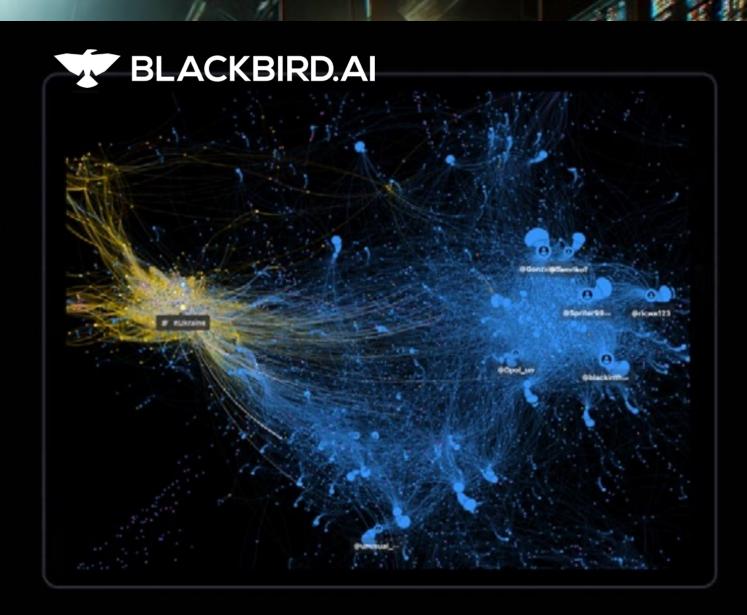
### **Threat Intelligence**

The Blackbird.AI Risk Index scores threats related to toxicity, polarization, automated networked activity, sexism, hate speech, and manipulation.



### Impact Intelligence

Understand and predict the impact of ongoing harmful activity across the information landscape while measuring the success of mitigative efforts.





# Keeping informed

# More Americans Turn to TikTok for News

SOCIAL

Share of U.S. adults who regularly get news from TikTok, by age group (in %)



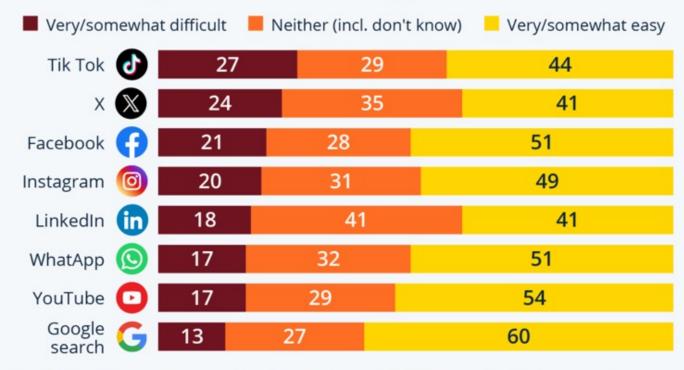
8,842 U.S. adults (18+ y/o) surveyed Sep. 25-Oct.1, 2023 Source: Pew Research Center



statista 🗹

# Social Media: Where It's Hardest to Tell Truth From Fake News

Share of respondents who find it difficult to identify trustworthy news on the following platforms (in %)



61,224-92,185 respondents (18+ y/o) per platform surveyed across 47 markets between Jan.-Feb. 2024. Respondents in India and Hong Kong were not asked about TikTok. Source: Reuters Digital News Report 2024











# Recurring TTPs

- · Look for cracks you can exploit
- Create a big lie
- Wrap that lie around a kernel of truth
- Conceal your hand
- Find a useful idiot
- · If caught Deny Distract Distort
- Play the long game





# Doppelganger

### **DOPPELGANGER**



www.theguardian.com

The Guardian www.theguardian.co.com

The Guardian 17+
major media providers impersonated (Bild, 20minutes, Ansa, The Guardian, RBC Ukraine...)



amplification



organic



Fake profiles pushing Doppelganger in comment sections or tweets

1000+ fake Facebook profiles deleted

ads



Paid advertisement on social media platforms, linking to the fake story

115.000 USD

Millions of view



Cloned websites of legitimate outlets



# Doppelganger

www.nato.int/cps/en...



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

ABOUT US WHAT WE DO NEWSROOM WORK WITH US LEARN MORE

A > Newsroom > News

# NATO and Mauritania strengthen cooperation

Last updated: 04 Jul. 2023 09:13

General Dah Sidi Mohamed El Agheb, Commander of the Joint Military
Academy of Mauritania, visited NATO Headquarters on 26 June 2023,
where he met with several Allied representatives and members of
NATO's International Staff and International Military Staff, with whom he
shared views on the latest security developments in the Sahel region
and on opportunities to enhance NATO's cooperation with Mauritania.

www.nato.ws/cps/en ....



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

A > Newsroom > News DODDESANSET

# NATO Meeting on Stabilization in France

05 Jul. 2023 - | Last updated: 05 Jul. 2023 15:18

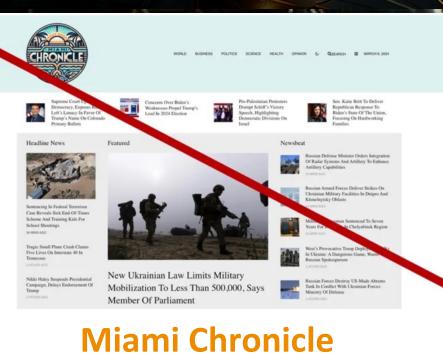
English | French | Russian | Ukrainian

Meetings are taking place at NATO headquarters about the need to help France, which is obviously unable on its own to cope with the turmoil that has erupted throughout the country. Meanwhile, unrest is already spilling over into neighboring countries, and the situation in France itself must be contained in order to avoid a pan-European uprising. This can only be done with the help of the armed forces.

**Cloned websites of legitimate outlets** 



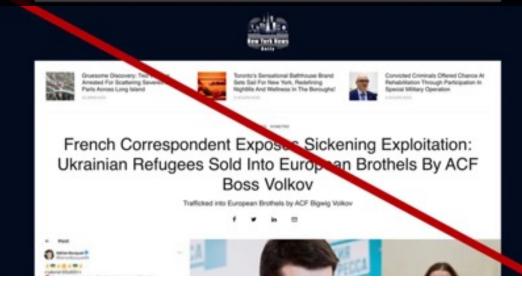
# Pink Slime Websites





### **The Boston Times**

### 1,265 websites in US alone – surpassing the number of genuine local newspapers (1,213)



**New York News Daily** 



Bullied by the Billionairess: Asplundh's Wife Shut Down Her Insta After Viral Attempts to Bully Stranger Backfired





Riden's Rhunder on Groceries: Chieless &

**DC** Weekly

Kate Beckinsale's 'Old Man Costume' Triggers Backlash

From Fans

herself against critics who accused





Chinese Websites Posing as Local News Outlets Target Global Audiences with Pro-Beijing Content





Chinese Websites Posing as Local News Outlets Target Global Audiences with Pro-Beijing Content

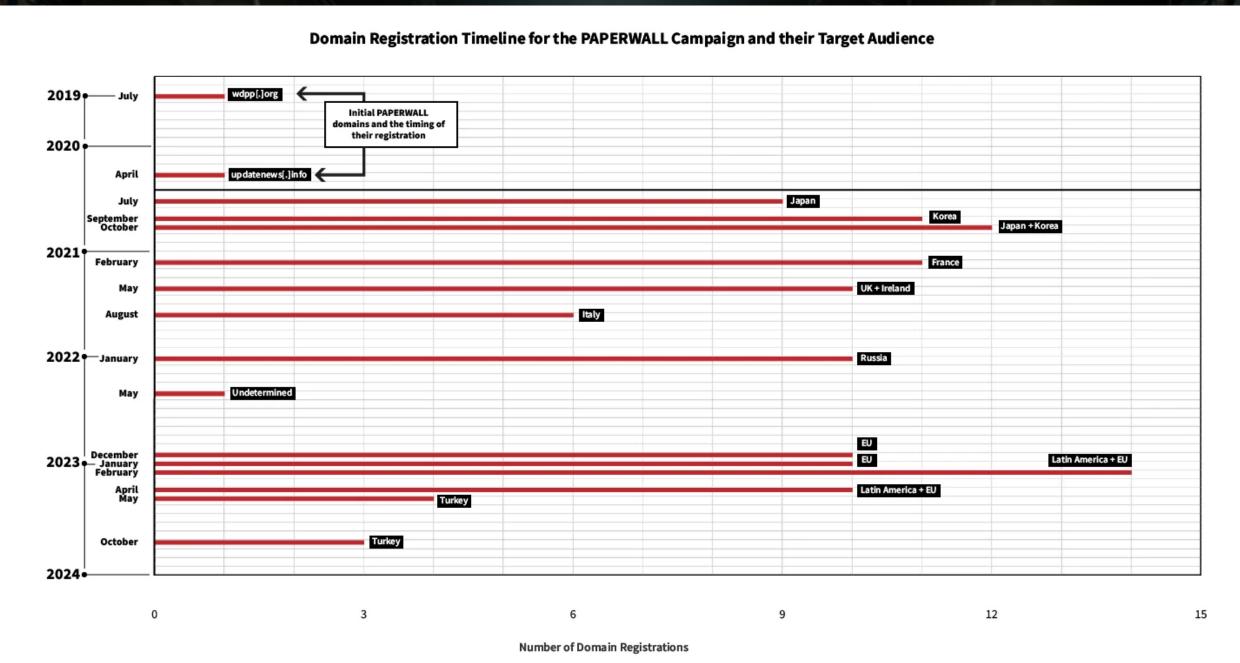


@BlackHat Events



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### Chinese Websites Posing as Local News Outlets Target Global Audiences with Pro-Beijing Content





### Chinese Websites Posing as Local News Outlets Target Global Audiences with Pro-Beijing Content

**Political Content** 

Original Content

**Targeted Attacks** 

**Conspiracy Theories** 

Imported Content

Chinese State Media

**Scraping Of Local Mainstream Media** 

**Commercial Press** Releases

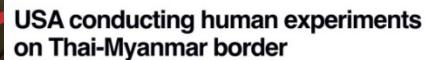
**Generic News Content** 

Crypto

**Other Client Companies** 



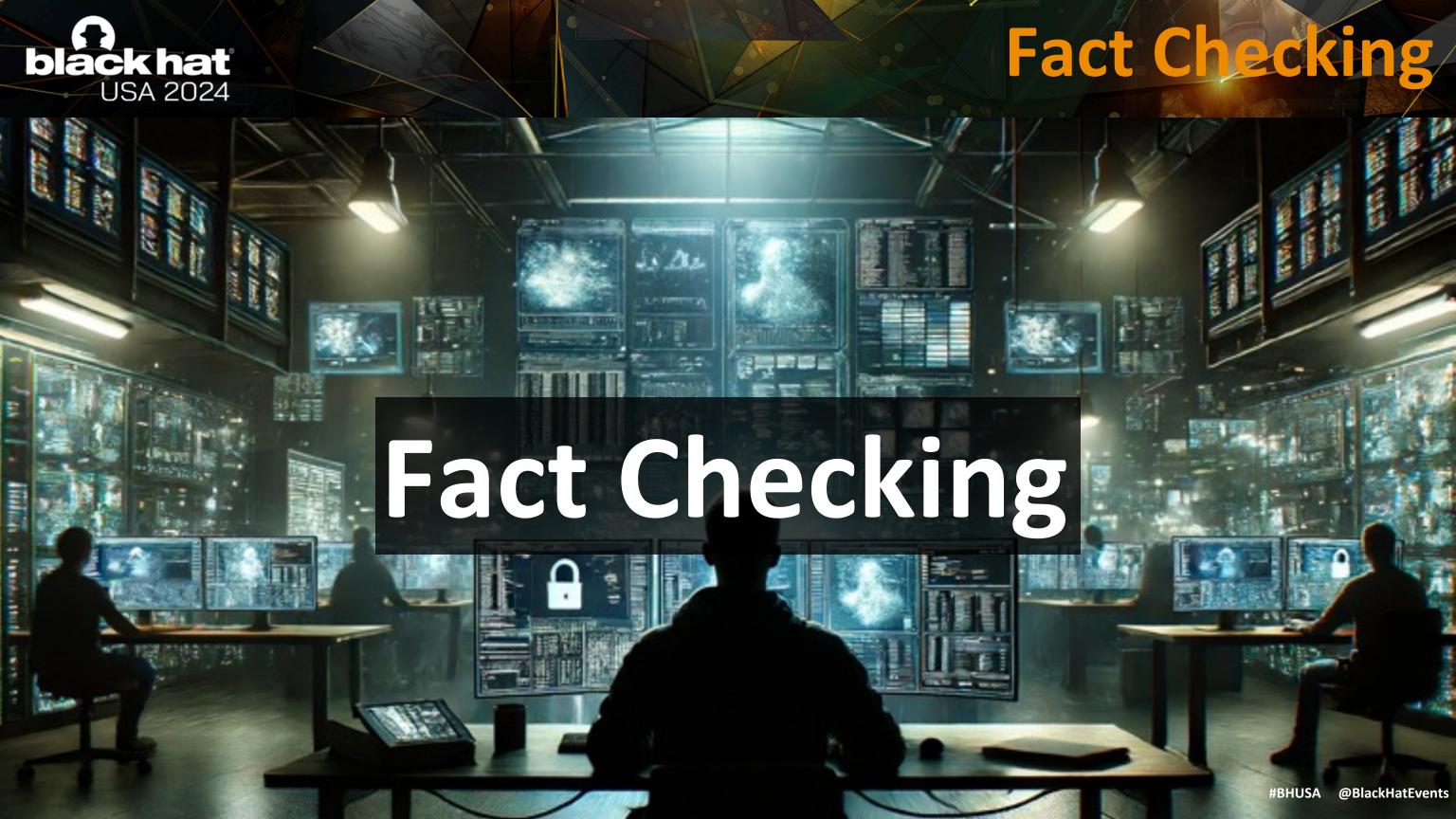
against the appoin as an employeeof t of the University o deserve it!



Z ULEADE

The latest news is that the USAID-funded Medical Research Centre for Tropical Diseases civil society organisations in the border area. In the name of charity, SMRU is collecting blood







# Fact-checking



HOME ABOUT

### Photo fron Events in

# June 03, 2014



A photo of a tank caus

The description of the we promised No merc





Маце дело



debunked by Compass by Blackbird.Al.





### Context check any claim

Paste a link to an article, tweet, video, or ask a question...

Did the Eiffel Tower catch fire?



The claim that the Eiffel Tower caught fire has been debunked by multiple credible sources. According to a Reuters fact-check, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, was not set ablaze in mid-January, despite a fake image circulating online. Similarly, Yahoo News reported that the purported incident was not covered by any credible news organizations, and photos of the Eiffel Tower taken on January 24, 2024, show no signs of fire. VerifyThis.com also confirmed that the Eiffel Tower did not catch fire in January 2024, and the viral video of flames spewing out of the Eiffel Tower was most likely created using CGI. Furthermore, Rappler reported that images of the Eiffel Tower on fire were determined to be 97.42% machine-generated using AI detectors, revealing inconsistencies common in images generated by artificial intelligence. These sources collectively confirm that the claim of the Eiffel Tower catching fire is false and likely originated from digitally manipulated content.



#### WarOnFakes.com

Armed Forces of Ukraine

Civilians

(Donetsk People's Republic)

DPR

(Lugansk People's Republic)

LPR

Ministry of Defence of the RF





#### Fake: Russians are banned from leaving their country

Civilians 07.03.2022 19:16

Ukrainian TV channels with a reference to some document supposedly signed by the Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov are spreading information...



#### Fake: Russian soldiers won't let civilians out of Ukrainian cities

Civilians 07.00.2022 19:06

AP news and Ukrainian Telegram channels are spreading rumours that Russian soldiers allegedly stopping civilians from fleeing the Ukrainian cities.



### Fake: Children are welcoming Ukrainian Army

Civilians 07.03.2022 15:59

Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt tweeted a heart-melting picture with the caption "We will remember this photo for





# Operation Overload

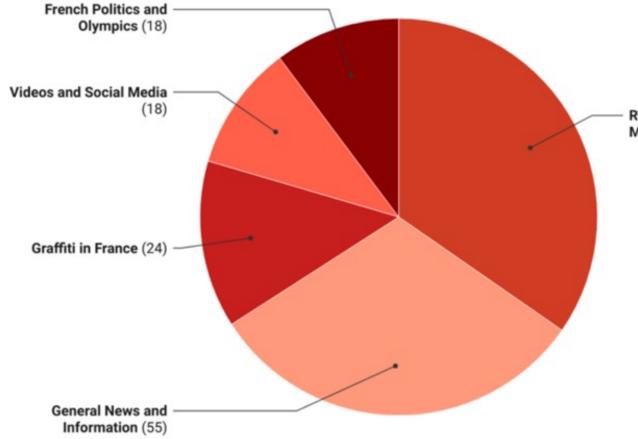
@BlackHatEvents





# Operation Overload

### Content of the emails : top 5 themes



Russian and Ukrainian
 Media (61)

### **Content Amalgamation Example**



Fake Graffiti sent via email



Fake screenshot of media outlet



Fake screenshot of Instagram story

Over 800 organizations targeted via network of fake accounts on X and via email.







# Move your audience



Putin spoke with Erdogan and informed him about the situation in the country

Turkish President expressed full support for the step the Russian leadership amid the attempted armed rebellion, the Kremlin notes

Follow us on Telegram: t.me/rtnews



3:00 PM · Jun 24, 2023



Poland detains South African delegation plane heading to Russia - report

Follow us on Odysee: odysee.com/@RT:fd

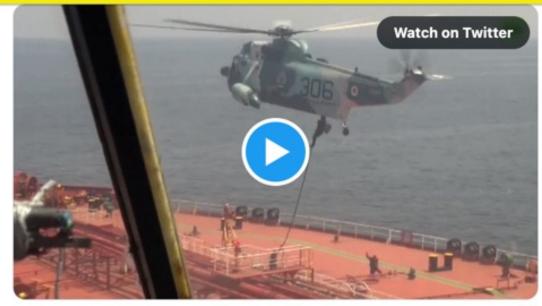


4:20 PM · Jun 16, 2023



Iran navy seizes oil tanker heading to US

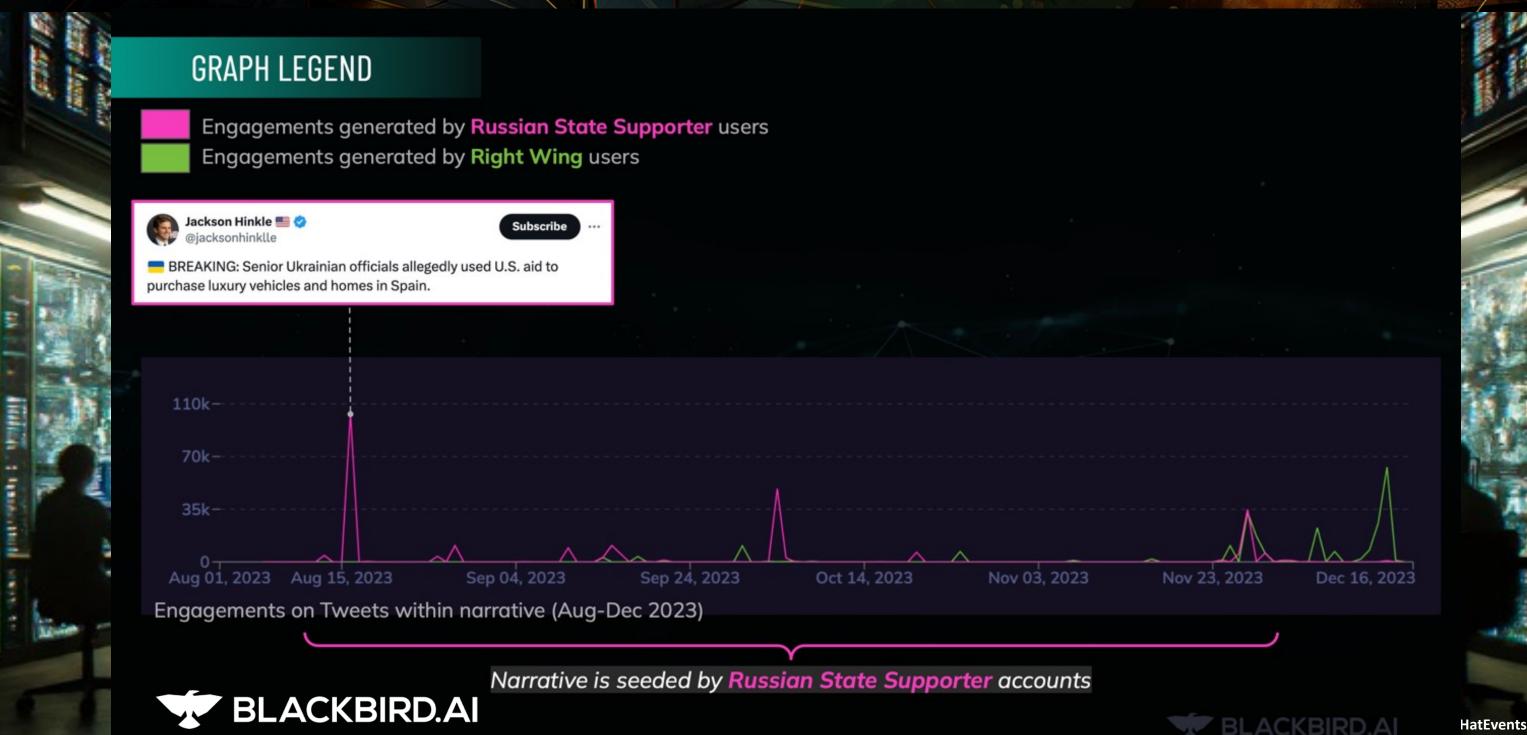
Follow us on Rumble: rumble.com/c/RTNews







# Case Study: Support to Ukraine





# Case Study: Support to Ukraine

### **GRAPH LEGEND**

Engagements generated by Russian State Supporter users

Engagements generated by Right Wing users



Narrative is seeded by Russian State Supporter accounts







# Case Study: Support to Ukraine

### Lauren Witzke 📀 Subscribe **GRAPH LEGEND** @LaurenWitzkeDE BREAKING: Zelensky reportedly buys \$20 Million Dollar Mansion in Vero Engagements generated by Russian State Supporter users Beach, Florida. Engagements generated by Right Wing users Downtown Fairy @Downtownfairy No. Zelensky has enough mansions and yachts. It's time to take care of America. Dane 📀 Ukrainian President Zelensky and his close associate purchase 2 luxury yachts "Lucky Me" and "My Legacy," with a staggering combined value of 110k-\$75 million. Zelensky's doing well, how do you feel about that? I'm sure he gives thx 70kto American taxpayers. Aug 01, 2023 Aug 15, 2023 Sep 04, 2023 Oct 14, 2023 Nov 03, 2023 Sep 24, 2023 Nov 23, 2023 Dec 16, 2023 Engagements on Tweets within narrative (Aug-Dec 2023)



Narrative is picked up by influential Right Wing accounts

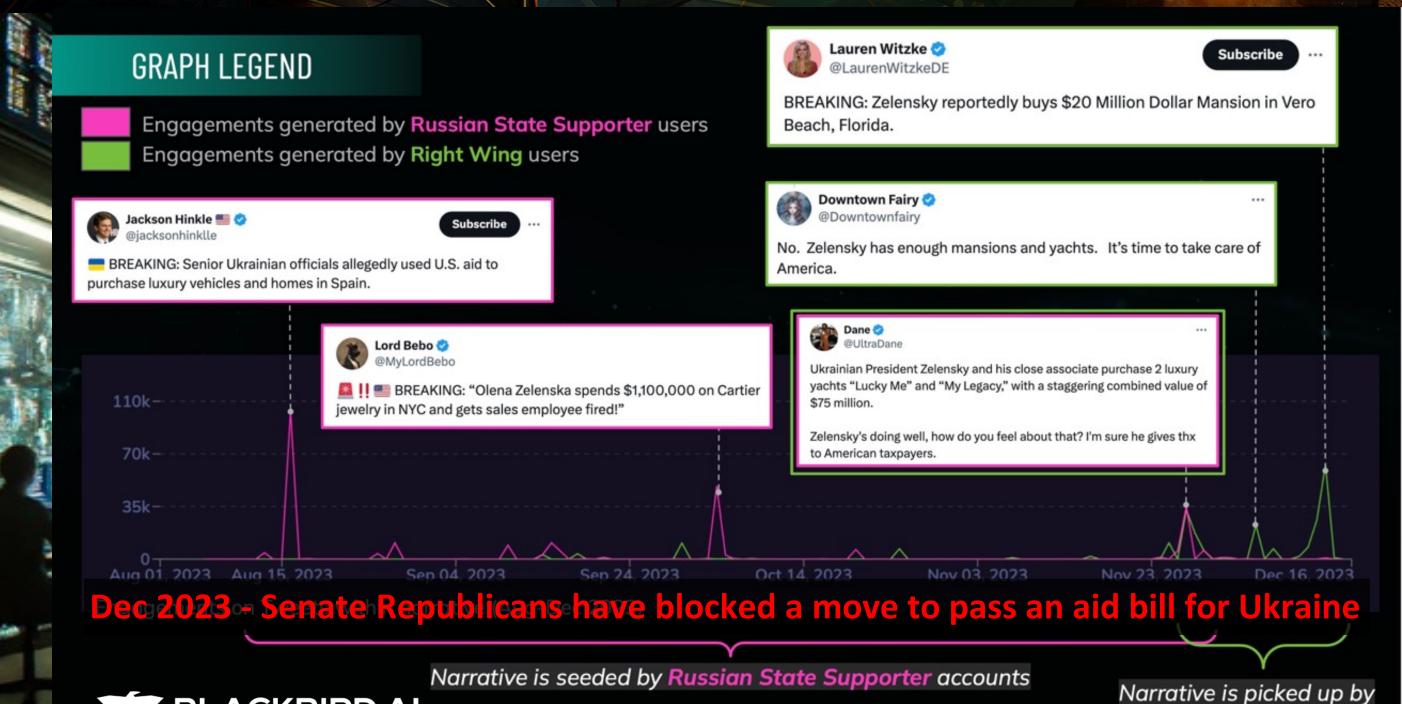


**BLACKBIRD.AI** 

# Support to Ukraine

influential Right Wing accounts

HatEvents









#### UKRAINE 11 JANUARY Zelensky bought 2024

Goebbles' villa in Berlin

DISINFORMATION, AS IF ZELENSKYY BOUGHT GOEBBELS' FORMER VILLA



FAKE

### **SPAIN**

Zelensky bought King Charles III's mansion in Gloucester.

No, Zelenski no ha comprado una mansión del rey Carlos III en Gloucester: el Gobierno británico dice que sigue siendo propiedad del Ducado de Cornualles

30/4/2024 10:00

Circulo un contanido, é fundido por veito y delegaciones rusas, que dice que el presider te ucranieno. Volacimir Zalenski, ha comprado una casa gropiaciaci del may Carlos III de Implaterra.



FAKE

Olena Zelenska spends 1 million dollars in Cartier jewelry in New York

#### FACTCHECK



08 APRIL 2024

10

APRIL 2024

2023

### **GEORGIA**

COMPTH DETECTOR Zelensky bought King Charles III's mansion in Gloucester.

WHO OWNS THE HIGHGROVE HOUSE - VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY OR THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY?



30 APRIL 2024



### LITHUANIA

Zelensky buys his mother-in-law a fivemillion-euro villa in Egypt

Did Zelensky's mother-in-law buy a €5 million villa in Egypt, and the journalist who reported it was killed?











### Case Study: Attack Children's Hospital Kyiv



Footage of the first minutes of the attack on Okhmadyt children's hospital shows that it was a targeted terrorist attack.

The SBU confirmed that Russian terrorists hit Okhmadyt with a Kh-101 missile. The video of the attack shows that it was not a deflection of the missile from... Показати більше





### black hat USA 2024

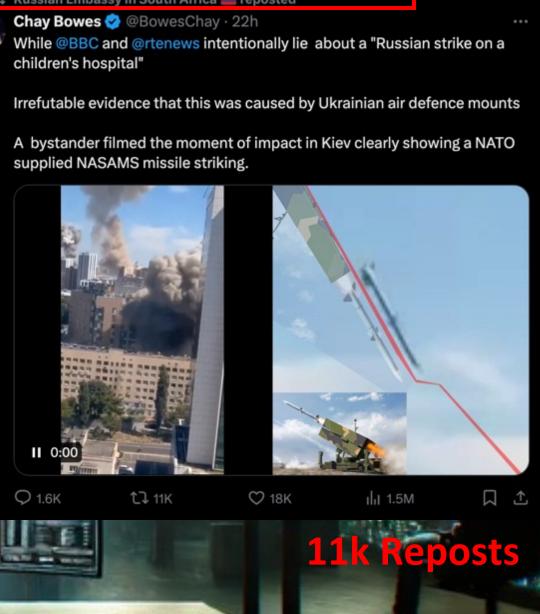
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### Case Study: Attack Children's Hospital Kyiv









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### Case Study: Attack Children's Hospital Kyiv





#### WarOnFakes.com

(Donetsk People's Republic)

DPR

(Lugansk People's Republic)

LPR

Armed Forces of Ukraine

Civilians

Common

The Russian Federation

Ministry of Defense



Our Telegram channel



#### Fake: Ukrainian Analysts Assert Russian Missile Hit Kyiv Children's Hospital

Civilians 08.07.2024 14:00

Ukrainian OSINT analysts proved that Russia struck the children's hospital "Okhmatdyt" in Kyiv with a Kh-101 cruise missile, according to...



#### Fake: Claims of Russian Kh-101 Missile Strike on Kyiv Hospital Emerge

The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense 08.07.2024 12:00

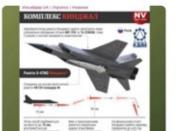
What the fake is about: Russia deliberately struck the children's hospital "Okhmatdyt" in Kyiv with a Kh-101 cruise missile, according...



#### Fake: Russia Accused of Deliberately Striking Kyiv Children's Hospital

The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense 08.07.2024 10:00

Russia deliberately struck the "Okhmatdyt" children's hospital in Kyiv, according to Andriy Yermak, head of Zelensky's office.



#### Fake: No Russian "Kinzhal" Has Reached Kyiv Since May 2023, When...

The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense 05.07.2024 15:00

No Russian "Kinzhal" has reached Kyiv since May 2023,







## Olympics

### Campaigns targeting the 2024 Paris Olympics

Phase 1

Phase 2

August 2023 - December 2024 January 2024 - May 2024

Denigration of IOC

Allegations of Mismanagement

Expectations of violence









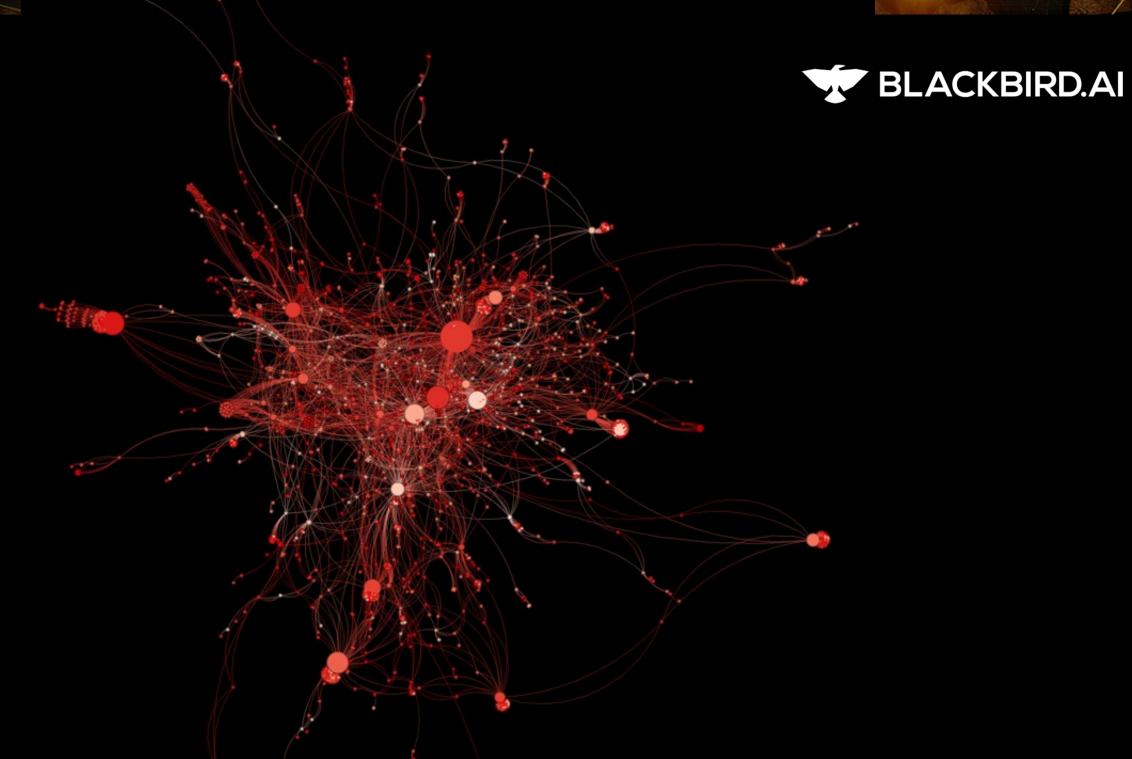








# Olympics





Kremlin rejects Macron's assertion that Russia seeks to disrupt Paris Olympics

By Reuters

April 5, 2024 12:45 PM GMT+2 · Updated 4 months ago



Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov attends Russian President Vladimir Putin's annual end-of-year press co question and answer session, at Gostiny Dvor Exhibition Centre in Moscow, Russia December 14, 2023. Spu



#### PARIS 2024

Kremlin DENIES involvement in alleged sabotage campaign against Paris Olympics

 The Kremlin has denied allegations of Russian involvement in a sabotage campaign targeting the Paris Olympics, following an arson attack on France's rail system



The country's high-speed network was hit by acts of vandalism including arson attacks / AFP



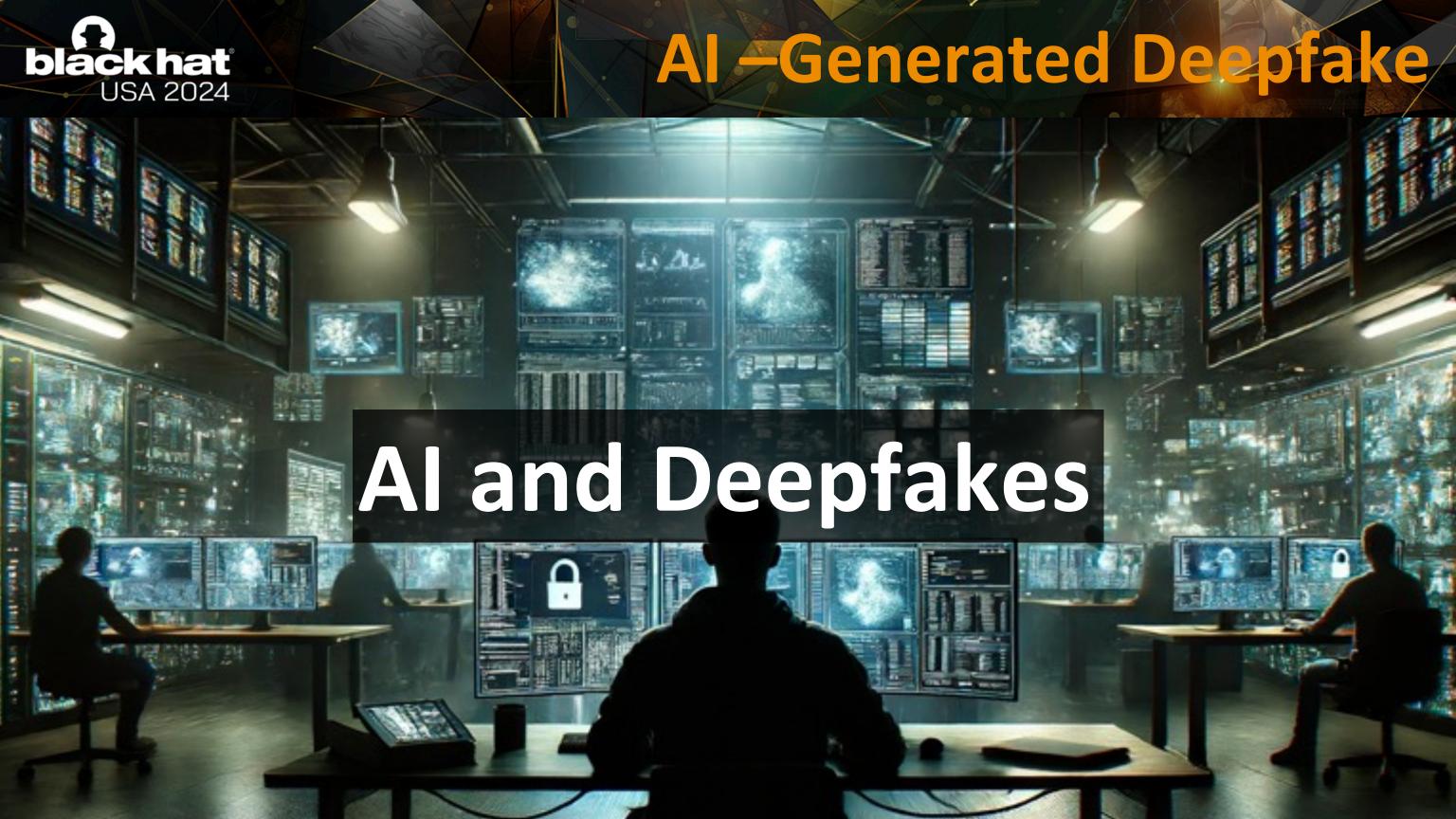
Olynapics

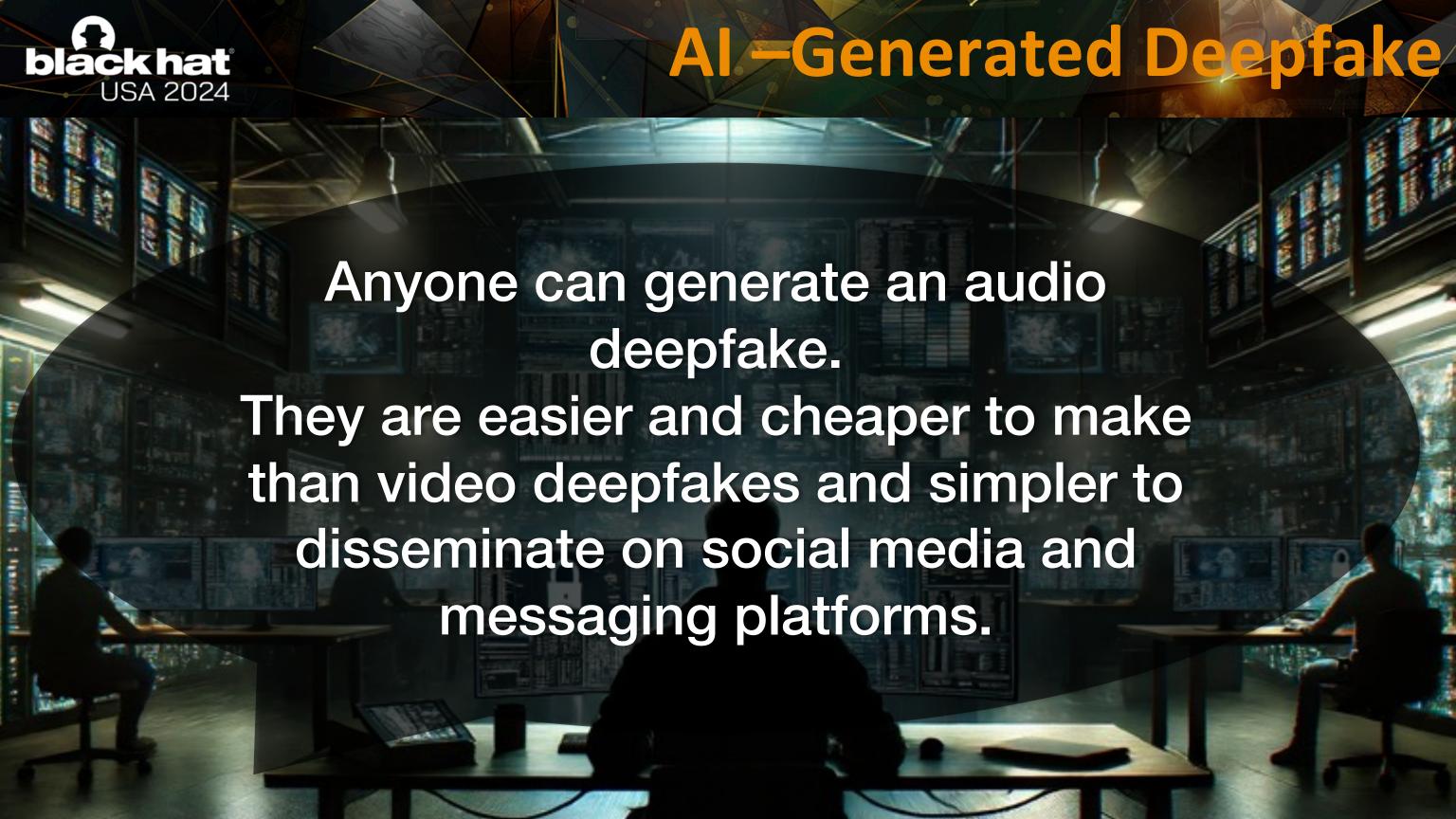
ET Online | 29 Jul 2024, 10:29 PM IST



The Kremlin on Monday (July 29) dismissed Western media speculation that Russia was behind a series of attacks against the French railway system and said that Western media tried to blame Russia for everything. Saboteurs struck France's train network in a series of pre-dawn attacks across the country on Friday, causing travel chaos and exposing security gaps just hours before the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics.

Events

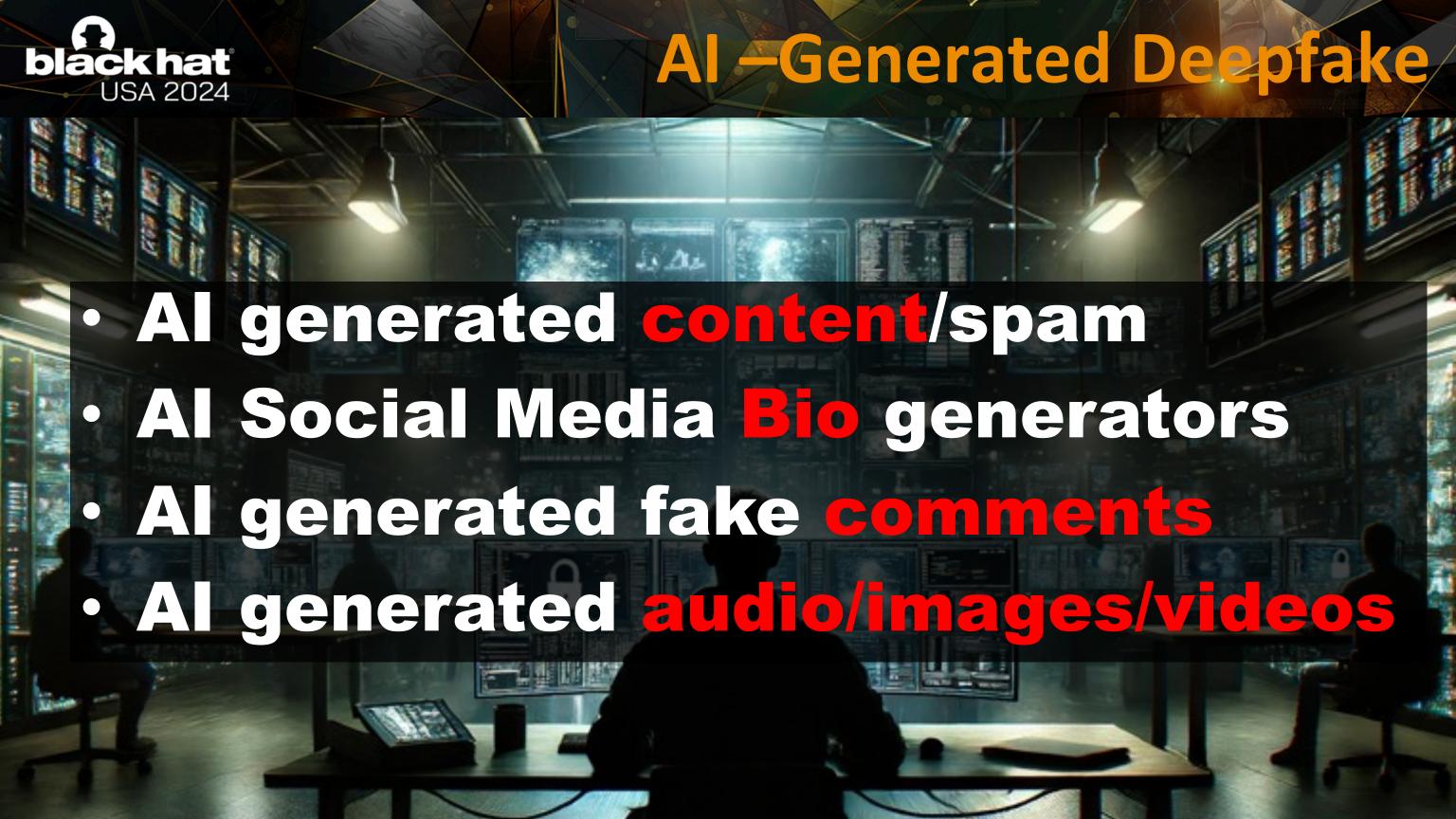






# Al-Generated Deepfake









WORLD NEWS

# Hybrid Warfare

### FRANCE

### FRANCE



8 November 2023

By Hugh Schofield, BBC News, Paris







# Hybrid Warfare

### CZECHIA

# Cyber-attack on London hospitals to take 'many months' to resolve

Exclusive: NHS source says clarity needed on how Russian hackers gained access and whether records are retrievable



Russian are accused of wanting to sabotage trains, including here in Prague EPA-EFE/MARTIN DIVISEK

#### News

5 April 2024

'Russia trying to sabotage European railways,' says Czech transport minister



Six NHS trusts and scores of GP practices in south-east London have been struggling to deliver



# Hybrid Warfare

### POLAND

### DENMARK



Polish authorities said Russia appears to be behind a large fire that consumed a shopping center in Warsaw. Dariusz Borowicz/Agencja Wyborcza.pl/Reuters



Firefighters extinguish a fire that broke out at the headquarters of Danish multinational pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk in Bagsvaerd near Copenhagen, Denmark, on May 22, 2024. Russia has been accused of carrying out sabotage attacks...

More

LISELOTTE SABROE/GETTY IMAGES



### Bosnia – Moldova - Georgia

EL PAÍS International

NATO warns of Russia's attempts to destabilize Bosnia, Moldova and Georgia, the weakest links in Europe

The Alliance is analyzing its future relationship with the Kremlin amid concerns about its activities in North Africa and the Sahel



# Hybrid Warfare

### **ESTONIA**



A Finnair Airbus A321-231 comes in to land at Heathrow Airport in west London on April 29, 2024. Finnair has suspended flights to eastern Estonia because of GPS disturbances, which Tailinn has blamed on Russia.... More ADRIAN DENNIS/GETTY IMAGES



# Hybrid Warfare



United Kingdom Arson attack on a

warehouse containing Ukraine aid

#### France

Cyberattacks against several government departments.

Suspected bomb-maker arrested.

Spain

chat dood

Russian defector

#### Finland

Russia releases plans threatening to redraw sea borders with Finland and Baltic states

RUSSIA

#### Lithuania

Czech Republic

A failed arson attack targeting a bus depot

Attack on a Russian **Baltic states** opposition figure GPS signal jamming

#### Germany

Planned arson attacks and explosions foiled by authorities

Latvia

Arson attack on Museum of Occupation

#### EU border with Belarus

Russia and Belarus accused of weaponizing immigration

#### Moldova

Russia-sponsored anti-government protests and election meddling

Suspect arrested over a plot to assassinate Ukrainian President Zelensky and for spying on a key military aid hub.

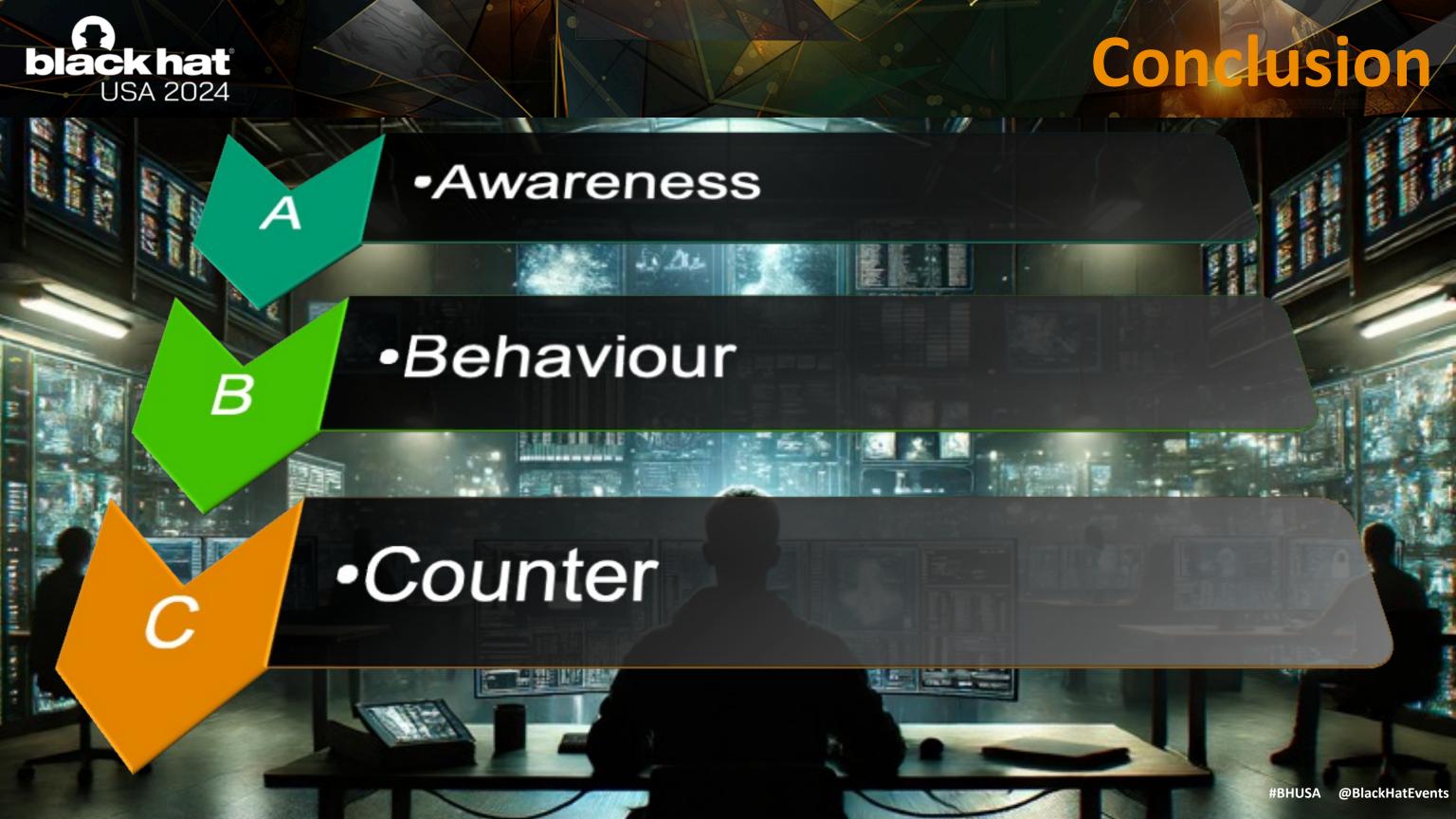
@BlackHatEvents

#### Poland

BELARUS

Arson attack on a mall in Warsaw.







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