



NJOHSP

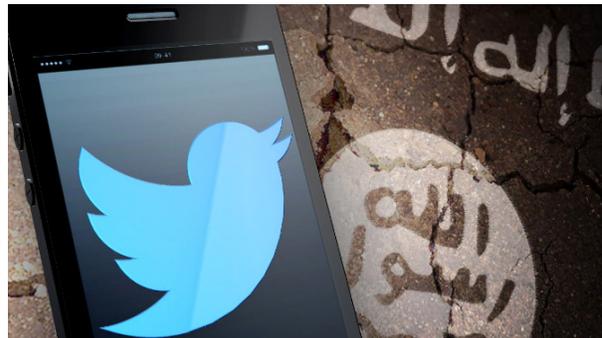
EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

JULY 1, 2016

ISIS: Under Pressure on Twitter

Since last year, persistent account suspensions have disrupted the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS) ability to share propaganda, perpetuate threats, recruit, and spread false narratives. Anti-ISIS Twitter accounts are also countering the group's messages through hashtag hijacking.

- According to a private intelligence group, Twitter—ISIS's favored social media platform—suspended 26,000 pro-ISIS accounts in March, four times more than in September 2015. Organized hacking groups have also assisted Twitter in suspending around 110,000 pro-ISIS accounts. Account suspensions delete all associated content from the Internet, including videos and images.
- Consistent account suspensions have forced pro-ISIS Twitter users to create new accounts. A Western study evaluated 1,000 suspended pro-ISIS English-language Twitter users over a three-month period and concluded there was a 38 percent decline in the average number of tweets per day. According to the study's author, pro-ISIS Twitter accounts suspended at least once had almost 70 percent fewer followers.
- In May, anti-ISIS Twitter users hijacked the hashtag #alfurqan promoting the release of an official ISIS statement. While ISIS supporters applauded the hashtag going viral, further analysis revealed the top five accounts using the hashtag countered ISIS's campaign and posted hundreds of anti-ISIS tweets each.



Hashtag Hijacking: Using a hashtag to promote a different purpose than originally intended. For example, during the World Cup in 2014, pro-ISIS Twitter users hijacked #WorldCup2014 to spread propaganda.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact NJOHSP's Analysis Bureau at analysis@njohsp.gov or 609-584-4000.