

Entry in Tasks - a ticket system used by Facebook.
Same task was used for all 5 fake account networks.

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▾

Add owner ▾

Low ▾

Private

Private task: Cannot be searched for; only subscribers (23 employees here) have access. Access must be granted by other subscribers.

Update: As described below in the comments, the Punjab network is now acting in large numbers to influence the Delhi legislative elections. They generally coordinate on a network of low-volume IPs and devices and appear to be obvious fake accounts; [redacted] assessed them as belonging to the paid engagement group Best Review Exchanges. These accounts which historically have been focused on supporting the Punjab INC have now also branched out to support the Delhi ruling AAP government [even though the Punjab INC and Punjab AAP are currently at odds.] In their Delhi activity, these accounts appear to inauthentically portray themselves as supporters of Indian PM Modi on the national-level while supporting the AAP on the local Delhi level: they make mass comments to this effect on local Delhi pro-BJP pages [redacted] with the apparent goal of attracting support for the AAP from BJP crossover voters. The accounts are still happily supporting the INC Punjab [mostly [redacted]] at the same time.

Investigator 2

Identities redacted for targets, due to no proof of responsibility/association.

This task regards three separate networks of highly coordinated users acting on certain high-profile political targets in India. We consider this to be almost certainly manual fake engagement.

Three networks initially written up in December. Kaushambi network (Vinod Sonkar) found soon afterwards but description not updated. Delhi network found in January - mentioned in update at top.

These networks are as follows:

- Punjab: This is the largest network, containing 526 users coordinating to target [redacted] [INC [redacted] Punjab] as well as [redacted] [INC [redacted]], and the INC-Punjab page. Activity is generally ~100 users/day
- [redacted] This consists of a network of 65 users coordinating to consistently target [redacted] [redacted] BJP [redacted] with reactions/shares. Almost all of these users have branched out to target the main BJP page, but said activity on the BJP page occurred on only one occasion [on November 10.]
- [redacted] A smallish network of 51 users coordinating to target [redacted] [INC [redacted]], without other targets

Detailed information regarding the users, [redacted] involved in each case are attached, as well as the specific users [redacted] each user [redacted] has specifically been tied to via same-day fanouts [redacted]

Details of evidence redacted to avoid alerting future IT cells

These users appear to be focused on the specific targets with little other activity. A cursory look reveals the activity to be apparently intended at boosting the political targets and the accounts to appear inauthentic in terms of behavior but this is not an area of my expertise and I've only looked at a few examples.

Leave a comment...

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

apparently intended at boosting the political targets and the accounts to appear inauthentic in terms of behavior but this is not an area of my expertise and I've only looked at a few examples.

Note that these accounts involve frequent switching of [REDACTED] presumably for attempted obfuscation purposes, even if [REDACTED] Hence the attached spreadsheets detail precisely which [REDACTED]

Details of evidence redacted to avoid alerting future IT cells

Public Title

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Projects

Subscribers

17 more...

Tags

Schedule

Start mm/dd/yyyy 9:00 AM Target 12/9/2019 2:00 PM

Attachments

details [Punjab].csv
details [REDACTED].csv
details [REDACTED].csv

8 more...

Leave a comment...

Comments go chronologically bottom to up (top = most recent.) I strongly recommend skipping to the last page and reading upwards towards here.

This specific page was recorded after the others - on September 4, 2020 (my last day at FB.)

T58501672

Edit Mode

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Low

Private

Blocks

Plugin Suggestions

Activity & Comments

Sophie Zhang (DS) made several changes

2 hrs

INC Punjab target

Show all 3 changes...

I did not have time to verify whether the accounts involved were the same as before, or if the MP was still involved. Overall methodology same as before.

Sophie Zhang (DS) As I'm departing the company today, I did another last-minute sweep in India and turned up about ~4k more users of varying confidence in similar networks [see attached files.] Note that this includes the current version of a recidivist coordinated IB supporting Punjab, and the still-existing cluster of accounts associated with MP Vinod Sonkar (BJP-Kaushambi) to boost the honorable member of the Lok Sabha. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to investigate in-depth before my departure, so leave it to

Investigator 2

India public policy manager

3 hrs · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) assigned the task to Investigator 2 (previously upforgrabs)

3 hrs

Sophie Zhang (DS) The remaining followup here in the task regarded an apparent inauthentic cluster of inauthentic accounts focused on boosting MP Vinod Sonkar (BJP-Kaushambi), which were run out of a network associated with the account of MP Vinod Sonkar and family members. Given the close ties to a sitting member of the Lok Sabha, we sought policy approval for a takedown, which we did not receive; and the situation was not deemed to be a focus for prioritization. Removing myself from the task for completeness for my own tracking.

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▼

Add owner ▼

Low ▼

Private

T [redacted] details [redacted] csv

T [redacted] details [redacted] csv

8 more...

Blocks

Plugin
Suggestions

Activity & Comments ▼

Sophie Zhang (DS) The remaining followup here in the task regarded an apparent inauthentic cluster of inauthentic accounts focused on boosting MP Vinod Sonkar (BJP-Kaushambi), which were run out of a network associated with the account of MP Vinod Sonkar and family members. Given the close ties to a sitting member of the Lok Sabha, we sought policy approval for a takedown, which we did not receive; and the situation was not deemed to be a focus for prioritization. Removing myself from the task for completeness for my own tracking.

August 7, 8:55 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) placed the task upforgrabs from Sophie Zhang (DS)
August 7, 8:55 PM

Task Privacy Bot made several changes
June 14, 8:14 AM
Show all 2 changes...

Task Privacy Bot

This task has been flagged as potentially containing User Identifiable Information (UII). *Please use the privacy toggle near the top of the task to convert it to private.*

If FB's final response to the Guardian is to be believed, "a portion" of the pro-Sonkar fake accounts were taken down here. This would mean that, according to FB's own account, they took half a year to take down just some of the accounts.

When I pointed this out to Nikkei Asia, per Nikkei Asia, "Facebook said Zhang's accusation that the company failed to act on pro-BJP fake accounts is "inaccurate." FB has not provided details on what their new (4th) version of the story is.

Leave a comment...

T58501672

Escalation - coordinated potentially-

Add progress Add owner Low

According to the second and third response provided by FB to the Guardian, "a portion" of the pro-Sonkar fake accounts were disabled here by a "specialist team" with the remaining monitored.
Per the Guardian, "[FB] also did not respond to questions about which specialist team was involved in the May review of the accounts, nor why this review and enforcement was not recorded in the task management system. It claimed that the policy team was not responsible for blocking any action."

to convert it to private.

If no action is taken by **June 12th, 2020**, the task will be converted to private automatically and only the owner and the subscribers will continue to have access to the task. Other users can be added later as needed using the process outlined in [Private Tasks](#) (e.g. by adding them as subscribers). If you believe that there is no UII in the task and would like it to be whitelisted, please consult the [wiki](#).

If you own a lot of tasks with UII and would like to work out a more systematic approach, please see the techniques described in [User Identifiable Information in Tasks](#). You can also post your use case to [Tasks Feedback](#) and we will work with you.

A public task containing UII is unsafe and we appreciate your help in taking the action to ensure that user data is protected. For details on how you could help further please refer to the [UII in tasks wiki](#) and this post about [Safe Handling of User Data in Tasks](#).

May 29, 5:47 PM · Like · Reply

+ [redacted] added tag [redacted]

March 23, 4:46 AM

+ [redacted] subscribed [redacted]

Post-election summary on Workplace (Appendix 4) written around now

March 13, 12:44 PM

Different India public policy manager

India public policy manager

Investigator 2

[redacted] Hi [redacted] synced with Shivnath Thukral and we are good to action this. [redacted] has confirmed these three folks aren't candidates in the Delhi elections. Thanks

Name not redacted, as they are a high-profile public figure.

February 7, 8:35 AM · Like · 2 · Reply

Response from policy 8 hrs after request by investigator. Compare with non-response for Vinod Sonkar (despite same methodology.) This resulted in 3rd takedown of pro-INC Punjab network and 2nd takedown of pro-AAP Delhi network.

+ Shivnath Thukral, [redacted] were subscribed

February 7, 8:35 AM

Show all 2 changes...

[redacted] assigned the task from [redacted] to Sophie Zhang (DS)

Investigator 2

February 6, 2:34 AM

Identity Review

Investigator 2

<https://fburl.com/si/3589y5ob> - list of 199 users - enrolled in UFAC IDR
List of 259 accounts - the link seems broken Sophie Zhang (DS) - can you provide the link again ?

Leave a comment...

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▾

Add owner ▾

Low ▾

Private

Show all 2 changes...

Investigator 2

assigned the task from

Investigator 2

to Sophie Zhang (DS)

February 6, 2:34 AM

Investigator 2

<https://fburl.com/si/3589y5ob> - list of 199 users - enrolled in UFAC IDR

List of 259 accounts - the link seems broken Sophie Zhang (DS) - can you provide the link again ?

February 6, 2:31 AM · Love · 1 · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS)

thanks for enrolling!

Fixed list of accounts seen [including on 2/5] that have not been UFACed [whether by us or others, whether cleared or not]:
<https://fburl.com/gaq89pol>

February 6, 12:24 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Tool used to create short links to details of many users for investigation. Hence the manual list.

actually it looks like bounce short-link is broken really annoyingly - after trying again complained at
<https://fb.workplace.com/groups/proactive.tools/permalink/3250538174994775/>

ID list [sorry this is giant]:

List of user IDs of apparent fake accounts redacted

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

Edit Mode

List of user IDs of apparent fake accounts redacted.

February 6, 12:25 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Investigator 2

flagged by Sophie Zhang (DS) above is the admin of the

below verified pages

- Sunder Sham Arora
- Balwinder Singh Laddi
- Arun Dogra

India Public Policy Manager

Names not redacted, as they are public figures whose page admins were directly tied to fake accounts supporting INC in Punjab (same methodology as for MP Sonkar.)

User IDs of page administrators redacted

but given poor integrity

These pages have other admins in addition to user signals of other admins as well as the pages, I wanted to flag this to you for approval

February 7, 12:20 AM · Like · Reply · Edited

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▼

Add owner ▼

Low ▼

Private

Below verified pages

- Sunder Sham Arora
- Balwinder Singh Laddi
- Arun Dogra

Names not redacted, as they are public figures whose page admins were directly tied to fake accounts supporting INC in Punjab (same methodology as for MP Sonkar.)

These pages have other admins in addition to user [REDACTED] but given poor integrity signals of other admins as well as the pages, I wanted to flag this to you for approval

February 7, 12:20 AM · Like · Reply · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Investigator 2

thanks for noting! Appreciate it.

Methodology redacted to avoid alerting future IT cells

These users appear to be authentic users connected to the Punjab INC, as far as I can tell; they seem to have cleared UFAC okay. They were repeatedly identified in the last few months on the [REDACTED] as several dozen other users - many apparently inauthentic and now UFACed - acting on the Punjab INC. This provides a clear connection between some of the inauthentic pro-INC Punjab activity and the Punjab INC [akin to MP Vinod Sonkar in Kaushambi.]

To be clear this specific cluster appeared to only act on the Punjab INC. I included them out of caution as most of the entities acting on the Punjab INC also branched out to act in Delhi.

February 10, 2:08 PM · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS)

unfortunately, I was sick for the end of last week but tried to monitor for any recidivism attempts while sick.

As far as I can tell, after this third takedown [thanks **Investigator 2**], we did not detect any further inauthentic high-profile political activity in Delhi. We found ~60 recidivist actors who continued acting on the Punjab INC cluster, but they did not branch out again to the Delhi network.

Note that our signals are imprecise - the lack of catching activity does not indicate that the activity doesn't exist - but the fact that we did catch new Punjab activity is a point against us missing new Delhi activity.

If I had to guess, the takedowns had some material cost for the actors even if they could return immediately; they may have decided not to push their luck so close to the election, and correctly recognized that we considered Delhi much more high-pri than Punjab due to the upcoming election. Alternatively, they may have simply found a method of evading detection

February 10, 2:15 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

T58501672 📄 ☆ ↗ ⚙ ...

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▼

● Add owner ▼

Low ▼

🔒 Private

Punjab INC also branched out to act in Delhi.

February 10, 2:08 PM · Like · 👍 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

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February 10, 2:15 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) List of 199 suspicious coordinated user ids active on 2/4: <https://fburl.com/si/3589y5ob>, generally conducting some mix of pro-AAP/anti-BJP in Delhi, and/or pro-INC in Punjab activity.

List of the suspicious coordinated content engagement they created on 2/4 to illustrate: <https://fburl.com/2asy56og>

List of 259 accounts previously active in this cluster that we didn't see on 2/4 but have not been UFACed [whether by us or something else, whether they cleared or not]: <https://fburl.com/y0h4fhce>

February 5, 5:44 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) assigned the task from Sophie Zhang (DS) to Investigator 2





February 5, 5:44 PM



████████ added tag ████████
February 5, 10:00 AM · View Butterfly Rule

Sophie Zhang (DS) claimed the task from FB T&S Manager

February 4, 1:14 PM

T58501672     ...

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▼


Add owner ▼

Low ▼

Private

Edit Mode

February 5, 10:00 AM · View Butterfly Rule

 **Sophie Zhang (DS)** claimed the task from **FB T&S Manager**

February 4, 1:14 PM


 [redacted] added tags [redacted]

February 4, 8:19 AM


Investigator 2

Actions seem to have gone through : <https://fburl.com/si/5rl2tyxk> I enrolled them now. Do let me know if there are any open action items! :)

2nd takedown of Punjab pro-INC fake account network (64 days after task creation), 1st takedown of Delhi pro-AAP fake account network (16 days after discovery)

February 4, 12:27 AM · Love ·  1 · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS) Thanks for monitoring! I'll assign to myself and respond back tomorrow with results on how the takedown appears to have gone. I don't expect this to be enough though - both due to the ~400 accounts not included in this run and the past track record of this network at being able to rapidly recidivize.

February 4, 1:12 PM · Like ·  1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Unfortunately, the activity is still ongoing. Examples of various content created yesterday to illustrate - <https://fburl.com/bt4k06u3>. It looks like a lot of the comments are now more avidly pro-AAP/anti-BJP; a recent trend appears to be mass commenting on [who recently criticized Kejriwal.]

Target page name redacted, as they are an innocent victim

I'll compile another list of user ids.

February 5, 5:31 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Link tool was broken (see page 6), but users were enforced against in the 2nd Delhi network takedown.

Investigator 2

Sophie Zhang (DS) In order to keep our tasks organized, would you mind spinning the [redacted] one into a separate one? :)

The content examples link above seems broken :/

February 10, 2:37 AM · Like · Reply · Edited

FB T&S Manager

Investigator 2 assigned the task from [redacted]

February 3, 11:55 PM

Sophie Zhang (DS) There's quite a bit of [redacted]

but not enough for blanket actions. Most users are [redacted]

We can

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

I'll compile another list of user ids.

February 5, 5:31 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Investigator 2

Sophie Zhang (DS) In order to keep our tasks organized, would you mind spinning the [redacted] one into a separate one ? :)
The content examples link above seems broken :/

February 10, 2:37 AM · Like · Reply · Edited

Investigator requests a new task for organization. I ignore her, as I had been ordered a month before this to stop conducting work in this area (but successfully argue that I need to be responsible and finish this existing task)

Investigator 2

assigned the task from [redacted] to FB T&S Manager

February 3, 11:55 PM

Sophie Zhang (DS) There's quite a bit of [redacted] but not enough for blanket actions. Most users are [redacted] We can presumably reassess for more systematic solutions if the takedown attempt doesn't work.

Conclusion: Please advise if I'm incorrect, but it looks like the users were not actioned.

The ask is to act on the expanded list I provided, potentially with re-evaluation if deemed necessary.

February 3, 5:50 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Investigative details redacted to avoid tipping off future IT cells

Sophie Zhang (DS) Update: I may have completely missed something [went through [redacted] actions just to be certain], but I am not seeing the UFAC IDR actions that [redacted] intended to enroll these users in.

FB T&S Manager

FB T&S Manager

Since I'm reassessing regardless, update to list of users in the Punjab/Delhi network [now 803 users] since 1/1: <https://fburl.com/si/strvmeos>

It looks like one of them was already [redacted]

edit: the one [redacted] person was a recidivist [redacted]

February 3, 5:21 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Thanks for acting! Sorry I was out sick most of last week so wasn't able to respond.

T58501672

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

Sophie Zhang (DS) Update: I may have completely missed something [went through **FB T&S Manager** actions that **FB T&S Manager** intended to enroll these users in. **FB T&S Manager** actions just to be certain], but I am not seeing the

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It looks like one of them was already **FB T&S Manager**

edit: the one **FB T&S Manager** person was a recidivist **FB T&S Manager**

February 3, 5:21 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Thanks for acting! Sorry I was out sick most of last week so wasn't able to respond.

Unfortunately, it looks like there are still action items.

1) It appears that activity is continuing unfortunately in Delhi [assuming that **FB T&S Manager** did indeed enroll them; I didn't see a confirmation.] I'll investigate here and assess what exactly is going on and hopefully we can discuss on how they're returning so easily each time and how to ultimately stop them.

2) [optional]: For completeness and avoid accusations of biased enforcement, could we also come to an assessment on the cluster acting on MP Vinod Sonkar? **5th request for removal of Vinod Sonkar network**

February 3, 5:01 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) reopened the task and made several other changes

February 3, 5:01 PM

Show all 2 changes...

Investigator 2 closed the task and made several other changes

February 3, 3:01 AM

Show all 3 changes...

Investigator 2

Closing out as there are no open action items. Please re-open if this changes!

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress Add owner Low Private

Investigator 2 closed the task and made several other changes
February 3, 3:01 AM
Show all 3 changes...

Investigator 2 Closing out as there are no open action items. Please re-open if this changes!
February 3, 3:00 AM · Like · Reply

Investigator 2 added tag
January 30, 3:44 AM

Investigator 2 Thanks **FB T&S Manager**
January 30, 12:57 AM · Like · Reply

FB T&S Manager
Sophie,
Regarding item 2 below, the 400+ punjabi account network. Given the accounts are coordinated, as you've verified, and that they are all posting similar comments supporting a political figure I have enrolled them all in UFAC IDR.
January 29, 12:07 PM · Like · Reply

Enrollments did not actually take place - see discussion above

FB T&S Manager note, I'm waiting on the updated UFAC IDR guidance, part of the process changed. Will enroll in the next 45 minutes.
January 29, 12:15 PM · Like · 2 · Reply
Sophie Zhang (DS) **FB T&S Manager** I'm sorry to bother you but did you in fact enroll these users? It looks like you never confirmed; I haven't seen the actions either for the users in [redacted] or in the [redacted]
No worries if you forgot, and apologies if you did in fact enroll them and I just missed it somehow.
February 3, 5:05 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Logging tools

FB T&S Manager assigned the task from **FB T&S Manager** to Sophie Zhang (DS)
January 29, 12:07 PM

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

FB T&S Manager

note, I'm waiting on the updated UFAC IDR guidance, part of the process changed. Will enroll in the next 45 minutes.

January 29, 12:15 PM · Like · 2 · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS)

FB T&S Manager

I'm sorry to bother you but did you in fact enroll these users? It looks like you never confirmed; I haven't seen the actions either for the users in [redacted] or in the [redacted] table.

No worries if you forgot, and apologies if you did in fact enroll them and I just missed it somehow.

February 3, 5:05 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

FB T&S Manager

assigned the task from [redacted] to Sophie Zhang (DS)

January 29, 12:07 PM

FB T&S Manager

made several changes

January 29, 12:02 PM

Show all 2 changes...

Instagram

FB T&S Manager

Hey Sophie, sorry the task has gotten pretty big so I'm checking to make sure you're aware that the accounts you flagged for this cluster are connected to hundreds of IG accounts. I'm not an expert on IG, however the majority have [redacted] that indicate they are either scripted or [redacted] SUMAs: SUMA = Same User Multiple Accounts

January 29, 11:59 AM · Like · Reply · Edited

FB T&S Manager

Investigative screenshots redacted (to avoid helping future IT cells.)

I was unfortunately unable to follow up on this point of inauthentic activity also taking place on Instagram. I sincerely apologize to the Indian people.

T58501672

39 Results

Save

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

Investigative screenshots redacted (to avoid helping future IT cells.)

January 29, 12:03 PM · Like · Reply

☰ **Sophie Zhang (DS)** made several changes

January 28, 11:03 AM

Show all 2 changes...

Private discussion with an Indian public policy manager (Appendix 3) on how to unblock occurred around here.

Discussion resulted in 4th request to remove the Vinod Sonkar network, and the 2nd (and final) cursory acknowledgement of it by another employee.



Investigator 2

marked this task as blocking

January 28, 1:58 AM



Investigator 2

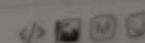
made several changes

January 27, 2:46 AM

Show all 3 changes...

Investigator 2

Hi Sophie Zhang (DS) - just wondering - Would it be possible for us to filter these comments by email in case we write



Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▼

Add owner ▼

Low ▼

Private

Investigator 2

January 27, 2:46 AM

Show all 3 changes...

As action did not seem to be forthcoming on the pro-AAP fake accounts in Delhi with the Delhi elections imminent, I raised the topic directly at an internal civic summit presentation intended for the U.S. 2020 elections around this chronological point (Appendix 2.) This succeeded in convincing FB to act

Investigator 2

Hi Sophie Zhang (DS) : Just wondering : Would it be possible for us to filter these comments by specific key words ? We currently have an ongoing situation in India where we might be able to use incitement of violence as an additional lens here.

January 20, 8:03 AM · Like · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Investigator 2

Hi [redacted] - I provided a Bouncer link to the recent comments earlier that you can filter through if you'd like. I'm certainly not a subject matter expert [I don't speak Hindi, rely on Google Translate and Wikipedia, and have never been to India], but my cursory overview is that the comments in question are not inciting violence and do not appear to be violating with regard to content. This is typical in my experience of these inauthentic political engagement networks globally - perhaps because they do not want to draw FB's attention via receiving reports for violating content, or perhaps because it would considerably intensify the political risks incurred by adopting such a strategy.

Target names redacted as they are innocent victims

January 20, 5:40 PM · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) It looks like the Punjab recidivist cluster is also acting to support Kejriwal via commenting on other political pages including [redacted] a satirical page criticizing the AAP [redacted] etc. Easy link for all the recent comments across all pages by the cluster: <https://fburl.com/si/ejv4rwol>

The support for the Delhi AAP by a probable inauthentic coordinated cluster that typically [and still] supports the Punjab INC is unusual given the fact that the Punjab AAP is apparently currently protesting the Punjab INC over electricity rate hikes, with protesters dispersed outside CM Amarinder Singh's house.

January 20, 9:52 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Investigator 2 Sophie Zhang (DS) Thanks Sophie Zhang (DS) . I'll analyse the comments more to see if there is any key issue specific trends and circle back.

January 21, 2:00 AM · Like · Reply

Investigator 2

No additional insights generated using CAA specific key words

January 27, 2:40 AM · Like · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS) My assessment has been that this is non-violating in terms of content but violating in terms of inauthentic behavior, and so not surprised by that finding. This has been my experience throughout the dozens of inauthentic amplification networks I've found.

Overall, this represents an implementation gap in terms of lack of prioritization for semi-sophisticated influence operations - not sufficiently complex to be considered info-ops/CIB [too complex for most other times], acting to amplify/silence existing messages or create new messages in aggregate via targeted engagement without actually creating content outside the normal flow of CIB. It is technically correct

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress Add owner Low Private

January 20, 5:40 PM · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) It looks like the Punjab recidivist cluster is also acting to support Kejriwal via commenting on other political pages including [redacted] a satirical page criticizing the AAP [redacted] Easy link for all the recent comments across all pages by the cluster: <https://fburl.com/si/ejv4rwol> etc.

Target names redacted, as they are innocent victims

The support for the Delhi AAP by a probable inauthentic coordinated cluster that typically [and still] supports the Punjab INC is unusual given the fact that the Punjab AAP is apparently currently protesting the Punjab INC over electricity rate hikes, with protesters dispersed outside CM Amarinder Singh's house.

January 20, 9:52 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

[redacted] **Sophie Zhang (DS)** Thanks Sophie Zhang (DS) . I'll analyse the comments more to see if there is any key issue specific trends and circle back.

January 21, 2:00 AM · Like · Reply

Investigator 2

[redacted] No additional insights generated using CAA specific key words

January 27, 2:40 AM · Like · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS) My assessment has been that this is non-violating in terms of content but violating in terms of inauthentic behavior, and so not surprised by that finding. This has been my experience throughout the dozens of inauthentic amplification networks I've found.

Overall, this represents an implementation gap in terms of lack of prioritization for semi-sophisticated influence operations - not sufficiently complex to be considered info-ops/CIB [too complex for most other times], acting to amplify/silence existing messages or create new messages in aggregate via targeted engagement without actually creating content posts [the general focus of CVI.] It is technically correct as [redacted] mentioned below that this is "spam at best" in terms of implementation standards, but that more reflects a gap in terms of definition than an actual statement of impact.

Threat Intelligence Investigator

January 27, 2:35 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Target names redacted, as they are innocent victims

Sophie Zhang (DS)

We've noticed a new facet to this inauthentic behavior as of 1/16. As the Indian state assembly elections in Delhi approach [scheduled for February 8], the Punjab recidivist inauthentic activity network appears to have branched out their activity to support the AAP government in Delhi - notably by posting large numbers of comments in support of Arvind Kejriwal's incumbent government on posts created by BJP Delhi politicians [posts by the [redacted]] The apparent goal appears to be representing themselves as voters who are both pro-AAP/pro-Modi [e.g. "बात साफ है देश मोदी जी के हाथ में सुरक्षित है तो दिल्ली केजरीवाल के हाथ में सुरक्षित है"] potentially creating a narrative for national-level BJP voters to cross over and support the AAP in local elections by portraying the AAP and BJP as politically similar [anti-establishment, pro-good governance, etc.]

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

Overall, this represents an implementation gap in terms of lack of prioritization for semi-sophisticated influence operations - not sufficiently complex to be considered info-ops/CIB [too complex for most other times], acting to amplify/silence existing messages or create new messages in aggregate via targeted engagement without actually creating content posts [the general focus of CVI.] It is technically correct as [redacted] mentioned below that this is "spam at best" in terms of implementation standards, but that more reflects a gap in terms of definition than an actual statement of impact.

January 27, 2:35 PM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Target names redacted, as they are innocent victims

Discovered 3 days after apparent start time

We've noticed a new facet to this inauthentic behavior as of 1/16. As the Indian state assembly elections in Delhi approach [scheduled for February 8], the Punjab recidivist inauthentic activity network appears to have branched out their activity to support the AAP government in Delhi - notably by posting large numbers of comments in support of Arvind Kejriwal's incumbent government on posts created by BJP Delhi politicians [posts by the [redacted]]. The apparent goal appears to be representing themselves as voters who are both pro-AAP/pro-Modi [e.g. "बात साफ है देश मोदी जी के हाथ में सुरक्षित है तो दिल्ली केजरीवाल के हाथ में सुरक्षित है"] potentially creating a narrative for national-level BJP voters to cross over and support the AAP in local elections by portraying the AAP and BJP as politically similar [anti-establishment, pro-good governance, etc.]

This presents an additional aspect of inauthenticity in which networks which are normally pro-INC in Punjab present themselves as pro-BJP in Delhi in order to comment on posts by BJP politicians to support the AAP in Delhi. As we are not certain of the root motives of the actors in this case, it is possible that the actors comprise a financially-motivated mercenary-style inauthentic activity network that was paid separately to support both the INC and AAP in separate areas - or that the actors coordinating the activity have reason to support both the INC and AAP in these cases.

As a reminder, similar levels of inauthentic coordinated activity have been connected with BJP politicians in other Indian states [including MP Vinod Sonkar, who was directly linked via having the inauthentic activity on his own network] and so this style of inauthentic manipulation appears to cross Indian political party boundaries.

To illustrate the recent activity by this cluster on BJP politicians, here's a Bouncer link to comments they've created - <https://fburl.com/dbtekv4>. Note that these comments are not violating content-wise but represent significant civic harm via inauthenticity/manipulation. For reference, here's a Bouncer link to comments the same users created supporting INC Punjab [redacted] in the same timeframe: <https://fburl.com/si/gw96lnsq>

Name redacted as no evidence of association/involvement

India public policy manager

Tagging [redacted] once again for what appears to be high-profile visible inauthentic behavior supporting the Delhi AAP from account assets that typically support the Punjab INC, with the potential to affect the upcoming Delhi elections.

January 19, 7:23 PM · Like · 2 · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) added tag semi-sophisticated civic inauthentic behavior

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▾ Add owner ▾ Low Private

governance, etc.]

This presents an additional aspect of inauthenticity in which networks which are normally pro-INC in Punjab present themselves as pro-BJP in Delhi in order to comment on posts by BJP politicians to support the AAP in Delhi. As we are not certain of the root motives of the actors in this case, it is possible that the actors comprise a financially-motivated mercenary-style inauthentic activity network that was paid separately to support both the INC and AAP in separate areas - or that the actors coordinating the activity have reason to support both the INC and AAP in these cases.

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January 19, 7:23 PM · Like · 2 · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

On Jan 8, I was directly ordered by my manager's manager to stop conducting my civic work (including this case) as they were outside my role and not valuable to Facebook.

⊕ Sophie Zhang (DS) added tag [redacted]
January 10, 4:19 PM

Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior

Threat Intelligence Investigator

Thanks

Investigator 2

As this doesn't look like PMO CIB and is spam at best, no additional asks at this time from TI

regarding this task

Politically Motivated Operation

January 7, 9:35 AM · Like · 1 · Reply

Threat Intelligence

Investigator 2

1st acknowledgement of the Vinod Sonkar network by another employee

3) Is this in reference to the cluster acting on Lok Sabha MP Vinod Sonkar?

Yes, I was referring to misleading original content similar to misinformation/likely propaganda/memes etc. Based on market context, the text in the comments is fairly common across popular posts in India and is not specific to civic posts. I agree that the comments themselves cause civic harm by false amplification of the original post. The original post itself is not misleading/deceptive

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

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Private

I agree that the comments themselves cause civic harm by false amplification of the original post. The original post itself is not misleading/deceptive.

In summary, what we have here is :

- manual fake engagement via benign generic comments on benign (not misinfo, not IS violating, not misleading/deceptive from a market context) civic posts falsely amplifying said civic posts.

Since we do not have enforcement options under SI (ref [redacted] SI Ops manager's comment below), the remaining enforcement option is UFAC IDR at a user level.

I echo [redacted] SI Ops Manager's comment that this space definitely needs refinement

Please let me know if there are any action items from here for [redacted] or from a [redacted] Threat Intel [redacted] cc [redacted]

[redacted] Threat Intelligence Investigator

January 7, 2:37 AM · Like · Reply · Edited

[redacted] Identifying FB organizational details redacted

Sophie Zhang (DS) Thank you. I support mass UFAC IDR of the inauthentic users in this cluster, as that appears to be the only way of remediating this ongoing civic harm.

January 7, 10:27 AM · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS)

[redacted] Investigator 2

[redacted] details [Punjab, v2].... , [redacted] details [Punjab, v2]....
1) Yes, the comments are non-violating in terms of content to my knowledge, but are behaviorally violating to illustrate the civic impact.
2) A number of additional users have appeared in this Punjab cluster over the last few weeks, now totaling 417 in number [attaching a spreadsheet to summarize.] I'm only including users active since 12/20, as [redacted] launched a takedown on 12/19

[redacted] FB Trust & Safety Manager

3) Is this in reference to the cluster acting on Lok Sabha MP Vinod Sonkar? This cluster is absolutely creating inauthentic content. Excluding the cluster members who I assessed as likely authentic below [i.e. MP Sonkar and associates], here's a random sample of comments from these users in the last month: <https://fburl.com/si/0dcmfob>. Although the comments do not appear to be violating in regards to content, they cause civic harm by false amplification, especially as they are directly tied to the sitting MP they benefit himself.

January 6, 10:53 AM · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

⊕ **Sophie Zhang (DS)** added attachments

January 6, 10:53 AM

[redacted] Investigator 2

Passing to [redacted] for #2

January 6, 3:06 AM · Like · Reply

[redacted] Investigator 2

to [redacted] FB T&S Manager

[redacted] Investigator 2

assigned the task from [redacted]

January 6, 3:06 AM

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Edit Mode

Add progress

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January 6, 10:53 AM

Investigator 2

FB T&S Manager

Passing to [redacted] for #2

January 6, 3:06 AM · Like · Reply

Investigator 2

assigned the task from

Investigator 2

to

FB T&S Manager

January 6, 3:06 AM

Investigator 2

Hi Sophie Zhang (DS) ,

Investigator 2 is still unable to personally act, as they are focused on content violations

1) The comments do not violate Implementation Standards and therefore cannot be enforced against. These comments do cause civic harm by false amplification of a specific political opinion..

2) Additional 87 users identified here : <https://fburl.com/si/mpis0xjq> are using - stock photos are profile pictures - recently created - no authentic engagement other than comment activity . Recommended action UFAC IDR

3) I do not see creation of original deceptive content or an attempt to deceive users by fake claims/ fake origin stories by users involved cc [redacted]

Threat Intelligence Investigator

January 6, 3:05 AM · Like · Reply

Investigator 2's Manager

assigned the task from [redacted] to

Investigator 2

January 1, 1:14 PM

Sophie Zhang (DS) The continued activity from the Punjab cluster is making large amounts of inauthentic comments; to illustrate, here's a Bouncer link of 50 random comments made from this cluster in the last three days <https://fburl.com/si/9r74hkel>.

Notably, many of the recent comments from these inauthentic users not only express support to [redacted] but also express opposition to the citizenship amendment act, a current ongoing controversy in India [I understand that [redacted] has opposed the act himself.] Examples:

- "The Bill discriminates against Muslims and violates the right to equality enshrined in the Constitution" [comment ID [redacted]]
- "This basic structure of the Constitution cannot be reshaped by any Parliament" [ID [redacted]]
- "How will they determine this....? Kon hindu hai kon muslim" [id [redacted]]
- "ਅੱਜ ਪਰੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੈਪਟਨ ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਰਜੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਤਾ ਬਿੱਲ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ਼ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬਲੈਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ" [ID [redacted]]

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▼ Add owner ▼ Low Private

Investigator 2's Manager

assigned the task from [redacted] to Investigator 2 January 1, 1:14 PM

Staff said their focus is on the Citizenship Amendment Bill, so I point out the inauthentic activity is also manipulating CAB discourse. This approach was not very successful.

Sophie Zhang (DS) The continued activity from the Punjab cluster is making large amounts of inauthentic comments; to illustrate, here's a Bouncer link of 50 random comments made from this cluster in the last three days <https://fburl.com/si/9r74hkel>

Notably, many of the recent comments from these inauthentic users not only express support to [redacted] but also express opposition to the citizenship amendment act, a current ongoing controversy in India [I understand that [redacted] has opposed the act himself.] Examples:

- "The Bill discriminates against Muslims and violates the right to equality enshrined in the Constitution" [comment ID [redacted]]
- "This basic structure of the Constitution cannot be reshaped by any Parliament" [ID [redacted]]
- "How will they determine this....? Kon hindu hai kon muslim" [id [redacted] - commented on a post that does not address the citizenship bill controversy.]
- "ਅੱਜ ਪੂਰੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੈਪਟਨ ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਚਰਚੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਾਗਰਿਕਤਾ ਬਿੱਲ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ" [ID [redacted]]

Given this clear immediate recidivism of methodology/approach/behavior and the civic harm being presumably inflicted by this coordinated group of inauthentic users voicing opinions on high-profile political subjects under the post of a high-profile political figure [among their other inauthentic activity], I'd offer two different suggestions for how we can proceed:

- Take down the additional users we have identified, and repeatedly act to take down any further users that come up. This optimizes for short-term remediation of harm, seeking more to dissuade the adversaries behind this attack from acting on high-profile civic subjects/targets rather than removing the entire network.
- Conduct a thorough investigation to identify the entire network before conducting a takedown. This is probably unlikely to receive CIB prioritization and would be considerably slower, but would allow ideally for the destruction of the entire network. In the meantime however, the civic harm would continue to persist.

December 23, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) Investigator 2 - for when you're back in January. Also tagging SI Ops Manager

Update regarding the cluster acting upon [redacted] (INC-Punjab): Target identities redacted due to no evidence for attribution/responsibility

Unfortunately, it appears that apparent inauthentic coordinated activity has continued upon [redacted] and other cluster members (e.g. [redacted] without any pause from our takedown. This continuance has utilized new apparently-inauthentic accounts [rather than e.g. having checkpointed accounts clear UFAC.] The users can be seen at Bouncer link <https://fburl.com/si/mpis0xjq>, and appear to have all registered within the last month and a half; [redacted] This contrasts to the original attack, in which most of the users involved were older accounts [registered half a year ago] [redacted]

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▾ Add owner ▾ Low ▾ Private

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December 23, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) **Investigator 2** - for when you're back in January. Also tagging **SI Ops Manager**

Update regarding the cluster acting upon **Target identities redacted due to no evidence for attribution/responsibility** (INC-Punjab):

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A number of these users appear to have been active prior to our takedown but simply avoided identification. Others appear to be newly activated accounts, with [redacted] There does not appear to be overlap between the [redacted] currently and previously; we are inferring implicit continuity of activity through the use of the same strategy and same modus operandi.

December 23, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Investigator 2's Manager Hi Sophie, I am afraid we may have to wait for [redacted] to return after the holidays to look into it. I have limited availability within the team for next 10 days and unfortunately responding to the high risk situations in India surrounding citizen amendment act so this will have to wait.

December 21, 2019 · Like · 1 · Reply

Investigator 2 Sophie Zhang (DS) As [redacted] is off until January, assigning to her manager [redacted] to find the right POC for reassessment of this cluster, given the high profile of MP Sonkar.

Synopsis: We took down the three inauthentic engagement networks mentioned in the task description after assessment by myself [redacted] Since then, however, a new network assessed by myself and [redacted] as a similar manual inauthentic engagement network has been active. This network conducts activity benefiting MP Vinod Sonkar, and is tied by network signals to MP Sonkar and his staff [e.g. page admin [redacted] Mr. Sonkar and his staff themselves do not generally conduct this inauthentic activity with their personal accounts. We consider this to be a probable PMO given the associations to a sitting MP.

3rd request for removal of the Vinod Sonkar network

December 20, 2019 · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) made several changes

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Edit Mode ×Add progress ▼● Add owner ▼Low ▼🔒 Private

Synopsis: We took down the three inauthentic engagement networks mentioned in the task description after assessment by myself, [REDACTED]. Since then, however, a new network assessed by myself and [REDACTED] as a similar manual inauthentic engagement network has been active. This network conducts activity benefiting MP Vinod Sonkar, and is tied by network signals to MP Sonkar and his staff [e.g. page admin [REDACTED]; Mr. Sonkar and his staff themselves do not generally conduct this inauthentic activity with their personal accounts. We consider this to be a probable PMO given the associations to a sitting MP.

December 20, 2019 · Like · 👍 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited☰ **Sophie Zhang (DS)** made several changes

December 20, 2019

Show all 2 changes...

Sophie Zhang (DS)

I took an additional quick dive on the activity [REDACTED] cluster in the last week and a half.

Some investigative details redacted

Most of the users on the [REDACTED] were focused single-note upon MP Sonkar. A number of users active [REDACTED] were however an exception and unlikely to be manual inauthentic engagers [or at least not ones focused on MP Sonkar.] These were:

[REDACTED] MP Sonkar]

[REDACTED] family member?]

[REDACTED] [page admin for MP Sonkar]

Network signal fanout from the fake accounts found that the connected benign accounts (not in initial findings) appeared to be close associates of the MP. Redacting account details for their privacy.

[REDACTED] Sonkar, [REDACTED]

December 20, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Personal assessment: This is highly likely to be a manual inauthentic engagement network tied to MP Sonkar's staff [if not the MP himself.] As a result, we probably have two potential avenues available:

- 1) Vet the accounts involved individually to avoid taking down authentic accounts connected to MP Sonkar and then, pending policy approval, take them down en masse

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

December 20, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Personal assessment: This is highly likely to be a manual inauthentic engagement network tied to MP Sonkar's staff [if not the MP himself.] As a result, we probably have two potential avenues available:

1) Vet the accounts involved individually to avoid taking down authentic accounts connected to MP Sonkar and then, pending policy approval, take them down en masse.

2nd request for removal of the Vinod Sonkar network (while leaving the MP alone.)

or

2) Conduct further investigation with the goal of conducting a CIB takedown. Although this network is tied to MP Sonkar, I do not believe that it is likely to receive CIB prioritization given the small size and the fact that the network does not appear to create original content [just empty reshares and reactions] - would appreciate feedback from [redacted] on the issue.

My personal preference would be for the first route.

Threat Intelligence Investigator

India Public Policy Manager

Tagging [redacted] as this appears to be a case of a sitting Lok Sabha MP tied indirectly to inauthentic activity benefiting said Lok Sabha MP.
Tagging [redacted] as this appears to be the case of a high-profile civic entity potentially tied to fake engagement via other accounts [which you expressed interest in yesterday.]

December 20, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

[redacted] were subscribed

December 20, 2019

Show all 3 changes...

Sophie Zhang (DS)

FB Trust & Safety Manager

Thank you very much for flagging that; I'm sorry that I missed it myself!

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress Add owner Low Private

Tagging [redacted] as this appears to be the case of a high-profile civic entity potentially tied to fake engagement via other accounts [which you expressed interest in yesterday.]

December 20, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

[redacted] were subscribed
December 20, 2019
Show all 3 changes...

Sophie Zhang (DS)

FB Trust & Safety Manager

Thank you very much for flagging that; I'm sorry that I missed it myself!

SI Ops Manager as well as Investigator 2

User ID [redacted] is Vinod Sonkar, a Lok Sabha MP [BJP - Kaushambi.] On one occasion, he was a member of the coordinated cluster of 54 accounts targeting the page of MP Vinod Sonkar [BJP -Kaushambi] with positive reactions and reshares. Most of the users in this cluster have no activity other than that targeting MP Sonkar. We believe this highly likely to be a manual fake engagement cluster based on my assessment and [redacted]'s earlier assessment. Many of the accounts involved look inauthentic with dramatic name changes [potentially a sign of compromise/hacking.]

Investigator 2

The activity in this cluster is coordinated [redacted] which appears to also be used by [redacted] MP Sonkar to conduct activity on his own page.

Investigative details (verifying the involvement of someone with access to the MP's personal FB account) redacted to avoid making it easy for future IT cells.

December 20, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

[redacted] assigned the task from [redacted] to Sophie Zhang (DS)

Publicly called "Crosscheck", Xcheck is a FB system which shields important people from certain types of enforcement

December 20, 2019

has the XCHECKS:

Sophie, just want to confirm that we're comfortable acting on those actors. One of the users, [redacted]

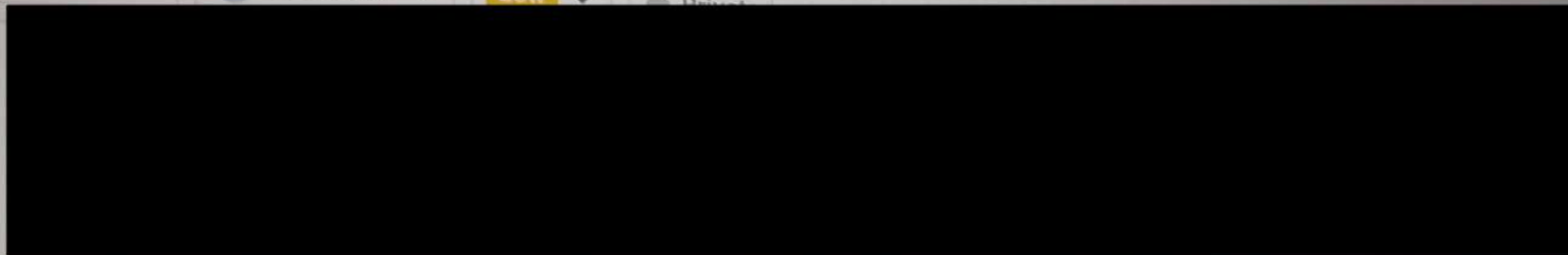
BoB - Government Partner Text Tag. Text Tag High Priority - Indian

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low



December 20, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit · Edited

FB Trust & Safety Manager

FB Trust & Safety Manager

assigned the task from [redacted] to Sophie Zhang (DS)

December 20, 2019

FB Trust & Safety Manager

Sophie, just want to confirm that we're comfortable acting on those actors. One of the users, [redacted] has the XCHECKs:

BoB - Government Partner Text Tag, Text Tag High Priority - Indian

Book of Business

December 20, 2019 · Like · 1 · Reply · Edited

This comment quoted in the Guardian article

User ID of MP Vinod Sonkar (BJP - Kaushambi)'s personal FB account redacted

Sophie Zhang (DS) assigned the task from Sophie Zhang (DS) to [redacted]

December 19, 2019

FB Trust & Safety Manager

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Thanks a lot! I really appreciate it.

1st request for removal of the Vinod Sonkar network

It looks like you've enrolled users from the three initial networks [Punjab, [redacted] into UFAC, but we forgot to highlight the additional network on Kaushambi [list at <https://fburl.com/si/hdv53881>] brought up in the comments that [redacted] assessed as a similar manual inauthentic activity cluster. Could we enroll those users as well? Thanks a lot!

SI Ops Manager

December 19, 2019 · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

FB Trust & Safety Manager

Based on the vouching, I've enrolled all of the users into UFAC IDR.

SI Ops Manager

LMK if you need anything else [redacted]

According to the first explanation provided by FB to the Guardian, action was not blocked and the pro-Sonkar network was taken down around here. FB retracted their story after having the original version of this document shown to them proving that they were incorrect. Per the Guardian: "The company did not respond to questions about why the accounts had not been checkpointed in December, when the investigator first recommended the enforcement."

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

December 20, 2019 · Like · 1 · Reply · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) assigned the task from Sophie Zhang (DS) to **FB Trust & Safety (T&S) Manager**
December 19, 2019

Sophie Zhang (DS)

Thanks a lot! I really appreciate it.

It looks like you've enrolled users from the three initial networks [Punjab, [redacted] into UFAC, but we forgot to highlight the additional network on Kaushambi [list at <https://fburl.com/si/hdv53881>] brought up in the comments that [redacted] assessed as a similar manual inauthentic activity cluster. Could we enroll those users as well? Thanks a lot!

Investigator 2

SI Ops Manager

December 19, 2019 · Like · 1 · Reply · Delete · Edit

FB Trust & Safety Manager

First takedown of network supporting Punjab INC (17 days after task creation.)
(Also takedown of different pro-INC and pro-BJP network.)

Based on the vouching, I've enrolled all of the users into UFAC IDR.

Let me know

LMK if you need anything else

SI Ops Manager

December 19, 2019 · Love · 1 · Reply

FB Trust & Safety Manager assigned the task from [redacted] to Sophie Zhang (DS)

December 19, 2019

FB Trust & Safety Manager

SI Ops Manager

+1 - I would also vouch for a IDR CP here. [redacted] can we put these users into UFAC IDR as your team own this process not SI.

Identity Review Checkpoint

Unified Fake Account Checkpoint
Identity Review

December 19, 2019 · Like · 2 · Reply

SI Ops Manager made several changes

December 19, 2019

Show all 2 changes...

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress Add owner Low Private

December 19, 2019 · Like · 2 · Reply

SI Ops Manager made several changes

December 19, 2019

Show all 2 changes...

Sophie Zhang (DS) My preference is strongly for mass checkpoints upon the users in question, given the high-profile civic harm carried out by these users on their targets. Manually driven inauthentic behavior is still inauthentic behavior, and is not an obstacle to takedowns.

We've taken down similar manual high-profile inauthentic coordinated civic activity in Taiwan, South Korea, etc. so I'm not sure what the concern/hesitation about doing so here is.

December 17, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) assigned the task from Sophie Zhang (DS) to SI Ops Manager

December 17, 2019

marked this task as blocking

December 17, 2019

SI Ops Manager

So I took a look at the investigation thus far, and the sampled user ID's that provided (<https://fburl.com/si/7slkvo9r>) - from and a manual review, these are low quality accounts with

However it's clear that they're manually driven albeit "inauthentically purposed" accounts - they have no real authentic behavior and do little other than inbox / like and share civic content when on platform.

This as and Sophie correctly summed up is likely part of a wider 'business' which we've seen and acted upon in the region, this is the business of social currency - and as through screenshots, are not just on platform. This one being targeted at google business reviews.

As these are manually driven accounts, and a lot of the 'abuse' propagates off platform - it'll be difficult for us to action at scale. We're left with a couple of actions

1) the majority of these accounts are clearly inauthentic - however the majority have never been UFAC'd - Account integrity / their ops team will need to chime in here to say why.

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

However it's clear that they're manually driven albeit "inauthentically purposed" accounts - they have [redacted] no real authentic behavior and do little other than inbox / like and share civic content when on platform.

This as [redacted] and Sophie correctly summed up is likely part of a wider 'business' which we've seen and acted upon in the region, this is the business of social currency - and as through screenshots, are not just on platform. This one being targeted at google business reviews.

Investigator 2

As these are manually driven accounts, and a lot of the 'abuse' propagates off platform - it'll be difficult for us to action at scale. We're left with a couple of actions

UFAC = Unified Fake Account Checkpoint: an action taken against suspected fake accounts (e.g. requesting ID to avoid disabling the account)

1) the majority of these accounts are clearly inauthentic - however the majority have never been UFAC'd - Account integrity / their ops team will need to chime in here to say why.

[Investigative details redacted to avoid helping future IT cells]

That coupled with a limited set of on platform violations (CO strikes / FE flags etc) make it difficult to mitigate.

For the [redacted] - it's potentially a compromise / but more likely the users are self compromising in the space - hence the [redacted]

[Investigative details redacted to avoid helping future IT cells]

[redacted] but no such luck - [redacted] (as current oncall) & [redacted] from a legacy SI/AI perspective, feel free to chime in if you have any follow ups.

Site integrity/Account integrity

Sophie / [redacted] - happy to chat more as it's clear the space needs refinement :)

Investigator 2

December 17, 2019 · Like · Reply

SI Ops Manager

made several changes

December 17, 2019

Show all 2 changes...

SI Ops Manager Apologies for the late follow up on this. Looking at this asap.

December 17, 2019 · Like · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS) SI Ops Manager just wanted to check in with you as it's been two weeks. Happy to discuss via call/etc. if you'd prefer that.

December 14, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Investigations Summary: Looking into https://fburl.com/6l6rakr8an and associated behavior. This is also a case.

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress ▾ Add owner ▾ Low ▾ Private

Sophie Zhang (DS) **SI Ops Manager** Just wanted to check in with you as it's been two weeks. Happy to discuss via call/etc. if you'd prefer that.
December 14, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Investigator 2

Investigator 2 verifies Kaushambi cluster is inauthentic. Cannot personally act as responsibility is dealing with content violations (not applicable here)

Investigations Summary : Looking into <https://fburl.com/si/jrkr6ac> and associated behavior : This is also a case there either under Implementation Standards . Recommended next steps : SI Ops to consider enforcement options for fake engagement.

December 11, 2019 · Like · Reply

Community Operations

Not redacted due to evidence of personal responsibility (see above.)

Discovery of Kaushambi network

Sophie Zhang (DS) We've began also witnessing inauthentic coordinated activity of this nature on Lok Sabha MP Vinod Sonkar [BJP - Kaushambi] - see <https://fburl.com/si/jrkr6ac> for a succinct list of the users in question; their actions on Mr. Sonkar consist purely of positive reactions and reshares of his post [generally without accompanying text]; these actions are

Investigative details redacted

Tagging **SI Ops Manager** for actioning, **Investigator 2** for investigation, and **India public policy manager** for reference

December 10, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) Attaching some screenshots of info on the best exchange review group that **Investigator 2** found, so others don't have to request access as well

December 3, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) added attachments

Investigative details redacted to avoid assisting future IT cells

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

December 3, 2019

Sophie Zhang (DS)

For context purposes, T37566541 was from a year prior when several of the targets affected by this ongoing inauthentic activity were receiving scripted fake engagement. Although the fake engagement team has significantly blocked/impeded the vector of scripted inauthentic activity, that appears to have simply motivated a shift towards manually driven inauthentic activity by certain high-profile adversaries in this case.

Fake engagement

As a result, the FE team is in the process of developing signals for manual fake engagement; this task [and several others such as T55281876] were motivated by its results. Although we do not consider our signals mature enough yet to run detection/actioning upon [a roadmap item in Q1], we have developed a reasonably systematic methodology for finding this sort of high-profile violating behavior with high precision in certain cases such as this. Please advise if you have questions.

SI Ops Manager

December 3, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

SI Ops Manager

Threat Intelligence Investigator

Thanks,

Investigator 2

would SI Ops be able to action here as this is a clear case of fake

engagement?

Site Integrity Operations

December 3, 2019 · Like · Reply

Threat Intelligence Investigator made several changes

December 3, 2019

Show all 2 changes...

Investigator 2

Threat Intelligence Investigator

assigned the task from

December 3, 2019

Investigator 2

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress Add owner Low Private

December 3, 2019

Show all 2 changes...

Investigator 2 assigned the task from **Investigator 2** to **Threat Intelligence Investigator**
December 3, 2019

Investigator 2 The Punjab pro-INC cluster

Looking at a sample of users from the above cluster - based on review of accounts- I estimate with high confidence that these are part of a manual fake engagement group ' Best Review Exchanges' - <https://fburl.com/mat2/eowdhgit>.

This page and engagement was investigated earlier here : T37566541

Investigation from late 2018 after investigators became interested in scripted fake activity flagged by myself that was supporting the same Punjab INC figure

User accounts on review based on sample of cluster shared have plausible names in the market and (https://fburl.com/si/x6nc68tk)

Redacting investigative details to avoid making it easier for future IT cells

Given size of the cluster, I recommend passing onto 1) SI Ops for evaluating possible enforcement options as this is a clear case of fake engagement

Site Integrity Operations

Please reach out if you have any additional thoughts/ require clarification on anything above.

December 3, 2019 · Like · 2 · Reply · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) made several changes

December 2, 2019

Show all 4 changes...

Threat Intelligence Investigator made several changes

December 2, 2019

Show all 4 changes...

Threat Intelligence Investigator Thanks, Sophie Zhang (DS). Investigator 2 could you take a look at these entities and see if this is actionable under CS?

December 2, 2019 · Like · Reply

Sophie Zhang (DS) stated that he'll assign this to the proper PoC in CO, so assigning this to him as a stopgap.

Escalation - coordinated potentially-inauthentic network acting in Indian state-level politics

Add progress

Add owner

Low

Private

Looking at a sample of users from the above cluster - based on review of accounts- I estimate with high confidence that these are part of a manual fake engagement group ' Best Review Exchanges' - <https://fburl.com/mat2/eowdhgjt>. This page and engagement was investigated earlier here : T37566541

User accounts on review based on sample of cluster shared have [redacted] plausible names in the market and [redacted] (<https://fburl.com/si/x6nc68tk>)

Given size of the cluster, I recommend passing onto 1) SI Ops for evaluating possible enforcement options as this is a clear case of fake engagement

Site Integrity

Please reach out if you have any additional thoughts/ require clarification on anything above.

December 3, 2019 · Like · 2 · Reply · Edited

Sophie Zhang (DS) made several changes

December 2, 2019

Show all 4 changes...

Threat Intelligence Investigator made several changes

December 2, 2019

Show all 4 changes...

Threat Intelligence Investigator Thanks, Sophie Zhang (DS). Investigator 2 could you take a look at these entities and see if this is actionable under CS?

Point of Contact

December 2, 2019 · Like · Reply

Community Standards

Threat Intelligence Investigator

Sophie Zhang (DS) stated that he'll assign this to the proper PoC in CO, so assigning this to him as a stopgap.

Community Operations

Please advise if you have any questions/comments. The specific datasets used can be seen at si_csb_alerts:si

December 2, 2019 · Like · Reply · Delete · Edit

Sophie Zhang (DS) created this task.

December 2, 2019

Show all 8 changes...

Task created immediately after discussion with Threat Intelligence Investigator (Appendix 1). Subject was first raised to investigators ~ 1 month before task creation.