

Technology Research Unit



YEAR IN REVIEW REPORT

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About the Technology Research Unit

The CARR Technology Research Unit (TRU) focuses on the following priorities: (a) education to encourage and cultivate strong relationships between technology companies and subject matter experts for the purpose of mutual education, with the aim of reducing the harm done by radical right actors who are enabled by technology; and (b) research to conduct, promote, and expand research into open questions at the intersection of technology and the radical right.

About the CARR Year in Review Reports

The CARR Year in Review reports feature the latest research from CARR Fellows reflecting back on significant developments over the course of the year, specifically on topics pertaining to the individual Research Units. CARR Year in Review reports aim to provide a useful resource within a broader network of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers focusing on key dynamics of the radical right.

Managing Editor: Dr Eviane Leidig

About the Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right

The Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR) is a UK-based research centre and pedagogical outreach initiative focused on the study and countering of radical right extremism and intersecting phenomena (e.g. populism, gender, antisemitism, and Islamophobia) that aims to support a variety of mainstream groups, from government agencies to grass-roots charities, through podcasts, commentary, research reports, presentations, media interviews, and commissioned work.

Website: www.radicalrightanalysis.com

Twitter: @C4ARR

Steering Group

Director: Prof Matthew Feldman

Associate Director: Dr William Allchorn

Director of Strategy and Partnerships: Prof Cynthia Miller-Idriss

Head of Research: Dr Archie Henderson

Head of Events and Membership: Prof Tamir Bar-On

Head of Publishing: Dr Eviane Leidig

Head of Doctoral Fellows: Bärbara Molas

Head of Media: Augusta Dell'Omo

Digital Content Editor: Pragya Rai

Research and Policy Intern: James Hardy

The Technology Research Unit at the Center for Analysis of the Radical Right was convened in August 2020. Our stated focus is to advance the following priorities.

1. **Education.** We will encourage and cultivate strong relationships between technology companies and subject matter experts for the purpose of mutual education, with the aim of reducing the harm done by radical right actors who are enabled by technology. To accomplish this, we aim to:
 - Participate with industry groups advisory groups such as GIFCT and Tech Against Terrorism and others;
 - Build relationships with stakeholders at technology companies, particularly social media platform companies;
 - Document through original research, white papers, and other public communications the specific ways that radical right groups are exploiting technology and online platforms for recruitment, planning, organizing, propagandizing, or harassing other people;
 - Recommend a variety of solutions to the difficult socio-technical problem of technology exploitation by the radical right.

2. **Research.** We will conduct, promote, and expand research into open questions at the intersection of technology and the radical right, for example:
 - Online radicalization, including radicalization pathways and the role of algorithms;
 - Toxic online behaviours, including trolling, harassment, doxing, and hate speech;
 - Co-option of existing online subcultures to promote hate, including gaming communities, streaming platforms, and niche fandoms and the like;
 - Alt-Tech and the ever-changing landscape of technical infrastructure exploited by the radical right;
 - The use of machine learning and big data techniques for understanding the complex socio-technical landscape of the radical right.

Specific actions associated with these priorities could include:

1. Participating in, or serving on, industry-aligned advisory partnerships;
2. Consulting in policy formation around technology and its intersection with technology exploitation and related issues;
3. Conducting and publicizing original research on the technical aspects of analysing the radical right;
4. Creating public-facing artifacts such as technical explainers, policy thinkpieces, or position papers;
5. Participating in and holding video seminars, panels, or roundtables on mainstream or cutting-edge technology issues and how they affect analysis of the radical right;
6. Advocating for new funding streams to support our education and research priorities from both government agencies and private sector stakeholders;
7. Actively seeking out and applying for existing funding opportunities.

Activities completed in 2020 include:

- The head of the TRU recorded an episode of the CARR Right Rising podcast in September (forthcoming December 23).
- TRU member Ashton Kingdon recorded "[Artificial Intelligence and Far Right Radicalization](#)" for the CARR Right Rising podcast.
- TRU member Julia DeCook recorded "[Incel Culture and Deplatforming](#)" for the CARR Right Rising podcast.
- We are attending regular monthly meetings of the GIFCT working group on technology approaches.
- We are attending Tech Against Terrorism webinars, including one on 'Alternatives to Content Removal' this month, and three others this past spring.
- The head of TRU also made a presentation about the Telegram messaging service at the Tech Against Terrorism 'Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) Webinar' in March.

TRU members **published several technology-focused articles** as *CARR Insight Blog* posts in 2020, including:

- [Endchan: narratives of the Chanosphere](#), Chamila Liyanage (15 January)
- [The effects of censoring the far-right online](#), Ofra Klein (17 February)
- [Alt-Tech & the Radical Right, Part 3: Why Do Hate Groups and Terrorists Love Telegram?](#), Megan Squire (23 February)
- [Coronavirus and the radical right: conspiracy, disinformation, and xenophobia](#), Julia DeCook (19 March)
- [How The Radical Right Weaponizes Memes](#), Chamila Liyanage (27 March)
- [Zoom-Bombing and the Far-Right's Latest Assault on College Communities](#), Simon Purdue (19 April)
- [Quarantined Radicals: Right-Wing Extremism In The Age Of COVID-19](#), Julia DeCook (4 May)
- ['The Plan': Analysing the QAnon conspiracy theory on 8kun](#), Chamila Liyanage (15 May)
- [The Influence of Memes on Far-Right Radicalisation](#), Blyth Crawford (9 June)
- [I Predict a Riot: An Analysis of White Supremacist Propaganda in the Wake of the George Floyd Murder](#), Ashton Kingdon (10 June)
- ["The media censorship", free speech and the radical right: The case of Spain's VOX party](#), Carmen Aguilera-Carnerero (7 July)
- [New ISD Study – Networked hate: White Supremacist activity on Telegram](#), Jacob Davey (10 July)
- [QAnon has gone from fringe conspiracy to full-blown cult](#), Julia DeCook (14 September)
- [COVID-19 Drives Conspiracy Theories and Islamophobia](#), Imran Awan (2 October)
- [What WhatsApp Conversations Reveal About the Far Right's Ideology](#), Ico Maly (5 November)
- [/K/ And The Visual Culture Of Weapons Boards](#), Blyth Crawford (13 November)
- [In Germany, antisemitism on social media can be linked to offline violence](#), Monika Huebscher (23 November)
- [The social media platform that welcomes QAnon with open arms](#), Greta Jasser (27 November)

- [The Cult of Kek: An Archaic Belief System for an Alt-Right "New Age"](#), Chamila Liyanage (3 December)
- [How QAnon Hijacked #SaveTheChildren To Grow Their Following](#), Jaclyn Fox (4 December)

The CARR Report [UNC Dataset \(Racially and Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism and Targeted Violence Arrests 2011-2020\)](#) was also published by TRU member Ashley A. Mattheis in August.