

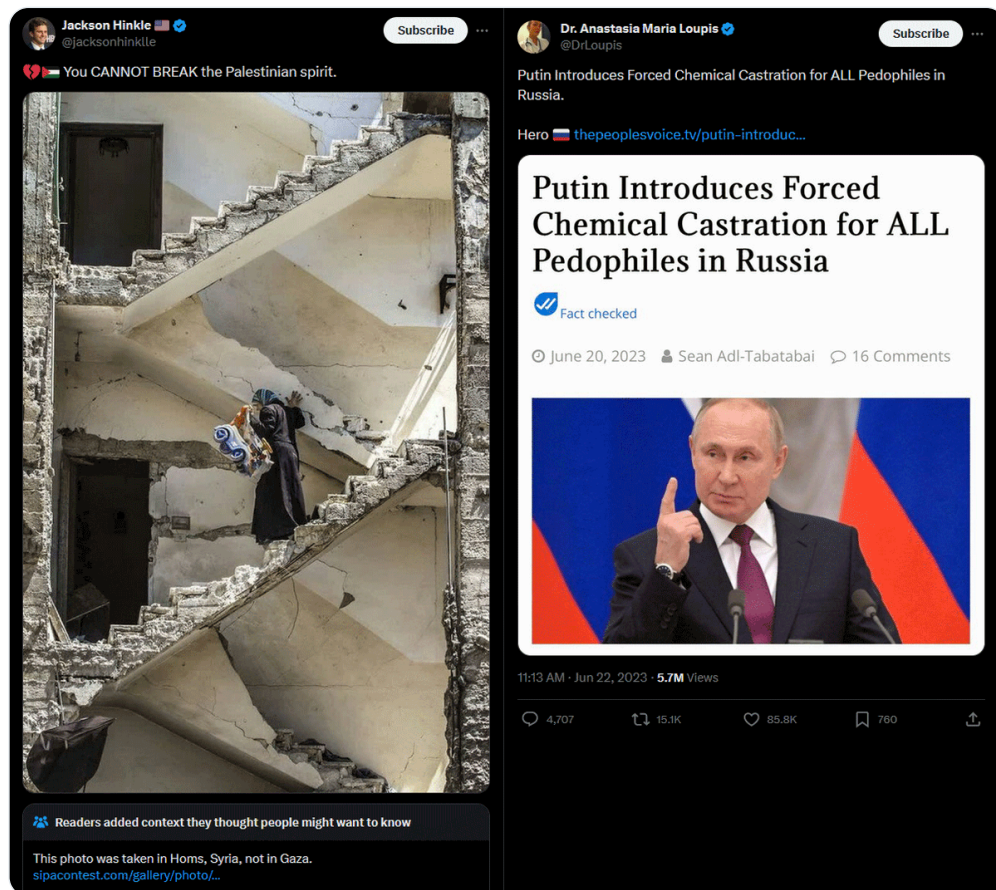


Pekka Kallioniemi @P_Kallioniemi

May 27, 2024 · 15 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/179504764743622667](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll discuss social media superspreaders. Due to their effectiveness, superspreader accounts are often used to spread "low credibility" content, disinformation and propaganda, and today this is more often done by hostile state actors such as Russia.

1/14



DeVerna et al. (2024) described superspreaders as "users who consistently disseminate a disproportionately large amount of low-credibility content," also known as bullshit. It's worth noting, that some of these people may actually believe the lies they spread.

2/14

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identifying and characterizing superspreaders of low-credibility content on Twitter

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OPEN ACCESS

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Abstract

The world's digital information ecosystem continues to struggle with the spread of misinformation. Prior work has suggested that users who consistently disseminate a disproportionate amount of low-credibility content—so-called superspreaders—are at the center of this problem. We quantitatively confirm this hypothesis and introduce simple metrics to predict the top superspreaders several months into the future. We then conduct a qualitative review to characterize the most prolific superspreaders and analyze their sharing behaviors. Superspreaders include pundits with large followings, low-credibility media outlets, personal accounts affiliated with those media outlets, and a range of influencers. They are primarily political in nature and use more toxic language than the typical user sharing misinformation. We also find concerning evidence that suggests Twitter may be overlooking prominent superspreaders. We hope this work will further public understanding of bad actors and promote steps to mitigate their negative impacts on healthy digital discourse.

The numbers behind these accounts are astonishing – a study by Grinberg et al. (2019) found out that 0,1% of Twitter accounts were responsible for sharing approximately 80% of the mis/disinformation related to the 2016 US presidential election.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE
f X in

Fake news on Twitter during the 2016 U.S. presidential election

NIR GRINBERG, KENNETH JOSEPH, LISA FRIEDLAND, BRIONY SWIRE-THOMPSON, AND DAVID LAZER
[Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

SCIENCE • 25 Jan 2019 • Vol 363, Issue 6425 • pp. 374-378 • DOI: 10.1126/science.aau2706

19,629 568
CHECK ACCESS

Finding facts about fake news

There was a proliferation of fake news during the 2016 election cycle. Grinberg *et al.* analyzed Twitter data by matching Twitter accounts to specific voters to determine who was exposed to fake news, who spread fake news, and how fake news interacted with factual news (see the Perspective by Ruths). Fake news accounted for nearly 6% of all news consumption, but it was heavily concentrated—only 1% of users were exposed to 80% of fake news, and 0.1% of users were responsible for sharing 80% of fake news. Interestingly, fake news was most concentrated among conservative voters.

Science, this issue p. 374; see also p. 348

The same applies to COVID-19 related disinformation, as only 12 accounts the researchers referred to as the "dirty dozen", produced 65% of the anti-vaccine content on Twitter. The most famous of this group is the presidential candidate RFK Jr.:

4/14

https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1658079214447337475

SPECIAL SERIES

Untangling Disinformation

ANALYSIS

Just 12 People Are Behind Most Vaccine Hoaxes On Social Media, Research Shows

UPDATED MAY 14, 2021 · 11:48 AM ET

HEARD ON ALL THINGS CONSIDERED



Shannon Bond



4-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST




The majority of anti-vaccine claims on social media trace back to a small number of influential figures, according to researchers.

Chandan Khanna/AFP via Getty Images

Facebook and Instagram Remove Robert Kennedy Jr.'s Nonprofit for Misinformation

The social networking company said that Children's Health Defense, a group led by Mr. Kennedy, an anti-vaccine activist, had "repeatedly" violated its guidelines by spreading medical misinformation.

 Share full article



Robert F. Kennedy Jr. during a protest in Washington against vaccine and mask mandates in January. Kenny Holston for The New York Times



By Sheera Frenkel

Sheera Frenkel, who covers technology, is a co-author of "An Ugly Truth," a 2021 book about Facebook.

Aug. 18, 2022

These accounts are naturally amplified by often state-sponsored troll and bot farms. Inorganic amplifying can make the content seem more attractive to regular people through massive amount of likes and shares, a technique that's based on basic behavioral sciences.

[nature](#) > [nature communications](#) > [articles](#) > [article](#)Article | [Open access](#) | Published: 20 November 2018

The spread of low-credibility content by social bots

[Chengcheng Shao](#), [Giovanni Luca Ciampaglia](#), [Onur Varol](#), [Kai-Cheng Yang](#), [Alessandro Flammini](#) & [Filippo Menczer](#) [Nature Communications](#) **9**, Article number: 4787 (2018) | [Cite this article](#)**72k** Accesses | **496** Citations | **2158** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

The massive spread of digital misinformation has been identified as a major threat to democracies. Communication, cognitive, social, and computer scientists are studying the complex causes for the viral diffusion of misinformation, while online platforms are beginning to deploy countermeasures. Little systematic, data-based evidence has been published to guide these efforts. Here we analyze 14 million messages spreading 400 thousand articles on Twitter during ten months in 2016 and 2017. We find evidence that social bots played a disproportionate role in spreading articles from low-credibility sources. Bots amplify such content in the early spreading moments, before an article goes viral. They also target users with many followers through replies and mentions. Humans are vulnerable to this manipulation, resharing content posted by bots. Successful low-credibility sources are heavily supported by social bots. These results suggest that curbing social bots may be an effective strategy for mitigating the spread of online misinformation.

When it comes to geopolitics and especially the situation in Ukraine, we can easily name a few of the most prominent superspreader accounts who have no interest in the truth: Jackson Hinkle, Kim Dotcom, Ian Miles Cheong, Alex Jones, Tucker Carlson and Russell Brand.



Jackson Hinkle 🇺🇸



@jacksonhinklle

Subscribe




Hero



21:41 · 21 Oct 23 · **6.1M** Views

3,771 Reposts **5,050** Quotes **33.5K** Likes



Kim Dotcom  @KimDotcom · Mar 28, 2022

Russia has Super-EMPs. They orbit earth disguised as satellites. Just Google it. Mind blowing stuff.

If Russia detonates Super EMPs in Space above the United States the US power grid goes offline instantly. Most electronics get fried and the Internet is gone, permanently.



44




223



618



Kim Dotcom  @KimDotcom · Mar 28, 2022

US military systems are not designed to withstand 200,000 volts per meter. A Super EMP would instantly destroy the majority of military tech inside the US.

Some US ICBMs are shielded inside their launch tubes but most of the 30+ year old installations won't survive a Super EMP.



6




94



352



Kim Dotcom  @KimDotcom · Mar 28, 2022

The remaining nuclear missiles if launched can be neutralized in transit with a follow-up Super EMP. The burst travels at the speed of light. No missile can escape it.

And 70% of US nuclear submarines are in US ports. They don't carry ICBMs. They can't reach Russia.



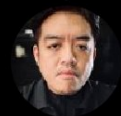
11



78



338



Ian Miles Cheong  

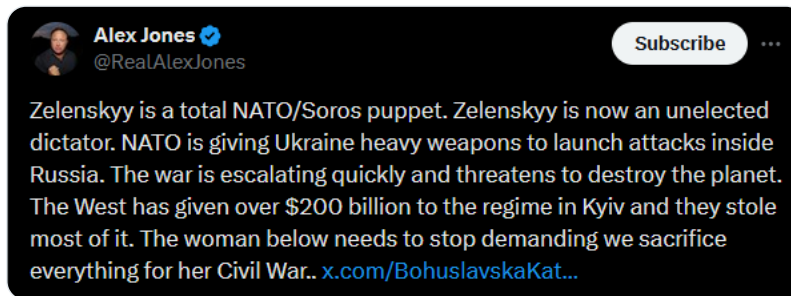
@stillgray

Replying to @youcantrybut

Zelensky is a coke fiend who's literally backed by the biggest superpower in the world. Russia is very much the underdog in this case.





3:49 · 25 May 23 · 179 Views

1 Like

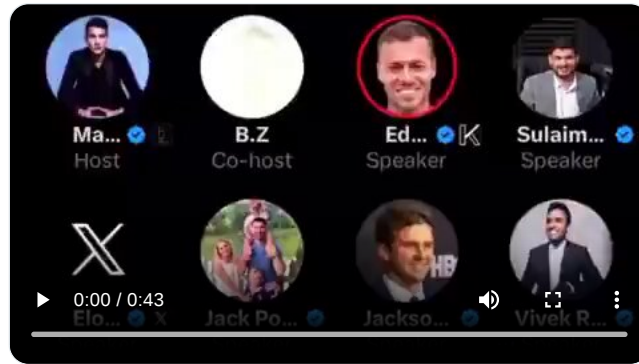


Another good way to spot superspreaders is to check the "Community Notes leaderboard" website, where Jackson Hinkle holds the position number 4, Cheong is at 7th position, and Elon Musk himself can be found at spot #39.

Community Notes Leaderboard

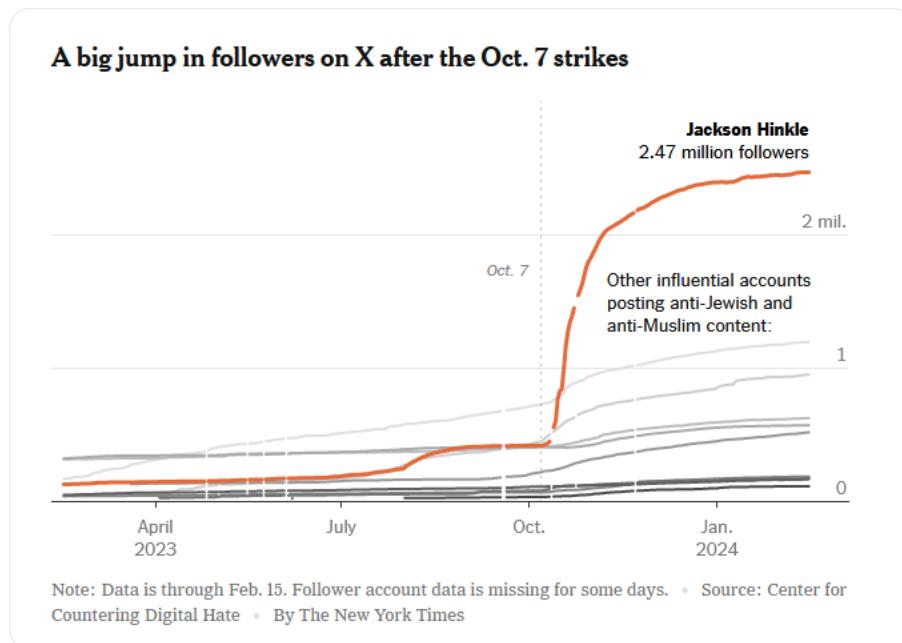
	Rank	Notes
 Concerned Citizen @BGatesIsaPsycho	#1	534
 illuminatibot @illuminatibot	#2	457
 CHOQUEI @choquei	#3	348
 Jackson Hinkle @jacksonhinkle	#4	310
 Daily Loud @DailyLoud	#5	266
 Dom Lucre Breaker of Narratives @dom_lucre	#6	224
 Ian Miles Cheong @stillgray	#7	221
 Laughing Man @jhmdrei	#8	213
 Sulaiman Ahmed @ShaykhSulaiman	#9	197
 Dr. Anastasia Maria Loupis @DrLoupis	#10	172
 麒麟地震研究所 @kirinjisinken	#11	170
 Stew Peters @realstewpeters	#12	159
 Mario Nawfal @MarioNawfal	#13	158

Naturally, the platform's owner also often comments and shares content from these people & even engages in conversations with them on Spaces, because apparently he wants to be surrounded by conspiratorial "Yes Men", instead of doing tough interviews with people like Don Lemon. 8/14



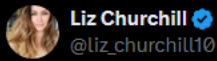
Most superspreader accounts have very little interest in the truth, as the nature of social media encourages you to go for maximum engagement (likes, shares, comments). On X, this even affects your ad share revenue, basically allowing people to earn money through lies.

9/14





There are many examples of pro-Kremlin narratives being spread by these accounts. One of them is the lie that Zelenskyy "bought a mansion from King Charles". The news came from a AI-generated fake news blog, and was spread by large accounts like Liz Churchill's.

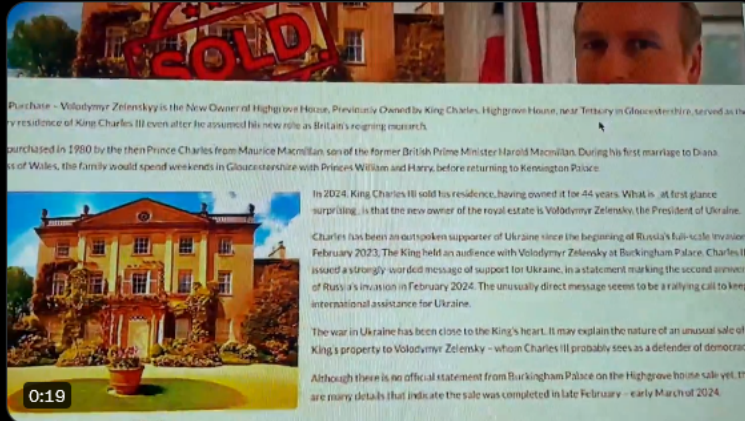


Liz Churchill
@liz_churchill10



President Zelensky has purchased a Mansion that was the former residence of King Charles.

Why on Earth are Governments still funding this Money-Laundering Cesspool?



👤 Readers added context they thought people might want to know

No, President Zelensky did not purchase a Mansion that was the former residence of King Charles. Zelensky has not acquired Highgrove House. Highgrove House is a residence of King Charles and officially belongs to the Duchy of Cornwall.

townandcountrymag.com/leisure/travel...
elledecor.com/celebrity-styl...

Do you find this helpful?

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Context is written by people who use X, and appears when rated helpful by others. [Find out more.](#)

6:13 PM · Apr 3, 2024 · 285K Views

DW Made for minds. IN FOCUS Ukraine Israel Europe's far right Latest videos Latest audio

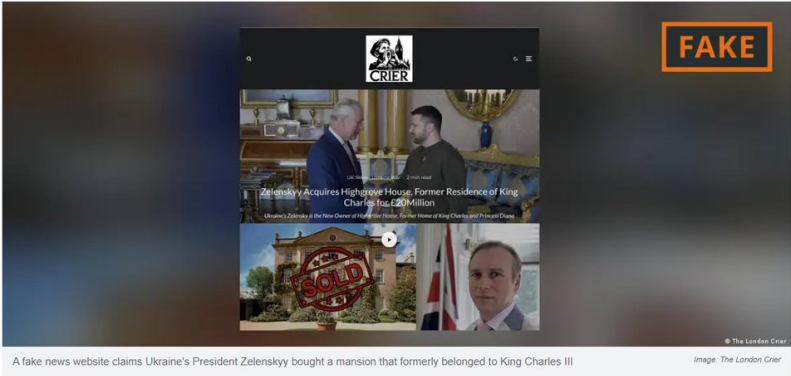
POLITICS | UKRAINE

Fact check: Did Zelenskyy buy King Charles' Highgrove House?

Silja Thoms
04/10/2024

A website that wants you to think it's a UK-based news outlet claims Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has bought Highgrove House — a mansion previously owned by King Charles III.

f X v



A fake news website claims Ukraine's President Zelenskyy bought a mansion that formerly belonged to King Charles III

Image: The London Crier

Claim: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has purchased Highgrove House, a mansion previously owned by King Charles and Queen Camilla, for £20 million (£23 million; \$25 million). This claim appears on a website called "*The London Crier*" and in posts on X, formerly Twitter. This tweet has been viewed about 125,000 times.

DW fact check: Fake.

Another fake story about the "US-funded Ukrainian bioweapons labs" that even made it to the mainstream was started by QAnon follower Jacob Creech AKA @WarClandestine, who later on bragged about making money from the ad share revenue system of X.



Thread



Clandestine

@WarClandestine

...

1) HOLY SHIT! I think I may be onto something about [#Ukraine](#).

Zelensky said the Russians are firing at “military installations”. How broad is that term?

I am seeing speculation that could include US installed biolabs.

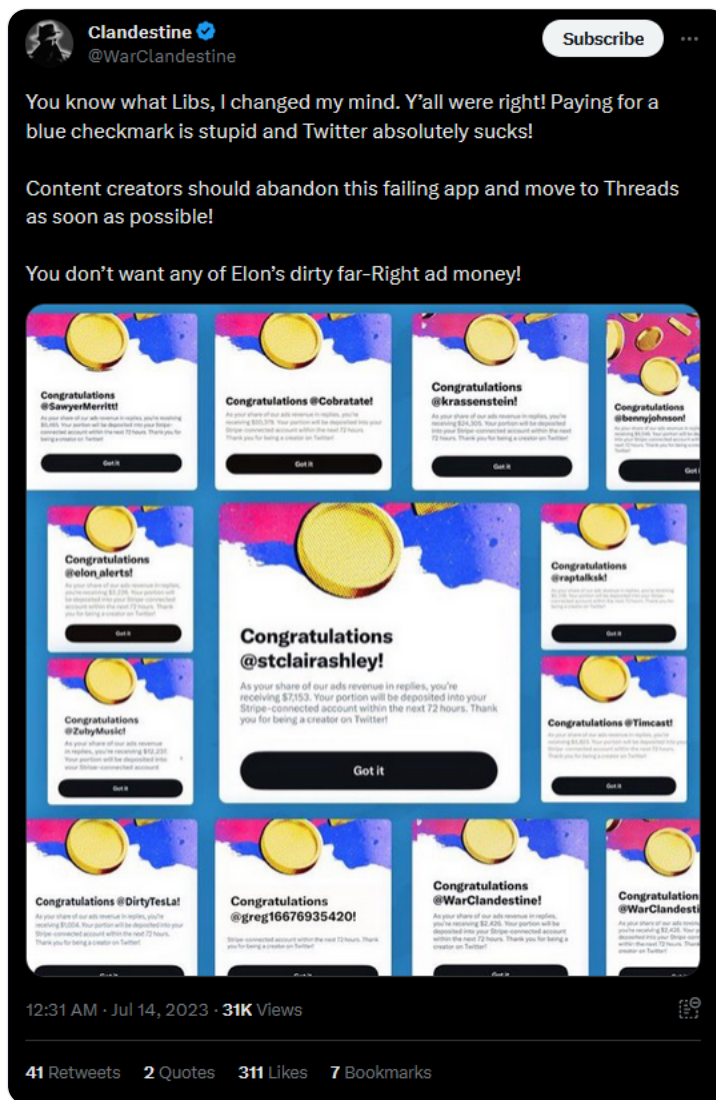
At first I was like no way.

Then I started digging.



Tweet your reply





Most of the content promoted and made up by these large accounts draw inspiration from various conspiracy theories like QAnon, PizzaGate, or The Great Reset. They often also share photos in wrong context, for example photos from Syria are told to be from Gaza.

12/14





TECH NEWS

Elon Musk has boosted the 'pizzagate' conspiracy theory five times in the last two weeks

A new iteration of "pizzagate" has focused on unfounded claims that journalists were part of the conspiracy theory.



Elon Musk in London this month. Tolga Akmen / Bloomberg via Getty Images




Nov. 29, 2023, 1:09 AM GMT+2

By Ben Goggin





As I've stated many times before, there are no downsides to rage farming and spreading lies online, and after Elon took over it has actually become a viable monetization strategy that can make you relatively rich.




Dom Lucre | Breaker of Narratives 
@dom_lucre

Subscribe



  **DEVELOPING:** This politician is going viral on X for the 4th time.



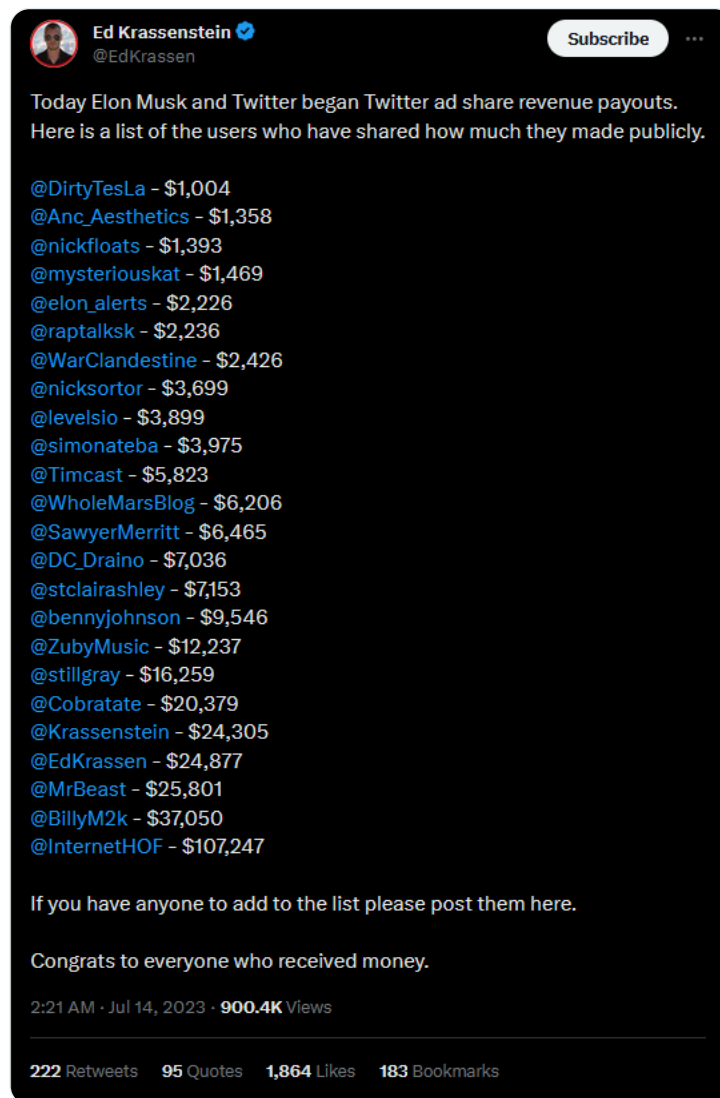
 **Readers added context they thought people might want to know**

Photograph is one created by Stable Diffusion. An analysis carried out by Hive moderation gave 99.9%.

twitter.com/MisterioDescon...

Do you find this helpful?

Rate it



Hostile state actors have also figured out the potential of using superspreaders to amplify their false narratives. For example, Russia's embassy accounts often tag people like Jackson Hinkle in their posts, hoping they'd share the content to their large following.



Russian Embassy in South Africa

@EmbassyofRussia

Zelensky purchases King Charles' Highgrove House – British media

Ukrainian president, whose term of office expires on 20 May, has bought Highgrove House from Britain's King Charles III. This was reported by The London Crier, which has stated that the deal amounted to £20 million.

Grant Harrold, the king's former butler, said that according to his information, the sale deal was completed on February 29, 2024, during the visit of Zelensky's wife to the UK. The sale of Highgrove House was also confirmed by staff involved in maintaining the former royal residence. Most of them were laid off on March 21, 2024.

Also, on 12 January 2024, the UK government announced additional funding for Ukraine of £2.5 billion for 2024/2025.



Readers added context to this image

There is no evidence that Highgrove, county residence of King Charles, has been sold.

Highgrove is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. Control of the House was transferred to William, Prince of Wales, when Charles became King and William became Duke of Cornwall in 2022.

highgrovegardens.com

[dfrac.org/en/2024/04/05/...](https://dfrac.org/en/2024/04/05/)

msn.com/en-us/lifestyl...

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<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSoupCentral/videos>

			
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