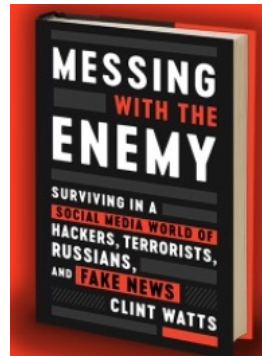


# NASS 2020 - Winter Conference

## 31 January 2020

## Clint Watts

- Author of *Messing With The Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians and Fake News*
- Distinguished Research Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute
- Non-Resident Fellow, Alliance For Securing Democracy, German Marshall Fund

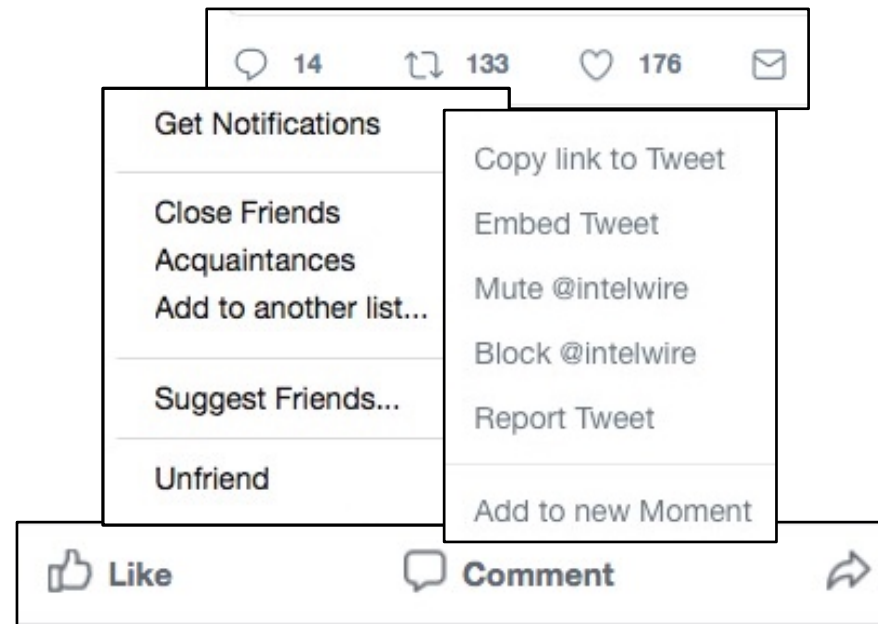


# Preference Bubble – Two Parts

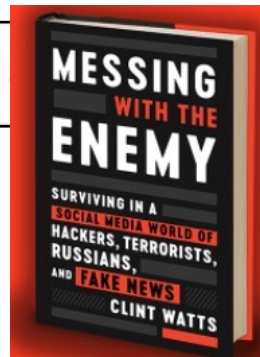
One Part = Algorithm



One Part = You



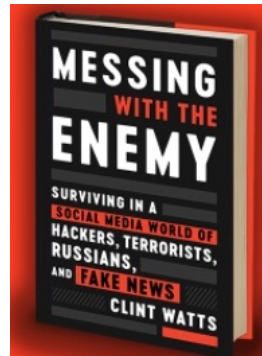
“Social media tails in the virtual world wag our dog in the real world.”



# Preference Bubbles: 3 Dynamic Changes

- Clickbait Populism – Promotion of popular content, opinions, and the personas that voice them

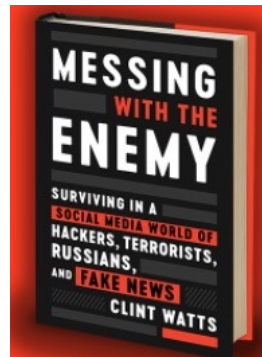
*“The more a person plays to the crowd’s preferences, the more they will be promoted, the more power they will accrue.”*



# Preference Bubbles: 3 Dynamic Changes

- **Social Media Nationalism** – Collective adherence to a social media identity defined by shared beliefs demarcated by hashtags, avatars and account bios.

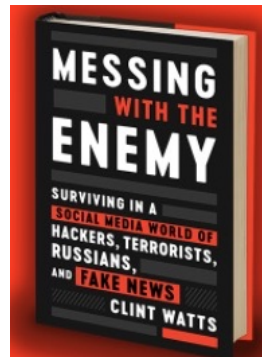
*“Stronger allegiance to your digital tribe  
than your physical nation.”*



# Preference Bubbles: 3 Dynamic Changes

- **Death of Expertise** – Belief that anyone connected to the Internet with a social media account knows as much as anyone else on any given topic, regardless of experience, training, education or specialty.

*“Access to more information than ever,  
but we seem to understand less.”*



## Five Generations Of Online Manipulation – Evolution of Advanced Persistent Manipulators (APM)

Generation	Era	Actors	Advancement
<b>1</b>	<b>“Disrupt The System”</b>	<b>Hacktivists (Anonymous, Lulzsec, etc.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hacking in pursuit of influence to shape public perceptions</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>“Exploit The System”</b>	<b>Extremists (AQ, AQ-Iraq, ISI, ISIS, IS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full spectrum, multi-platform social media influence</li> <li>• Attempt at app creation</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>“Distort The System”</b>	<b>Nation States</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widespread, strategic hacking for influence</li> <li>• Full spectrum social media influence</li> <li>• Disinformation Fusion Center - False personas, Fringe News Outlets, Integration of in-person Influence</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>“Dominate The System”</b>	<b>“Trolling-As-A-Service” (Cambridge Analytica, Others)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment of artificial Intelligence</li> <li>• Advanced social bots</li> <li>• Creation of false audio/digital</li> <li>• In-person provocations</li> <li>• Migration to app influence</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>“Own The System”</b>	<b>Authoritarian Regimes (now) &amp; Multi-National Corporations (future)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balkanization of the Internet driving users to apps</li> <li>• Incentivize human behavior to create preferred reality</li> </ul>

Source: Clint Watts (Foreign Policy Research Institute & Alliance For Securing Democracy)

# Advanced Persistent Manipulators (APM)

*"Well resourced, Multi-platform, Full Spectrum"*

Objectives	Methods	Actors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Influence Audiences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Shape Opinions</li> <li>➤ Sell Products &amp; Services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Discredit Adversaries</b></li> <li>• <b>Enlist Allies &amp; Agents</b></li> <li>• <b>Incite Fear &amp; Provoke Conflict</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Real or Imagined</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Distort Reality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Re-Write History</li> <li>➤ Launder Reputations</li> <li>➤ Alternative Explanation Flooding</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Compromise Targets</b></li> <li>• <b>Deploy Social Media Advancing Narratives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ True &amp; False, Overt &amp; Covert</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Create Forgeries</b></li> <li>• <b>Leverage Agents of Influence</b></li> <li>• <b>Employ Computational Propaganda</b></li> <li>• <b>Stage Real World Provocations</b></li> <li>• <b>Create Alternative Information Outlets</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop Pseudo-science, Revised Histories</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Via Think Tanks, Non-Profits &amp; Universities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activist Groups</b></li> <li>• <b>Extremist Groups</b></li> <li>• <b>Nation States</b></li> <li>• <b>Political Campaigns, PAC's</b></li> <li>• <b>Lobbyists &amp; Public Relations Firms</b></li> <li>• <b>Extremely Wealthy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oligarchs, Celebrities, MNC Executives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Social Media Influence – Multi-platform, Full Spectrum

Objective	Platforms	Purpose & Advantages
Placement	Primary: <b>4Chan, Reddit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert forgeries into social media discussions</li> <li>• Create &amp; sow conspiracies in target audiences</li> <li>• Hide source of forgeries &amp; attribution to Kremlin</li> <li>• Spread kompromat on targeted adversaries, both true &amp; false information</li> </ul>
	Secondary: <b>8Chan, YouTube, Facebook</b>	
Propagation	<b>Twitter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread narratives through overt accounts &amp; covert personas</li> <li>• Amplify select target audience stories &amp; preferable narratives supporting Kremlin goals (<i>Computational propaganda, make falsehoods appear more believable through repetition &amp; volume</i>)</li> <li>• Inject stories into mainstream media worldwide</li> <li>• Attack political opponents, foreign policy experts &amp; adversarial media personalities</li> </ul>
Saturation	Primary: <b>Facebook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplify political &amp; social divisions, erode faith in democracy through discussions &amp; ads</li> <li>• Pull content from other platforms into trusted friends &amp; family discussions</li> <li>• Recruit target audience for organic propaganda creation/distribution, or physical provocations (protests, rallies or even violence)</li> </ul>
	Secondary: <b>Google Ads, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest</b>	
Hosting	<b>YouTube</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt propaganda posts</li> <li>• Sharing of video content to target audience via producers &amp; reporters rather than standard television channels</li> </ul>

Source: C. Watts (Foreign Policy Research Institute)



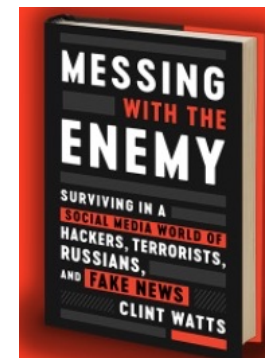
# How Do We Survive In A Social Media World?

## Countries

- Restore trust and confidence in institutions
- Reinforce data and science
- Refute falsehoods levied against the government
- Partner with social media companies to stop false information impacting public safety
- Information rating systems
- Anticipate breaches & smear campaigns

## Companies & Agencies

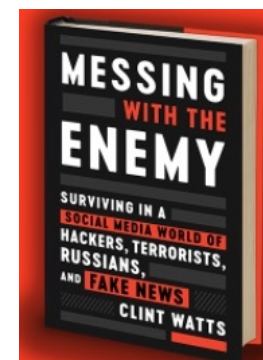
- Have a social media usage policy for employees
- User training for cyber security
- Maintain an insider threat program
- Brand & reputational protection plan
  - Respond to smear campaign
  - Strategy for public social media engagement



# How Do We Survive In A Social Media World?

## Citizens

1. Determine the costs & benefits of social media use
2. Value human connections more than virtual connections
3. Spend more time in the physical world than the virtual world
4. Know the source of the information you consume
5. Listen more than you speak, Read more than you write, Watch more than you film
6. Understand what you will tend to believe
7. Know when you are an expert and when you are not an expert



# Protecting Election 2020 From Foreign Interference

## FPRI – #FIE2020 (www.fpri.org) Foreign Influence Election 2020

## Alliance For Securing Democracy – Hamilton 68 Dashboard

