

Is Google Working with Liberal Groups Snuff Out Conservative Websites?



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CHAT 72 COMMENTS



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See below for an important update.

Google revealed in a blog post that it is now using machine learning to document "hate crimes and events" in America. They've partnered with liberal groups like ProPublica, BuzzFeed News, and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to make information about "hate events" easily accessible to journalists. And now, there are troubling signs that this

tool could be used to ferret out writers and websites that run afoul of the progressive orthodoxy.

In the announcement, [Simon Rogers](#), data editor of [Google News Labs](#), wrote:

Now, with ProPublica, we are launching a new machine learning tool to help journalists covering hate news leverage this data in their reporting.

The [Documenting Hate News Index](#) — built by the [Google News Lab](#), data visualization studio [Pitch Interactive](#) and ProPublica — takes a raw feed of Google News articles from the past six months and uses the [Google Cloud Natural Language API](#) to create a visual tool to help reporters find news happening across the country. It's a constantly-updating snapshot of data from this year, one which is valuable as a starting point to reporting on this area of news.

The Documenting Hate project launched in response to the lack of national data on hate crimes. While the FBI is required by law to collect data about hate crimes, the data is incomplete because local jurisdictions aren't required to report incidents up to the federal government.

All of which underlines the value of the Documenting Hate Project, which is powered by a number of different [news organisations and journalists](#) who collect and verify reports of hate crimes and events. Documenting Hate is informed by both reports from members of the public and raw Google News data of stories from across the nation.

On the surface, this looks rather innocuous. It's presented by Google as an attempt to create a database of hate crimes — information that should be available with a quick Google search, it should be noted. But a quick glance at the list of partners for this project should raise some red flags:

The ProPublica-led coalition includes The Google News Lab, Univision News, the New York Times, WNYC, BuzzFeed News, First Draft, Meedan, New America Media, The Root, Latino USA, The Advocate, 100 Days in Appalachia and Ushahidi. The coalition is also working with civil-rights groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, and schools such as the University of Miami School of Communications.

ProPublica poses as a middle-of-the-road non-profit journalistic operation, but in reality, it's funded by a stable of uber-liberal donors, including George Soros's Open Society Foundation and Herb and Marion Sandler, billionaire former mortgage bankers whose Golden West Financial Corp. allegedly targeted subprime borrowers with "pick-a-pay" mortgages that led to toxic assets that were blamed for the collapse of Wachovia. The Southern Poverty Law Center, of course, is infamous for [targeting legitimate conservatives groups](#), branding them as "hate groups" because they refuse to walk in lockstep with the progressive agenda. And it goes with out saying that The New York Times and BuzzFeed News lean left.

■ Tech Companies Begin Blacklisting Alt-Right Sites, Purging Them from the Internet

A perusal of [the raw data](#) that's been compiled thus far on hate stories shows articles from a wide array of center-right sites, including The Daily Caller, Breitbart News, The Washington Times, National Review, and the Washington Examiner. It also includes many articles from liberal sites like BuzzFeed News and The New York Times. [One story from PJ Media's Bridget Johnson](#) is included in the list. It's a report about a Sikh ad campaign aimed at reducing hate crimes against members of their faith community. Many of the articles are simply reports about alleged hate crimes from sources running the gamut of the political spectrum.

[ProPublica vows to diligently track "hate incidents" in the coming months.](#) "Everyday people — not just avowed 'white nationalists' — **intimidate, harass, humiliate** and even harm their fellow

Americans because of the color of their skin, how they worship or who they love." [Emphasis added] Note that they're not just focusing on hate "crimes."

It's easy enough to figure out the direction of this project by taking it for a test drive. A search for "Scalise" returned four results, one of which didn't even mention Steve Scalise, the congressman who was shot by a crazed leftist in June. A search for "Trump" during the same time period yielded more than 200 results. A search of the raw data resulted in 1178 hits for Trump and not a single mention of Scalise.

Note that Google, which recently fired an employee for expressing his counter-progressive opinions, thinks this information could be used to "help journalists covering hate news **leverage this data in their reporting.**" What do they mean by "leverage this data"? They don't say, but an email sent to several conservative writers by a ProPublica reporter may give us some indication. Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer along with some others received this from ProPublica "reporter" Lauren Kirchner:

I am a reporter at ProPublica, a nonprofit investigative newsroom in New York. I am contacting you to let you know that we are including your website in a list of sites that have been designated as hate or extremist by the American Defamation League or the Southern Poverty Law Center. **We have identified all the tech platforms that are supporting websites on the ADL and SPLC lists.**

We would like to ask you a few questions:

1) Do you disagree with the designation of your website as hate or extremist? Why?

2) **We identified several tech companies on your website: PayPal, Amazon, Newsmax, and Revcontent. Can you confirm that you receive funds from your relationship with those tech companies? How would the**

loss of those funds affect your operations, and how would you be able to replace them?

3) Have you been shut down by other tech companies for being **an alleged hate or extremist web site**? Which companies?

4) **Many people opposed to sites like yours are currently pressuring tech companies to cease their relationships with them** - what is your view of this campaign? Why?

In other words, nice website you've got there. It would be a shame if anything happened to it.

To summarize: Liberal ProPublica, working with the smear merchants at SPLC — powered by Google — sent a reporter out to issue not so veiled threats against conservative websites. It's blatantly obvious that the goal here is to tank websites they disagree with by mounting a campaign to pressure their advertisers and tech providers to drop them as clients. This comes on the heels of Google, GoDaddy, CloudFlare, Apple, and others singling out alt-right sites for destruction in the wake of the Charlottesville riots.

Robert Spencer (who also writes for PJ Media) responded to the threat [on his Jihad Watch blog](#):

The intent of your questions, and no doubt of your forthcoming article, will be to try to compel these sites to cut off any connection with us based on our opposition to jihad terror. Are you comfortable with what you're enabling? Not only are you inhibiting honest analysis of the nature and magnitude of the jihad threat, but you're aiding the attempt to deny people a platform based on their political views. This could come back to bite you if your own views ever fall out of favor. Have you ever lived in a totalitarian state, where the powerful determine the parameters of the public discourse and cut off all voice from the powerless? Do you really want to live in one now? You might find, once you get there, that it isn't as wonderful as you thought it would be.

Spencer has recently criticized [Google](#) and the [SPLC](#) here at PJ Media for their attempts to squelch dissent, so it's not surprising that they've decided to target him. Only instead of fighting Spencer's words with words of their own, they're lashing out with actions designed to silence him.

William A. Jacobson, [writing at Legal Insurrection](#), explained the seriousness of this recent spate of blacklistings:

Companies like Cloudflare and others who provide internet infrastructure will come under increasing pressure, and it won't be limited to the Storm Fronts of the world. We know from history that the "hate" label is broadly applied for political purposes, and will be used only against right-of-center websites.

Being cut off from domain registrars and other aspects of the internet backbone is something we expect from totalitarian governments. Now that power is in the control of almost-uniformly left-wing corporate managers.

He went on to warn that the threats he highlights have gone way beyond mere politics. "They are about our liberty — on the street exercising our free speech rights, accessing the internet to communicate our ideas, and preserving the protections of the First Amendment and free speech," he writes. "It's a dangerous time."

Robert Spencer wrote, "Authoritarianism in service of any cause leads to a slave society despite the best intentions of those who helped usher it in."

We're on a very slippery slope. Be assured that the left won't stop at taking down alt-right sites. They've tasted blood with their recent successes and they won't quit until we are all silenced.

UPDATE August 19 5:43 p.m.: ProPublica came out today with the [expected hit piece](#) on Richard Spencer, Jihad Watch, and others they disagree with, repeating the Southern Poverty Law Center's

smears and legitimizing the dishonest group's hate list. In the article titled "Despite Disavowals, Leading Tech Companies Help Extremist Sites Monetize Hate," Lauren Kirchner along with two fellow journalists/activists documented the recent blacklisting of "hate websites" by tech companies and, although they didn't come right out and say it, strongly implied that this should be the norm. They accept without question the hate designations bestowed by the SPLC and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The article leaves no doubt that ProPublica — which is working with Google, remember — wants to see more blacklisting. They will not rest until every one of the names on SPLC's dubious 900-member hate list is purged from the Internet. Make no mistake. They are marshaling forces to pressure advertisers and tech providers to take conservative sites down. Just take a look at [this list of Christian groups that made the list](#) because they haven't jumped on the LGBTQ bandwagon.

ProPublica [explained what they're doing](#) with excruciating duplicity under the guise of "journalism":

We supplemented the SPLC list with a list of top extremist websites provided to us by the Anti-Defamation League. The ADL does not publish this list and supplied it to us for research purposes. **[Wasn't that super helpful of the ADL?]**

See the list of websites we investigated. [Download the data.](#)

We located websites associated with the SPLC hate groups and combined it with the ADL's list of hate sites. **[Because 917 isn't enough — they want more scalps.]** We then compared the combined SPLC/ADL lists with the [Alexa's Top Million websites](#) and filtered our list to use only websites that had enough traffic to appear in the top million sites worldwide.

We then wrote software to automatically browse to each website and collect a list of external domains contacted by each website. In the wake of Charlottesville, some popular

white nationalist websites, such as The Daily Stormer, were shut down and we removed them from our list. Others, such as Richard Spencer's National Policy Initiative, were shut down after we finished collecting data and so we included them in our results.

In order to identify which domains loaded advertisements or provided payment forms for the hate sites, and to eliminate domains that only provided basic functionality, we checked the external domains we found on those sites against the Adblock Easylist. This crowdsourced list is used by ad blocking software to hide ads when users are browsing the internet.

[...]

In order to verify our results, **we visited every website and clicked on the payment links** to determine if a working credit card form was loaded, and **we visually inspected each site** to ensure that the ad networks were actually delivering ads when we loaded the page.

Note what they didn't do? They didn't actually read the sites to verify they were "hate sites." It continues:

We then contacted all the websites and the tech companies and asked them to verify whether our results were correct. In some cases, such as Google Custom Search, the company clarified for us that although some websites were using the technology, none were being paid for its use.

If the SPLC and ADL, with their (growing) list of "hate groups" is going to be the arbiter for approved online speech, we have reached a very scary place in this country. It will be the end of the Internet as we know it and America will be no better than totalitarian China and N. Korea.

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