

The Secret Playbook of Internet Trolls. “Disrupt, Misdirect and Control Internet Discussions”

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

Relevant to the evolving Fake News saga, this incisive article was first published in 2014. The objective is to smear Truth in Media

*Pleased to meet you
Hope you guess my name
What's confusing you
Is the nature of my game*

- *The Rolling Stones*

The reason that Internet trolls are effective is that people still don't understand their game.

There are [15 commonly-used trolling tactics](#) to [disrupt, misdirect and control](#) internet discussions.

As one interesting example, trolls start flame wars because - according to two professors - [swearing and name-calling shut down our ability to think and focus](#).

And trolls will often spew divisive attacks so that people argue against each other, instead of bad actions and policies of the powers-that-be. For example, [trolls will](#):

Start a religious war whenever possible using stereotypes like “all Jews are selfish”, “all Christians are crazy” or “all Muslims are terrorists”.

Yesterday, the alternative news site Common Dreams [caught a troll](#) using scores of different user names to spew anti-Semitic bile. (Common Dreams discovered that the same troll was behind the multiple user names by tracking their IP addresses. And the troll confessed to Common Dreams.)

The troll is a “a Jewish Harvard graduate in his thirties who was irritated by the website's discussion of issues involving Israel”.

He posted anti-Semitic diatribes - such as Hitler should have finished the job and killed all Jews - using one alias. Then - a couple of minutes later - he'd post an attack on the first poster using a *different* alias, claiming that criticism of Israel is the *same thing* as anti-Semitism. (Note: Holocaust survivors and Israeli ministers say [it's not](#).)

Why would a Jew post vile anti-Semitic comments? Because normal people are offended by – and don't want to be associated with – pure, naked anti-Semitism, and so they will avoid such discussions. If the discussion was originally criticizing a specific aspect of *Israeli policy*, the discussion will break down, and the actual point regarding policy will be lost.

Similarly, anti-Semitic posts weaken websites by making them seem less reputable. Indeed, Common Dreams says that the troll's anti-Semitic comments *drove away many of that site's largest donors* ... dealing a severe blow to its continued viability. That's *exactly* what trolls spewing anti-Semitic bile are *trying* to do: shut down logical discussion and discredit and weaken sites which allow rational criticism of policy.

It is well-known that foreign governments and large companies troll online. See [this](#), [this this](#), and [this](#). For example, the Israeli government is [paying students](#) to post [pro-Israeli comments](#) online.

And American students are also [attempting to influence internet discussion](#).

While the Common Dreams troll claims that he's not sponsored by the state of Israel, [government agencies](#) have [manipulated Internet](#) discussion for years. This includes the use of [multiple "socket puppet"](#) aliases. The potential for mischief is [stunning](#).

Unless we learn their game...

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