

Google algorithm fail puts 4chan's wrongly named Las Vegas gunman on top of search



IMAGE: COMPOSITE BY MASHABLE

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In times of crisis, can you trust an algorithm to deliver the most accurate and up-to-date news you're craving to get?

SEE ALSO: [A troll explains why he tweeted a fake 'missing dad' picture from the Las Vegas shooting](#)

In the aftermath of the Las Vegas shooting that left more than 50 dead and 200 injured, the answer seems to be a big fat no.

This is the Google search result when you look up the name of "Geary Danley," who is currently at the center of a 4chan-inspired conspiracy theory that wrongly identifies him as the gunman:



IMAGE: GOOGLE NEWS/SCREENGAB

Two out of four results are 4chan threads from the [online lair of the alt-right, /pol/](#), which is infamous for trolling and spreading misinformation and fake news (another is Iranian state-funded *Press TV*).

That Google News algorithm would put 4chan threads on top of search is crazy enough, but it gets even more nonsensical when you consider the whole conspiracy at the core of it.

It all started after [police named Marilou Danley](#) as a "person of interest" following the mass shooting. She was later located and identified as companion of the dead suspected gunman, 64-year-old Stephen Paddock.

But before that, 4chan /pol/ was abuzz with people doxxing the woman and trying to find links that could direct them to the suspect. They found this guy, Geary Danley, who they alleged was married to Marilou and who liked several anti-Trump, left-wing pages.

That makes him the perfect target for some alt-right trolls, who immediately posted threads on 4chan /pol/ claiming he was identified as the suspect:



IMAGE: 4CHAN/POL/SCREENGAB



IMAGE: 4CHAN/POL/SCREENGAB



IMAGE: 4CHAN/POL/SCREENGAB

Some 4chan threads have now been deleted in the light of police finally naming the suspect. But it's worth reiterating: The dead gunman's name is Stephen Paddock, according to police.

UPDATE Oct. 2 10:20 a.m. PT:

Google released a short statement promising it would continue to make "algorithmic improvements".



It also appears the problem hasn't been limited to Google. Reporters and users online noticed Monday that Facebook's trending topics page was surfacing results from [Kremlin-sponsored media outlet](#) Sputnik News.

Facebook later [said](#) its Global Security Operations Center noticed the posts but their removal was delayed and the company "deeply regrets" the confusion caused.

Right now, FB's trending topic page for the Las Vegas shooting features two (2) posts from a

Russian propaganda
outlet. pic.twitter.com/jDR1V0zzPy

— Kevin Roose (@kevinroose) [October 2, 2017](#)

Another reporter, meanwhile, pointed out what happens when you head to YouTube.

facebook and google news are a mess, but as usual they've got nothing on first page of (logged out, incognito) youtube results pic.twitter.com/FEPFwZKt7e

— John Herrman (@jwherrman) [October 2, 2017](#)

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