BUSTED: The Inside Story Of How The Kamala Harris Campaign Manipulates Reddit (And Breaks The Rules) To Control The Platform

By: Reddit Lies



Image CreditKamala Harris/YouTube

Part one of an investigation into how the Harris-Walz campaign is manipulating social media sites to artificially boost their popularity, spread election disinformation, and skirt election laws.



Reddit Lies More Articles

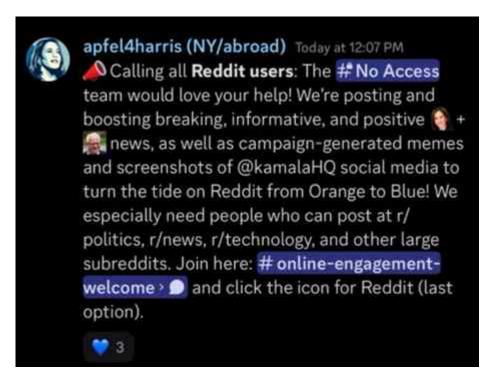
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For years, many have speculated that Democrat political candidates may be filling social media with fake posts to deceive the public and make their campaigns and causes seem more popular than they are. These claims have often been dismissed, citing that Democrat voters are already more likely to be on the internet compared to their not-as-tech-savvy Republican counterparts. This would suggest that the constant flood of left-leaning content on websites such as Reddit was merely a reflection of the userbase. However, many people simply couldn't shake the feeling that something was just *off*, especially in the run up to major elections. Despite my fervent belief that something was amiss, I never had any direct proof that Democrats were actively manipulating social media.

That all changed two weeks ago, when X user <u>@jessiprincey</u> replied to one of my posts with a screenshot from a Discord server, seemingly related to the Harris-Walz campaign:



I immediately messaged Jess, and soon received a link to the Discord server where this operation was taking place. What I'd find there went far beyond algorithmic manipulation. I discovered massive "astroturfing" campaigns operating across multiple platforms. "Astroturfing" is a political and marketing term that describes creating swarms of coordinated and/or paid messages and posts to deceptively create the illusion of support from ordinary people. Essentially, "astroturfing" is the opposite of grassroots support.

In this case, there is a team of volunteers who spam social media with posts that specifically promote Kamala. They then have other users pretend to be random individuals who just happened across the post and decided to comment. It's no different than a shady company paying a team to write a bunch of fake Amazon reviews about their product to make it appear to be a better and more popular product than it is.

On Amazon, that might result in a product getting more sales. In a U.S. election, it could mean that the falsely advertised candidate receives more votes. This behavior is not only incredibly dishonest, but in many cases, it directly violates the Terms of Service they've agreed to by operating on certain social media platforms.

In part one of a three-part series, we're going to look at how the Harris-Walz campaign has manipulated the popular website Reddit, one of the top social media sites with 500 million users, to publish campaign propaganda.

Astroturfing on Reddit

Reddit is broken into thousands of message boards on discrete topics, known as "subreddits." The Politics subreddit and several others are being actively targeted by the Harris-Walz campaign, with notable success. Since the Reddit astroturfing operation started, it has rapidly developed an organizational structure — complete with <u>roles</u> for team members, spreadsheets for tracking their analytics, and "Key Messaging" to stick to when making a social media post.

I found that 126 of the top 1,000 posts in the past month on r/Politics were posted by official Harris-Walz campaign volunteers. Owning one out of every eight of all top posts in r/Politics is not an easy feat, and it doesn't just *happen*. Here's how they achieved it.

Every weekday morning, Harris for President staffers like Gabrielle Lynn post the "Daily Messaging Guidance" to the server's Reddit channel. It usually consists of articles and data that the Harris-Walz campaign wants to boost, as well as "key messaging" that their Reddit volunteers should stick to.



Gabrielle Lynn [HFP Staff] D 10/18/2024 9:38 AM

Good morning @Redditor! Back at it again with the daily messaging guidance:

Continue uplifting the VP's interviews

- News Article: Fox News interview with Vice President Kamala Harris scores 7.8 million viewers
- Reach Content: (Video) VP Harris Calls Out Fox Whitewashing Trump's Extremism
- · News Article: Key lines from Kamala Harris vs. Fox News
- Reach Content: (Video) Trump vs. Harris Fox News Appearances
- News Article: Kamala Harris' Fox News Interview Wins Over Swing Voters: 'In Her Element'

Keep calling out Trump's unstable behavior and dangerous rhetoric

- · News Article: Trump delivers profanity, below the belt digs at Catholic charity banquet
- Reach Content: (Video) Trump Calls January 6th "Day of Love
- · News Article/Video: Would Trump's tariffs trigger a global trade war? Experts weigh in:
- · Reach Content: (Video) Played By Fox vs. Trump's Full Answer
- · News Article: Trump is Speaking Like Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini
- News Article: How Trump's Radical Tariff Plan Could Wreck Our Economy

Highlight Trump's poor record on reproductive rights

- · Reach Content: (Video) What Happened to Amber Thurman was Preventable
- . News Article/Video: Trump says he's the 'father of IVF' and that he just recently learned what it is

@apfel4harris (NY/abroad) Let me know any flags whenever you get the chance and I'll drop these into Reddit Organizing 🤕



Keep up the amazing energy and work!!!







Gabrielle Lynn [HFP Staff] (D) 10/17/2004 10:50 A Good morning @Redditor! 19 days to go and we are all gas, no brakes 🙆 Each and every one of you is making a difference, contributing to shaping the narrative online with quite literally MILLIONS of engagements over the course of mere days!! Here's today's messaging guidance 😂

Uplift VP Harris's interview with Fox News (as I see you're already doing!!)

- News Article/Video: Harris catches Fox News edit of Transp's 'exembes from within' threat
 News Article: 5 Talianways From Harris's Combistive Intensies on Fox News
 News Article: Fox News's Intensies of Kamala Harris was grievance theafar, not political journals.

Continue to call out Trump's unhinged, unchecked, and unstable behavior

- News Article: What we know about Trump's medical history
- Reach Content: (Image) Trampie Linhinges
- Reach Content: (Video) Mantage of Trump Distribution
- Reach Content: (Video) "Enemy Wittin" Clip Played at Rail
 Reach Content: (Image) Trimp's Age and Health Concerns

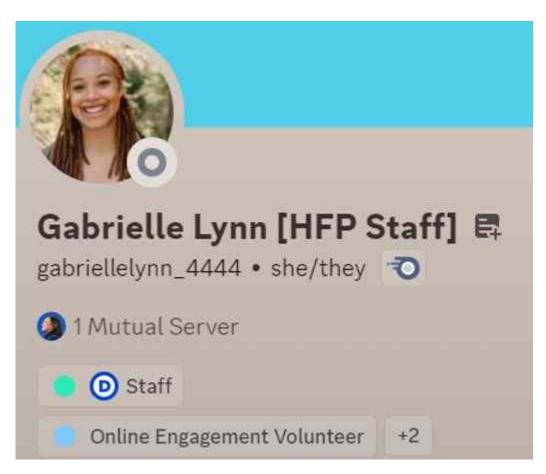
Highlight how much reproductive rights are at stake with Trump's Project 2025

- Reach Content: (Image) Republicans and IVF
 News Article: Donald Trump Calls Himself the "Father of IVE" Then Says He Only Learned What IVF Was This Year, at Women's Issues Town Hall

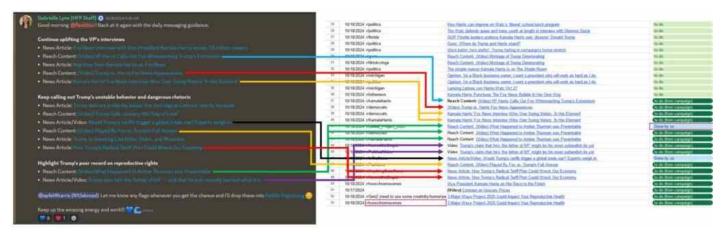
@apfel4harris (NY/abroad) Let me know any flags on getting these into the sheet and thank you for all your incredible work!!

Reach helps progressive campaigns and organizations meet people

On Gabrielle Lynn's profile, you'll find a Staff icon (the blue D), which indicates that she is a paid Democrat staffer. In this case, Gabrielle is a Harris for President staffer.



The links compiled by official Harris-Walz staffers, along with other articles submitted by volunteers, are added to a Google Spreadsheet called "Reddit Organizing."

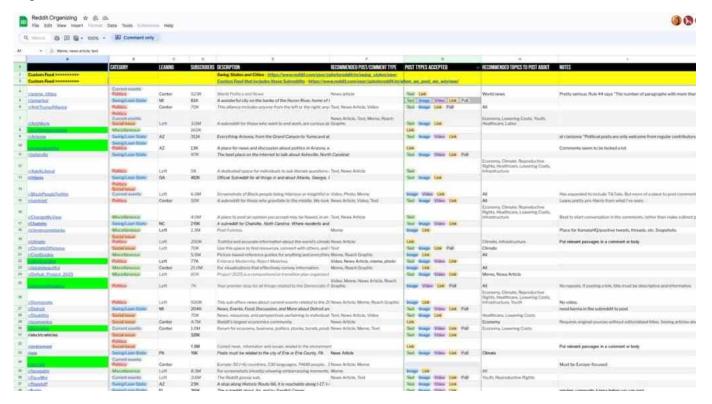


Kamala's "Lead Posters" (people who have demonstrated a "cultural" knowledge of Reddit) then choose which links will resonate best with different Reddit communities. For instance, a link about

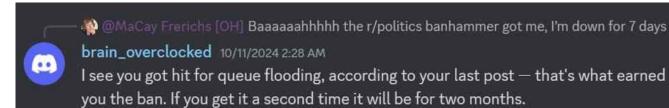
"how Project 2025 impacts reproductive health" will be directed towards communities with young women as their primary user base, whereas news about Kamala's Fox News interview "winning over swing state voters" gets directed to Reddit's Democrat communities, and possibly to people living in swing states.

r/kamalaharris	Reach Content: (Video) VP Harris Calls Out Fox Whitewashing Trump's Extremism	
r/democrats	(Video) Trump vs. Harris Fox News Appearances	
r/democrats	Kamala Harris' Fox News Interview Wins Over Swing Voters: "In Her Element"	
r/KamalaHarris	Kamala Harris' Fox News Interview Wins Over Swing Voters; "In Her Element"	
r/Defeat_Project_2025	Reach Content: (Video) What Happened to Amber Thurman was Preventable	
r/democrats	Reach Content: (Video) What Happened to Amber Thurman was Preventable	
r/KamalaHarris	Reach Content: (Video) What Happened to Amber Thurman was Preventable	
r/NewsoftheStupid	Video: Trump's claim that he's 'the father of IVF' might be his most outlandish lie yet	
r/PoliticalVideo	Video: Trump's claim that he's 'the father of IVF' might be his most outlandish lie yet	
r/InTheNews	News Article/Video: Would Trump's tariffs trigger a global trade war? Experts weigh in	
r/FoxNews	Reach Content: (Video) Played By Fox vs. Trump's Full Answer	
r/AnythingGoesNews	News Article: How Trump's Radical Tariff Plan Could Wreck Our Economy	
r/NewsoftheStupid	News Article: How Trump's Radical Tariff Plan Could Wreck Our Economy	
r/twoxchromosomes	Vice President Kamala Harris on Her Race to the Finish	
	(Video) Contrast on Grocery Prices	
r/GenZ (need to use some creativity/humor/pe	3 Major Ways Project 2025 Could Impact Your Reproductive Health	
r/twoxchromosomes	3 Major Ways Project 2025 Could Impact Your Reproductive Health	

Harris-Walz campaign volunteers have created a database of more than 100 subreddits — each containing detailed information on what kind of content they permit, what topics perform the best, and any specific notes about each community, such as how much "karma" or cumulative upvotes one needs to post in each subreddit.



After their links have been collected and categorized, volunteer "Posters" will take a handful of the links provided and post them to their assigned subreddits. Kamala's posters, however, don't simply spam links haphazardly. They use a calculated, sequential post timing metric to avoid Reddit's built-in spam filters. Harris-Walz campaign volunteers often discuss their ban-avoidance tactics in their Discord server, while continuing to spam Reddit with their collected links.

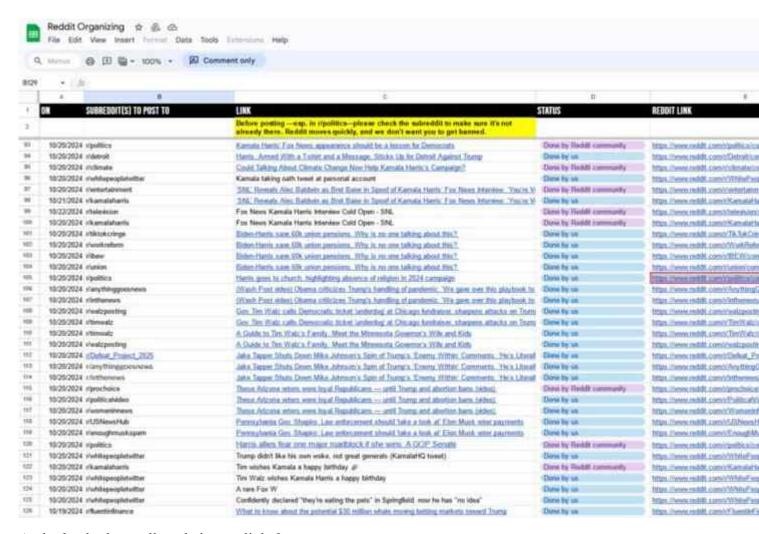


When posting submissions to r/politics keep in mind a few rules:

- Stick to 3/day it gives you the greatest posting flexibility and offers you a spacing
 of one submission mistake. It's quite possible to do up to 4/day but you have to keep
 strict timing and a single mistake can be costly. Avoid 5/day it's an extremely
 inflexible posting rate with the highest chance of earning a ban.
- Space your posts at a minimum of 20 minutes apart (I prefer 30 minutes). The side bar may say 10 min. but the way the site runs timing down to the minute is practically impossible. Likewise, if there are sitewide issues timing can be off.
- Always check that the post you plan to submit hasn't already been posted.
- If you delete a post it counts against your #/day, if a mod deletes your post —
 including the automod it does not count against it. Thus if your headline does not
 meet requirements and gets taken down you can resubmit without issue.

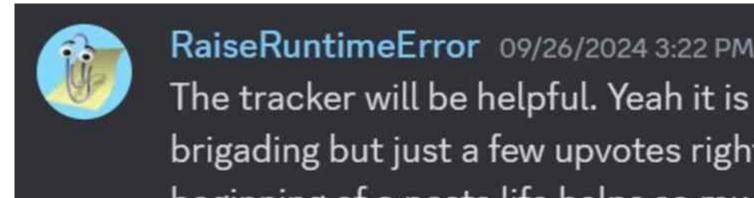


Once the users make their Reddit posts, they return to the spreadsheet and update it with a link to their brand-new post.



And why do they collect their post links?

They collect their Reddit links so Kamala's volunteers can flood the post with likes and comments, thus making them appear more active. This, in turn, triggers the algorithm to make the post appear in more user timelines. Reddit's post activity algorithm is extremely simple, and can easily be abused, which is known on Reddit as "brigading."



beginning of a posts life helps so muclarge subs like r/PoliticalHumor. as lo

few upvotes it will never be an issue.



THAI





How Effective is This?

While the Harris-Walz Discord server was created many months ago, the spreadsheet to track their vote manipulation on Reddit was only implemented on Oct. 4.



Gabrielle Lynn [HFP Staff] D 10/04/2024 2:27 PM

Hi @Redditor! Today's messaging guidance is to amplify the diverse support Kamala her several notable Republican endorsements and her willingness to work across the

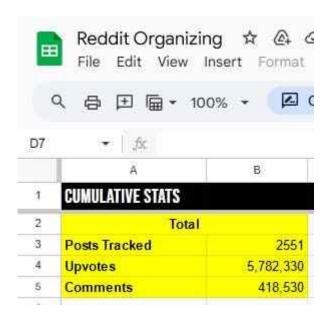
We're also rolling out a NEW subreddit tracker to help maximize our impact or @apfel4harris (NY/abroad) for helping create this awesome system!!
We'll post the PDF of the tracker each day with the daily messaging guidance
The subreddits to start online conversations in. Consider sharing a Call to Action in the start to Kamala Harris and the Democrats, inviting members to our Online Engagement The Opportunities page will display specific opportunities to interact with Reddit por guidance and give members the option to upvote, comment, or create a new post.

- Here are some news articles you can share:
- Liz Cheney dubs Trump 'petty, vindictive and cruel' as she campaigns with Harris first time
- Harris consoles those devastated by Helene in Georgia a contrast with Trump's
- Here's some content you can use from Reach:

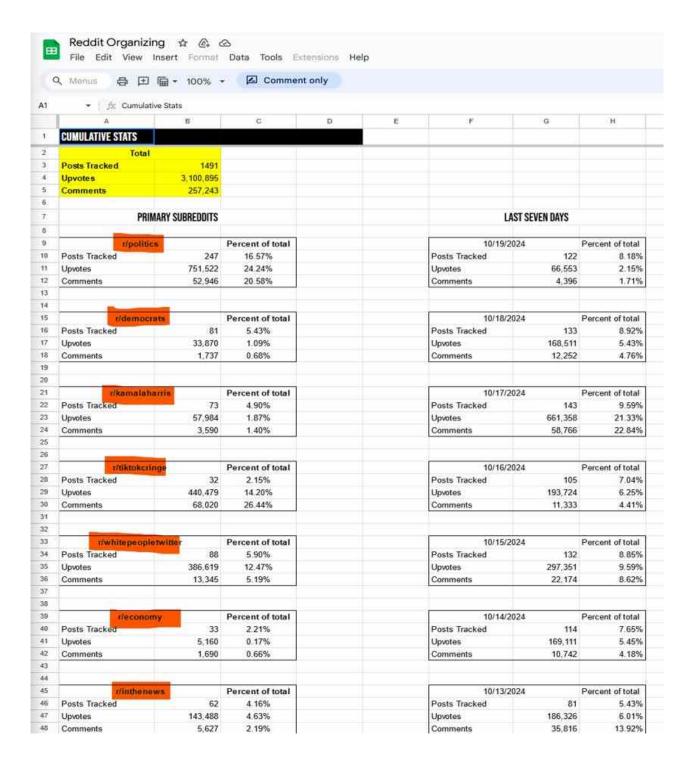
 Mark Cuban Endorsement

Let us know how your Reddit interactions are going! Drop any links to Reddit post campaign (catalog)

Over the course of 15 days, this group of volunteers, directed by official Harris-Walz campaign staff, was able to make 2,551 posts to Reddit. So far, they have received more than 5.7 million upvotes and 418,000 comments on those posts, according to their own data:



Currently, they're posting approximately 120 unique links to Reddit per day.



However, Kamala's volunteer data wasn't enough for me. I wanted to know just how effective this campaign has been. So, I exported their spreadsheet and got to work.

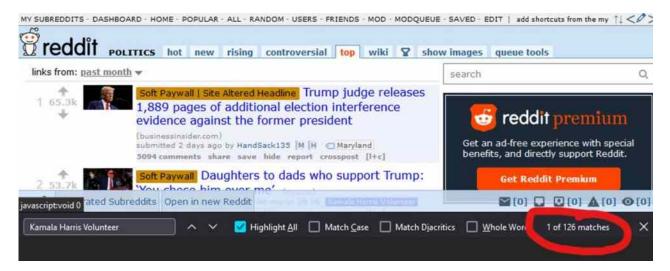
Using their oh-so cleverly named "Please Upvote These!" spreadsheet, I filtered the information to find posts exclusively made by official Harris-Walz campaign volunteers. I found 1,728 posts created by 67 unique Harris-Walz campaign volunteers since Oct. 4, many of which received a LOT of traction in a very short time span.

Ok-Strawberry-9474	Iknowwecanmakeit	Professional_Bug81
rhomanji	Hawkgirl2006	nutritionvegan
MiltonManners	thedoc617	MisterEayes
zphotoreddit	gomommago	wordswordsNow
UnluckyStar237	HerrWolken	Blu_Skies_In_My_Head
peterst28	BlueDog2024	makingloudness
MarvelsGrantMan136	vulturesponge	RecklessThor
Dizzy-Inspection-492	Darknight2203	Strict-Marsupial6141
takemusu	h20polo	notsociallyakward
Th3TruthIs0utTh3r3	brain_overclocked	JoeNooner
Curious_Art_5239	Soggy-Bottom_Boy	pinkblush99
yorocky89A	gdazInSeattle	uphatbrew
Schmidaho	Muffzillla	RJW_Gilman
TiredForEternity	John3262005	Nasjere
plz-let-me-in	Lifeguard_Amphibian	whatclimatecrisis
FunkYouInParticular	redditor01020	Rlynn11
Lena_Lena_A	Crazy_Brandon99	blindinganusofhope
Odd_Seaweed_3420	TheSoupThief	HeavyVeterinarian350
bluetieboy	Cute-Perception2335	InconvenientTruth18
winduken	Level_Investigator_1	Cosmic-Chen
Annual-Comp <mark>l</mark> aint-755	Free_Swimming	biospheric
Coffee_n_wifi	Master_Shoulder_9657	
Unusual-State1827	TheLaraSuChronicles	

I tagged each of their usernames with a "Kamala Harris Volunteer" label using a browser extension called <u>Reddit Enhancement Suite</u>, and went to their targeted subreddits to determine exactly how successful they'd been.

I found their primary target to be r/Politics, the largest community on Reddit for discussing U.S. politics with more than 8 million members. I sorted the top 1,000 posts of the past month, and what I discovered shocked me.

Of the top 1,000 posts on r/Politics, 126 were written by a user bearing the mark "Kamala Harris Volunteer."



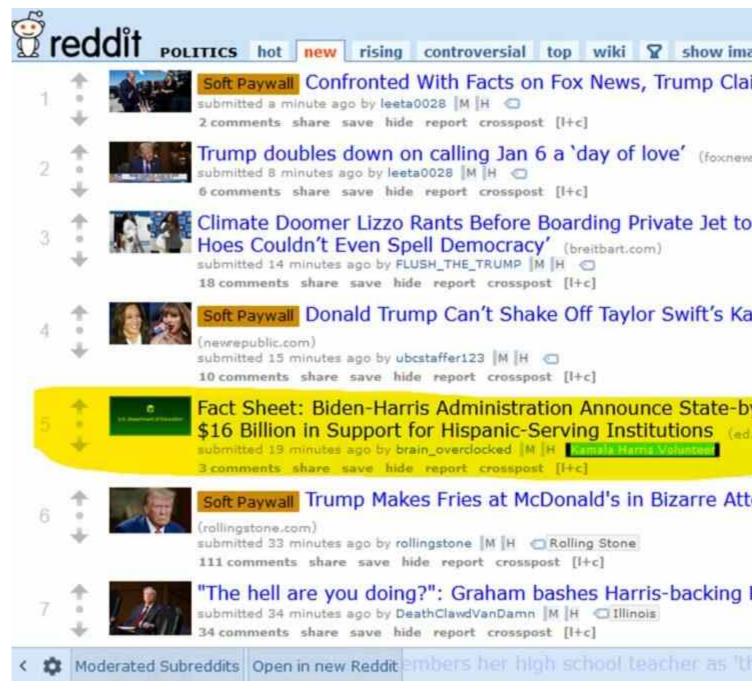
This means 12.5 percent of the most upvoted content on r/Politics came directly from volunteers of the Harris-Walz campaign.

Remember, this operation has only picked up steam in the last two weeks. On Oct. 17, eight of the 30 hottest posts on r/Politics were created by Harris-Walz campaign volunteers. That's **over 25 percent.**

Donald Trump Cancels Second Mainstream Interview in Days Kamala Harris shares full Trump clip after accusing Fox News of aditing set tweet Trump NRA rally in Savannah canceled. Fox Nevs anchor Bret Baier admits Kamala Harris did damage to Trump: "She was on a mission" 🚕 🚐 Dave Bautista Calls Donald Trump a "Whiny Little 8---" Who "Wears Nore Makeup Than Dolly Parton': His Gut is 'Like Emission Even Bret Baier Admits Hamis Outsmarted Him in Interview Donald Trump reportedly calls off NBC Interview in Philadelphia | It would be the third interview with a main ** **== Fox News interview with Kamala Harris draws 7.1 million viewers, more than quadruple channel's average Trump Backs Out of NRA Event Amid Slew of Cancellations 10 3424 Georgia judge declares 7 new election rules passed by Trump-backed state board 'illegal, unconstitutional an TATES OF SHIRE Bret Baier Describes Kamala Hamis as "Tough to Redirect" like Obama (#ader/book.om) Trump MAGA supporters crash Harris' rally ... and she smokes them with a great one-liner has a reliable should be supported by a contract to the support of Mark Cuban will campaign for Kamala Harris in 3 key swing states have a seemed from the same time over the court in the same time. Lawrence: Bret Saier lied, and Kamala Harris forcefully responds Trump team silent over teleprompter at his town hall—after building frenzied conspiracy about Harris having one (as the last triangle free are the second like) Trump Says Harris Running Against Him Is a Criminal Act More than 7 million watched Harris Fox Nevs interview (million) Trump's legal team tried to keep Stormy Daniels quiet shead of 2024 election, MSNBC reports Saterial Dozens of leading Republicans main Donald Trump is dangerous. Voters, listen to them Entry, of After Harris nails Fox News and 60 Minutes interviews, ranting Trump makes absurd demand 🔠 Fox News's interview of Kamala Harris was grievance theater, not political journalism theres Trump's "Swiss" Watches Traced to Derelict Wyoming Strip Mail Kamala Harris Punctures The Fox (levs Subble In Her Own Way makeup than Dolly Parton Siden Has Now Conceled Student Debt for Over 1 Million Sorrowers commercial countries to find the makers of Trump's new "Swiss-made" watches. We ended up at a shopping center in V Letter: Trump has bested his opponents by popular vote exactly zero times New FTC 'Click-to-Cancel' Rule Marks Latest Pro-Consumer Win by Lina Khan — "Consumers shouldn't have to navig

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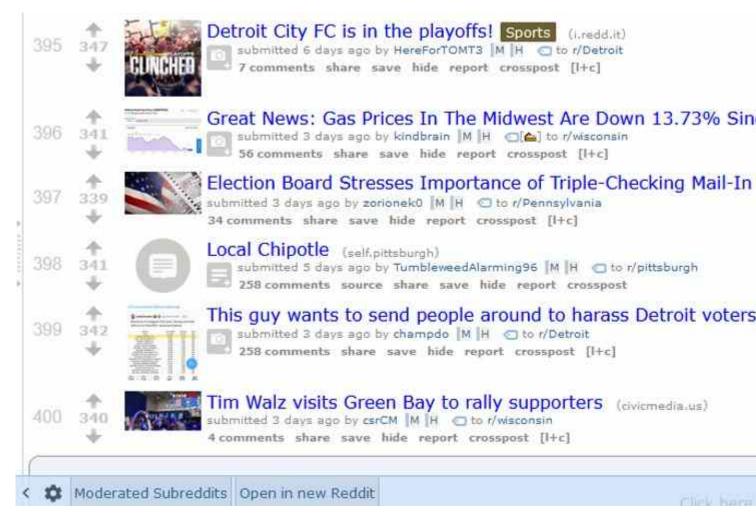
On Oct. 20, 13 of the 100 newest posts were created by Harris-Walz campaign volunteers.



Beyond r/Politics, they also target swing state subreddits, which tend to be a lot smaller in number and far less strictly moderated. They created a collection of swing state subreddits, including communities dedicated to their towns and cities, which streamlines the process of targeting them with Harris-Walz supplied messaging.

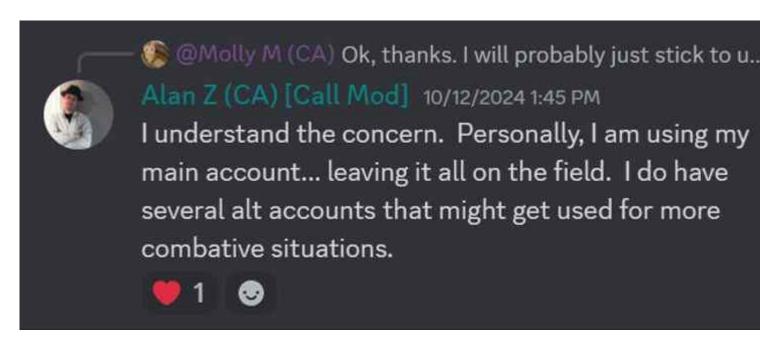
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swing states subreddits
curated by /u/zphotoreddit
create a copy
Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North
Carolina, Georgia, Arizona, Nevada
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 /r/arizona
 /r/asheville
 /r/Atlanta
 /r/Augusta
 /r/Charlotte
 /r/Detroit
 /r/Flagstaff
 /r/Georgia
 /r/grandrapids
 /r/Harrisburg
 /r/lansing
 /r/LasVegas
 /r/madisonwi
 /r/Michigan
 /r/milwaukee
 /r/Nevada
 /r/NorthCarolina
 /r/Pennsylvania
 /r/philadelphia
 /r/phoenix
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 /r/raleigh
 /r/Reno
 /r/savannah
 /r/Tucson
 /r/wisconsin
created by zphotoreddit
                       a multireddit for 8 day
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Because these communities are small, it's a lot easier to get their posts to rank. In the week between Oct. 13 and the 20, 10 percent (39 of 400 posts) of top posts in their swing state collection were created by Harris-Walz volunteers, many of whom aren't even from a swing state.

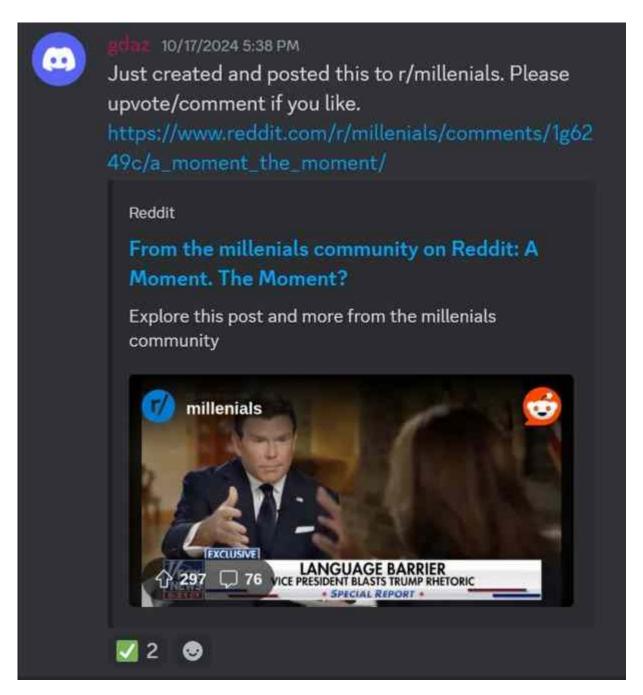


It's safe to say that the Harris-Walz astroturfing operation has fundamentally compromised the authenticity of political discussions on Reddit. Kamala is actively ruining the internet by making her campaign look far more popular than it is in reality.

The actions, while seemingly not illegal, directly violate Reddit's Terms of Service. The volunteers of the Harris-Walz campaign are using multiple accounts to manipulate votes ...



and solicit votes from others ...



in a group formed to coordinate voting:

apfel4harris (NY/abroad) 10/11/2024 8:43 AM
I've been pushing our links to the Please Upvote! Tab
(third one) so that you can find our posts from the
previous two days and upvote them. I color the date
cells in Column A so they stand out. But not sure if it
is better to upvote posts right away after they go
live. I wonder if the group here would find the new
"click me" posts disruptive or not.

These are all direct violations of Reddit's content policy, which explicitly forbids the types of vote manipulation that is encouraged on the Harris-Walz volunteer Discord server.

Vote manipulation is prohibited on Reddit and goes against the rules, whether it is manual, programmatic, or otherwise. Some common forms of vote manipulation include:

- Using multiple accounts and voting services: Creating and employing multiple accounts, voting services, or any software to manipulate vote counts by either increasing or decreasing them.
- Soliciting votes: Requesting or encouraging people to upvote or downvote specific posts, either on Reddit or through social networks, messaging, etc. for personal gain.
- Participating in Group Voting: Joining or forming groups that coordinate votes, either on a specific post, a user's posts, content from a domain, etc.

Engaging in vote cheating or manipulation will result in temporary or permanent banning of your Reddit account.

If you come across instances of vote manipulation that you'd like to report, please visit this page.

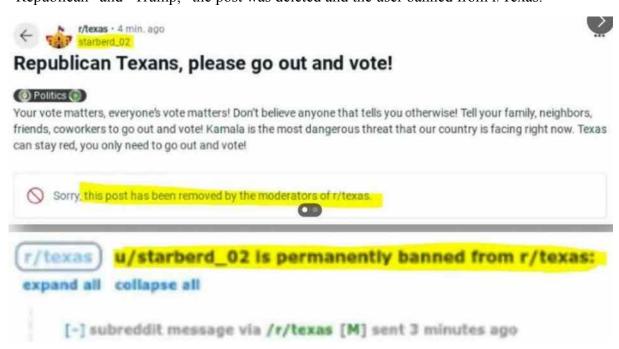
Why is This So Effective?

For those unfamiliar with Reddit, the site tends to be very left-leaning, largely due to the biases of activist Reddit moderators. Here's a recent example:

The following post was made by a Democrat redditor to r/Texas. The call for Democrats specifically to get out and vote was met with heaps of praise and showered with upvotes.



However, when the same text was posted but with "Democrat" and "Kamala" replaced with "Republican" and "Trump," the post was deleted and the user banned from r/Texas.



It's unknown if Reddit is aware of the policy violations being performed by the Harris-Walz campaign. While it's possible that their accounts will be banned when their actions come to light, it is also entirely possible that Reddit is giving the Harris-Walz campaign free rein to violate the rules. In 2018, Reddit's CEO Steve Huffman plainly stated in an interview with The New Yorker:

I'm confident that Reddit could sway elections. We wouldn't do it, of course. And I don't
know how many times we could get away with it. But, if we really wanted to, I'm sure
Reddit could have swayed at least this election, this once.

The author runs the popular Twitter account @reddit_lies.