

A person wearing a dark hoodie is seen from the side, looking at a screen. The background is a dark, abstract image with blue and purple hues, possibly representing a digital or social media environment. The person's face is not visible, and the focus is on their posture and the screen they are viewing.

Graphika

Interpreting Social Qs: Implications of the Evolution of QAnon

Melanie Smith, Graphika

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Special Reports

Interpreting Social Qs: Implications of the Evolution of QAnon

By Melanie Smith, Graphika

Introduction

The past few months have seen a wealth of mainstream news reporting on the conspiratorial social media movement known as QAnon. Some of these news pieces have charted [its growth](#) in the Covid-19 era, documented the presence of its supporters on Twitter and [Facebook](#) and covered [the recent actions](#) taken by [these platforms](#) to restrict its influence.

Graphika has been analyzing the QAnon community on an ongoing basis for over two years, developing a set of network maps that allow for an understanding of how this movement has changed over time. This includes regular assessments of the movement's potential to cause real-world harm as a result of its involvement in topics like Covid-19 and the worldwide protests that began after the murder of George Floyd. Frequently discussed in publications about QAnon is the FBI's decision to designate the movement a [domestic terrorism threat](#) in August of last year - while Graphika understands the majority of QAnon content to be innocuous, there are a number of situations in which this potential harm has become realized.

When we first mapped the network of QAnon supporters in June 2018, it was the most dense conspiratorial network Graphika had ever studied. This means that accounts engaged in QAnon theories at the time had an astounding rate of mutual followership and represented an extremely tight-knit online community. The likelihood with a community this dense is that accounts are exposed to, and engage with, very similar content to each other. Despite its significant growth and undeniable 'mainstreaming' over the past two years, QAnon continues to be exactly such a community.

After closely observing the evolution of the movement, this briefing lays out three concerns regarding the threat posed by the QAnon movement to the US elections in November, and to democratic processes worldwide:

- I. The autonomy and adaptability of the QAnon movement continues to be routinely underestimated.**
- II. Foreign actors, predominantly Russia, have shown some interest in targeting QAnon supporters: while there have not been significant attempts to leverage this community to date, this remains a concern.**
- III. This is not just happening in the US - the internationalization of this community has spawned a global anti-government conspiracy movement.**

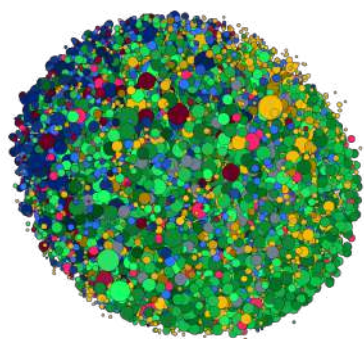
The QAnon movement supports a set of nebulous conspiracy theories that revolve around the belief that there is a 'global elite cabal' whose members are embedded in influential positions in government, media, finance and the arts. In the US context, QAnon supporters usually also believe that this is a cabal of pedophiles who are orchestrating child sex trafficking networks, and that Donald Trump is working to expose and dismantle these networks, all while being continually hindered by a set of individuals and organizations referred to as 'the deep state'.

An individual known as Q (a reference to a level of US security clearance) began posting somewhat coded messages known as 'Q drops' on Trump's progress in dismantling the 'liberal cabal' on 4chan in late 2017, and continues to do so on 8kun. Support for the QAnon movement has grown exponentially since then, with supporters in over 25 countries and elected politicians championing its cause. While there are sporadic offline events at which QAnon supporters gather, a large proportion of their mobilization occurs on mainstream and fringe social media platforms. QAnon presence is most widely noted on Facebook, Twitter and Reddit, however Discord, Telegram, Parler, and various message boards host significant QAnon support communities.

I. The Autonomy and Adaptability of the QAnon Movement Continues to Be Routinely Underestimated.

Much is made of QAnon's relationship with the broad Trump support movement online. Our research shows that the inseparability of these groups poses a significant challenge to QAnon's description as 'fringe'. However, while deeply embedded within it, analysis of these networks on Twitter demonstrates the QAnon community becoming increasingly autonomous over time. In the June 2018 map (below left), the saturation of Trump supporters within a highly

interconnected map largely collapses any clear distinction between the two groups. Trump support accounts here are shown in green, and QAnon supporter accounts in yellow. Yet, in a February 2020 update to this map (below right), the Trump support group (again in green) has shifted visibly further from the explicitly conspiratorial QAnon accounts (shown in red).



QAnon Network Map ([June 2018](#))



QAnon Network Map ([February 2020](#))

Despite this increase in the autonomy of the movement in a structural sense, QAnon still appears to rely upon Trump support accounts to amplify its messaging. The volume of content produced and shared by QAnon accounts is staggering in comparison to other political communities we study. The network maps above are deliberately reduced to capture the most highly connected accounts and are not intended to represent the entirety of QAnon supporters on Twitter. These 13.8k accounts in the image on the right alone posted more than 41 million tweets in 30 days between January and February - between July and August this rose to an estimated 62.5 million.

In the same 30 days between January and February, these accounts also produced just shy of 18 million individual in-network mentions across 3,723,284 unique relationships. These in-network mentions occur when one account in the network mentions another account in the same network. Much of this in-network traffic is the result of “Q Armies” who openly coordinate to amplify content on Twitter, however QAnon is also known to distribute its efforts across multiple platforms. Over the same initial 30-day period in February, accounts produced more than 380,000 posts that included a YouTube link. Spam-like patterns of hyperactive behavior are especially common in QAnon’s sharing of YouTube content. For example, in a live monitor, 146 accounts shared the exact same YouTube video 25 times or more, while 11 users shared the same link more than 100 times.

QAnon’s success in spreading content beyond its immediate community has been most obvious with the release of three YouTube ‘documentaries’. Two of these were the Covid-19 conspiracy videos ‘Plandemic’ and ‘America’s Frontline Doctors’, the rapid spread of which social media platforms struggled to contain. The third, ‘Out of Shadows’, is a “documentary film” produced by

and featuring major figures within the QAnon movement. It was first posted to YouTube on April 10th, and at present, has almost 18 million views. The popularity of this film alone speaks to the movement's ability to produce and amplify content that receives enthusiastic engagement from within the core QAnon community, while also grabbing the attention of external audiences who may be receptive to their message.

Over the past year, we have witnessed the involvement of QAnon accounts in numerous, seemingly unrelated political conversations. Like many conspiracy communities, QAnon has thrived in part as a result of diversification and this has presented a unique threat over the past few months in the areas of protest-related violence and COVID-19 health misinformation. There are a few reasons for this success. QAnon's "big-tent" ideology is all-encompassing and flexible, capable of assimilating a wide range of existing and burgeoning conspiracy theories. Coupled with the ubiquity of QAnon supporter accounts online, these loose ideological boundaries enable the movement to be highly adaptive to the news cycle.

Since November 2016, Graphika has produced over a thousand network maps on divergent, wide-ranging issues in numerous online contexts around the world - 145 of these maps contain at least one cluster of accounts that support QAnon. This set includes conversations around topics that are seemingly irrelevant to the QAnon community, for example:

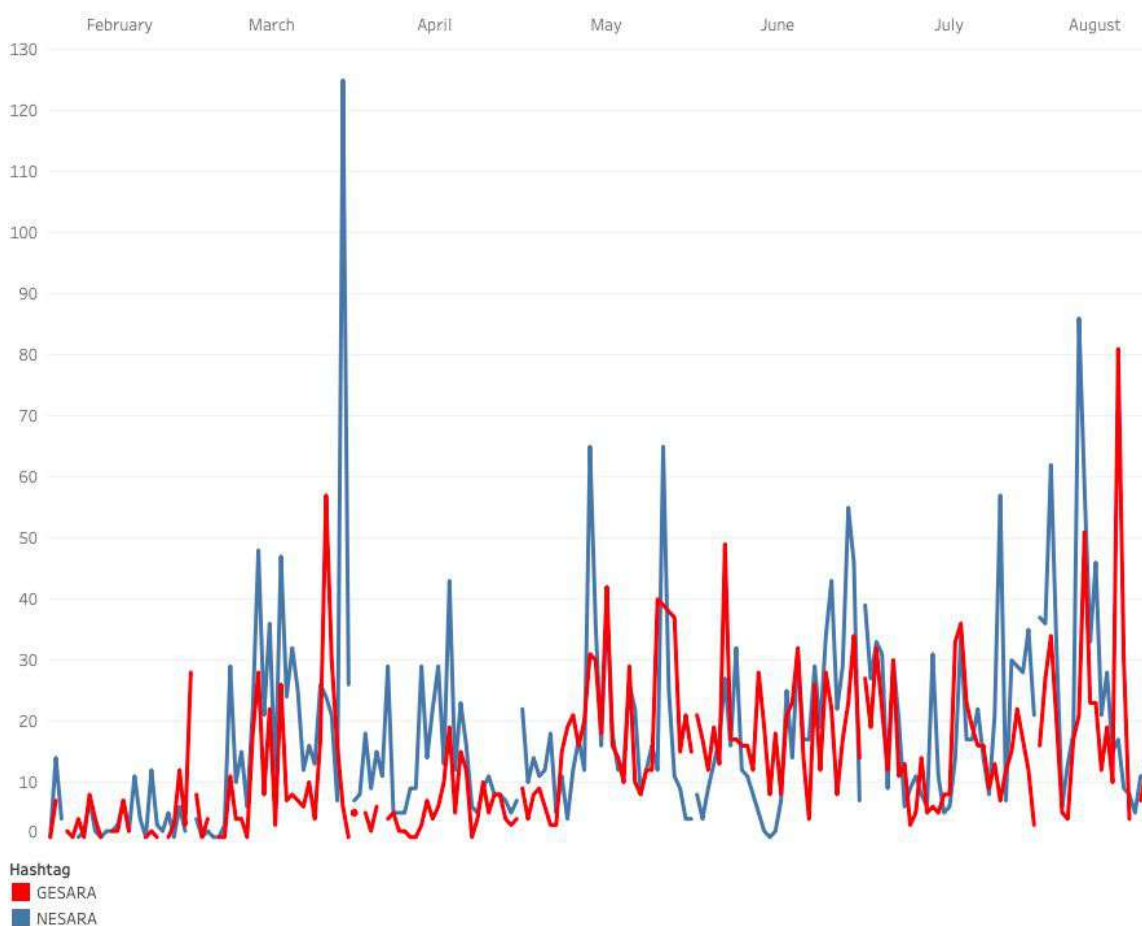
- the Idlib offensive in Syria in October 2017;
- the boycott of Nike over their campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick in September 2018;
- the release of an anti-abortion movie called *Unplanned* in February 2019;
- reactions to Gladys Knight singing the National Anthem at the 2019 Super Bowl;
- the fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in April 2019;
- the recent phenomenon of 'Zoombombing'.

Clusters of QAnon accounts in the above maps involve themselves in these conversations by using hashtags specific to the event or topic of conversation, and presenting a QAnon theory as an 'explanation'. Accordingly, the fire at Notre Dame cathedral was described both as a 'false flag' and "symbolic for the Cabal's downfall".

QAnon followers were even able to shoehorn the recent explosion at the port of Beirut into their overarching child sex trafficking and anti-establishment theories. Multiple authorities have determined that the explosion was the result of a spontaneous [detonation of an ammonium nitrate](#) stored in a port warehouse. Members of the QAnon community, however, have [amplified the conspiracy](#) that the Rothschild family detonated a bomb to destroy the Central Bank of Lebanon, which was falsely claimed to be 'directly next to' the site of the explosion. Others discussed the explosion in connection with a number of [odd happenings](#) that occurred on the same day, claiming that the explosion was planned to expose a ['labyrinth of subterranean chambers'](#) under the city that are used for human trafficking. According to a QAnon theory, these underground tunnel systems also exist in many American cities and have been used to imprison children. In June, social media users ([supposedly including medical workers](#)) claimed that [35,000](#)

[‘caged’ children](#) had in fact been rescued from tunnels underneath Central Park in New York City. In this way, QAnon supporters are able to frequently manipulate current news stories to fit their overarching theories.

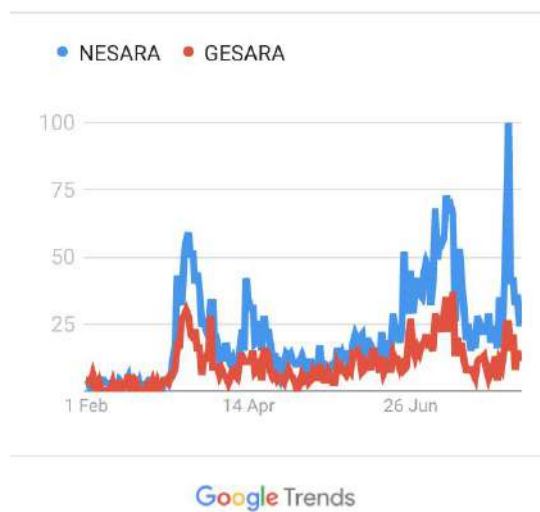
Much of QAnon’s success in building its following and appealing to new audiences lies in its consistent revisiting of existing conspiracy theories. For example, influencers within the QAnon community make occasional mention of the NESARA/GESARA plans, sustaining the interest of financial conspiracists. Short for [Global/National Economic Security and Recovery Act](#), these models were proposed in the 1990s but were never turned into legislation. However, conspiracists claim that they were actually signed into law in 2000, a few months prior to Clinton leaving office. Related online content claims that 9/11 was perpetrated by ‘the cabal’ to prevent the unveiling of NESARA on the same day. GESARA and NESARA have gained attention in the past few months as QAnon followers have capitalized on the existing conspiracy theory to reassure others that Trump is working towards the objectives of the proposals (predominantly by turning currencies into gold) as a way of stabilizing the COVID-19 US economy. This is reflected in the usage of both hashtags on Twitter as well as in Google search trends.



Tweets containing #NESARA and #GESARA posted by accounts in Graphika’s QAnon live map from February 1st to August 21st

Interest over time

United States. 01/02/2020 - 17/08/2020.



Google Trends also shows a significant increase in searches for 'NESARA' and 'GESARA' from users based in the United States since February

Among a set of actors, QAnon has been particularly successful in leveraging existing mistrust of health misinformation movements to further politicize the handling of Covid-19. A previous Graphika report, [‘The Covid-19 “Infodemic”](#), published in April details how QAnon supporters reframed and subsumed conversation about the handling of the pandemic by the Trump administration to fit existing objectives. Since then, this trend has grown evermore concerning as QAnon supporters continue to spin public health information to suit its theories.

More recent work from Graphika explored how and when communities, including distinct conspiratorial communities like QAnon and anti-vaxx, converged throughout the pandemic. This approach used a novel combination of network analysis, topic modeling, and a cultural bridging method to surface what communities aligned, when they aligned, and the topics, accounts and media that aided this process. This multimodal approach is covered in [a recent paper](#) and the findings from its application to the QAnon community are detailed in a Graphika blog post. Overall, the findings indicate the pandemic catalyzed the spread of the QAnon ideology to other communities and the QAnon topic aided in the convergence of other conspiratorial groups.

Three of Graphika’s network maps that monitor Covid-19 misinformation and disinformation show a high number of accounts in common with the QAnon map. This means that there is now significant overlap between the QAnon network and health misinformation communities, including those dedicated to anti-vaccination. This confluence of narratives around related [Covid-19 topics](#) like [mask-wearing](#) and [hydroxychloroquine](#) has been noted by many reporters and researchers.

The consequences of this manipulation of narratives around Covid-19 were particularly obvious in the early days of the pandemic with conspiracies around the use of the two US Navy hospital ships, *USNS Comfort* and *USNS Mercy*. Just days after the ships had moored in New York and Los Angeles, respectively, to provide extra healthcare capacity for the cities, an engineer intentionally [derailed a freight train](#) near the *USNS Mercy*. Prosecutors said that the engineer believed that the ship 'had an alternate purpose related to COVID-19 or a government takeover.' The derailling incident occurred just three days after two 'Q drops' posted to 8kun questioned the purpose of the *USNS Comfort*.

Later in the same month, an Illinois woman was arrested near the *USNS Comfort* in New York City after being found with eighteen knives in her vehicle. Jessica Prim, who used Facebook Live to broadcast her arrest in New York City, stated that she was [planning to kill Joe Biden](#). Prim had [shared QAnon conspiracy theories](#) on Facebook in the days and hours leading up to the incident. While the wavering trust in public health institutions and information is of most pressing concern in terms of the potential to cause real-world harm, these incidents provide a more immediate indication of the threat posed by QAnon-backed Covid-19 disinformation.

Frequently discussed in publications about QAnon is the FBI's decision to designate the movement a [domestic terrorism threat](#) in August of last year. The capacity for the QAnon support accounts to incite real-world harm was also made extremely clear by their ability to rapidly involve themselves in online conversations around the death of George Floyd and subsequent civil unrest. A number of Graphika network maps set up to monitor live conversation around hashtags like #MinneapolisProtests and #JusticeForGeorgeFloyd had over 500 accounts in common with the QAnon live map.

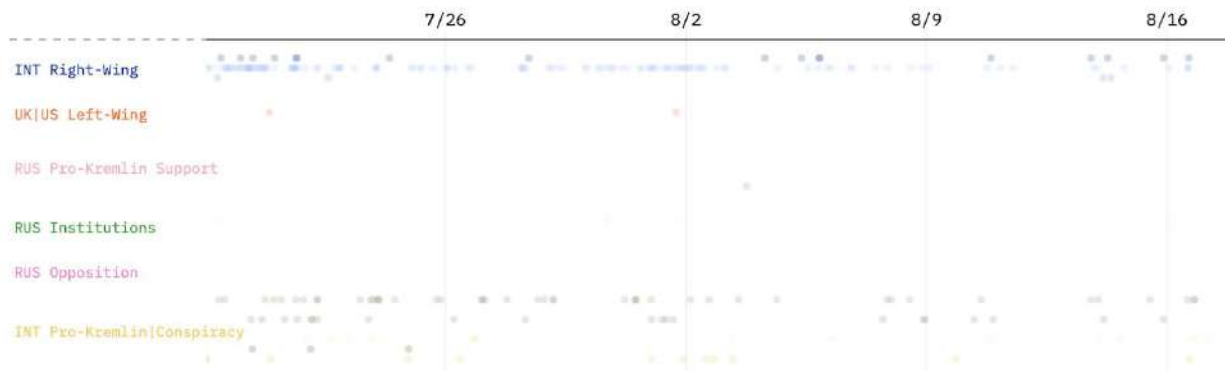
The primary QAnon narrative in this case suggested that the protestors were organized and funded by 'shadowy elites' with alternative motives, including George Soros, Bill Gates, and other common targets of conspiracy theories. Some used the hashtag #HelloGeorge to indicate that George Floyd was still alive and to suggest that he was a crisis actor paid by those same 'liberal elites'. Attempts to tie Soros to the protests also included an effort to disseminate photoshopped images showing busses marked "Soros Riot Dance Squad" in Milan, Michigan. These images spread on Facebook and Twitter before being picked up by larger conspiracy sites. An article from ZeroHedge covering Soros' statements denying any role in funding the protests was shared over 8,000 times on Facebook, and by over 2,500 individual accounts in Graphika's QAnon live map. Efforts were made to link Soros to Antifa, to expose financial links between the organization and influential liberal figures, and to target Antifa leaders.

II. Foreign Actors, Predominantly Russia, Have Shown Some Interest in Targeting QAnon Supporters: While There Have Not Been Significant Attempts to Leverage This Community to Date, This Remains a Concern.

These ongoing protests, and the racial justice movement *writ large*, are likely to be one of the most significant topics of public debate for the 2020 election season. The QAnon community has already begun to curate a set of conspiratorial narratives around these issues, and the recent nomination of Kamala Harris as Joe Biden's vice presidential candidate is a testament to how quickly these can be deployed. In the 36-hour period following the announcement of Kamala Harris as Joe Biden's VP pick, QAnon Facebook pages and Twitter accounts began spreading content that claimed Harris's sister Maya is part of a sex trafficking ring, and attempted to draw attention to Harris's links with the Soros family.

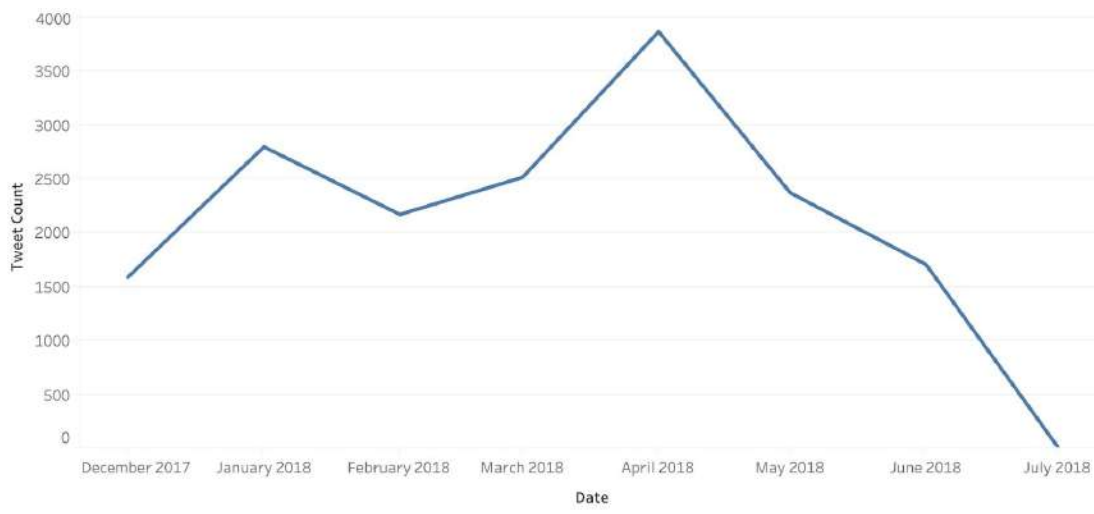
The sheer volume and amorphous nature of the QAnon movement presents a unique risk concerning its ability to be potentially infiltrated or manipulated by foreign actors in contexts such as the above. For a malign actor, the QAnon movement presents itself as the ideal delivery mechanism for the seeding of conspiratorial content and blatant disinformation into the politically-engaged US mainstream. Graphika has not yet noted foreign actors deploying significant information operations that seek to leverage the QAnon community as a whole. However, as the November elections draw closer, it is important to recognize more subtle efforts at aligning narratives that make the QAnon community more susceptible to foreign influence.

Graphika's live monitoring map on Russian state-sponsored media and official assets shows a burgeoning engagement by followers of these accounts with QAnon terminology and lore. QAnon's most common online rallying call is '#WWG1WGA' ('Where We Go One, We Go All') and is typically used by accounts to demonstrate loyalty and support. The tweet activity graph for this hashtag is shown below, with each dot indicating an engagement with the hashtag. The graph shows that although a large portion of engagement is driven by users belonging to the group described as the [International Right-Wing](#), use of the hashtag is also relatively consistent among the [International Pro-Kremlin | Conspiracy](#) clusters. These clusters preferentially follow English-language versions of Russian state-sponsored media outlets, as well as political commentators known to push the Kremlin viewpoint.



Engagement with #WWG1WGA among users in Graphika's live map of Russian state outlets over the past month

Twitter's [publicly available datasets](#) of assets used in state-backed information operations indicate that Russia may have taken a concerted interest in QAnon between December 2017 and April 2018 (shown below). One particular set of assets, [removed in January 2019](#), was responsible for the majority of this interest. A search for tweets containing either #QAnon or #WWG1WGA revealed over 17,000 tweets produced by 3 unique users. These three users were all removed from the Twitter platform due to their suspected involvement in Kremlin-backed information operations. There was also some engagement with the hashtag #pizzagate from a different set of Russian Twitter accounts that were [attributed to the Internet Research Agency](#) and removed from the platform in October 2018, indicating that Russian state assets made early attempts to engage with one of the principal tenets of the QAnon theory.



Twitter's public [information operations archive](#) indicates Russian assets were using QAnon hashtags (#QAnon, #WWG1WGA) from December 2017 to July 2018

An analysis of references to QAnon in articles on RT.com over the past year also suggests that Russian state-sponsored media may look to indirectly pay homage to central tenets of QAnon theory without explicitly aligning itself with the community. Graphika has noted a convergence of

interests between these two support communities on an increasingly frequent basis over the past two months, with Kremlin-aligned sources giving increasing airtime to topics that are near and dear to the QAnon community.

Data from Graphika’s most recent mapping of the QAnon network also demonstrates that Russian interest in QAnon has become increasingly reciprocated over time. In Graphika’s map of the QAnon community from 2018, the RT website was only the 70th most shared domain. However, in Graphika’s 2020 map of the QAnon network, RT rose to be the 23rd most shared domain, with 2,728 posts sharing an RT article between February 2nd to March 3rd of this year. Between July 19th and August 20th, rt.com once again rose the ranks to be the 12th most shared domain among QAnon accounts in Graphika’s live map.

The ten RT articles with the highest number of shares in Graphika’s live QAnon map over the past month are shown in the table below. These articles represent a set of narratives through which Russian state content is finding purchase within the QAnon community. The second most popular article alludes to a central tenet of the aforementioned NESARA/GESARA financial conspiracy theory, while the fourth is an op-ed published on July 22nd that threatens that QAnon will ‘only be made stronger’ by action taken by social media platforms to restrict them. Many of the remaining most popular articles focus on Covid-19, reporting that New Zealand’s lockdown was ‘unlawful’ and implying that evidence for hydroxychloroquine as a legitimate treatment for the virus is being ‘covered up’.

RT Article Headline
Twitter YANKS doctor’s fierce defense of HCQ as Covid-19 ‘cure’ after Trump’s retweet, as skeptics question her credentials
‘The world is going back to a GOLD STANDARD as the US dollar is about to collapse’ – Peter Schiff
Coronavirus can HIDE in human EARS, new research finds
Twitter’s ban of QAnon conspiracy theory for vague ‘offline harm’ link only makes them stronger, & the censorship won’t stop there
18 officers injured in clashes with Berlin anti-mask protesters (VIDEOS)
Infowars reporter Millie Weaver ‘arrested’ mid-premiere of her whistleblowing investigation into ‘shadow government’
New Zealand’s first lockdown ruled UNLAWFUL by country’s High Court
Next-level protection: Anti-Covid HELMET uses space technologies to stop virus in its tracks (VIDEO)
‘Independent’ Facebook fact-checker exposed as partisan smear factory packed with CNN alumni
Masks aren’t enough! Fauci says eye protection ‘MIGHT’ BE REQUIRED for ‘perfect’ Covid-proof set

Though Russia is only one foreign actor capable of targeting US political audiences through the QAnon community, its history of operations appear to be the most ideologically aligned with the overarching QAnon theory. Russia also appears to have made the most effort to gain credibility within the community thus far.

The QAnon community provides a convenient target for foreign actors wishing to influence US political discourse ahead of the election; given the volume of accounts in question and their existing presence in a host of online conversations, this would require little effort. Aside from occasionally reinforcing and exacerbating certain aspects of QAnon theories, there is likely very little that foreign actors would need to do that is not already being done by the movement. As is often mentioned in reporting and research on US QAnon, there are a large number of Congressional candidates known to be sympathetic or explicitly supportive of the movement. [Media Matters' list](#) of former and current candidates now stands at 75 total. In most of these cases, QAnon is given occasional reference in speeches and online posts made by candidates. However, a few candidates have gone further than this - [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#), a Republican running for a safe seat in Georgia's 14th congressional district, has described Q as a 'patriot' in a YouTube video and has been known to [spread 9/11 conspiracy theories](#).

Several individuals with significant political influence have also proven key to the 'mainstreaming' of QAnon narratives ahead of the election - including President Donald Trump, who said of QAnon supporters: "[I've heard these are people who love our country](#)" in a White House press conference on August 19th. General Michael Flynn, who is widely considered by QAnon supporters to be one of the central figures of Trump's struggle against the cabal, has also embraced QAnon in an increasingly public manner in recent months.

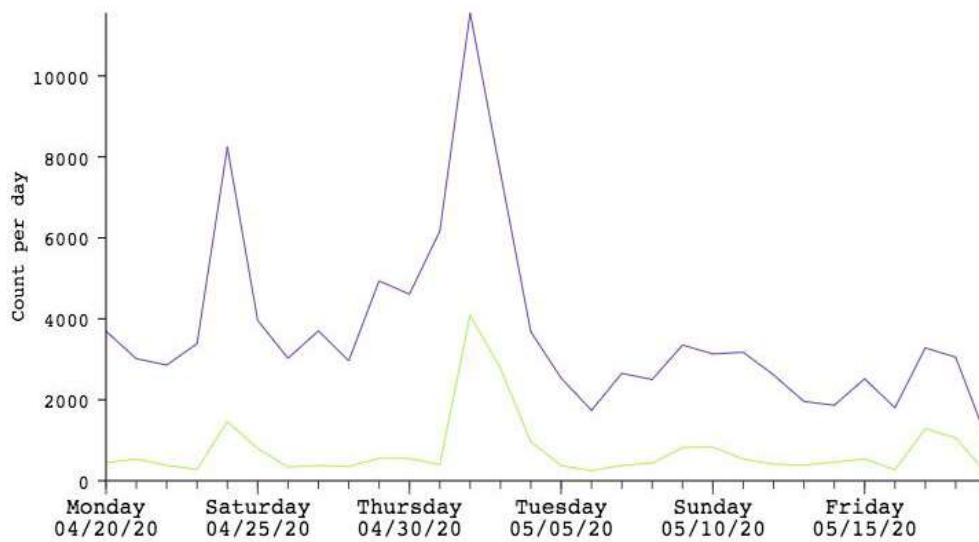
The QAnon-led #TakeTheOath campaign culminated in Flynn reciting the oath of enlistment traditionally used by the US Armed Forces at [a cookout with friends on the 4th of July](#). The #TakeTheOath hashtag has been consistently popular with the QAnon community since June 24th, when 'Q' instructed his followers to 'take the oath and serve your country' and become 'digital soldiers' in a post on 8kun. Supporters, including an [Oregon Republican senate candidate](#), responded by posting videos of themselves reciting the oath, often intermingled with QAnon rallying cries. Michael Flynn's video received almost 100,000 likes on Twitter, and he has since been the subject of numerous 'Q drops' - including Q reporting on a change to Flynn's Twitter profile banner.

III. This Is Not Just Happening in the US - the Internationalization of This Community Has Spawned a Global Anti-Government Conspiracy Movement.

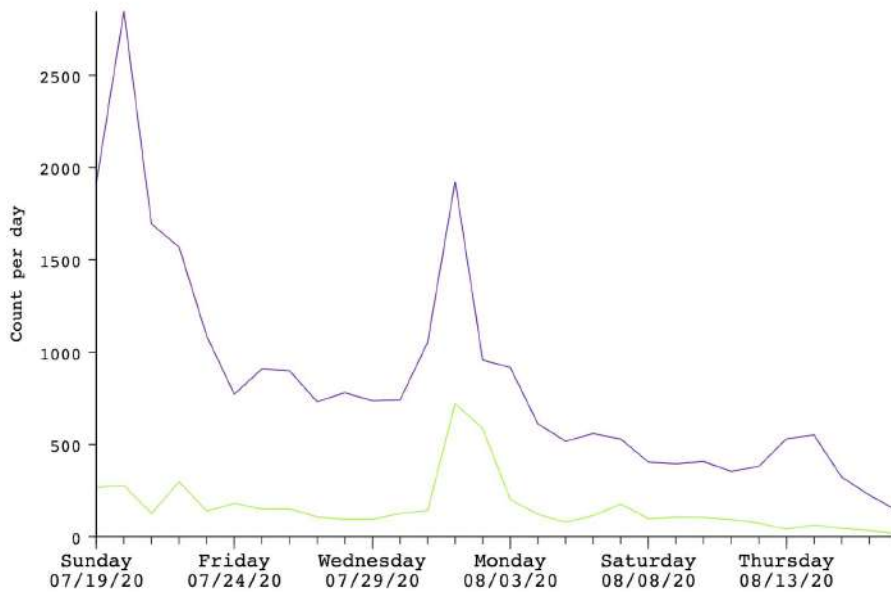
The third under-discussed aspect of the online threat posed by QAnon is the internationalization of the movement. While the sheer volume of QAnon support accounts in the US presents a risk in various contexts, the internationalization of the movement warrants special attention. Over the

past nine months, Graphika has begun to note the growth of distinct QAnon online ecosystems outside of the US - communities which often have their own terminologies, influencers and behaviors. The two most highly developed of these international chapters appear to be in Japan and Brazil, though British, French and German support communities appear to be growing at a rapid pace. Support for QAnon can be found much further afield as well. The diversity of Facebook groups alone extends from the Philippines to Finland, Chile to New Zealand.

The movement's focus on international expansion was most evident in its widespread participation in globally-themed hashtags such as #WWG1WGAWorldwide in April and May. QAnon campaigns including the phrase "global" or "worldwide" were being used at frequencies comparable to the group's most signature rallying cry, #WWG1WGA (below). While this activity has slowed significantly in terms of volume - at least on Twitter - there is much evidence to suggest that the exporting of QAnon was extremely successful during this time.

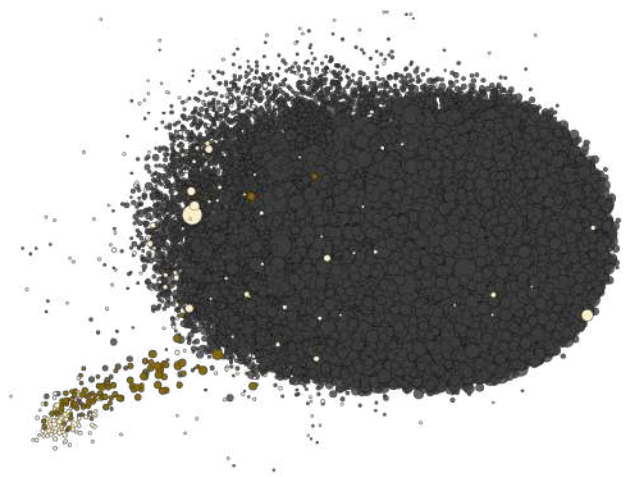


Volume of tweets from accounts in Graphika's QAnon monitor containing #WWG1WGA and #WWG1WGAWorldwide from April 20th to May 19th



Volume of tweets from accounts in Graphika's QAnon monitor containing #WWG1WGA and #WWG1WGAWORLDWIDE from July 19th to August 17th

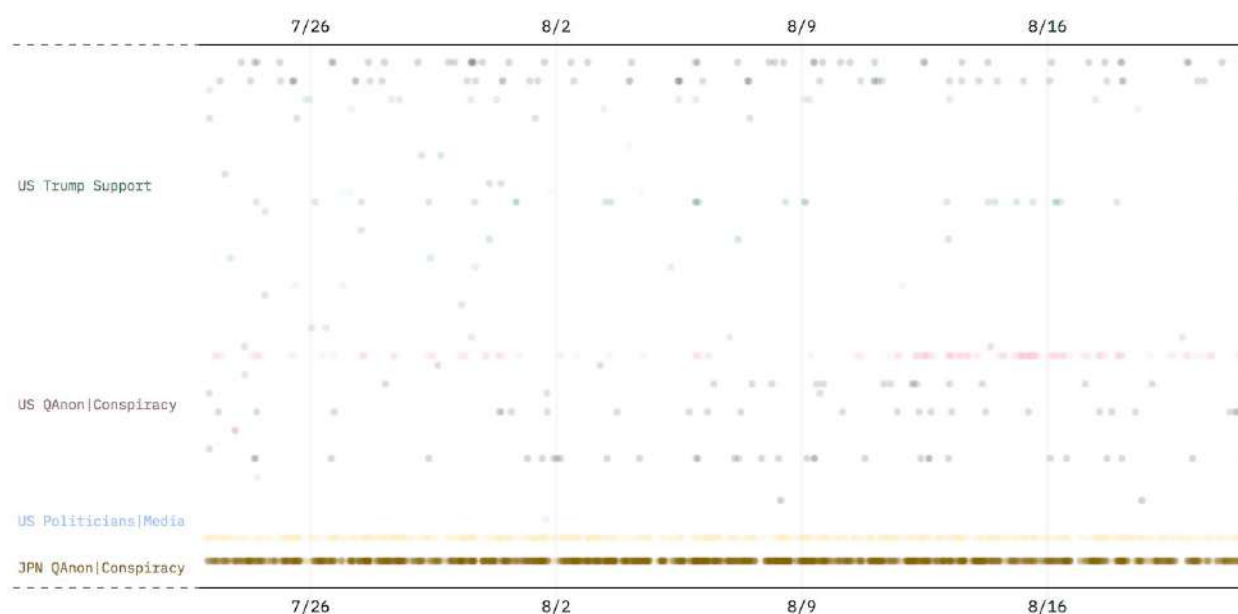
As mentioned, QAnon has a developed support network in Japan. This is best demonstrated by Graphika's February 2020 map of the QAnon network, which shows the Japan-based community is developing as a largely separate support ecosystem (below). It has become increasingly clear since this time that international QAnon chapters engage with the US network in different ways. The Japanese QAnon network as a whole appears to still be influenced by the US core - for example, popular QAnon content is often translated or subtitled for a Japanese audience. Japanese accounts that act as translators for trending QAnon content are also some of the most influential among this group.



Graphika's February 2020 QAnon map showed a distinct Japan-based community (highlighted).

US accounts are structurally influential here, acting as bridges connecting the Japanese QAnon community with the wider online ecosystem. Despite this connectivity, the Japanese QAnon community has also developed its own unique set of terminologies, causes and influencers. In particular, the Japanese QAnon community is galvanized around support for General Michael Flynn. While Flynn is also a central figure in US QAnon theories (as mentioned), his backing by the Japanese community appears to be tied to his strategic position between the Japanese and American governments during his time as US National Security Advisor.

The below engagement graph shows the distribution of tweets with the hashtag #QArmyJapanFlynn among groups in Graphika’s live QAnon map; the most solid lines at the bottom of the graph indicate consistent and extremely heavy engagement from Japanese users, while there is occasional sustained engagement elsewhere.



Hashtag engagement graph for #QArmyJapanFlynn from July 21st to August 20th

The Japanese QAnon network is not limited to translating content from abroad; the relative autonomy of this community allows for unique Japanese QAnon conversations and idiosyncratic terminologies around local events. Trending hashtags in the Japanese QAnon group include 視超管理社会を拒否します [reject the super management society] and スーパーシティ法案を廃案へ [abolish the super city bill]. Both were used to object to a [May 27th bill](#) passed by Japan’s House of Councilors which would look to create new cities driven by artificial intelligence, stoking fears of enhanced ‘deep-state’ control of Japan. This group often ties these concerns to other conspiracy theories that are favored by QAnon, such as the supposed health risks of 5G technology.

While the Brazilian QAnon community has not yet developed the level of autonomy or engagement seen in Japan, it is steadily growing in size. The general hashtag #QAnon is gaining traction within Graphika’s maps of Brazilian political groups; with almost consistent engagement

from Bolsonaro supporters over a 30-day period in April. The hashtag #QAnonBr is also being used in high volume across maps of the Brazilian online sphere as a way for QAnon-supportive accounts to engage in broader political conversations. For example it was used by 735 accounts in a map about Covid-19 in Brazil.

Much of the content from Brazilian QAnon accounts focuses on the [current close relationship](#) between Trump and Bolsonaro, with many using support for both Presidents as identity markers in their Twitter bios and headers (below).



Highly followed Brazilian accounts that celebrate the Trump-Bolsonaro relationship.

Graphika has also observed US-based QAnon adherents engaging with the Brazilian network. This is likely also a result of the close domestic association between Trump and Bolsonaro amongst right-wing groups. Like many international chapters, Brazilian QAnon supporters tend to apply generalized political conspiracies to their own national context. For example, in response to the [resignation of justice minister Sérgio Moro](#), a popular right wing judge, theories arose in QAnon circles connecting his wife to the UN and the 'global elites' conspiring against Bolsonaro.

The QAnon community's drive to gather support in other countries also appears to have found some success in Europe. One widely shared post to employ the #WWG1WGA WORLDWIDE hashtag, for instance, features a user described as a "Q Patriot from the UK" in which he recites a QAnon slogan in a British accent - this tweet received 6.2k retweets and 15.9k likes.

Graphika has noted engagement between QAnon believers and European right-wing accounts that appears to be based on a more general ideological alignment. Perhaps most notably, there is evidence of an anti-globalist affinity between UK-based Brexit enthusiasts and QAnon, which appears to provide a foothold for the expansion of the QAnon movement in the UK. Almost 13% of the accounts in Graphika's recent QAnon map that reported a location in their Twitter bio provided a UK city or country address, and over the initial 30-day collection period in February, the #brexit hashtag was used by almost 25% of the map.

In recent months, members of the UK QAnon community have also promoted a conspiracy claiming the ascendency of a new 'legitimate king', King John III, who would remove the 'fraudulent' House of Windsor from the throne. This theory appears to have been related to theories that group the Queen in a cabal of global elites who created COVID-19. This was one of the most discussed events in Graphika's QAnon Twitter map during the last two weeks of May. This theory has also been spread through rapidly growing, issue-specific, Facebook groups. One such group (below) now has over 10,000 members, having added over 1,300 users in one week in June alone. A public Facebook page celebrating the 'new Hallett sovereign' has amassed over 11,000 followers since its creation on May 15th.



Rapidly growing Facebook groups and pages support 'King John III' or 'Joseph Gregory Hallett'.

French, Australian, Korean and German QAnon pages on Facebook appear to be extremely active, and while their content is localized to each individual political situation, there continues to be a strong focus on understanding current events in the context of 'government control'. This mistrust, and at times outright rejection, of public health information and mainstream media reporting poses a significant problem for social media platforms attempting to limit the exposure of misinformation content.

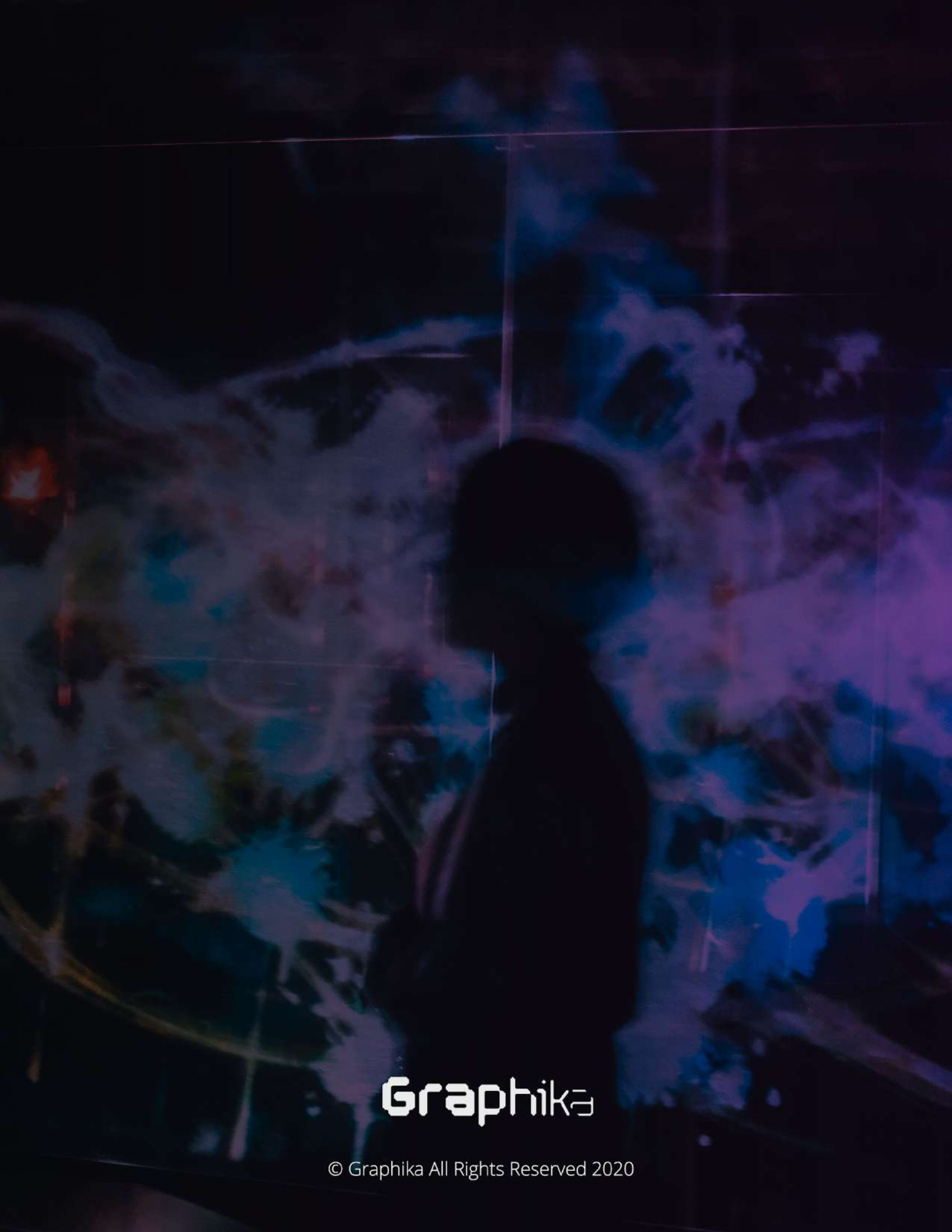
Conclusion

QAnon remains the most densely interconnected conspiratorial network that Graphika has studied. The evolution of this movement over the past two years indicates an increasing autonomy from mainstream right-wing online groups in the US, however network analysis suggests that these groups still prove useful for the amplification of QAnon messaging. As the US election draws closer, and public debate over Covid-19 continues, QAnon is likely to appeal to a number of distinct online communities with similar messaging. This will make it increasingly difficult to detect and disambiguate content and activity specific to the QAnon movement. Even in

the past few weeks, there have been [well-attended rallies](#) and demonstrations centered around QAnon-adjacent causes taking place in many US cities. This appetite for offline participation raises security concerns and will likely entail a spike in exposure for QAnon slogans and rallying cries.

QAnon's highly malleable ideology, coupled with its capacity for rapid content dissemination, allows the movement to appeal to new members by blending current events in the news cycle into an overarching anti-government worldview. This adaptability presents an opportunity for foreign actors to leverage the community by manipulating specific narratives that align with their interests. While no significant attempts to take advantage of the QAnon community for specific US election outcomes have been observed as of yet, this continues to be a possibility.

Meanwhile, QAnon theories and causes are finding purchase outside of the US as new national communities begin to apply these concepts to their local political landscapes and figures. The development of these relatively independent online ecosystems, which often have their own distinct influencers and terminologies, warrants greater attention. The international chapters of QAnon present a concern not only for democratic processes worldwide but also for the deterioration of trust in institutions.



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