

ABOUT THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER'S YEARLY DIGITAL TERRORISM & HATE PROJECT



The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Digital Terrorism & Hate Project is an annual study of the troubling growth of hate and terrorist activity in the Digital Age. The 2012 study reported a number of alarming developments, among them:

1) Social networking is increasingly the weapon of choice for bigots and terrorists and that there has been a 12% increase to 14,000 problematic social networks websites, forums, blogs, twitter, etc. (up from 11,500 last year), comprised on the subculture of hate.

2) The internet in general continues to serve as the incubator and validator of 9/11, other notorious 'conspiracy theories' as well as a disturbing spike in attacks against religious minorities in the US and abroad.

"As the traffic on social networking sites increase, so do the potential dividends for hate and terror groups," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, Associate Dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. "For this reason, it is imperative our law enforcement professionals are aware of the trends in digital hate and can take a stand against it," he concluded.

Some of the other findings in the report include:

- The use of the internet to spread hate and incite violence against religious & ethnic minorities. Recent examples include the use of internet technologies to target blacks, Jews & other minorities in the United States, Muslims in Burma and Christians in Nigeria, as well as the intimidation of ethnic Koreans & Chinese in Japan.
- The full range of Internet technologies have been harnessed by Islamist terrorists and their supporters to recruit and encourage "Lone Wolf" terrorists. These tactics were heavily utilized by the Yemen-based radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki.
- The dramatic increase in "trolling", the online activity wherein the identity of an innocent person is hijacked by bigots and bullies. Trolling also used to discredit anti-hate activists online.
- Hate games remain a prominent component of the online subculture of hate targeting gays, immigrants, African Americans and Jews. The Simon Wiesenthal Center reported that partly through its efforts, social media companies, led by Facebook, have begun to pay serious attention to the abuse of their services by racists, anti-Semites and terrorists.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is one of the largest international Jewish human rights organizations with over 400,000 member families in the United States. It is an NGO at international agencies including the United Nations, UNESCO, the OSCE, the OAS, the Council of Europe and the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino). For more information, please contact the Center's Public Relations Department, phone: 1-310-553-9036, e-mail: info@wiesenthal.com, join the Center on Facebook, or follow @simonwiesenthal for news updates sent directly to your Twitter account.