

TOXIC TWITTER

How Twitter Makes Millions from Anti-LGBTQ+ Rhetoric



1. Tweets mentioning the hateful 'grooming' narrative have jumped 119% under Musk

Over the past year, the LGBTQ+ community has become the target of a wave of abuse centered around the false and hateful lie that they 'groom' children.

The volume of this narrative on Twitter has only grown under Musk, with tweets and retweets mentioning the LGBTQ+ community alongside 'grooming' slurs jumping 119% since his takeover of the platform on 27 October 2022.

Often targeting educators, pride events or drag story hour events, the 'grooming' narrative demonizes the LGBTQ+ community with hateful tropes, using slurs like "groomer" and "pedophile".

The Center for Countering Digital Hate has identified 1,714,504 tweets and retweets since the start of 2022 that mention the LGBTQ+ community via a keyword such as "LGBT", "gay", "homosexual" or "trans" alongside slurs including "groomer", "predator" and "pedophile".

In 2022 before Musk took over, there were an average of 3,011 such tweets per day. This jumped 119% to 6,596 in the four months after his takeover. Note that this analysis captures the volume of discourse around the 'groomer' narrative, which includes tweets defending the LGBTQ+ community as well as those leveling the slurs.



Volume of tweets containing 'groomer' discourse

Source: CCDH Research

Since Musk's takeover, tweets containing the 'grooming' narrative have spiked several times. In particular, they spiked around the following events:

- **19 November 2022**: Five people were killed in a Colorado Springs LGBTQ+ nightclub. Following the shooting, a number of tweets went viral branding LGBTQ+ people as groomers.¹
- **10 December 2022:** Elon Musk attacked former Twitter employee Yoel Roth by insinuating he was an enabler of child abuse.² Roth, who was previously head of Trust and Safety at Twitter and is gay, was targeted with a wave of abuse online branding him as a "groomer".³
- **27 December 2022:** Chaya Raichik, who runs Libs of TikTok, did her first mainstream televised interview.⁴ During the hour-long interview with Fox News' Tucker Carlson, Raichik slandered members of the LGBTQ+ community as "evil" and accused them of "grooming".⁵ The interview was widely picked up on Twitter.
- **16 January 2023**: UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak moved to block Scotland's gender recognition legislation, which was designed to make it easier for transgender people to self-identify.⁶
- **17 January 2023**: A news story emerged about a gay couple allegedly sexually abusing their adoptive children.⁷ Despite being an isolated case, the story was painted by some as evidence of the claim that LGBTQ+ people groom children.

2. Just five Twitter accounts driving the 'grooming' narrative generate up to \$6.4m per year for Twitter in ad revenue

The hateful 'grooming' narrative online is driven by a small number of influential accounts with large followings. Now new estimates from the Center show that just five of these accounts are set to generate up to \$6.4 million per year for Twitter in ad revenues.

These estimates shed fresh light on the extent to which Twitter is benefiting financially from not only hosting but also actively monetising toxic accounts that spread harmful tropes demonizing the LGBTQ+ community.

The five accounts analyzed were chosen as individuals known to be responsible for heavily promoting the lie that members of the LGBTQ+ community are guilty of 'grooming' children. They are:

- Libs of TikTok, the account run by former real estate agent Chaya Raichik that frequently targets drag performers, educators, and healthcare professionals in the LGBTQ+ space with false allegations of "grooming", "child abuse" and "indoctrination".⁸ Those targeted by her often report real-world violence, harassment and threats, including some bomb threats.⁹ Libs of TikTok has been identified by the ADL as one of the biggest amplifiers of anti-LGBTQ+ extremism.¹⁰
- **Gays Against Groomers**, the main Twitter account behind a coalition founded by Jaimee Michell that peddles misleading narratives about the LGBTQ+ community, focusing on false allegations of "grooming" by drag performers, "indoctrination" by LGBTQ+ educators and "child mutilation" by gender-affirming care providers. Gays Against Groomers has been identified by the ADL as one of the biggest amplifiers of anti-LGBTQ+ extremism.¹¹
- James Lindsay has contributed to the popularization of the phrase "ok groomer", which he frequently uses in a derogatory manner to respond to tweets on LGBTQ+ themes.¹² He was previously permanently suspended from Twitter for his tweets pushing the grooming narrative, but has since been reinstated under Elon Musk.¹³
- Chris Rufo works as a Senior Fellow for the right-leaning Manhattan Institute.¹⁴ He has promoted fears about the alleged "dangers" of "gender ideology" and pushed conspiracies including the claim that "radical gender theory wants to replace parents with a state-backed sexual ideology".¹⁵ He has been identified by the ADL as one of the biggest amplifiers of anti-LGBTQ+ extremism.¹⁶

• **Tim Pool**, the right-wing influencer, YouTuber and podcast host who first rose to prominence live streaming the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protests.¹⁷ He was criticized by Media Matters in the wake of the Colorado Springs shooting for "appear[ing] to blame the victims of the attack" and for "spreading anti-trans hate and propaganda".¹⁸

The Center captured screenshots of branded ads appearing next to tweets by each one of the five accounts, confirming that content from the accounts are being monetized. These can be found in Section 3.

To estimate the value of annual ad revenues raised by each account for Twitter, the Center combined three elements: publicly available figures on tweet impressions, the results of a simulation to find the frequency of ads on Twitter, and industry information on the cost of Twitter ads.

Account	Impressions since 15 December	Estimated Daily Impressions	Estimated Annual Impressions	Estimated Ad Revenue Annually
Gays Against Groomers	50,905,088	669,804	244,478,383	\$235,721
Chris Rufo	79,482,635	1,045,824	381,725,813	\$368,052
James Lindsay	142,988,216	1,881,424	686,719,722	\$662,121
Tim Pool	295,306,974	3,885,618	1,418,250,599	\$1,367,448
Libs of TikTok	816,179,982	10,739,210	3,919,811,756	\$3,779,401
TOTAL	1,384,862,895	18,221,880	6,650,986,272	\$6,412,742

Analysis of publicly available data on impressions shows that tweets from the five accounts have already amassed nearly 1.4 billion impressions since Twitter rolled out publicly visible impression-counts on December 15th, 2022.

To predict yearly impressions for the accounts, the Center gathered a dataset of tweets starting on December 15th, 2022 when impressions first became visible on the platform. The dataset counts 9,102 tweets posted by the accounts over the course of 76 days, ending on February 28th, 2023.

On an average day, tweets from the five accounts receive a combined total of 18 million impressions. Projecting this average across 365 days, the accounts can be expected to reach nearly 6.7 billion impressions over the course of a year.

To find an estimate for how often Twitter shows ads, the Center set up three accounts and found that after scrolling through 1,039 tweets, an ad appeared at an average rate of once every 6.7 tweets.

Assuming this rate is broadly representative of how often Twitter serves ads, the five accounts can be estimated to generate 992,684,518 ad impressions throughout the course of a year.

Finally, industry information from the social media analytics firm Brandwatch shows that Twitter ads cost an average of \$6.46 per 1,000 impressions. Pulling these elements together results in a total figure of up to \$6.4 million in estimated annual ad revenues across the accounts.

The estimates demonstrate that Twitter is directly profiting from hosting ads on content by leading promoters of anti-LGBTQ+ hate.

3. Examples of ads appearing next to tweets from the five accounts

Twitter is displaying ads from brands including Fortune Magazine, Kindle, Disney and NBA and T-Mobile next to tweets from individuals in the list. The following section evidences these ads, highlighting those next to tweets promoting the hateful 'grooming' narrative.

Ads were captured via accounts created by the Center, which were set up to simulate the experience of a user following the accounts. They appeared either in the "For You" feed, the "Following" feed or in search results.

This work confirms that Twitter has been displaying ads next to every one of the toxic accounts we have investigated, despite the fact that the individuals behind them are known to promote hateful views.

• Libs of TikTok: An ad for Kindle appeared next to a tweet by Libs of TikTok in which they claim to be "proud" to have come first place on a list of accounts highlighted by the ADL for spreading false narratives about the LGBTQ+ community and leading to real-world harm.¹⁹

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• **Gays Against Groomers:** An ad for Disney+ appeared next to a tweet from Gays Against Groomers saying that children need to be protected "from predatory #ChildAbuse by #Groomers".²⁰



 James Lindsay: An ad for T-Mobile appeared next to a tweet from James Lindsay in which he labels Senator Scott Wiener, who is gay, a "groomer". Lindsay's tweet responds to a tweet from Wiener in which he says: "As more & more states ban books & drag queens, we're celebrating both at San Francisco Public Library's #NightOfldeas".²¹



• **Chris Rufo:** An ad for NBA appeared next to a tweet from Chris Rufo where he claims that the "real story" behind drag queen story events is that they are the "culmination of a 40-year campaign to destigmatize adult-child sexuality", claiming "it's worse than you think".²²

Christopher F. Rufo 💥 🤣 @realchrisrufo · Oct 24, 2022 · 🥒 · · · · I spent a month digging into the real story behind Drag Queen Story Hour.
It's the culmination of a 40-year campaign to destigmatize adult-child sexuality and create a "site of queer pleasure" for male transvestites and kids.
It's worse than you think.
City-journal.org The Real Story Behind Drag Queen Story Hour City Journal Aimed at children, the phenomenon is far more subversive than its defenders claim.
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Promoted by Sorare

• Tim Pool: An ad for Fortune Magazine appeared next to a tweet from Tim Pool, posted in the aftermath of the Colorado Springs shooting at Club Q, in which he says: "the grooming of children is not stopping...people are calling for more violence...I do not think legislators will stop the grooming...People will not stop calling for violence...so you tell me what happens next".²³ At the time, Pool's response to the shooting was criticized by Media Matters for "perpetuating a myth that people in LGBTQ communities are grooming or otherwise sexualizing children", and for his "implicit endorsement of anti-LBGTQ violence as an inevitable response to trans and gender-nonconforming people being visible members of society".²⁴



Methodology Note: 'Grooming' Discourse Analysis

- To gather tweets relevant to the 'grooming' discourse, researchers used SNScrape, a social media web-scraping tool that programmatically collects tweets that are returned by Twitter's search tool. Researchers used a search query to identify all available tweets containing two elements: a keyword referencing the LGBTQ+ community, such as "LGBT", "gay" or "trans", and at least one of a list of slurs frequently used in the 'grooming' narrative, such as "pedo", "groomer" or "pervert". The query also includes tweets that mention the term "LGBTP" to incorporate tweets making the derogatory argument that "pedophiles" should be added to the LGBTQ+ banner. The query excludes mentions of marriage or brides in order to remove discussion about a particular bill that is not relevant to the LGBTQ+ grooming discourse. The 1,714,504 tweets and retweets collected include all those returned by Twitter's search spanning between 1 January 2022 and 28 February 2023.
- The full query used was: ((LGBTQ OR LGBTQ OR LGBT OR homosexual OR gay OR homosexuality OR fags OR faggots OR transexual OR tranny OR trannie OR trannies OR trans OR sodomite) AND (grooming OR groomer OR groomers OR paedophiles OR pedophiles OR paedo OR pedo OR predator OR pervert OR molester OR molest) NOT (marriage OR marry OR bride OR brides)) OR LGBTP.
- For the purposes of the over-time analysis, retweets are included as tweets, so a tweet with 5 retweets will be counted as 6 tweets. For simplicity, retweets are counted as having occurred on the same day as the original tweet.

Methodology Note: Ad Revenue Estimates

- To gather tweets from each of the five accounts, researchers used the social media web-scraping tool SNScrape, which utilizes Twitter's search function to enable data collection. The resulting dataset spans 76 days from the December 15th, 2022, which is when tweet impressions first became widely visible, to February 28th, 2023.
- Estimated annual impressions for each account were calculated based on their average daily impressions throughout this 76 day period, with daily figures annualized by multiplying by 365.
- Twitter ads cost an average of \$6.46 per 1,000 impressions, according to the social media analytics firm Brandwatch. Twitter's average cost per 1,000 impressions was the lowest of four social media platforms analyzed by Brandwatch.

Brandwatch, 22 February 2022, https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/how-much-do-social-media-ads-cost-on-facebo ok-instagram-twitter-and-linkedin/

- Built into these estimates is the assumption that one ad is served up by Twitter for every 6.7 tweet impressions. The Center arrived at this figure by conducting an experiment to analyze the average number of tweets served up between ads on Twitter's home timeline. For the purposes of this experiment, three Twitter accounts were created. Using these accounts, researchers conducted ten separate simulations where they loaded the home screen and scrolled until they reached 100 tweets. In total, 156 ads were shown out of a total of 1,039 tweets, meaning ads were shown at an average rate of once every 6.7 tweets.
- Note that this is a simplified characterisation of the way that people view tweets on Twitter, as they may also view tweets via the search function, on individuals profiles or directly. While ads are served in these other contexts too, it is more complex to simulate user behavior. Therefore, in the absence of any clear information from Twitter on either ad frequency or user behavior, the home feed analysis was used as a broad approximation of the number of ads displayed per tweet impression.

Appendix: Additional examples of ads

Libs of Tiktok



Libs of TikTok 🤣 @libsoftiktok · Dec 27, 2022 ···· They suck young people in. You're not allowed to notice. You're not allowed to be critical. You have to go along with it or you're called all sorts of slurs. We shouldn't fall for it.





NBA 🧇 @NBA

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Last-second circus-shot from Spida!

@cavs and Celtics heading into Q2 on the NBA App! app.link.nba.com/e/watch_now



Q 11 tl 23 ○ 249 III 417.7K 1.
 Promoted by Sorare

<u>https://twitter.com/libsoftiktok/status/1607785086761721857</u> <u>https://twitter.com/NBA/status/1632903944971210752</u>



FORTUNE 🧇 @FortuneMagazine

Some of the world's leading businesses are leveraging Workhuman's recognition platform to increase retention. #ad



fortune.com How employers are responding to retention challenges

Q 18 tl 109 ♡ 460 III 312.8K 1

Promoted



Libs of TikTok 🤣 @libsoftiktok · Jan 22 · 🥒

First grade teacher boasts about celebrating **pride** in her classroom with a progress **pride** flag and offering books to kids about gender identity including a book about toddler who becomes transgender.



https://twitter.com/libsoftiktok/status/1617239545984225280 https://twitter.com/FortuneMagazine/status/1612946639206981634



Fatal Attraction on Paramount+ @FatalAttraction Some lines can never be uncrossed. Witness a fresh take on #FatalAttraction when the new series premieres April 30, only on @ParamountPlus. ...

...





Libs of TikTok 🤣 @libsoftiktok · Feb 22

If you walk into your ${\bf kid}$'s classroom and this is what greets you, that's your sign to homeschool your ${\bf kids}.$ This is a middle school in Utah



Q 2,656 ℃ 4,620 ♡ 31.1K III 2.5M ①

https://twitter.com/libsoftiktok/status/1628419924967190529 https://twitter.com/FatalAttraction/status/1630938441205813248

Gays Against Groomers

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DisneyAulani 🤣 🔤 @DisneyAulani Get ready to soak in the magic and let all of those cares float away at AULANI, A Disney Resort & Spa in Hawai'i. 0:03 disneyaulani.com Let Your Legend Begin £ Q 32 t] 129 ♥ 608 1 4.5M Promoted Gays Against Groomers 🤣 @againstgrmrs · 16h ... We stand side by side with anyone that wants to end the sexualization, indoctrination and medicalization of children. This is war and the victims are the most vulnerable among us. Our mission as an organization is laser-focused on protecting them. There are many conversations to... Show more Q 74 tl 463 ♡ 3,535 ılı 93.3K £

https://twitter.com/againstgrmrs/status/1632827664829382656 https://twitter.com/DisneyAulani/status/1608506882968141825



https://twitter.com/againstgrmrs/status/1628956202087456770 https://twitter.com/Apple/status/1585691251193495553



NBA 🤣 @NBA

Heading into the half with a highlight ৬

Tyrese Haliburton (22 PTS, 9 AST) gives the @Pacers a 1-point edge at the break!

PHI-IND: app.link.nba.com/e/watch_now



ılı 355.6K Q 24 tl 59 ♥ 401

Promoted by Sorare

tl Gays Against Groomers Retweeted

Gays Against Groomers Illinois @GAG_Illinois · Mar 3 ... Did these people think we were going to let them just claim children? Were they not expecting pushback? It seems that way. Their grooming attempts grow more obvious and desperate every day as our movement grows. They are afraid.

🏙 Matt Walsh 🤣 @MattWalshBlog · Mar 3

Jeffrey Marsh recommends that kids cut off contact with their parents and also says that if their parents are upset about being cut off then it's just more proof that they should be. This is classic groomer manipulation. This man is an evil scumbag.

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James Lindsay

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#5G's low latency and massive capacity are key to enabling #AI powered

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James Lindsay, tried lol @ConceptuaUames · Mar 5 Ok groomer

🎆 Senator Scott Wiener 🤣 @Scott_Wiener · Mar 5

As more & more states ban books & drag queens, we're celebrating both at San Francisco Public Library's #NightOfldeas.



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#5G's low latency and massive capacity are key to enabling #AI powered #IoT applications like industrial robots. Learn why at #5GHQ: tmo.co/3WBwNfj



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James Lindsay, tried lol @ConceptuaUames · 42m Ok groomer

🕼 Neasa Hourigan TD 🤣 @neasa_neasa · 9h

Transgender people exist. Kids are compassionate and accepting. Actively hiding the existence of some people is deeply odd. My kids have dealt with disability, chronic illness, etc etc before the age of ten with grace and humour. Cause that's life. Don't lie to your children. twitter.com/Independent_ie...

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As the **#Fed** shifts to focus on growth, Head of Multi-Sector Fixed Income, Lisa Hornby, provides her outlook on **#fixedincome** markets in 2023. Given the current regime shift, yields available today are the most attractive they have been in over a decade. Watch below.



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NBA 🧼 @NBA 15 for Julius in Q1. 11-0 @nyknicks run!

NYK seeks 8 straight Ws app.link.nba.com/e/watch_now



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VANITY FAIR © @VanityFair Watch how Mark overcame his mobility challenges after a tragic accident. Captured by @@AnnieLeibovitz.



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Chris Rufo



Christopher F. Rufo 💥 🧇 @realchrisrufo · Oct 24, 2022 · 🥒 I spent a month digging into the real story behind Drag Queen Story Hour.

It's the culmination of a 40-year campaign to destigmatize adult-child sexuality and create a "site of queer pleasure" for male transvestites and kids.

It's worse than you think.



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Christopher F. Rufo X ♥ @realchrisrufo · Oct 24, 2022 · ℓ I spent a month digging into the real story behind Drag Queen Story Hour.

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It's the culmination of a 40-year campaign to destigmatize adult-child sexuality and create a "site of queer pleasure" for male transvestites and kids.

It's worse than you think.



city-journal.org The Real Story Behind Drag Queen Story Hour | City Journal Aimed at children, the phenomenon is far more subversive than its defenders claim.

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Are we experiencing a crisis of authorship? Art+Technology alumni James Coupe believes so. He returns to the show to share more about his latest AI-based project and why he thinks we should redefine authorship in the age of AI. Sponsored by @Hyundai_Global



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Christopher F. Rufo X @realchrisrufo · Oct 24, 2022 ···· Drag Queen **Story Hour** is about reading books in the same way that Playboy magazine is about reading the articles.

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The **#PartyDown R** gang is back together again! Sign up for the STARZ app to watch the Season 3 premiere NOW. \$5/month for 3 months for a limited time.

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Tim Pool @Timcast · Nov 22, 2022 the grooming of **children** is not stopping

people are calling for more violence

I do not think legislators will stop the grooming

People will not stop calling for violence

so you tell me what happens next

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