



45 Days Until Election 2024




Election Security Update as of Mid-September 2024

Foreign Actors Boosting Influence Operations with Generated and Manipulated Media

The IC is observing foreign actors, including Russia and Iran, use generative AI technology to boost their respective U.S. election influence efforts, consistent with the IC's warning in its first election update in July. Generative AI is helping to improve and accelerate aspects of foreign influence operations but thus far the IC has not seen it revolutionize such operations. The risk to U.S. elections from foreign AI-generated content depends on the ability of foreign actors to overcome restrictions built into many AI tools and remain undetected, develop their own sophisticated models, and strategically target and disseminate such content.

The IC and our partners continue to monitor for any foreign attempts to inject deceptive or potentially disruptive AI-generated content into the U.S. information environment as Election Day nears. Methods to accomplish this include laundering material through prominent figures, publishing on inauthentic social media accounts or websites pretending to be legitimate news outlets, or releasing supposed "leaks" of AI-generated content that appear sensitive or controversial.

Foreign Actors

-  Of the top three actors we are tracking, **Russia** has generated the most AI content related to the election and has done so across all four mediums—text, images, audio, and video—though the degree to which this content has been released and spread online varies. These items include AI-generated content of and about prominent U.S. figures, and are consistent with Russia's broader efforts to boost the former President's candidacy and denigrate the Vice President and the Democratic Party, including through conspiratorial narratives. Russian AI-generated content has also sought to emphasize divisive U.S. issues such as immigration.
-  **Iranian** actors have used AI to help generate social media posts and write inauthentic news articles for websites that claim to be real news sites. This content, in both English and Spanish, has targeted U.S. voters across the political spectrum on polarizing issues, such as the Israel-Gaza conflict and on the presidential candidates.
-  **China** is using AI in broader influence operations seeking to shape global views of China and amplify divisive U.S. political issues, but not for any specific operations targeting U.S. election outcomes. For example, pro-China online actors this year have used AI-generated news anchors and inauthentic social media accounts with AI-generated profile pictures to sow divisions on issues such as drug use, immigration, and abortion.

Foreign actors, especially Russia, are also creating or manipulating media with less sophisticated means, or using AI to enhance rather than generate content. For example, the IC assesses Russian influence actors were responsible for staging a video in which a woman claims she was the victim of a hit-and-run car accident by the Vice President and altering videos of the Vice President's speeches.

The IC continues to judge that foreign actors are increasing their election influence activities as we approach November. Our judgments on the activities of Russia, Iran, and China have not changed since our last update on 6 September.