



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 2, 2015

DOJ Study Examines Right-wing Social Media Usage

The Department of Justice is once again using taxpayer dollars to fund a biased agenda. The department's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has awarded Michigan State University over half a million dollars for a study on social media usage by "far-right" groups.

"There is currently limited knowledge of the role of technology and computer mediated communications (CMCs), such as Facebook and Twitter, in the dissemination of messages that promote extremist agendas and radicalize individuals to violence," [according to the NIJ grant](#). "The proposed study will address this gap through a series of qualitative and quantitative analyses of posts from various forms of CMC used by members of both the far-right and Islamic extremist movements."



The grant states that the study will focus more on right-wing forums than areas of the Internet occupied by Islamic extremists, though it does not state which "far-right" groups will be targeted:

We will collect posts made in four active forums used by members of the far-right and three from the Islamic Extremist community, as well as posts made in Facebook, LiveJournal, Twitter, YouTube, and Pastebin accounts used by members of each movement.

The findings will be used to document both the prevalence and variation in the ideological content of posts from members of each movement. In addition, we will assess the value of these messages in the social status of the individual posting the message and the function of radical messages in the larger on-line identity of participants in extremist communities generally.

The project will also "identify the hidden networks of individuals who engage in extremist movements based on geographic location and ideological similarities."

The findings from the study will be used in presentations for counterterrorism experts.

This is not the first time the Obama administration has characterized its critics as "terrorists" or "extremists." In 2009, the Department of Homeland Security issued a report on right-wing "extremism" which identified (among others) [veterans](#) returning from combat as a potential terrorist threat, as well as pro-life groups and those opposed to illegal immigration.

"Rightwing extremism," the 2009 report said in a footnote on page 2, goes beyond religious and racial hate groups and extends to "those that are mainly antigovernment, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely.... It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration." It also listed gun owners and (as the 2015 report does) veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as potential



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risks.

In 2009, then-Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano defended that report's focus on right-wing groups, drawing comparisons between those who oppose abortion and Timothy McVeigh. "The document on right-wing extremism sent last week by this department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis is one in an ongoing series of assessments to provide situational awareness to state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies on the phenomenon and trends of violent radicalization in the United States," Napolitano said in her statement. "I was briefed on the general topic, which is one that struck a nerve as someone personally involved in the Timothy McVeigh prosecution."

Earlier this year, a Department of Homeland Security intelligence assessment was released, which focused on right-wing sovereign citizen "extremist" groups in the United States. According to some law-enforcement groups, the threat from those groups is equal to, and at times even greater than, that from Islamic extremist groups. The assessment states that these particular right-wing "extremists" defy laws when they detect that their individual rights are being violated, at times even during typical daily routines such as traffic stops.

Ironically, the report predicted that the majority of the sovereign citizen violence will occur against law-enforcement officers. "Law enforcement officers will remain the primary target of [sovereign citizen] violence over the next year due to their role in physically enforcing laws and regulations," the report states

However, constitutionalists have pointed out that the latest attacks against law-enforcement officers have come from [protesters](#) with misplaced anger, not from those who seek to ensure that civil liberties are being protected in all police interactions with citizens.

Photo of military veteran: [Frank Schulenburg](#)



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