The Deplatforming Index: A Research Brief

Based on their analysis of 7.6 million tweets, The Jacobs Technion-Cornell Institute recently issued a report on Voter Fraud 2020 that analyzes how allegations of election fraud spread across Twitter. These researchers identified the top 20 influencers pushing a widespread disinformation campaign about the U.S. election on Twitter. However, a range of networked conspiracies proliferated across platforms in the lead up to the Capitol attack on January 6, 2021. We have modified Cornell’s list slightly to include Steve Bannon, Roger Stone, and Mike Lindell, which our research has identified as significant nodes in this coordinated disinformation campaign. Bannon was suspended from Twitter on November 6, 2020, so he does not prominently appear in the Cornell data set.

The Technology and Social Change Research Project created this “DEPLATFORMING INDEX” to call attention to the issues that deplatforming raises for a free and open internet. The index will be updated as companies take action on different accounts. We will add more platforms and accounts as this group moves to alternative technologies. While this list is by no means exhaustive of all the elites and influencers who were part of the election disinformation campaign, the index illustrates that enforcement of bans has been a relatively uneven process across the major social media platforms.

We believe our index will help boost transparency and accountability across the technology industry. Moreover, it will allow us to more closely evaluate what happens after deplatforming.