



THE COUNTER-NARRATIVE HANDBOOK



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About this Handbook

Given the proliferation of violent extremist content online in recent years, developing effective counter-narratives - *messages that offer a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, or deconstruct or delegitimise extremist narratives and challenge extremist ideologies* - is an increasingly necessary alternative to online censorship.

This Handbook, funded by [Public Safety Canada](#) through the [Kanishka Project](#), was created by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) to help anyone looking to proactively respond to extremist propaganda with counter-narrative campaigns, and is intended as a beginner's guide for those with little or no previous experience of counter-narrative campaigning. It takes readers through the main stages of creating, launching and evaluating an effective counter-narrative campaign. It can also be used alongside ISD's freely available online [Counter-narrative Toolkit](#), which can be found at www.counternarratives.org.

Our advice is based on ISD's experiences in creating, running and evaluating in-house campaigns such as Extreme Dialogue, and collaborating with independent content-creators, from civil society and NGO campaigners to young activists, to amplify their counter-narrative messages through training, networking and campaign support. This Handbook therefore focuses on civil-society, youth or NGO-led online counter-narrative campaigns.

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The background features several abstract geometric shapes in various shades of purple. At the top left, a large, dark purple polygon is partially visible. In the center, the word "INTRODUCTION" is displayed in a bold, dark grey, sans-serif font. Below the text, there are three more geometric elements: a medium-sized purple hexagon, a light purple cube-like structure with a triangular pattern on its base, and a large, dark purple polygon in the bottom right corner.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In recent years violent extremists' use of the internet and social media has garnered a lot of attention. This is not least because of their increasingly glamorised methods of recruiting youth to their cause. The quality and scale of their output is growing and they are increasingly pioneering new ways of spreading malicious content. They produce compelling content delivered by charismatic individuals that can add to the allure of their message and has proven effective at appealing to their target audiences.

There has been growing interest in alternative approaches to this problem that go beyond online censorship, which is both unrealistic and problematic. In a world where it is impossible to completely silence extremist narratives, developing “counter-narratives” is a necessary alternative.

“Counter-narratives” has become a catch-all term for a wide variety of activities that range from grassroots civil-society, youth or NGO-led campaigns to government strategic communications. This Handbook focuses on civil-society, youth or NGO-led online counter-narrative campaigns that are tailored to a specific audience, and with a particular goal in mind.

This Handbook defines a counter-narrative as *a message that offers a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, or alternatively aims to deconstruct or delegitimise extremist narratives*. This could involve:

- Focusing on what we are *for* (rather than *against*) by offering positive stories about shared values, open-mindedness, freedom and democracy;
- Highlighting how extremist activities negatively impact on the people they claim to represent;
- Demonstrating the hypocrisy of extremist groups and how their actions are often inconsistent with their own stated beliefs;
- Emphasising factual inaccuracies used in extremist propaganda and setting the record straight;
- Mocking or satirising extremist propaganda to undermine its credibility.

Organisations and credible messengers doing this work often lack the technical or communications skills to do this effectively at scale. This Handbook was created to help anyone looking to proactively respond to extremist propaganda with counter-narratives. It can also be used alongside ISD's freely available, online **Counter-narrative Toolkit**, which can be found at www.counternarratives.org and houses the Video Tutorials and Apps for [Creating Content](#) and [Social Media](#), as well as more in-depth [Case Studies](#).

The Handbook is intended as a beginner's guide for those with little or no previous experience of counter-narrative campaigning. Our advice is based on ISD's experiences in creating, running and evaluating in-house campaigns such as Extreme Dialogue, and collaborating with independent content-creators, from civil society and NGO campaigners to young activists, to amplify their counter-narrative messages through training, networking and campaign support. All ISD campaigns have been measured, analysed and evaluated to identify successes and areas for improvements, and test the relative effectiveness of various social media platforms and tactics.

This Handbook takes readers through the main stages of creating, launching and evaluating an effective counter-narrative campaign. This includes:

Planning a Campaign: A successful counter-narrative campaign requires careful planning. This section presents the best methods for researching audiences, crafting messages, choosing messengers and mediums, setting realistic goals and objectives, and advice on funding and budgeting.

Creating Content: The content of a counter-narrative campaign can vary in terms of medium, style, message and messenger. There are many ways to create the content needed for a counter-narrative campaign, ranging from DIY methods to professional production. This section outlines key choices and suggestions for creating content that reflects the aims of your planned campaign.

Running a Campaign: After creating content, this section helps campaigners to think about the platforms and tactics that can be used to ensure their message reaches the intended audience.

Online Advertising: Whilst free methods for boosting campaigns are available, this section outlines how campaigners can use paid advertising on social media platforms to reach their audience.

Engaging Audiences: Whilst a campaign is running there are a number of actions that a campaigner can take to maximise audience engagement and ensure a strong response from audiences. This section outlines a number of considerations to take on board when interacting with audiences.

Evaluating Campaigns: Campaigners need to understand what works and what doesn't. To progress, it's important to be able to measure the impact of a campaign to determine whether it was successful. This section explains why this is important and unpacks often-confusing terminologies concerning "analytics" and "metrics".

Toolbox, Additional Resources & Glossary: Finally, this Handbook provides additional tools, resources, case studies and advice to help campaigners on their way to creating, launching and evaluating effective campaigns, as well as a summary of key terms and definitions.

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PLANNING A CAMPAIGN

Planning a Campaign

A counter-narrative campaign plan can be broken down into four fundamental questions:

- Who is your **audience**?
- What is your **message**?
- What **medium** are you going to use?
- Who will be the **messenger**?

Defining Your Audience

Identifying the right audience for a counter-narrative campaign is the first important consideration. Before beginning the process of planning a campaign make sure you have thought about whether you want to produce content intended for “upstream” prevention or more “downstream” intervention with people with extreme views. This will help to focus your overall counter-narrative campaign planning. For example, you might want to:

- Create a preventative campaign educating a broader audience. This could be young people, parents, teachers or other practitioners working with youth.
- Reach a more specific age or gender group such as young women aged 18-25, or teenagers aged 14-18.
- Reach young people actively watching or searching for extremist content online who could be at-risk of radicalisation.
- Influence members of online extremist groups or followers of known extremist accounts.

Campaigns can attempt to reach more than one audience. However, it's important not to be too ambitious and try to reach everyone. Be as specific as possible when thinking about exactly who the right audience is.

Case Study: Extreme Dialogue

Extreme Dialogue is an upstream, preventative campaign featuring the stories of formers and survivors. Videos are aimed at youth and parents, with educational resources for teachers to facilitate classroom discussions around extremism and radicalisation. The videos and resources were promoted on **Facebook** and **YouTube**.

Key Points:

- Highly emotive short films featuring true stories of formers and survivors.
- Launch campaign intended to raise awareness among young people and their parents, as well as build brand recognition among educators.

The characteristics of the audience should determine the message, medium, and messenger for the counter-narrative campaign. It is vital that these characteristics are included when thinking about an audience, as these help a campaigner to really know who they are trying to reach.

A helpful exercise is to draw-up a short biography or “bio” of a typical member of the intended audience. This could be a teenage male living in the UK who is regularly engaging with white-power music and videos, and is an active member of online far-right communities on both Facebook and YouTube. Alternatively the typical audience member might be a mother with teenage children, a teacher or a social worker that wants to learn more about the radicalisation process. You can find an example bio in the **Toolbox** to help you determine the characteristics of your intended audience.

Case Study: One to One Interventions

One to One is online intervention program managed by ISD. At-risk candidates in the UK, USA, and Canada were identified on Facebook via open-source info and matched up with an appropriate intervention provider. One to One operated on the assumption that formers would have the best credibility in direct messaging, so members were drawn from the AVE network.

Key Points:

- Interventions were highly tailored to each individual.
- It was a collaborative effort between civil society and formers.
- Formers proved to be powerful messengers for direct outreach.
- Interventions were most effective when they utilised certain tones and message content.

Researching Where Your Audience Spends Time Online

Understanding how your audience acts both online and offline will help you to figure out who they are and how best to reach them. Researching your audience can be as simple as talking to them! It’s important to engage with, and if possible, co-design counter-narrative content with members of the audience themselves. For example, if you are looking to engage with students then recruit and run focus groups with university students or student societies. Ask them what they think about your message or campaign and the kind of content they are likely to engage with.

For example, networks like YouthCAN aim to empower young people to create their own content. Alternatively, companies like Latimer Media Group routinely engage with young people as part of their business model to understand and co-create with their audience to create effective content for brands and public awareness campaigns.

You can also gain insights into your audience by researching them online without meeting face to face. For example:

- Conduct research – and use pre-existing research (find some examples in the **Additional Resources** section) – to understand how your audience interact online, what platforms they use and what they are really interested in. For example, if a

counter-narrative aims to reach white-supremacists in the U.S., then extremist chat forums like *Stormfront* can provide a good starting point for uncovering the interests of this audience. This could be the music they listen to, clothes they wear, individuals they respect, or events they attend.

- Research the content and profiles that your audience engages with online. For example, try setting up a social media profile that is typical of a member of your audience in order to see how content is advertised at that demographic, and what your campaign will be competing with. Make sure you check the terms and conditions of the platform you are using as some social networks do not allow individuals to have multiple profiles.
- Learn from former extremists about why extremist messaging appealed to them, how they found it and which online platforms are being used by extremists for recruitment. For example, the [AVE Network](#) is full of people that can help to identify interests based on their knowledge and first-hand experience.
- Contact organisations or people that have run similar counter-narrative campaigns. It's vital that all campaigners share insights from their campaigns with each other. There are a number of case studies available in the **Toolbox** that can prove useful in identifying individuals or organisations that could be helpful.

After researching your audience produce a detailed table outlining their demographic characteristics, languages, locations, interests and online behaviours. You can find an example template for an Audience Member Bio in the **Toolbox** section.

The Message

Once you've decided on your audience you need a story to tell them. A story is a message with a purpose. At a basic level your message should speak with your audience, not at them. Creating a message that says "extremism is bad" or "this extremist group is bad" without offering a positive alternative or a well thought-out explanation why is unlikely to have a strong or lasting impact. The most effective messages do not lecture the audience - they offer something to think about and reflect on. There are a number of different message types that you should consider:

- Facts from credible sources (for example formers and returning foreign fighters) to deconstruct, discredit and demystify extremist messages;
- Emotional appeals highlighting the impact of extremism and violence;
- Satire and humour to de-glamorise and undermine the rebellious appeal of extremist groups;
- Positive stories and messages from people within your audience, or whom the audience admires.

Getting a strong reaction from your audience is exactly what you are hoping to achieve with a counter-narrative campaign. It's good to be thought provoking, but there are risks when creating a provocative counter-narrative campaign. Avoid antagonising or simply being controversial for the sake of it. If you plan to reach members of extreme groups with your message make sure you read through [How can I stay safe online?](#) in the **Toolbox**.

What are the risks of using humour within counter-narratives?

Any content, online or offline, will have a chance of being misunderstood. Comedy is no exception, not everyone will find the same things funny. If you post content satirising an extremist group, this can easily be shared around the world but without people realising who made it or where it comes from. It's important to think carefully about how your content or message could be misinterpreted or cause offense to some audiences. Conducting research with members of your audience can help to gauge the potential reaction. Directly making fun of or humiliating members of an extremist group can also have the unintended effect of emboldening their extreme stance or increasing feelings of alienation.

Some messages may include a “call to action”. A call to action asks audiences to do something immediately in response to your message and makes it clear why it is important. This could be as simple as getting them to share a video, sign a petition, or get involved more directly in the campaign or cause. Calls to action should be creative but also realistic.

Case Study: Hours Against Hate

Hours Against Hate is a US State Department-led campaign that aims to promote pluralism across society through offline social activism and online awareness-raising. The campaign urges youth to volunteer their time by pledging one hour to do something for someone different to them, and encouraging others to do the same.

Key Points:

- A clear, positive call to action engages users and offers inspiration for how to get involved.
- Campaign combines online and offline activity to reach broad audiences while facilitating community engagement and cohesion.

Mediums

Once you have decided on your message, consider how you want to package it. A counter-narrative campaign could be made up of one or more mediums. Examples include:

- **Videos:** short films or animations.
- **Text:** slogans, hashtags or open letters.
- **Images:** photos or memes.
- **Online literature:** brochures or informative posters.

- **Audio recordings:** podcasts or short audio-clips.
- **Comics:** manga, short panels or graphic novels.

Research can help you understand which types of content receive the best engagement among your audience. Content-creators should be creative and draw insights from other areas such as advertising or marketing. Extremist groups are constantly producing attractive and interesting content, so campaigners and content-creators should do the same. You're not just competing with extremist content but also everything else out there for the attention of your audience. Have a look at the Case Studies in the **Toolbox** section for some examples of existing campaigns.

Budget and resources are of course also key considerations. If your budget is small and time is short, keep it simple. Most people tend to think of counter-narratives as videos, but a short and memorable slogan or hashtag can be cost-effective and very powerful. See **Creating Content** for more considerations on which medium to choose, or the **Toolbox** for various Tools and Video Tutorials on social media platforms and content creation.

Messengers

It's important to have a messenger that your audience finds credible. Think of the messenger and message like a song. The lyrics might be powerful but the singer also needs a good voice. Consider who your audience is likely to trust, be inspired by or listen to.

Case Study: Sabahi and Magharebia

Sabahi and Magharebia were online information platforms that aimed to provide impartial and balanced news coverage in Africa as a counter-narrative to the misinformation that feeds extremist narratives on the continent. The platforms were launched with sponsorship from US Department of Defence but maintained localised approaches.

Key Points:

- Factual campaigns to counter misinformation are powerful tools for undercutting extremist narratives and encouraging critical thinking.
- Government-run information campaigns often face difficulties with credibility and legitimacy, especially when targeted overseas.

There are many possible effective messengers for each audience but some examples could be:

- Former extremists ("formers").
- Survivors of extremism ("survivors").
- Respected organisations, charities, or projects relevant to who you want to reach.
- Individuals who your audience respects such as sporting figures, musicians or actors.
- Influential and respected faith, community or youth leaders and activists.

Many counter-narratives use the personal and touching stories of formers and survivors. The [Against Violent Extremism \(AVE\) network](#) is a great resource for anyone who wants to include these voices in their counter-narratives. You can [sign up to the network](#) and reach out to members through the in-built messaging system.

Those that have “been there, done that” can be a good way to reach those that have already been radicalised or individuals that have started to engage with online extremist content. Some people that are still members of extremist groups might view them with some suspicion or anger, but this can add to their impact. They have first-hand experience that can speak to the futility and flaws of violence and extremism and start to sow the seeds of doubt. They are well-positioned to unravel the undesirable day-to-day reality of what life is really like as a member of an extremist group, and delegitimise narratives that promote violence based on their own experiences.

Case Study: Global Survivors Network

The Global Survivors Network (GSN) aims to provide a platform to amplify the voices of victims and survivors of violent extremism. To achieve this, GSN produced and disseminated a series of survivor testimonies through social media. They also produced an Oscar-nominated documentary, *Killing in the Name*. They combine their online work with offline social activism.

Key Points:

- Produced audio-visual series highlighting survivor testimonies shared through social media.
- Uses the valuable and credible stories of survivors.

Survivors and families can also be effective messengers. They can offer an emotional and compelling reminder of the real impact that violence and hatred has on people’s lives. Their testimonies serve to deglamorise and delegitimise violent extremist acts that are committed against ordinary, innocent people and their families. Good resources for these powerful stories are organisations such as:

- [Global Survivors Network](#)
- [Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism](#)
- [The Forgiveness Project](#)
- [Against Violent Extremism network](#)

Learning from the Extremist Groups You’re Trying to Counter

There are often many layers or themes in the narratives of extremist groups. It’s difficult to address them all in one go. Instead, being focused on which aspect of the narrative you want to counter will help to produce an effective and tailored counter-narrative. For example, if you are countering an Islamist extremist group such as ISIS or al-Shabaab, they will use a mixture of theological, political and cultural themes in their narratives. It may be a big task to try to address all these issues in one campaign.

Creating a counter-narrative that gets the audience to think a little more about just one or two of these may be more suitable and easier to create. To help decide what you are going to counter it's a good idea to consider what it is about the extremist narrative that people can be drawn to, and how extremist propaganda achieves the response it is aiming for in its target audience.

For more information and analysis of extremist propaganda see the **Additional Resources** section.

Are there any security considerations I should be aware of?

There are several security considerations that you should think about while planning a campaign. These are discussed further in the [Toolbox](#).

Key Points:

- Are you okay for your campaign to be linked back to you or your organisation?
- Are you happy for your organisation to be visible online?
- Are you prepared for members of extremist groups to contact you?
- Have you taken into the account the safety of your messenger or others that may be featured in your content?

Setting Goals and Objectives

Setting an overarching goal and a series of more specific, measurable and achievable objectives during the planning stage will help to focus a counter-narrative campaign. Tangible objectives help campaigners to have a target to aim for and provide a framework or benchmark to evaluate the impact your campaign has had.

In order to define your objectives consider the size of your audience, the resources you have available and the estimated costs for campaigning (including advertising, outreach or events). Some campaigns often have goals and objectives that are too broad and not realistically achievable with the resources available. Not every campaign will go viral and nor should it, focus instead on reaching your specific audience.

For example, a goal might be teaching young people in a local town about some of the recruitment tactics used by extremists. The objectives might then be to get 5000 views and 100 shares of your video on YouTube from the desired audience, putting up 100 posters around town and in schools, and having 200 students attend screenings of the video and share the campaign via their social media accounts, and receive positive coverage in traditional media to amplify your message and reach a broader audience.

To learn from a campaign it's a good idea to think about objectives that can help to evaluate success. Most social media platforms have in-built analytics that allow you to monitor your campaign and determine whether online objectives were met. See **Evaluating Campaigns** for more details.

Remember, goals are there to guide the campaign and keep it focused on your original purpose. Objectives explain how goals will be met, serve as a reminder of your key tactics and provide targets to aim for, and offer a framework to evaluate your success.

Funding and Budgeting

All successful campaigns need resources, but they don't need to break the bank. There are plenty of examples of successful campaigns run on a shoe-string budget, as well as failed campaigns with huge budgets. If your campaign has a limited budget, make the most of what's there. A great idea backed by passion and commitment can go a long way! Regardless of the funding available, it is important to think about how resources are divided up. Allocate specific amounts for each aspect of your campaign (content production versus promotion and distribution) and keep accurate records of what you have spent. Try to build-in flexibility and remain responsive to changes in costs or requirements during the production process and campaigning stage.

Although creating the right content is important, it's also vital to be able to reach your audience. It's best to avoid being in a position where you have great content but a limited budget to promote it!

Where Can I Find Funding for My Campaign?

Funding isn't crucial for a successful counter-narrative campaign. However, it certainly helps to boost an online campaign and reach more of your audience. There are many potential funders out there, each with their own priorities, conditions and eligibility requirements so it's worth spending a bit of time to find the ones that are right for your proposed campaign. Look at who has funded or supported other related counter-narrative campaigns as a starting point.

Case Study: Not Another Brother

Launched by the Quilliam Foundation, the campaign's video is an emotionally charged story of a young man who only comes to realise his mistakes when it's too late. It aims to challenge extremist recruitment narratives and was financed using crowd-funding. It was disseminated primarily via Twitter and YouTube advertising.

Key Points:

- Specialised hashtag #NotAnotherBrother helped to drive engagement on Twitter.
- Supported through crowd-funding and a good example of alternative funding options.

Below are some options that are worth exploring:

- Private sector organisations are increasingly showing interest in countering violent

extremism. Many of the leading tech and social media companies are involved with fighting back against extremists using their products or networks. For example, Google offers its [Ad Grants](#) programme to provide monthly in-kind advertising support to charities in various countries.

- Civil society foundations or charitable and philanthropic organisations can be a great source of funding for counter-narrative campaigns. They bring credibility that governments can lack in some contexts and often have great links at the local grassroots level.
- Government funding may be available. This could be at the national, regional or local level in your country or from international governmental organisations. However, government funding may not be right for some organisations, campaigns or messages, so think carefully about how it could affect your credibility with your audience.
- Academic or research funding can be a potential option for some, especially if the plan is to pilot a new methodology or carry out extensive testing and in-depth evaluation.
- Crowdfunding websites are another option for supporting your campaign. Some sites like [Rally](#) are free and are largely aimed at non-profits or charities. Others like [Start Some Good](#) are all-or-nothing - any money raised will be returned to donors if the campaign does not reach at least 25% of its overall goal. Beware that some of the most popular sites, like [Kickstarter](#), require the donations to be for material rewards. If you are creating a physical product as part of your campaign, such as a comic book, then a site like this might be the best option.
- It can also be worth asking professional tech, content or campaigning experts or companies whether they might be willing to help with pro-bono or in-kind support. This could simply be advice and feedback, or even a reduced rate for their services.



CREATING CONTENT



Creating Content

There are no strict rules for creating counter-narrative content. Campaigners should seek to be as creative, bold and open-minded as possible. Moreover, they should seek to test out a wide range of different styles and formats with their audience to determine what works best. Where possible, campaigners should develop counter-narrative content with members of the audiences themselves. This is the best way to ensuring that content includes a message that will resonate.

This section provides ideas and tips for content format, style and the process of creation. It's important to remember that great counter-narrative content can be created without breaking the bank. There are many free tools and apps available in the **Toolbox**, which can be used effectively with a little practice. Resources aside, the most important thing is that the content reflects the campaign plan. The underlying message must be engaging, resonate with the audience, and be delivered by the right voice.

Whether you are trying to find music to set the right tone for your video, or trying to decide on the colour-scheme of your website, have a range of options and ask people for their thoughts and feedback. If possible ask your audience directly what they think. If this isn't an option then you can ask colleagues, friends and family or others working on counter-narrative campaigns.

What Type of Content Do I Need to Create?

The first thing to consider is which medium will be most effective at reaching the audience of your campaign. This could include:

- **Videos:** short films or animations
- **Images:** photos or memes
- **Text:** slogans, hashtags or open letters
- **Online literature:** brochures or informative posters
- **Audio recordings:** podcasts or short audio-clips
- **Comics:** manga, short panels or graphic novels

Choosing the medium for your content will depend on your resources and budget (including any in-house expertise), and the social media platforms you intend to use. Make sure to play to your strengths creatively and be realistic with the resources you have at your disposal. Remember, simple content and a well-executed campaign can be done effectively on a tight budget.

Your choice of platforms can also affect the medium you should use. Make sure the content will work on the platforms your audience uses most. Videos and pictures often do well on social media as they are more visible on people's news feeds or timelines.

Text based campaigns may work better with platforms that focus on discussion such as blogs or forums.

Many counter-narrative campaigns focus on video content. Videos can be difficult and expensive to make, but they don't have to be. Some of the most impactful videos have been made for free by amateurs with some practice and a little trial and error. If you do decide to use video, make sure the first 3 to 5 seconds of your video is as attention-grabbing as possible. Don't make your videos too long as it can be difficult to retain audiences online. Consider using compelling or emotive music to maximise impact, but be sure to check copyright restrictions. The [Creative Commons website](#) offers advice on what you can and can't use, and points to a number of other sites offering music published under flexible copyright licenses.

Case Study: JiLadz

JiLadz are a comedic duo from the UK who took on ISIS' recruitment narrative in their satirical video "Falafels and Kafirs". This is a low budget video that could have easily been shot on a mobile phone or webcam and required little editing. The video is a good example of how an effective video could be crafted without a high budget.

Key Points:

- Simplicity was here for this counter-narrative and it feels like an authentic grassroots effort.
- Uses humour to demystify extremist narratives subtly.
- Low budget creation.

There are also plenty of alternatives to video but no matter what kind of content you choose, just be sure it is appealing and engaging for your audience. Avoid relying too heavily on text and try to make your campaign as visually exciting as you can. Check out the **Toolbox** section to find out more about some of the DIY tools for creating different kinds of content, from image-making and graphic design to podcasting. Need to hone your skills or get some inspiration? Then see the [Video Tutorials](#) to learn how to make the most out of the great tools that are out there.

Case Study: Hero-Factor

Hero-Factor is a graphic novel created by Suleiman Bakhit. It presents a positive role model as an antidote to extremism and "adventure-seeking" narratives with cultural and historical legitimacy that rivals the inaccurate worldview of extremist groups. Produced with financial support from the Jordanian government it sold over 1.2 million copies in 2011.

Key Points:

- Filled an existing need for Arab superheroes.
- Comic books can be a powerful medium for engaging youth.

Identifying Content Creation Needs

Look back at the short bio you drew up while **Planning a Campaign**. This will help to determine what types of content (messages, mediums and messengers) are most likely to reach and engage your audience:

- Carefully consider the **message** and ensure you know precisely how your content will convey it. Consult your audiences if possible. If you are hoping to reach more extreme audiences then research the types of content they tend to consume.
- Your decision on what **medium** to use will help to identify exactly what production methods to use to create the impactful content you need. For instance, if a photo based campaign is going to be used, you could use a camera and tools like Photoshop or Instagram to create and edit content.
- If you have decided to partner with another **messenger** such as a former or survivor there may be extra things to consider. Have they told their story publically before and are they happy with how it is being used? Are they aware of the potential for media attention and might they wish to remain anonymous? Are there safety issues to consider such as reprisals from former associates? If it is a video campaign are they comfortable sharing their experiences on camera? See the **Toolbox** for more information on potential security considerations.
- Keep **goals** and **objectives** in mind. For example, if the goal is to interact with your audience and start important conversations, then content will have to be engaging enough to spark this interaction and leave some unanswered questions. If you want your audience to take action then how are you going to persuade them? If you want them to learn something how can you be informative but not lecturing? Remember, whilst it's important to be creative, make sure it's not at the expense of your campaign's goal, and your content is tailored to achieve it.

What are the options if I want to build a website?

A website will only help your campaign if you can get your audience to visit it. There are a huge range of different options for building a website for your campaign. Whether you decide to use free DIY tools such as **Tumblr**, go for a cheap but easy-to-use website builder such as **Squarespace**, or hire a professional website designer, it is possible to create a simple but great looking website. Have a look at the Apps section to find out more about some of the options available.

If you do decide to build a website, it is worth considering Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). Search Engine Optimisation is the process of affecting the visibility of your website in a search engine's "unpaid", "organic" or "earned" results (i.e. not via paid advertising). To find out how to use SEO to improve your website's search engine rankings, check out Google's **SEO Starter Guide** or the Video Tutorials section. It is important to note that professional SEO experts can be expensive and may not necessarily benefit smaller campaigns

Creating Engaging Content: Styles & Tones

Counter-narrative content can have a wide-range of different tones. It could be; reflective, antagonistic, scholarly, mournful, regretful, cool, exciting, adventurous, provocative, humorous, or satirical. It can tell a personal story, seek to directly engage an ideology or one component of an ideology. It can feature real-life people, such as former extremists and survivors of extremism, in an engaging documentary-style. It can involve cartoons and created characters; or fictionalised dramas or scenarios.

Here are some key questions you should be asking as you design your content:

- Is it age appropriate and pitched at the right level for your audience? Will the language be easily understood?
- What you want your audience to feel when they see your content?
- If you want your audience to remember one thing from the campaign what would it be?

There are many ways to make content engaging and resonate with your audience. Don't be afraid to create something bold. Ultimately, the tone and content of your messages will be in part shaped by who you are as a person or organisation, and how you want to engage your audience. But it should also be shaped by ongoing evaluation and data from previous campaigns.

Previous counter-narrative campaigns and evaluations provide some insight into what types of content receive the best engagement and have made the most impact. These are provided in the Additional Resources section. Ultimately however, far more campaigns and greater testing is needed to continually refresh and update learning. By creating and evaluating your campaign, you can help contribute to this process!

What copyright and intellectual property issues should I be aware of?

Copyright is a type of intellectual property (others include original designs, patents and trademarks). Intellectual property allows the creator or owner of an idea or original work exclusive legal rights to use, reproduce and distribute it. Be aware that copyright laws will vary between different countries and jurisdictions. If you are planning to make your content freely available to anyone, online or offline, then a copyright licence can protect your content from being copied, changed or altered by others.

If you need to use stock images there are several websites that offer content that is free to use under a Creative Commons license. As a first port of call have a look at Flickr's **Creative Commons** site or **Shutterstock**, although there are plenty of other options out there.

Budgets and Professional Content Creation

Content production costs vary considerably depending on what medium is used and whether or not your content is produced professionally. It's still easy to produce good content with a bit of practice – no matter what your budget or what option you choose.

Professionals can be an option for some but may be too expensive for others. Consider working with young aspiring student film-makers, photographers, designers or artists in schools and universities who will be keen to produce content to build up their CVs or as part of university projects. If you do have the budget to hire a professional, make sure you write a clear brief, consider several options, and don't cut corners and just go for the first or cheapest option you find.

A great message is no use if no one hears it! Will online advertising be used and if so how much might need to be spent to achieve the objectives? How long will the campaign run for? Remember to balance time and money spent on creating content with how you plan to promote your campaign. If possible, it is also a good idea to budget for any changes that might be made later on, based on feedback from focus groups or your audience once it's online.

Testing Content

It is always a good idea to try and get feedback on your content to make sure it has the desired impact on your audience. Testing content can help to understand if your content gets the message across and engages the audience effectively. It may be that you need to refine aspects of your content so a trial and error approach is often best. If possible, try testing your content with a focus group similar to your audience.

It is also possible to refine your content during your campaign. Look out for online comments from your audience – what are they saying about your campaign and its message? How many people are sharing it? If it's a video, how long are people watching it for? Always keep in mind that you can't please everyone! Too much feedback and too many changes can increase the danger of your original message getting lost. Once you have planned your counter-narrative campaign and created your content, it's nearly time to launch! Before running the campaign it's important to think about how to ensure your content reaches the right audience. Where are the best places to find your audience online? What platforms can you reach them on and how? What kinds of online activity are they most likely to respond to?



RUNNING A CAMPAIGN



Running a Campaign

How Your Audience Uses Social Media

Exploring audience behaviour online will help you decide how best to reach them and can inform the methods and tactics you use during your campaign. Look back at the audience research you did when you were planning your campaign:

- Which social networks or platforms are **most popular**? Are certain platforms banned or not heavily used in your area?
- To what extent do they use major platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube?
- Do they also use online forums or blogs like **Reddit**, **Tumblr** or **4Chan**?
- How does your audience use these platforms? Do they tend to interact with only their friends or do they share content and discuss issues with others?
- What types of social media posts are typically the most popular with your audience?
- What times of day are they most likely to be online?

Choosing Platforms

Getting a sense of where and how your audience spend their time online will help you choose which platforms will be best for your campaign. It is also important to remember that different platforms have different advertising capabilities available for campaigners to reach their audience. See the **Online Advertising** section to find out more.

The medium you choose to convey your message will also be an important factor here. For example, if you have a video then you will need to host it on a platform like **YouTube**, **Dailymotion** or **Vimeo**. If you have an image based campaign then perhaps **Instagram** or **Pinterest** will work best. Remember though that platforms like **Facebook** and **Twitter** are very popular and can also be used for many different types of content.

There are far too many platforms out there to mention here, but below are some of the most popular and widely used.

Facebook is the largest and most popular social network in the world. Most people use Facebook to connect with friends and family, participate in groups or like pages or organisations. Sharing lots of different types of content is easy and it offers advertising features that can be very useful for reaching your audience.

YouTube is the world's largest video hosting platform. Users can watch, upload and share videos not just on YouTube but on other social networks and websites as well. Viewers can interact with each other, commenting on videos and subscribing to channels. YouTube offers extensive advertising services via Google AdWords that can help you reach your audience. YouTube also offers a broad range of services through their **non-**

profit programs. YouTube is also automatically connected to **Google+**, Gmail and other Google services.

Twitter varies in popularity around the world but is still one of the most popular social networks. Like Facebook it has become a popular tool for content-sharing among friends and like-minded users. Twitter is famed for its shorter messages, a faster pace, and its ability to break news and galvanise political and social movements. Twitter also offers advertising that can boost your tweets into your audiences' news feeds.

Instagram is primarily a photo-sharing platform that is also being used to share videos. With 70% of its users being millennials it is a great platform to reach a young audience and is most popular with mobile and tablet users.

Blogs and forums can provide an alternate way to engage and connect with your audience. Popular blog sites like **Tumblr** (more than 400 million users worldwide), **Ask.fm** or **Wordpress** (over 76 million blogs) are widely used because they are very simple. In some countries, you will find that blogs are the most popular forms of social media. Forum based platforms like **Reddit** give you the opportunity to engage with users in a more conversational manner but are also capable of generating lots of interest for your campaign.

Flickr, **Pinterest** and **Imgur** are also popular for photos and images, as are **Vine**, **Vimeo** and **Dailymotion** for videos. Messaging based apps like **WhatsApp**, **Snapchat**, **Kik** and **Telegram** are also increasingly used to share content as well as stay in touch. There are even music-centric social networks such as **Soundcloud** or **Last.fm**.

There are a lot of options. Go explore and find what's right for your campaign!

Should My Campaign Be On All the Popular Social Media Platforms?

No campaign will have the need or the resources to be on every social media platform out there! Instead, consider which platforms are favoured by your audience and best suited to your content and resources. Think carefully about why you want to use each platform and what specifically it will add to your campaign. What does it offer that other platforms don't? How will the different platforms you choose complement each other? Focus on platforms that you know your audience enjoy and that you're comfortable with. Be mindful of which platforms are popular (or banned!) in the countries you are trying to reach. Whilst there are some all-rounders, different social media platforms tend to favour different kinds of content.

For example, if you do not have video content then it is unlikely you will need to create a YouTube page. If you want to run ads, do the platforms you've chosen allow you to reach the right people? Think about what you want your audience to do and whether the platforms you are using are the best to encourage them to do it!

Many of the social networks will allow you to link your accounts to other platforms,

as well as share your content between them. Using unique banner images and logos and keeping the tone of posts and comments consistent across platforms can help to establish the campaign's brand and encourage people to find or follow you in more than one place.

Be sensitive to the different ways people engage with content on different platforms. There can be benefits of having a degree of synergy between your social media pages, especially if you have a consistent brand or “look” for your campaign. If you are using Instagram, then think about linking it to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. If you are posting a video from YouTube on Facebook, then provide a link to your YouTube channel on your Facebook page.

How Much Time Will it Take to Run and Maintain an Online Campaign?

Treat your time like you would any other finite resource – be realistic about the time that you have at your disposal and plan your campaign accordingly. Although you may want to be active on many different social media platforms and release new content every week, if you then find it too hard to manage and your levels of engagement dip you may start to lose your audience.

A counter-narrative campaign could run for as long as there remains extremist propaganda to counter! Realistically though the length of a campaign is largely determined by the budget, capacity and objectives. When deciding how long to run your campaign think about how you can make the biggest impact on your audience. If your campaign is about public awareness then you may want to make a big splash quickly to capitalise on media coverage or events. Other campaigns may try to engage with a more specific audience over a longer period of time.

There are apps such as Hootsuite that can help you manage multiple social media platforms at the same time. For more information see the **Toolbox** for useful Tools and Video Tutorials on managing social media pages.

How Will You Reach Your Audience?

Now that you have a shiny new social media presence make sure you use it! You can post or tweet your content, pose questions to your audience, or start a discussion. Be proactive, be social, and don't be afraid to get involved! See **Engaging Audiences** for more considerations on interacting with your audience.

Write posts, tweets or descriptions that resonate with your audience, reflect your message or mission and encourage sharing and comments. If you use more than one platform, make sure you link them together and cross-post content. If you want your audience to do something don't forget to ask. Inspiring calls to action can make a real difference. Depending on how long your campaign will run for you may want to consider staggering the release of your content to keep your audience hooked.

As a general rule, video and visual content receive greater levels of engagement across most platforms. However, not all sites you might want to use for your campaign will react as well to the same content, so try out a few different approaches and fine-tune your understanding of what works on each platform.

When is the best time to post?

Deciding the best times to post content will depend on your audience. If they are at work or in school all day and unlikely to check social media before 5pm then you should try and post in the evenings. If your audience is in multiple time zones then you may also want to space out your posts using a service like **Hootsuite** and figure out the best times in each location.

The built in analytics on many social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, can help you understand what types of posts or content are most effective and when. You can look back over your posts to see when your audience are most likely to interact with your campaign. If you are just starting out try and experiment with the timing of your activity to get a sense of when your audience are most likely to be online.

If you have the budget you can also make use of social media advertising to directly reach the news feeds of your chosen audience. Online ads can be used creatively by causes as well as companies. You can use ads to show off your videos, boost your social media posts, attract people to your website or disrupt extremist content and social networks. See the **Online Advertising** section for more information.

How often should I post content on my website or social media?

How often you post content online depends on you and your campaign; be realistic about your resources, capacity and the amount of content you have at your disposal. Just be careful not to wait too long between posts so your audience doesn't lose interest.

Not all your posts need to feature big and creative new pieces of original content. You can also incorporate smaller posts, like quick memes or relevant articles, in between your bigger posts. As you begin to receive more likes, views or follows, you may want to re-post your material from time to time to make sure that you capitalise on the increased traffic.

Don't forget to have a conversation with your audience!

What Free Tactics Can I Use to Boost the Reach of My Campaign?

There are also many other tactics you can use promote your message for free! These can be some of the most effective and direct ways to get your voice heard by the right audience. Using cost-free tactics to gain exposure is often a trade-off between time and money. Whilst it is cheaper, it can also be time consuming. Online advertising can be effective for building up an initial audience base because it takes your content directly to them. If you are unable to use paid advertising or it's not suitable for your campaign, you can still build up a good following and reach the right people.

Consider who else can reach your audience and ask them to share your campaign. They could be people you already know, but social media is also perfect for making new connections so be bold. You could approach anyone who is influential with your audience and might be interested in your campaign. It could be partner organisations and other NGOs working on similar issues or popular online figures. Some social media platforms allow you to see trending hashtags or topics, so you can participate in or even try to hijack relevant discussions that already have a large following.

If it is right for your campaign you could also approach websites that are popular with your audience. This could be blogs, news websites or popular “aggregators” such as **Buzzfeed** and **Upworthy**. Ask if they are interested in featuring your content or writing a story about your campaign. Make it clear what you would like them to do and why it is important! This could be sharing your content on their social media, featuring your campaign or simply spreading the word.

Another possibility to consider is linking your online campaign with real-world events. These can provide a valuable opportunity to engage with your audience, raise the profile of your campaign and get your message heard. You can promote events on social media and encourage guests to talk about the event live online by using hashtags or sharing your videos and photos. Events are also a good opportunity to invite the media, if appropriate for your campaign and your audience.

Case Study: English Disco Lovers (EDL)

The English Disco Lovers is a play on Far-Right English Defence League (EDL). It's a “Google bomb” campaign that uses a similar name with the same initials to try to outrank the far-right group on web searches and social media. Utilised carefully, such an approach can be a powerful and free way to get a campaign in front of the right audience.

Key Points:

- Group holds offline events to raise awareness about far-right extremism.
- Uses a similar name to an extreme group to outrank the English Defence League on search engines and social media.

Final Considerations

There are just a few final points to consider before you are ready to launch your campaign. It's a good idea to consider how much time you will need to manage your campaign once it is up and running. Do you have enough time to do everything by yourself, or will you need some help? If you have a team working on the campaign have you decided who is going to do what? Try and ensure that you play to your strengths and make sure you use the expertise available to you in the right places.

It's also important to be as responsive as possible to your audience. Have you thought about how you plan to interact with your audience, who will be responsible for this and when they will do it? This could be as simple as thanking people for their support, answering

questions about your campaign or joining in with comment threads or discussions. Don't be afraid to be creative and experiment. But, keep an eye on which kinds of interactions are most popular and successful with your key audience! See the **Engaging Audiences** section for more information.

Ready to Launch!

It's always a good idea to refer back to your original campaign plan so that you can make sure you stay on message, on budget and on track. This is also a great way to double check you have all your content, social media accounts, website, posts and ads set-up and ready to go. Focus on your goals and objectives and remember how you plan to reach your audience. Don't be afraid to refine your tactics during the campaign if you need to.

Now you're ready to launch your campaign! Good luck!



ONLINE ADVERTISING

The background features several large, semi-transparent pink geometric shapes. At the top left is a large, irregular polygon. Below the title, there are three more shapes: a medium-sized hexagon on the left, a smaller hexagon with a triangular pattern inside it overlapping the first, and a large, irregular polygon on the right.

Online Advertising

Social media advertising can be a useful way of reaching your campaign's audience. Whilst there are a number of free methods you can use to reach your audience, paid advertising can really help to get your message to them directly. Paid advertising can achieve this based on someone's self-reported information, such as the pages they like or follow on Facebook and Twitter, or keywords they search for on Google or YouTube.

Don't worry if you are campaigning on a tight budget, you don't need to spend money on advertising to gain exposure online. There are many free options for expanding your reach and engaging with your audience that can have just as much impact, if not more, than paid advertising. Advertising will help expand the reach of your campaign, but is not required and it may not be suitable for all campaigns or messages. See the **Running a Campaign** section for ideas on alternatives to advertising.

Online advertising can be an effective way of ensuring your campaign reaches the right people. But, there is no one secret to success and what works will vary from one campaign to the next. Below are some of the pros and cons of using paid advertising;

PROS

Allows you to target specific audiences based on self-reported criteria such as age, location, gender, interests, online behaviours, and more.

Enables you to directly compete in the same online spaces as extremist content, by targeting specific videos, keywords, social media pages, profiles or channels.

Provides access to more in-depth analytics and metrics, and as a result, greater insights into the success of your campaign.

Can help to gain momentum for your campaign launch or help ensure a consistent level of engagement over time.

Allows for testing of different types of content through comparison trials and audience control groups.

CONS

Cost effectiveness can vary significantly across different ads, platforms, campaigns or target audiences.

Audiences are less trusting and willing to engage with advertised content than "organic" social media or search results, and often do not expect a non-profit message.

Advertising is available on many of the major global platforms, but not on some of the smaller ones that your audience might prefer.

Depending on the funding available for your campaign, advertising may not always be financially sustainable or the right option for you.

Initially can be time-intensive to set up and manage, and then depending on the goal of the campaign, it can be difficult to evaluate impact.

Targeting Criteria and Ad Types

Online advertising offers the opportunity to reach very specific audiences, so make sure you get your targeting criteria right! Think back to the short bio of a member of your audience you drew up when **Planning a Campaign**. The options vary between platforms, but whether you want to reach followers of an extremist Twitter account, or parents with an awareness campaign on YouTube, think carefully about how you can best use the options available to reach the right people for your campaign.

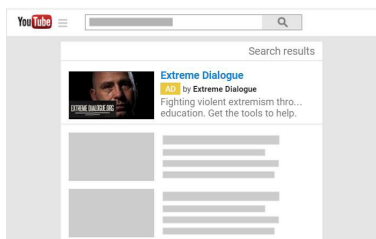
Advertising is typically more cost-effective the more specific the targeting criteria. Be careful not to overdo it though, otherwise you may find you bombard the same people with ads and push them away! Most importantly, remember that you want to reach the right people, not necessarily the most people.

YouTube advertising is accessed through **Google AdWords**, which offers the capacity to promote a YouTube video through specific targeting criteria based primarily on user behaviour or keywords, rather than self-reported demographic details. These criteria include:

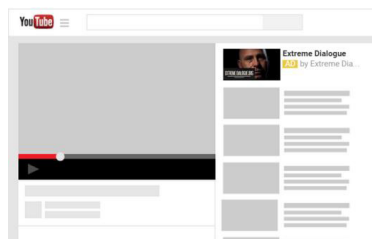
- **Keywords** (unlimited)
- **Placements** (target adverts at specific videos or channel audiences)
- **Interests** (e.g. sports, film, music, gaming)
- **Topics** (e.g. society, politics, employment, education, belief, games, arts, entertainment)

YouTube also offers ads in a number of different locations and formats:

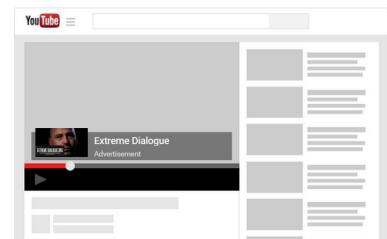
- **In-display** ads where the ad can be placed in searches, next to a video in the side-bar, and/or as a banner overlay.



Search Ads

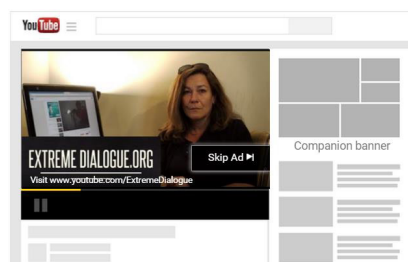


Sidebar Ads



Banner Overlay Ads

- **In-stream ads** where the advert is shown before the selected video, but can be skipped after 5 seconds.



YouTube In-stream Ads

Facebook offers thorough and expansive targeting criteria for advertising, and enables campaigns to be targeted according to:

- **Geographical locations** (country, state, town)
- **Demographics** (age, gender, education, language, employment, household and lifestyle details)
- **Interests** (activities, liked Pages, closely related topics)
- **Behaviours** (purchase behaviour or intent, device usage)
- **Additional Facebook Categories** (frequent travellers, films, food)

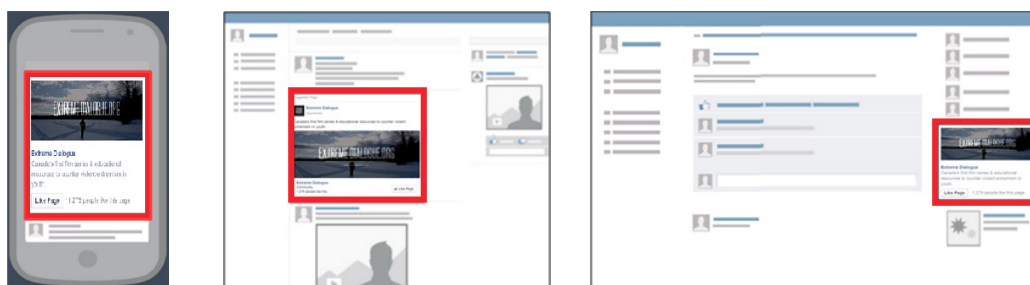
Facebook also provides a pre-campaign snapshot of the potential reach of the advert based on the audience criteria. This allows advertisers to make quick alterations in targeting to help optimise the number of people who will be advertised to.

Facebook boosted posts offer the option of having a post land in the newsfeed of the intended target audience. The number of people that can be reached using a boosted post will vary depending on who you plan to target.



Facebook Boosted Posts

Facebook ads are text and image based and can be placed in three different locations, in desktop or mobile news feeds, and the desktop right column. In previous ISD campaigns, news feed ads were more effective at encouraging user engagement but came at a higher price. Right column ads represented better value for money but are more clearly presented as advertised content and therefore drive lower levels of engagement and may not be appropriate for all forms of counter-narrative content.



Mobile News Feed

Desktop Newsfeed

Right Column Ads (Desktop Only)

Twitter offers the ability to target advertising to specific hashtags and to people that follow certain accounts. Similar to Google's AdWords, Twitter users provide less background or

demographic data in comparison to Facebook. Make sure you research the most relevant hashtags and accounts to reach your target audience. Twitter allows you to target the following criteria:

- **Keywords**
- **Followers** (people following certain users)
- **Interests** (cultural, societal, political and entertainment based)
- **Tailored Audiences** (inclusion and exclusion of certain users)
- **TV Targeting** (users following or tweeting about TV Shows)
- **Behaviours** (chosen by location, and focused on a range of behavioural trends)
- **Event Targeting** (user engagement with specific high profile events from sporting to religious)

Ad Content and Placement

Even if you have a big budget and a well-defined audience, if the content of your ads isn't right then people may not take any notice. This applies on any platform; if you are using video the opening 5 seconds is crucial in drawing people in, and with an image and text based ad you will need to have striking, memorable visuals and bold, emotive headlines or slogans.

Case Study: Abdullah-X

Created by a former Islamist who uses his experiences to dismantle extremist narratives, Abdullah-X is a young Muslim living in the UK and talks about current events in a way that speaks to his intended audience rather than lectures them. Abdullah-X is on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, and uses a combination of free tactics and paid advertising.

Key Points:

- Engaging animated character that questions the world from a youth perspective.
- Mixed methods to reach its audience to avoid an over-reliance on paid advertising.

In previous ISD campaigns more recognisable or controversial images, combined with provocative text generated the most responses from users, but this approach may not be suitable for all campaigns. If your ad doesn't seem to be attracting much attention, don't be afraid to change it!

Lead with your core message or call to action, especially if your campaign name or brand is not widely recognised yet. Once you have got your ad content right, think about where best to place it to attract your audience. Depending on your audience this could either be targeting mobiles and tablets over desktop computers, or deciding where on the web page you want your ad to appear.

Case Study: Average Mohamed

Average Mohamed is a series of short animated videos intended for an upstream audience to build resilience to extremist narratives. The videos are short (1-2 minutes) in order to encourage views and shares on social media. YouTube, Facebook and Twitter ads were used to reach thousands of youth in targeted locations across the US.

Key Points:

- Shorter animated videos suitable for social media.
- Reached youth in specific locations across the US using targeted advertising.

Advertising Budgets

Don't forget to set your budget before you start and work out how much you can afford to spend on each platform, and for how long. You can also set limits on how much you are willing to spend either over time or per audience member reached.

When using paid advertising, spending should ideally be more evenly distributed over time in order to keep content relevant, take advantage of any residual effects in terms of engagement and avoid over-exposing your audience to campaign ads. The impression frequency of ads should be closely monitored when paid advertising is running to ensure that users are not being alienated and spending is allocated effectively.

However, depending on the time-scales and objectives of the campaign, heavier spending may be required for a short period to provide initial momentum and attract a surge of interest. This should be combined with greater use of organic outreach tactics to encourage user engagement among advertising audiences during the initial campaign but also in the long-term.

Managing and Testing Your Ads

When your campaign is running keep an eye on how your ads are doing. Make sure you are getting good value for money by checking the costs per click, like, view or follow on a regular basis. The best way to learn what works for your campaign is by experimenting, so if you can, run multiple versions of ads to see what is most cost-effective and engaging to your audience. While your ads are running don't be afraid to reallocate spending to the most effective ads, or make changes to the targeting or content of ads that don't attract clicks, views, likes or follows.

The background features several abstract geometric shapes in shades of pink and red. A large, light pink pentagon is in the top left. Below it, a medium pink hexagon overlaps a darker pink hexagon. In the bottom left, a light pink hexagon contains a pattern of smaller, overlapping triangles. A large, dark red pentagon is in the bottom right.

ENGAGING AUDIENCES

Engaging Audiences

The key to social media success is being sociable! Social media platforms are designed not just to share content but also to interact and debate. Often the best way to grow your audience, increase levels of engagement and make an impact is to talk directly with your audience and reach out to people to help get your message out there. Although it can be time-consuming, it is important for your social media profiles to be both proactive (by consistently posting, liking or sharing) and responsive (by commenting and joining discussions).

How Can I Get My Audience Involved and Engaged With My Campaign?

Encouraging an initial response from your audience will depend on their interest in the content you are putting out and how you present it. High quality content aimed at the right people will be the most effective way of getting a good response, as will being involved and engaged yourself. Have a look at the posts of other campaigns you like and think about why they get a strong response from their audience. Use the analytics provided on social media and a trial and error approach to find out the types of content that your audience most enjoys.

There are lots of simple techniques you can use to increase audience engagement. Try asking questions or creating lists, be topical, and most importantly participate as much as you can if it's right for your campaign. Talk to rather than at your audience; if you are responsive and communicative, then they will be too.

Try to stay relevant by responding to current events. One way to do this is by “hijacking”, where you relate your posts to trending topics or hashtags to connect with an interested audience. You can also use the same hashtags as your target audience so that your content appears when they search these terms. It can be a useful tactic to reach a large audience, establish or maintain your relevance, and help shape the tone of discussions following an event. But be careful not to overdo it and make sure you're sensitive to the topic and tone of the discussion.

Finally, have an inspiring call to action! Tell your audience how you want them to interact with your campaign, what you want them to do next, and crucially why it is important and what difference it will make! It can be anything from “watch this video!” or “join our network” to more substantial offline actions. Your call to action should be in line with your goals and help to maximise the impact of your campaign.

Case Study: My Jihad

My Jihad aims to reclaim the word jihad from extremists by emphasising and amplifying more moderate, user-generated meanings of the term. My Jihad provides a virtual community that offers Muslims an online platform to share their stories and participate in the campaign on Twitter using the hashtag #MyJihad.

Key Points:

- Use of hashtag encourages engagement online.
- User-generated approach drives engagement, with people encouraged to share their own stories.

How Frequently Should I Engage With Replies or Comments?

This will depend on your campaign objectives and the audience you are hoping to reach. If you are not looking to engage directly with comments and messages from your audience then it may not be necessary to respond to each and every interaction you receive. Of course, if your objective is engagement then it is best to be active and respond as quickly as possible. Encouraging conversations on posts can generate greater interest in your content, and also give you an opportunity to interact with your audience (or discover if you are not reaching the right people).

Case Study: EXIT USA

EXIT USA is a project of Life After Hate, and run by former white power extremists. They conduct outreach work dedicated to helping those who want to leave the far-right groups they are associated with. They produced a series of four **videos**, each shared on social media, and engaged with their audience in a thoughtful and positive manner by frequently replying to the comments and messages on their videos and social media.

Key Points:

- Formers act as powerful messengers for challenging extremist messages.
- Consistent engagement on social media helped to increase responses from their audience.

How Can I Deal With Abusive Reactions to My Campaign?

It's important to remember that some counter-narrative campaigns can be challenging or controversial, especially if you are aiming to reach people that might hold extreme views. However great your campaign, be aware that you may receive negative responses or in some cases even abusive, threatening or racist comments. This is an immensely difficult and important issue to consider when beginning a counter-narrative campaign. How you respond will depend on your objectives, the audience you are trying to reach, and your own comfort with engaging with extreme and abusive individuals online.

Before you launch your campaign consider how you might want to respond if this does happen. It might be a good idea to establish some guidelines for everyone involved so that they know how to respond. Social networks all have community guidelines that set out what is allowed and what isn't. Most allow you to "flag" or report harmful or offensive material. Be familiar with the rules on the platforms you plan to use and decide where you will draw the line. If you do plan to engage with people that hold extreme views then your responses will need to be considered and thought through. Take care to avoid engaging in hostile debates in a way that may undermine your message.

If you want to start a lively discussion in the hope of turning people away from the path of radicalisation, then you will need to allow and potentially respond to dissenting and sometimes aggressive comments. However, if your intention is more general awareness raising and you want to maintain a space where a wide variety of people can interact with your content, you may want to be more reserved in your engagement.

Although there is a keyboard between you and the virtual abuser, it can be an uncomfortable and potentially scary experience if you receive a threatening or abusive tweet or message. It's important to remember why you're doing your campaign and to understand that sometimes these things happen. Also consider whether you need to remain anonymous online prior to starting your campaign and take the appropriate precautions. See the **Toolbox** for more on possible security considerations.

Not all campaigns will have the same concerns. Abusive interactions could mean your content reached the right audience! While that individual may not have appreciated the message, others may have, and perhaps later on the abusive user may think again about why they reacted in that way.

Knowing when and how to engage takes practice – you will develop a better feel for how to respond over time. There are a range of responses and tactics you can implement when faced with abuse online.

Ignore

The traditional advice online is "do not feed the trolls". We are told to ignore provocative comments so as not to fall into the trap and invite more abuse. However, the underlying assumption that the troll is insincere in their comment and just seeking a reaction may not always be the case. If the user believes wholeheartedly in their comment and is ignored, an opportunity is missed to engage and potentially cause them to rethink, even if only briefly. So proceed with caution, but do not miss a potentially valuable opportunity to engage with your audience.

Delete

Another approach is to delete the offending comment. Deleting a comment may be necessary if a person is deliberately trying to bait the online community and is aware that

their actions are antisocial. It may also be appropriate if the comment is truly offensive and likely to upset and discourage other users.

If however, the comment comes from someone who is sincere in their communication, silencing their view may actually further alienate this individual, who may already feel marginalised and frustrated. Too much censorship can also undermine your credibility over time if you appear to be entirely unwilling to engage with dissenting opinions.

Purely abusive, violent, threatening or racist comments can be removed on all the major social media platforms, limiting the influence they have on conversations on your profile or content. It is also advisable to report or flag a user for abusive behaviour. Each platform has a **simple procedure** that allows you to tell them why you are reporting the comment or user. You can also block users who are consistently causing trouble, but ideally this should be a last resort.

Engage

There is **evidence** to suggest that engaging with individuals who write provocative comments online can be effective at making them desist and even change their point of view. Specifically it seems most effective when a wide community contributes to condemning certain extreme comments. There are some important points to keep in mind before engaging:

- Try and be sure a user is sincere in their comment and not just trolling the discussion.
- If a comment has upset you, take a moment to regain your calm before responding. Never respond in anger!
- If you do engage, be sure you have the time to see the discussion through to the end.
- Be sure about any facts you cite – you might be called out for not fact-checking if you aren't careful!
- Use cool logic and always maintain the high road. Abusive users want to lower the tone of the discussion, make sure you don't let them.

When engaging, it is useful to think about the sort of tone you are going to use. This is a variable that can affect response type. In ISD's **One to One Online Interventions** project, response rates varied by large margins depending on the tone that an intervention provider used when messaging an individual over Facebook. The project found that some tones elicited no responses, whilst others garnered over 80% responses. Antagonistic and meditative tones had no responses, with a scholarly tone producing very few responses. Reflective, sentimental and casual tones resulted in very good response rates.

The background features several abstract geometric shapes in shades of orange and light orange. A large, irregular orange polygon is in the top left. Below the title, there are three more shapes: a medium orange polygon on the left, a light orange polygon with a small triangular pattern inside it below the medium one, and a large orange polygon on the bottom right.

EVALUATING CAMPAIGNS

Evaluating Campaigns

Counter-narrative campaigning, just like everything else in life, gets easier the more you practice. To progress we all collectively need to understand what we are doing right, but also where we could do better. Chances are you won't get absolutely everything right first time round. Reaching a specific audience online is not an exact science and takes trial and error to figure out what works best for your campaign. See the **Additional Resources** section for examples of existing counter-narrative campaign evaluations.

Why Should I Evaluate My Campaign?

Although there are more and more counter-narrative campaigns appearing online it is not always clear what the impact of these campaigns might be. Tracking, measuring and evaluating counter-narrative campaigns can help build on existing best practice in this dynamic and emerging field, which is crucial to maximising the potential impact of future campaigns.

Evaluating the success of a counter-narrative campaign is not always easy. It can be difficult to know if the people you are reaching are the right audience, if your message is having its desired effect, and if you met the overall goal of your campaign. Whether your aim is to prevent young people from going to Syria, or to decrease the number of teens joining far-right groups, make sure you include smaller, more measurable objectives that contribute to your overall goal. By clearly defining your objectives you can measure whether your campaign is working and having the impact you intended.

Monitoring and evaluating your campaign is therefore crucial, not only while your campaign is running but also once it has finished. Any insights into how you are doing can be used to tweak aspects of your content or tactics to ensure you meet your objectives. When you have finished your campaign you can assess whether you achieved your goals and where you might improve next time.

Useful Tools: Hootsuite



As well as offering a quick way to manage accounts across multiple social media platforms, Hootsuite also offers in-built analytics that can give you a quick view of your campaign's overall performance.

Analytics

Everyone leaves trails of data online when they use the internet, and many social media

platforms offer analytics services which automatically collect and anonymise some of this data. If you are using advertising then you will have access to even more data. This analytics data can help you understand how people are interacting with your social media profiles, websites, posts, ads or campaign content.

Useful Tools: Google Analytics



Google Analytics is a free service that tracks, measures and reports website traffic, and can also be used for apps or your YouTube channel. It can help you understand the audience of your website and provide useful insights to help improve its design and usability. For more on Google Analytics see the **Video Tutorials** section.

Metrics

Different platforms will offer different types of data or metrics. There are a vast range of different metrics that can help you understand who you reach, how well you engage your audience, and the impact your campaign is having. Broadly speaking these metrics can be broken down into three types:

- **Awareness:** metrics that indicate the number of people reached by a campaign (e.g. impressions, reach or video views) and demographic information (e.g. age, gender or geographic location) that provides insights as to whether the right audience was reached.
- **Engagement:** metrics that show how much people interacted with a campaign's content, social media accounts or websites (including video retention rates, numbers of likes, comments or shares).
- **Impact:** metrics that help you determine if you were able to meet your campaign goal. These will vary depending on what you originally set out to do. Depending on the type of campaign and your audience, this could be evidence of prompting discussions, critical thinking and sustained online engagements around violent extremism, or signs that the intended audience is reaching out directly for support. Remember that measuring the impact of online counter-narrative campaigns – whether they are actually changing people's opinions or behaviours – can be difficult and often is not conclusive.

Which Metrics Are Most Important in Evaluating an Online Campaign?

There are hundreds of different metrics available so consider what you want to find out about your campaign, and think about which metrics will allow you to do this. Metrics can be divided into three broad categories, *awareness*, *engagement* and *impact*, so try to use some from each to get a balanced view of your campaign.

Whichever metrics you decide to focus on, the big question is how they help you understand whether you met your objectives and goals. For some campaigns which are targeted further upstream at prevention or education, simply reaching more people, and more people engaging with the content could be used as a measure for impact. However, for more downstream campaigns that are focused on intervention, high awareness and basic engagement metrics may not necessarily represent success. Sustained engagements and qualitative analysis of comments or messages provide a clearer picture of impact.

Beware the allure of so-called “vanity metrics”. Often, these are impressive sounding numbers that do not necessarily tell you much about how effective your campaign was. For example, if your campaign was about reaching a very specific audience, then reaching 100,000 people is not necessarily a good result if they are not the right people!

It is important to combine awareness, engagement and impact metrics to help tell the true story of your campaign. So for example, if your campaign was intended to reach a specific age group in your area, you can use demographic awareness metrics to show you whether you were successful. Engagement metrics will then help you determine whether those you reached were interested in what your campaign had to say. Finally, impact metrics will help you decide whether your campaign appeared to have a lasting effect on those you reached and engaged.

Awareness Metrics

Awareness metrics capture how many people were exposed to your campaign, how many people viewed your content, who these people are and where they are from. Below are some of the most common awareness metrics, although the definitions of each can vary slightly between platforms;

- **Impressions** occur when your post or ad appears on someone’s screen, either in their newsfeed or an advertising column.
- **Reach** is the total number of people that received an impression of your post or ad on their screen or newsfeed. Your total reach could be lower than the number of impressions if some people saw your post or content more than once.
- **Impression frequency** is the number of times an individual person saw your ad or post over a certain period time. If you are using ads this can be useful to figure out if you are spending too much too quickly, or whether your targeting criteria is too specific and as a result you are repeatedly bombarding the same people with your ads.
- **Views** refer to the number of times a video is watched or played.
- **Clicks** are the number of times people have clicked on your ad or a link in your posts.

Awareness metrics also include **demographic** and **geographic location** data that allows

you to see the self-reported ages, genders, locations and languages of your audience, as well as many other metrics such as occupations or interests, although again this varies by platform. This data can help you understand whether you are reaching your intended audience with your campaign.

Demographic and location data will not however reveal individuals within your audience. For example, although Google Analytics enables demographic data to be collected on certain users, it also applies limits on the availability of age, gender and interests data **under certain circumstances**. A threshold may be applied to prevent the possibility of inferring the demographics or interests of individual users. If this threshold is not met then some information is withheld for that category resulting in an incomplete picture of the data.

Engagement Metrics

Engagement metrics can tell you how often your audience interacted with your campaign, and the quality of those interactions. This could include simply the number of **likes**, **comments**, or **shares** that your posts, content or ads received.

Engagement metrics are important because they show you whether people that saw your content were interested in your campaign and provide an indication of whether your campaign's message and tone was effective. They can give you an indication of how attractive your posts are or how compelling your content is, and whether they resonate with your audience. Typically engagement metrics are considered more valuable than reach metrics as it is easier to get people to see your posts, ads or content, but more difficult to get your audience to engage with them.

Again different platforms have different metrics for engagement. Typically Facebook focuses on likes, shares, comments, link clicks and page likes from promoted posts, adverts and videos; YouTube on comments, likes and dislikes on videos; and Twitter on retweets, favourites, media clicks from, and replies to, promoted tweets.

There are also various different types of engagement metrics specifically for video content, such as **viewer retention** or **drop-off rates** that will tell you how much of your video viewers watched, and at what point they decided to stop watching. This can inform future content design by highlighting uninteresting parts of a video that can be changed, or by encouraging the production of a shorter, more engaging video.

Impact Metrics

While there are numerous metrics which can be useful to measure how many people were reached and engaged by a campaign, understanding the impact it has on an audience's opinions and behaviour remains a challenge. The anonymity that the internet and social media platforms provide makes it difficult to know exactly who a campaign's audience is, and how they are reacting to it on an individual level.

One way to do this is to conduct a qualitative analysis of comments and discussions, looking at what your audience said about your campaign or content. Did your content (or any discussions that followed) change their opinions, attitudes or even behaviours in an observable way? Counter-narrative campaigns are designed to illicit a reaction in their intended audiences, and coding (or categorising) comments or “sustained engagements” can provide a valuable insight into the topics users were most likely to engage with.

Sustained engagements are ongoing interactions between audience members and/or campaigners themselves. This could mean someone making multiple comments or replying more than once in a discussion, or getting in touch with the campaign through a direct private message. Typically these sustained engagements are either;

- **Constructive:** where someone comments more than once in a positive manner in a conversation about the content or campaign.
- **Antagonistic:** where someone repeatedly disputes or dismisses the content or campaign, to other users (or campaigners) or expresses extreme views or offensive slurs.

Useful Tools: Google URL Shortener

Google's URL Shortener is quick way to track content that you share on social media. It allows you to easily shorten URLs (for posting on Twitter or other platforms with character limits) and view metrics related to people that click on your shortened links.

Depending on the goal of your campaign, either type of sustained engagement could represent a positive impact. If you are seeking to raise awareness of an issue or increase your audiences knowledge on a particular topic, then a constructive sustained engagement can help illustrate that your message has been considered and absorbed. If someone has entered into a constructive discussion and considered alternative viewpoints then the campaign has encouraged thinking critically about the issue or message.

Alternatively, for a campaign seeking to have an impact on those with extreme views, a sustained antagonistic engagement could appear discouraging. However, if someone has gone to the trouble to respond, then hopefully they have also considered and absorbed the message, even if they disagree with it. Although the immediate impact may not be clear, many people with extreme views are too rarely exposed to alternative perspectives. These interactions can potentially help to sow seeds of doubt and, if the time is right, may contribute to changing that person's attitudes.

Depending on the volume of comments and discussions you may want to analyse all of them to get an overall picture of your audiences' reactions. Alternatively, you might choose to focus instead on more sustained engagements to gain a deeper understanding of your impact on particular individuals within your audience.

Can I Trust the Analytics Data Provided by Social Media Platforms?

Most analytics tools are relatively trustworthy and rarely make mistakes, but every now and again you may come across something that doesn't look quite right or appears too good to be true. These services are not fool-proof so it can often be worth spending a bit of time looking into anything suspicious to make sure it is correct, and that you have interpreted the potential implications correctly.

It's also important to be aware that some platforms do not reveal how exactly they define or log certain metrics. Therefore, some statistics can be misleading and not tell the true story, so make sure you understand what each metric you use represents. For example, if a video based platform classified a "view" after someone has seen only a second of the video, and every viewer did this, then you may not have had the impact you initially thought when you received 100,000 views.

Don't be put off using analytics. Just be careful how you use them! Make sure you know exactly what each metric represents, and qualify and contextualise each statistic you use so that you do not misunderstand or misrepresent the impact of your campaign.

Useful Tools: Hashttracking

Hashttracking provides hashtag tracking and analytics tools that can provide useful additional data for campaigning on Twitter or Instagram. Hashttracking aggregates all engagement with a hashtag and provides thematic insights into related discussions. It can be useful to monitor the success of your campaign if you decide to attempt to hijack an existing extremist hashtag.

Are There Other Ways I Can Evaluate My Campaign?

You may also want to look at other indicators of the impact your campaign has had. There are many ways to do this, from conducting interviews, surveys or focus groups with your audience, to looking at the tone of separate discussions among your audience on social media while your campaign is running. If your campaign was the launch of a new initiative, or an attempt to raise awareness, then you could consider tracking the traditional media coverage you receive, and then look at the content of discussions on online news articles about your campaign.

Useful Tools: Google Alerts

Google Alerts can be used to track media coverage or mentions of your campaign or any other keywords or phrases. It is very easy to set up and sends email updates with links to where your campaign has been mentioned.

The feasibility of some of these approaches will however depend on the audience for your campaign. For example, if you are aiming to reach people with extreme far-right

views or those that are currently members of far-right groups, then perhaps a focus group may not be practical or safe and therefore not your best option!

These more qualitative approaches do not offer the statistical certainty of reach and engagement metrics, but can offer valuable insights into the ways your audience reacts to or perceives your campaign, and ultimately the impact that your campaign has had.



TOOLBOX, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & GLOSSARY



Toolbox

Audience Member Bios

A helpful audience exercise is to combine the characteristics which define an individual in your audience. This can be a short, descriptive bio. This will help give your campaign and those providing support for your campaign a clearer picture of who the message is for.

AUDIENCE MEMBER BIO	
WHO IS THE AUDIENCE YOUR COUNTER-NARRATIVE WILL BE AIMED AT?	
General Description of Audience Member	e.g. Mark is a 16 year old student, living and studying in Newcastle, England. He has a poor record of academic attendance, and has been in trouble with the college and police due to drinking, drug taking and anti-social behaviour. He is has recently become an active participant in a local underground music scene, which identifies itself with rock against communism (RAC) and a pro-Nazi sentiment.
Online Behaviour	e.g. Mark is a member of numerous blogs, chatrooms and Facebook groups which expose him to an online community willing to teach him more about this music scene, and the far-right principles behind it. Non-publicised gigs, arranged by RAC and far-right bands, are advertised on these pages.
Gender	e.g male
Age	e.g 15-18
Location	e.g Newcastle, UK
Language	e.g English
Education Level	e.g Secondary
Interests	e.g. gaming, football, national politics, immigration, Israel, far-right music, far-right videos, live music, British military, UKIP, BNP, Britain First, National Action, National Front.
Age	e.g Medium-High

How Can I Stay Safe Online?

Unfortunately counter-narrative campaigning can have security implications. Activities connected to countering violent extremism carry some degree of risk because of the subject matter and the audiences you may be targeting. Online activities and offline events could raise your profile and cause you to be targeted for your work.

Make sure you consider whether you need to take any safety measures to protect those working on or contributing to your campaign, including your messenger. If you plan to reach out to members of extreme groups, consider how sophisticated the extremist group is. Are they capable of identifying your involvement? Do you have contingency plans in place if you receive a direct threat online? The table below gives a few examples of things to consider, but it is not exhaustive so make sure you take into account your local context.

SECURITY CONCERN	SECURITY RESPONSE
Are you happy for your counter-narrative to be directly linked back to you or your organisation? If not...	<p>Avoid using personal email accounts when setting up social media profiles.</p> <p>Use secure passwords for all platforms and email addresses.</p> <p>Create a new Facebook profile before you create the Facebook page for your campaign.</p> <p>Do not respond to comments and responses using your personal accounts.</p> <p>If you have a website make sure you have hidden the ownership of your domain and Who is information.</p>
Are you okay with your organisations' location being publicly available online? If not...	<p>Some social media platforms may include you location when you post. Make sure you turn off any geo-location or geo-tagging settings on all the platforms you use.</p> <p>Do not include location of organisation in the "About" sections of any of your social media platforms.</p>
Are you prepared for members of extremist groups contacting your profile pages? If not...	<p>Use a qualified interventionist to engage with extremists who contact your profiles.</p> <p>Avoid giving any personal details about you or your organisation that may put you at risk.</p>

TOOLS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITES		
CREATE BRANDING		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Pixlr	Amateur	Free
Gimp	Amateur	Free
Picasa	Amateur	Free
Photoscape	Amateur	Free
Apple Photos	Amateur	Free for Mac Products
Affinity Photo	Professional	£40+
Photoshop	Professional	£50+
Serif PhotoPlus	Professional	£80+
BUILD WEBSITES		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Moonfruit	Amateur	Free
Wordpress	Amateur	Free
Tumblr (Blog)	Amateur	Free
Wix	Amateur to Professional	£5/month+
Squarespace	Amateur to Professional	£7/month+
TRACK IMPACT		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Google Analytics	Amateur to Professional	Free (Standard)

Piwik	Amateur to Professional	Free
Open Web Analytics	Amateur to Professional	Free
MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Hootsuite	Amateur to Professional	Free (or £9/month+)
Sprout Social	Amateur to Professional	Free (or £59/month+)
Agorapulse	Amateur to Professional	Free (or £29/month+)
Buffer	Amateur to Professional	Free (or £9/month+)
Sendible	Amateur to Professional	Free 30 Day Trial (or £59/month+)

TOOLS FOR CREATING CONTENT		
VIDEO		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Avid Pro Tools	Professional	£500+
Avidemux	Amateur	Free
Director Suite	Professional	£100+
Final Cut Pro	Professional	£200+
iMovie	Amateur; Professional	Free with Mac Products
Kate's Video Toolkit	Amateur	Free
Premier Pro	Professional	£150+
WeVideo	Amateur	Free
Windows Movie Maker	Amateur; Professional	Free with OS

AUDIO		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Audacity	Amateur; Professional	Free
Garage Band	Amateur; Professional	Free with Mac Products
Logic	Professional	£100+
Ocenaudio	Amateur; Professional	Free
Pro Tools	Professional	£200+
Wavosaur	Amateur; Professional	Free
GRAPHICS & IMAGES		
NAME	LEVEL	COST
Affinity Photo	Professional	£40+
Apple Photos	Amateur	Free for Mac Products
Gimp	Amateur	Free
Photoscope	Amateur	£40+
Photoshop	Professional	£40+
Picasa	Amateur	£40+
Pixlr	Amateur	£40+
Serif PhotoPlus	Professional	£40+

VIDEO TUTORIALS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITES		
MEDIUM OR PLATFORM	TUTORIAL	LEVEL
FACEBOOK	How to create a Facebook account	Beginner
	How to set up a Facebook business page	Beginner
	How to create a Facebook ad with Facebook Ads Manager	Beginner
	7 top posts for social media	Beginner
	How often should you post on Facebook?	Beginner
	How to create a Facebook ad with Power Editor	Intermediate
YOUTUBE	YouTube tutorial channel	Beginner
	How to grow with 0 views and 0 subscribers on YouTube	Beginner
	How to make custom thumbnails on YouTube	Beginner
	How to properly upload a video on YouTube	Beginner
	How to upload a video on YouTube	Beginner
	How to make a good YouTube video	Beginner
	How to make a YouTube video	Intermediate
	10 Tips for making YouTube videos	Intermediate
	How to get more views/subscribers on YouTube	Intermediate
	Creative ideas for getting discovered on YouTube	Intermediate
	6 tips for getting discovered on YouTube	Intermediate
	How to get longer watch time and subscribers on YouTube	Intermediate

TWITTER	How to create a Twitter account	Beginner
	How to create a Twitter business account	Beginner
	What is the best time to tweet and how to schedule tweets	Beginner
	How to create Twitter ads	Intermediate
HASHTAGS	What is a hashtag?	Beginner
	How to use hashtags on Facebook	Beginner
	How to use hashtags on Twitter	Beginner
	How to use hashtags on Instagram	Beginner
	How to style and optimise hashtags	Beginner
	9 killer tools to create content on the cheap	Beginner
INSTAGRAM	Instagram tutorial	Beginner
	Instagram video editing apps	Beginner
	8 ways to increase engagement on Instagram	Intermediate
	How to create Instagram ads through Facebook using Power Editor	Advanced
STUMBLEUPON	Stumbleupon: introductory video	Beginner
	How to generate leads using Stumbleupon	Intermediate
REDDIT	How to use Reddit	Beginner
TUMBLR	Tumblr: introduction and overview	Beginner
	How to create a Tumblr	Beginner
VIMEO	Vimeo: introductory tutorial	Beginner






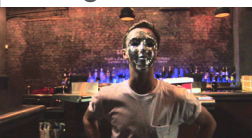



PINTEREST	Beginner guide to Pinterest	Beginner
	Pinterest for small business marketing	Beginner
WORDPRESS	WordPress: introductory tutorial	Beginner
	WordPress tutorial channel	Beginner
SQUARESPACE	How to build a website with Squarespace	Beginner
FLICKR	Flickr: basic introduction and tutorial	Beginner
	Flickr and SEO	Beginner
IMGUR	Imgur: introductory tutorial	Beginner
VINE	Vine: beginner introduction and tips	Beginner
	Vine for small business	Beginner
SOUNDCLOUD	How to set up an account on Soundcloud	Beginner
	How to set up a podcast on Soundcloud	Beginner
LAST.FM	How to use Last.fm	Beginner
GOOGLE	Google's Online Classroom	Beginner
	Google AdWords Tutorial	Beginner
	Creating website that performs well in Google search	Intermediate
	Google's AdWords Help Centre	Intermediate
CONTENT MARKETING	Build your action plan for social media	Beginner
	5 tips to make social media marketing less overwhelming	Beginner










CONTENT MARKETING	6 tips to engage your social media audience	Beginner
	Choosing content type for YouTube	Beginner
	How to engage your audience	Intermediate
	Advanced social media marketing	Intermediate
	How to create engaging content	Intermediate
	Create powerful content that leaves a lasting impression	Intermediate
	How to build a loyal audience on social media	Intermediate
	How to create content that will go viral	Intermediate
	Blog on hijack marketing/piggybacking	Intermediate

VIDEO TUTORIALS FOR CREATING CONTENT		
MEDIUM OR PLATFORM	TUTORIAL	LEVEL
PHOTOS	Learn how to take good photos	Beginner
	How to take good Instagram photos	Beginner
	How to take incredible pictures with your phone	Beginner
	How to take great pictures with your phone	Beginner
	How to edit photos using Pixlr	Beginner
	How to edit photos using VSCO	Intermediate
	How to edit photos using Adobe Photoshop	Beginner
	How to edit photos using Adobe Photoshop (beginner)	Beginner
	28 tips for Adobe Photoshop	Intermediate
	How to take the best photos with a DSLR camera	Intermediate
	How to edit photos using Adobe Photoshop (advanced)	Advanced

INFOGRAPHICS	Blog: 10 free online tools for creating infographics	Beginner
	Blog: free infographic templates for PowerPoint	Beginner
TEXT: OPEN LETTERS & BROCHURES	Example of an open letter	Beginner
	How to record your voice	Beginner
	How to create a business brochure using Microsoft Word	Beginner
	How to create a business brochure using PowerPoint	Beginner
	How to create a business brochure using InDesign	Intermediate
	How to create a brochure using Adobe Photoshop	Advanced
	How to create a business brochure using Adobe Photoshop	Advanced
AUDIO & PODCASTS	How to create audio content	Intermediate
	How to create a podcast	Intermediate
	Video channel on making podcasts	Intermediate
COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS	Written guide on how to host a web comic	Beginner
	How to create a web comic	Intermediate
	How to create a comic in Photoshop	Advanced
MEMES	How to make a Meme	Beginner
	Meme-maker tool	Beginner
SLOGANS	How to create amazing slogans	Beginner
	How to create a catchy slogan or tagline	Beginner
	How to write a slogan	Beginner

COUNTER-NARRATIVE CAMPAIGN CASE STUDIES

CAMPAIGN	COUNTRY	IDEOLOGY	AUDIENCE	MEDIUM	MESSENGER	GOAL
 <p>Abdullah-X</p>	UK	Islamist Extremism	Youth; At-risk	Online Video	Former	Prevention; Intervention
 <p>AFVT</p>	France; Global	Multiple	Youth	Online Video	Survivor	Prevention; Education
 <p>Al-Sakina</p>	Saudi Arabia	Islamist Extremism	Youth; At-risk	Text; Video	NGO	Prevention
 <p>Anonymous</p>	Global	Far-Right Extremism	Broad; At-risk	Text	Individuals	Prevention
 <p>Average Mohamed</p>	US	Islamist Extremism	Youth	Online Video	Individual	Prevention; Education
 <p>English Disco Lovers</p>	UK	Far-Right Extremism	Broad	Text; Image; Offline	NGO	Awareness
 <p>EXIT USA</p>	US	Far-Right Extremism	Formers; Prevention	Online Video	Former	Prevention; Intervention
 <p>Extreme Dialogue</p>	Canada	Far-Right Extremism; Islamist Extremism	Youth; Parents; Practitioners	Online; Video; Tools	Former; Survivor	Prevention; Education
 <p>Global Survivors Network</p>	Global	Multiple	Youth; Parents; Practitioners	Online Video; Text	Survivor	Prevention; Awareness

	Jordan	Islamist Extremism	Youth	Comic	Individual	Prevention
Hero Factor						
	US	Multiple	Youth	Online Video; Image	Government	Awareness
Hours Against Hate						
	UK	Islamist Extremism	Youth	Online Video	Individual	Prevention
JiLadz						
	US	Multiple	Youth	Online Video	Youth	Awareness
KNOW Extremism						
	US	Islamist Extremism	Youth	Text	Youth; Religious Figure	Awareness
My Jihad						
	UK	Islamist Extremism	At-risk	Online Video	NGO	Prevention
Not Another Brother						
	US	Islamist Extremism	Youth	Text; Online Video; Offline Event	NGO	Prevention; Intervention
Radical Middle Way						
	Africa	Islamist Extremism	Broad; At-risk	Text	Government	Awareness
Sabahi and Maghrarebia						
	Germany	Far-right Extremism	Extremists; At-risk	Online Video; Offline Event	Former	Awareness; Intervention
EXIT Germany: Trojan T-Shirt						

Additional Resources

Counter-Narrative Campaign Evaluation Case Studies

- **Counter-Speech: Examining Content That Challenges Extremism Online**, Jamie Bartlett & Alex Krasodonski-Jones (2015), Demos
- **Fighting Fire With Fire: Target Audience Responses To Online Anti-Violence Campaigns**, Roslyn Richardson (2013), Australian Strategic Policy Institute
- **Making ‘Noise’ Online: An Analysis of the Say No to Terror Online Campaign**, Anne Aly, Dana Weimann-Saks & Gabriel Weimann (2014), Perspectives on Terrorism (Vol 8, No 5)
- **One to One Online Interventions: A Pilot CVE Methodology**, Ross Frenett & Moli Dow (2015), ISD
- **Public Diplomacy 2.0: An Exploratory Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team**, Lina Khatib, William Dutton, & Michael Thelwall (2011), Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL)
- **Anti-Terrorist Advertising Campaigns in the Middle East**, Ahmed K. Al-Rawi (2013), Journal of International Communication (Vol 19, No 2)
- **Walk Away From Violent Extremism: A Campaign to Address Violent Extremism Online**, Anne Aly (2014), Journal Exit-Deutschland (JEX)

Extremist Propaganda, Narratives & Online Behaviours

- **#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks**, Joseph A. Carter, Shiraz Maher & Peter R. Neumann (2014), International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR)
- **A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe’s Counter-Jihad Movement**, Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens & Hans Brun (2013), ICSR
- **Extremist Files: Groups**, Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)
- **Fixing How We Fight The Islamic State’s Narrative**, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Nathaniel Barr (2016), War on The Rocks
- **Hate on Display™ - Hate Symbols Database**, Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
- **Jihad Trending: A Comprehensive Analysis of Online Extremism and How to Counter it**, Ghaffar Hussain & Erin Marie Saltman (2014), Quilliam Foundation
- **Lights, Camera, Jihad: Al-Shabaab’s Western Media Strategy**, Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Shiraz Maher & James Sheehan (2012), ICSR
- **Propaganda 2.0 – Psychological Effects of Right-Wing and Islamic Extremist Internet Videos**, Diana Rieger, Lena Frischlich & Gary Bente (2013)
- **Right-wing extremism - Signs, symbols and banned organisations**, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (2015)
- **Right-wing Extremists and their Internet Presence**, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (2013)
- **Swarmcast: How Jihadist Networks Maintain a Persistent Online Presence**, Ali Fisher (2015), Perspectives on Terrorism (Vol 9, No 3)
- **The ISIS Twitter Census Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter**, J.M. Berger & Jonathon Morgan (2015), Brookings
- **The Power of Unreason: Conspiracy Theories, Extremism And Counter-Terrorism**, Jamie Bartlett & Carl Miller (2010), Demos

- **The YouTube Jihadists: A Social Network Analysis of Al-Muhajiroun's Propaganda Campaign**, Jytte Klausen, Eliane Tschaen Barbieri, Aaron Reichlin-Melnick & Aaron Y. Zelin (2012), Perspectives on Terrorism (Vol 6, No 1)
- **Till Martyrdom Do Us Part: Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon**, Erin Marie Saltman & Melanie Smith (2015), Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)
- **Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq**, Jytte Klausen (2014), Studies in Conflict & Terrorism
- **Who Matters Online: Measuring influence, evaluating content and countering violent extremism in online social networks**, J.M. Berger & Bill Strathearn (2013), ICSR

Counter-Narrative Theory & Best Practice

- **Delivering Alternative Narratives**, from 'Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism' (2016), Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
- **Developing Effective Counter-Narrative Frameworks for Countering Violent Extremism** (2014), Hedayah & International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT)
- **FREE Initiative How To Guides, "Responding to Hate Speech and Incitement" & "Raising Awareness of the Problem"**, Vidhya Ramalingam (2014), ISD
- **Promoting Online Voices for Countering Violent Extremism**, Todd C. Helmus, Erin York & Peter Chalk (2013), RAND Corporation
- **Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism**, Rachel Briggs & Sebastien Feve (2013), ISD
- **Strategic communications and foreign fighters**, Shivit Bakrania (2014), Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC)
- **Understanding the Role of Former Extremists and Counter Messaging**, Zahed Amanullah (2016), ISD

Online Safety & Engagement

- **Anti-Social Media**, Jamie Bartlett, Jeremy Reffin, Noelle Rumball & Sarah Williamson (2014), Demos
- **Cyber-Safety Action Guide, Responding to Cyber-hate: Toolkit for Action & Confronting Hate Online**, Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

Related Bibliographies

- **Bibliography on Islamist Narratives and Western Counter-Narratives**, Judith Tinnes (2014), Perspectives on Terrorism (Vol 8, No 4)
- **Bibliography: Terrorism and the Media (including the Internet) - (Part 1 & Part 2)**, Judith Tinnes (2013), Perspectives on Terrorism (Vol 7, No 1)

Glossary

Aggregators: websites that collate and share content from multiple online sources, potentially providing a huge boost in reach and exposure.

Awareness metrics: metrics that indicate the number of people reached by a campaign (e.g. impressions, reach or video views), and demographic information (e.g. age, gender or geographic location) that provides insights as to whether the right audience was reached.

Boosted posts: posts or tweets that have been promoted to appear in selected audiences' news feeds.

Call to action: a call to action asks audiences to do something immediately in response to your campaign, and makes it clear why it is important.

Clicks: the number of times people have clicked on your ad or a link in your posts.

Counter-narrative: a message that offers a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, or alternatively aims to deconstruct or delegitimise extremist narratives.

Downstream: a campaign aimed at intervening online with those potentially at-risk, viewing extremist content, or actively participating in online extremist communities or networks.

Drop-off rates: the point or the video when the viewer decided to stop watching, either as a percentage of average time viewed.

Engagement metrics: metrics that show how much people interacted with a campaign's content, social media accounts or websites (including video retention or drop-off rates, numbers of likes, comments or shares).

Focus group: a qualitative research method where a group of people are asked for their observations, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards an idea, concept, campaign or its content.

Google AdWords: AdWords is Google's online advertising platform that offers the capacity to advertise against keywords in Google searches or partner websites or promote a YouTube video through specific targeting criteria based on user behaviour or keywords, or self-reported demographic data.

Google Analytics: a free service that tracks, measures and reports website traffic, and can also be used for apps or your YouTube channel. It can provide insights into who is visiting your site or channel, and what content they find most engaging.

"Hijacking": the process of relating your posts to trending topics or hashtags to connect with an interested audience.

Impact metrics: metrics that help you determine if you were able to meet your campaign goal. Often qualitative, impact metrics focus on the content and quality of interactions with a campaign's audience, and whether the campaign had a positive effect on attitudes or behaviours.

Impression frequency: the number of times your ad or post appeared on an average individual's screen. Use this metric to ensure you're not over-exposing the same people to your campaign.

Impressions: the number of times content or adverts appeared on user's screens. Avoid over-relying on impressions as a

metric of impact, people don't necessarily take notice of every ad that appears on their screen.

In-built analytics: analytics services available on social media platforms that allow you to monitor your campaign's reach and levels of audience engagement, and help determine whether your online objectives were met.

Meme: a combination of image, video, text, or other content, often comical, that is copied and shared online. Many memes take on a life of their own and evolve over time as they are shared with slight variations to react to a particular topic or trend.

Metrics: Different social media or website analytics services will offer different types of data or metrics. There are a vast range of different metrics that can help you understand who you reach, how well you engage your audience, and the impact your campaign is having.

Organic: audience reach or engagement on websites or social media platforms generated from searches and/or as a result of unpaid campaign strategies and tactics. Reach: the total number of people that received an impression of your post or ad on their screens or newsfeeds.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): the process of affecting the visibility of your website or social media in a search engine's "unpaid", "organic" or "earned" results (i.e. not via advertising).

Sustained engagements: on-going interactions between audience members or with campaigners themselves, these could be positive or negative and help provide an insight into reactions to a campaign.

Upstream: a preventative campaign aimed

at a broader, but still specific audience, with the intension of building resilience to extremist narratives or propaganda, or increasing knowledge and awareness of radicalisation, recruitment or online safety.

Vanity metrics: metrics that provide impressive sounding numbers but do not necessarily give a true indication of how effective your campaign was or much impact it had.

Viewer retention: what duration of your video a viewer watches, either as a percentage of the total length of the video, or the average amount of time viewed.

Views: the number of times a video is watched or played.

YouTube in-display ads: the ad contains a video thumbnail picture and text, and can be displayed adjacent to other YouTube content in the side-bar, search results or in a banner overlay on other videos.

YouTube in-stream ads: the advertised video is displayed prior to other YouTube content, with viewers unable to skip the video for a compulsory minimum of 5 seconds, although they can choose to continue watching after the 5 second limit.



The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is a London-based 'think and do tank' that has pioneered policy and operational responses to the rising challenges of violent extremism and inter-communal conflict.

Combining research and analysis with government advisory work and delivery programmes, ISD has been at the forefront of forging real-world, evidence-based responses to the challenges of integration, extremism and terrorism, working to enhance Europe's capacity to act effectively in the global arena.

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