

Methodology

This analysis examines a complete set of Facebook posts and tweets created on any account managed by any member of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives between Jan. 1, 2015, and Jan. 10, 2021. Researchers used the Facebook Graph API, CrowdTangle¹ API and Twitter API to download the posts. The resulting dataset contains more than 1.7 million Facebook posts from 772 different members of Congress who used a total of 1,512 Facebook accounts, and over 3.8 million tweets from 766 different members of Congress who used a total of 1,459 Twitter accounts. Unless otherwise noted in the text, this analysis includes freshman members of the 117th Congress.

This analysis includes all text from these Facebook and Twitter posts, including image captions and emojis. Photo and video posts were not included in this analysis unless the post also contained meaningful text, such as a caption. Text that appeared only within images was not included in the analysis. Posts by nonvoting representatives were also excluded. The broader data collection process is described in more detail [here](#).

To conduct the keyword analysis, researchers examined a sample of posts following the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol and developed a list of terms commonly used in responses to the event. These terms were then filtered to those used by at least 50% of the members in one or both parties. Variants of each term were consolidated into a single measure; for example, numbers reported for the word “terrorism” also include mentions of variations like “terrorist” and “terrorize.”

Center researchers began identifying Parler accounts for members of Congress in November 2020. As of Nov. 30, 2020, researchers had found 142 accounts that appeared to belong to 111 different members of Congress. These accounts were found using a combination of methods: searching for members of Congress by name, searching for accounts containing terms like “senator” and “representative,” and using Parler’s recommendation system. Researchers then examined each account’s profile – including its picture, description and recent posts – to determine whether the account was legitimate. Although researchers were not able to confirm the ownership of every account before the platform was taken offline, many accounts included signs that strongly indicated that they were operated by members of Congress, including official Parler verification badges and links to members’ official “.gov” websites. Not every account contained these markers, but researchers took care to exclude accounts if there was any evidence to suggest that it might be a fake or parody (e.g., poor grammar or misspellings). It is therefore possible that the numbers reported in this analysis include some accounts that were not created or managed by members of

¹ CrowdTangle is a public insights tool owned by Facebook.

Congress. These numbers also do not include any members of Congress that joined Parler after Nov. 30, 2020.

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