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The Deceit of internet hate speech: A Study of the narrative and visual methods used by hate groups on the Internet

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The Deceit of Internet Hate Speech:
A Study of the Narrative and Visual Methods Used by Hate Groups on the Internet.

By

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March 15, 2004

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Carin, thank you for the moral support, the technical help and the laughter through this grueling process, I could not have done this without you. Having someone to share the disappointments and the successes made this experience all worth it. We did it!

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Mom and Dad, thank you for always believing in me and having the patience to know that I could accomplish my dreams. You have given me more opportunities than anyone could ask for and you are both the reason for my success as an adult. Thank you and I could not love you more.

The Deceit of Internet Hate Speech:
A study of the narrative and visual methods used by hate groups on the Internet

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Abstract

Intentional misinformation is a problem that has been documented in a variety of shapes

and forms for thousands of years and continues to plague the American landscape. The

advent and increasing usage of the Internet has created an additional venue through

which intentional misinformation is disseminated, and many groups are taking full

advantage of this new communication medium. Because the Internet allows anyone with

web publishing skills to disseminate misinformation, it is often difficult for users to judge

the credibility of the information. Hate groups understand this phenomenon and are

taking full advantage of the Internet by publishing hate sites that promote their extremist

ideologies by using language and symbolism that makes the true message difficult to

decipher. This study will investigate the methods employed by hate groups to disseminate

misinformation to the public.

The Deceit of Internet Hate Speech:

A Study of the Narrative and Visual Methods Used by Hate Groups on the Internet.

Hate speech, although greatly frowned upon by a majority of people, continues to plague the American society (Simon Wiesenthal Center, Anti-Defamation League, Leets, 2000, Rajagopal, 2002). The issue of hate can be traced back to the days of Aristotle who spoke of it by saying, "it is more encompassing than lesser emotions such as anger, which is directed at individuals" (quoted in Whillock, Slayden, 1995, p. xv). Aristotle implies that hate is a pure emotion devoid of reason and sensibility that employs the use of visual persuasion (Barry, 1997). Since the 1960's there has been a major shift in public tolerance of hate speech as equality has become a central goal of American society and hate based on demographic characteristics has been viewed as irrational and fanatic.

This shift has forced hate groups to use media in innovative ways to promote their ideologies. According to Shafer (2002), "Groups have used radio (AM or shortwave) or television (public access channels) to present their ideological beliefs or used print mediums [sic] to educate, inform, enrage and entice" (p. 71). The efficacy of traditional communication methods is often limited in its ability to reach audiences. Broadcast media are limited in their geographic range and are constrained by the amount of money and equipment needed to air messages and programs (Shafer, 2002). Printed materials are limited because they can only be produced in finite amounts at a high cost. The development of the Internet creates a powerful new outlet for the propagation of hate with more reach and at a lower cost than traditional media. As a result, hate groups are taking full advantage of its capabilities. Although there are limitations, such as the

difficulty of finding available sites if they are not advertised and the requirement of some technical ability, the Internet is open to anyone who can post a web site.

Along with the growth of the Web, there has been an explosion of hate speech on the Internet over the last eight years and it continues to show substantial growth. Leets (2001) has documented the explosion of Internet hate speech, "In 1995 at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing, there was only one hate site, but today over 2,800 hate sites have been documented" (p. 287). These hate sites include White Supremacist sites which are the focus of this study.

Prior to the advent of the Internet, hate groups were resigned to recruiting through the use of obvious symbols, tactics and media to make their existence and beliefs known. Hate had a face, a set of symbols, and a discourse structure that allowed for the identification of members. However, it has become increasingly difficult for these groups to attract new recruits by using extremist symbols and terms. In recent years, many hate groups have changed the methods used for the promotion of hate, and this shift has been attributed to the advent of the Internet as a communications medium. A study conducted by the Simon Wiesenthal Center confirms this transition and describes the new hate tactics:

> Changes in the tactics of extremists and especially in utilizing new digital marketing opportunities have had a profound impact on hate in America. Much has changed since David Duke traded in his Klan hood for a three-piece suit. To attract citizens not comfortable with cross burnings and racial slurs, professional bigots often drop their racist label and now promote themselves as "nationalists" seeking to protect the

endangered rights of the white race (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2001, p. 1).

Web sites containing hate speech range from those that are blatant in the presentation of their message by including familiar White Supremacist symbols on the homepage to those that intentionally mislead the user by presenting information in an educational format. The present study focuses on the latter type of hate speech Web sites and investigates how information presented in an educationally-oriented format is verbally and visually deceptive. Because of the naiveté of young Americans, hate Web sites that utilize an educational structure may be effective in persuading and recruiting a young audience. "Realizing the appeal of the technology to youth, and that information can be accessed directly and not filtered through parents, educators or other adults, extremists have flocked to the Internet" (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2001, p. 13).

The credibility of a message is based on a number of factors. The tactics utilized by some hate groups on the Internet seem to employ a visual structure similar to those found on scholastic, news and research database Web sites (Radford, Barnes, & Barr, 2002). By avoiding the usage of flagrantly derogatory racial terms and blatant symbols, the message must be judged based on content alone. Prior to the advent of the Internet, hate speech was recognizable through the use of obvious symbols and terminology stereotypically associated with the message (see Appendix C). As the tactics employed by hate groups change to utilize the full capabilities of the Internet, users may become more vulnerable to persuasion because of the misleading educational context instead of the hate speech content.

Research Questions

The present research study investigates the following questions:

How do hate Web sites employing traditional tactics use visual symbols, visual structure, extremist terminology and URL addresses differ from hate Web sites disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? (For the traditional tactics used on Web sites see Radford, Barnes, & Barr (2002) and Appendix C for visual symbols used.)

What are the visual symbols used on hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? Visual symbols are all non-textual elements of a Web site including banners, graphics, photographs, symbols and streaming video. Hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research and/or news sites are presented with a professional and progressive style that make identification of the hate discourse difficult (Rajagopal, 2002). The Web site will resemble the structure and textual format of research databases and educational resource sites.

What is the visual structure used on hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? The visual structure refers to the way the textual and visual imagery are compiled to create the form of the Web site. Elements can include the immediacy, hypermediacy and remediation on the site (Bolter, Grusin, 1999). These elements, as defined in the book *Remediation,* are defined as follows: "Immediacy- A style of visual representation whose goal is to make the viewer forget the presence of the medium and believe that he is in the presence of the objects of representation" (1999, p. 272-3), "hypermediacy- A style of visual representation whose goal is to remind the viewer of the medium" (1999, p. 272), "remediation- The formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms. Along with immediacy and hypermediacy, remediation is one of the three traits of our genealogy of new media" (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 272).

What is the frequency with which traditional extremist language is used in the text of hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? Traditional extremist language includes all of those terms that are racist, sexist, or religiously offensive.

What are the third-level domain names used in the URL addresses of hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? The elements of URL addresses that are to be studied are the actual names of the sites such as martinlutherking.org and Stormfront.org and the third level domain name classification used, such as organization, commerce, or government (Sandvig, 2000).

Rationale

This research is of great social importance because of the negative consequences of the Internet that are emerging as usage increases. The World Wide Web is an ideal tool for learning, but the lack of gatekeepers combined with the unrestricted nature of this medium allows for misinformation to be as easily accessed as factual information. Hate speech on the Internet is one source of misinformation available to surfers, and this research can raise awareness of its existence. Because hate sites employ visual elements with new rhetorical methods to deceive users, society may be more influenced. This study attempts to identify the tactics used by hate groups so that deceptive messages will be easily recognized. By understanding and having the ability to identify this new hate speech outlet and the tactics used, the effectiveness and influence can be countered by individual efforts.

Because the Internet is such a new communications medium, research into the visual and rhetorical methods used is limited. Through the use of visual and rhetorical

elements, it appears that hate groups have compiled a new and unfamiliar message

structure. Due to the potential social harm associated with hate speech, it is imperative

that these messages be better understood in terms of the communication methods used in

order to offset their impact. Current research on hate speech on the Internet has addressed

a number of issues such as the use of implicit versus explicit messages and their influence

on adolescents (Lee & Leets, 2002), the foot-in-the-door techniques used by hate groups

to attract Internet users and the application of academic and techno-ethos to increase

persuasion (Borrowman, 1999) and credibility of hate sites (McDonald, 1999).

     To date, there has not been a research project that addresses the visual and

rhetorical elements of hate sites that attempt to misinform users by using a combination

of visual structure and rhetoric. Although this project is focusing solely on defining the

tactics used on various hate sites, it may provide a rough framework for further research

into the areas of influence and credibility of the identified visual design structures.

Because the Internet is such a new medium, extensive research must be done on the

visual and verbal patterns utilized in misinforming the public.

     This topic is of personal importance because of the lack of coverage and

education about the existence of Web sites with the main purpose of fooling Internet

users into reading questionable material. When doing some personal research on Martin

Luther King Jr., I came across a Web site that was virtually identical to the one sponsored

by the foundation established in his name. I was astounded to find the content of the site

was promoting a conspiracy theory claiming that this great figure was a hoax constructed

by the government. The wording and visual structure of the site did not support the

message, and the only reason that I was able to understand and discredit the content was

because of my knowledge and understanding of the real life of this great man. The subtlety of the racism and the apparent credibility of the structure could easily fool a child or adult who did not have previous knowledge of King's life. This issue cannot be ignored because of the impact and sheer number of sites containing similar tactics.

Literature Review

Misinformation includes both intentional and unintentional inaccuracy in a message. Misinformation can be documented as far back as the American Revolution with the racist propaganda used to support slavery. In *Slavery, Propaganda, and the American Revolution*, Bradley (1999) discussed the widespread use of propaganda to persuade citizens to accept the virtues of slavery. According to Bradley, all available media were used to disseminate racist propaganda. This is only one example of a pattern of misinformation that has persisted for years and is especially heightened during times of conflict. Misinformation during times of conflict is not restricted to false messages concocted by the citizenry; the government also plays a major role in the dissemination of the false information. The most prevalent occurrence of this is the use of spies and false documents to mislead the enemy regarding intelligence information.

In *How Real Is Real?*, Watzlawick (1976) describes deception by both the British and American intelligence agencies. One of the central themes of intelligence work is its duality: "Intelligence departments' work is generally considered to be twofold: to get information about the enemy (espionage) and to prevent the enemy from getting information (counter-espionage)" (Watzlawick, 1976, p. 118).

During World War II the U.S. government went to painstaking efforts to produce intelligence information that would be perceived by the enemy as reputable and accurate.

One of the most infamous examples of the lengths that the government will take to deceive the enemy was assigned the codename "operation mincemeat." In an effort to misinform the Axis powers about the intended attack target in the Mediterranean, the Allied forces staged a massive hoax and succeeded in the deception because of the persuasive tactics used to convince the enemy (Watzlawick, 1976). Espionage and counter-espionage are common and widespread tactics used by governments during wartime that use convincing, albeit deceptive, material to accomplish the overall objective of winning the conflict.

Government sponsored misinformation in the United States was prevalent during the cold war, but it was not limited to intelligence work. It also focused on deceiving and misguiding the American people. Cone (1998-1999) outlines the deceit perpetrated on the American people by the CIA through the denial of their involvement with radio stations. The CIA fully funded the Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty stations while at the same time allowing the formation of the Crusade for Freedom, an organization that asked for public support for the anti-communist efforts in the form of donations. Cone (1998-1999) contends, "While not exactly sinister, the Crusade for Freedom was unquestionably deceitful. For over almost twenty years, it repeatedly took advantage of American good will, expanding from a small, obscure program into a monstrous propaganda subterfuge" (p.149). This deceit continued for many years while the news media failed to disclose the relationship to the public. The deception perpetrated on the American people may be viewed as acceptable because it was done with the intention of fighting communism, but the ends do not always justify the means.

Unintentional misinformation, although prevalent in the history of communication through such things as rumors and honest mistakes, is not the focus of this study and will be set aside. With the development and increasing use of the Internet, there is evidence that the prevalence of intentional misinformation has increased to the point which scholars are paying attention (Piper, 2002).

Intentional misinformation on the Internet can be broken up into a number of categories as identified by Piper (2002). The various categories that misinformation on Internet web sites fall into are counterfeit, malicious, product, fictitious, parodies/spoofs/entertainment, hacks, and disinformation (Piper, 2002). Piper cautions that these categories are not mutually exclusive and some hate speech web sites fall into more than one category depending upon their content and presentation styles.

The prevalence of intentional misinformation on the Internet has been realized by a number of scholars and continues to be a major problem. According to Cannon (2001) "the real computer virus is misinformation and despite years of warnings, this malady keeps creeping its way into the newsprint and onto the airwaves of mainstream news outlets" (p. 29). The author identifies the use of Internet misinformation in such arenas as politics, journalism, and in the academic forum. The concern over misinformation on the Internet is not isolated to one discipline.

Fitzgerald (1997) documents the large amount of inaccurate information on the World Wide Web and contends that because this phenomenon is expected to increase, users need to sharpen critical thinking skills in order to combat massive amount of deception. However, the prevalence of this occurrence has not been identified and the amount of bad information is largely unknown (Fitzgerald, 1997). Although

misinformation in communication media is not a new phenomenon, the Internet

aggravates the problem for a number of reasons including hardware and software

problems, Internet architecture problems, lack of central authority, data malleability,

human error, misconduct, removal of information from context and bias (Fitzgerald,

1997). The reasons for misinformation on the Internet as identified by Fitzgerald create a

conundrum because the aspects of the Internet that make it great also make it vulnerable

to the dissemination of misinformation.

In *Electric Rhetoric*, Welch (1999) argues that the Internet, by its nature as a

remediated communication form, has created a new type of literacy among users that

combines traditional rhetorical theory with visual rhetoric to arrive at a new persuasive

form. "Our students, living their lives in the hegemony of the television screen and

speaker and the computer screen and speaker, are now literate in ways never imagined

two generations ago" (Welch, 1999, p. 4). This new literacy contributes to the formation

of a new rhetorical theory that attempts to examine the construct and usage of the

nonlinear communication form of the Internet. Welch (1999) examines the impact of the

new technology and the ways in which this new medium is used by Web surfers. The

rhetoric of electronic communication media is strongly grounded in the persuasive ability

of the visuals used in conjunction with the text. Suh (1999) has examined the persuasive

ability of the visual message and argues that "most persuasive messages- which mainly

means advertising, propaganda, and, in fact rhetoric of almost any kind- make extensive

use of various forms of visuals" (p. 3). The author argues that in many cases the visual

message is more important than the textual message for purposes of persuasion. The

persuasive ability of visual images, electronic rhetoric, and the historical prevalence and

continued occurrence of intentional misinformation creates a unique environment on the Internet.

As previously stated, hate speech can be dated back to the days of Aristotle, and there has been an abundance of research conducted on this subject. The Internet has had a substantial impact on this type of expression because of the wide audience available for the dissemination of hate and misinformation of the extremist view. The Simon Wiesenthal Center investigates hate speech and concentrates much of its efforts on the problems of hate speech on the Internet. Unlike cheap pamphlets and underground radio shows, the Internet gives hate groups credibility because of the opportunity for slick presentation. The characteristics in a Web site such as the visuals and the downplay of blatant hate symbols help a viewer to accept the propaganda as the truth (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1996). The credibility inherent in web sites creates an interesting difficulty when a user tries to decipher accurate information from misinformation.

The latest report by the Simon Wiesenthal Center (2002) addresses the many issues of Internet use by hate groups on the Internet. Presented in CD form, this report tracks troublesome sites and includes sample pages for viewing by the user. A major issue is the manipulation of information on the Internet by hate groups. One site that is particularly misleading is www.mlking.org because it uses many deceptive elements. The report states:

When initially posted, this site was visually a duplication of the Martin Luther King Family Foundation site. However, far from celebrating the historic contribution of the martyred Civil Rights leader, this site

denigrates Dr. King and is replete with slander, misinformation and distortions.

The reason, MLKing.org is the creation of Stormfront, which promotes

white supremacy and racism. (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2002)

This is just one example of the many sites that use similar tactics to mislead and confuse

Internet users.

Although the Simon Wiesenthal Center is a major force in the tracking and

identification of hate speech on the Internet, the research is limited to tracking

troublesome sites.

The issue of hate speech on the Internet was addressed by Guisnel (1997). He

argues that "the presence of neo-Nazi and other extremists on the Internet is a real

problem" (p. 172). Although there have been attempts in some countries to outlaw the

presence of hate speech on servers, many Web surfers have found ways around the

attempt. "In France by law no server can disseminate racist propaganda or denials of the

holocaust as historical fact, but in this interconnected world of ours, nothing could be

easier than for a French web surfer to connect to a U.S. or Scandinavian Nazi server"

(Guisnel, 1997, p. 172). Because of the different laws and regulations in countries such as

the U.S., foreign attempts to ban the content from servers is a futile practice. Hate groups

have become particularly proficient in using the Internet to influence and gain acceptance

of the extreme ideology. Guisnel (1977) adds, "Extremist groups have learned to use the

Net, allowing them access to a much greater part of the world and although most Internet

users aren't interested in their propaganda, but the more you diversify, the greater your

chances are of attracting new clients" (p. 1997). Hate groups have been especially able

to use the Internet to attract "new clients" through the use of persuasive electronic

rhetoric. Communication scholars have just recently begun to study the effects of Internet

hate speech and these findings are very insightful.

> Lee and Leets (2002) investigate the efficacy of hate messages on
>
> adolescents by using two different types of methods: explicit messages
>
> and implicit messages. "Explicit messages or persuasive attempts are
>
> statements or persuasion in which the content is consistent with the
>
> speaker's intention and only one meaning is conveyed. Implicit messages
>
> or persuasive attempts are statements in which the speaker's intention and
>
> the message content are at times inconsistent" (p. 933)

With the use of Internet surveys, this study measured the immediate persuasive

ability of both types of messages and the persistent persuasive ability of the messages on

adolescents after a two-week period. The results of the study uncovered a pattern of

susceptibility and persuasiveness that suggest implicit messages are more persuasive

immediately after viewing and that explicit messages are more persuasive after a two-

week period. "Although implicit messages appear more effective in influencing

individuals immediately after message exposure, these effects are short-lived compared to

the persuasive effects of explicit messages" (Lee & Leets, 2002, p. 950). Whether implicit

or explicit, narrative hate messages have a persuasive effect on adolescents. Although the

narrative methods used on hate sites are integral to understanding the persuasive ability of

hate messages, visual elements such as symbols and structure also need to be examined

for their persuasive effects. The combination of visual and narrative methods used by

hate groups to persuade users is extremely important because both elements work together

to influence Internet users. Using content analysis, McDonald (1999) analyzed hate sites

based on the techniques used to gain the attention of browsers. The techniques used

include warnings, disclaimers, objectives/purposes, social approaches, and sophisticated

counterargument strategies. The visual structure as well as the narration are used to define

each of the five possible tactics. The results show that the most prevalent techniques used

employed straightforward, neutral methods or "moderating symbols" that attempt to

change the surfers mind. Graphic elements on a Web site are extremely important to the

intent and persuasiveness of the message. McDonald (1999) states:

> Roughly half of the Web sites use graphic elements to help create a
>
> parasocial atmosphere. These data suggest a heavy emotional appeal used
>
> by web site creators as an effort to make contact with net surfers. This can
>
> be compared to the salesperson's technique of shaking one's hand and
>
> conversing in an extremely friendly manner (p. 156-157).

This study uses elements of both visual and narrative elements to classify the types

of techniques used by hate Web sites to persuade and influence the opinions of Web

surfers. McDonald used the rhetorical principle of ethos to analyze the narrative and

visual aspects employed on hate Web sites to increase credibility.

Borrowman (1999) divides the principle of ethos into two parts: academic ethos

and techno-ethos. This study found that many of the revisionists' hate Web sites on the

Internet combined elements of both academic and techno-ethos to increase the credibility and persuasiveness of the message. The academic ethos of a Web site may be enhanced by using a credible source to support the message's claim. Borrowman (1999) cites the infamous holocaust revisionist Dr. Arthur Butz to apply the academic ethos principle.

> On the Web, Dr. Butz relies on the academic strategy to construct his ethos. His site is simple and unadorned. Beneath his name, and before the copyright, Butz identifies himself as an "Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering" and names the university at which he works. With no fanfare, Butz states that he is the author of a book on "Holocaust revisionism." The reference to his published work and to his profession serve to construct Butz's ethos on the Web; he relies on tradition, familiar means (p. 46).

The tactics described in the above quote lend credibility to the author of the hate message and support assertions in an academic guise. A study conducted by the Anti-Defamatory League (2001) found similar results. According to "Poisoning the Web: Hatred Online," "Holocaust deniers' thousands of pages of propaganda on the Web, presented as academic fact or in the guise of free and open 'debate,' take particular advantage of many Web users' difficulty distinguishing between reputable and disreputable Web sites" (p. 26). The use of academic ethos creates credibility based on the reputation of the message creator. Techno-ethos, in contrast, uses the many strengths and unique aspects of the new medium to gain credibility and increase persuasiveness.

Borrowman (1999) supplies an example of successful usage of techno-ethos

with CODOH, the Committee for Open Discussion of the Holocaust Story.

> CODOH's site is filled with color, in the background and the text. It is
> both easy to read and visually appealing. Various sizes of font are used,
> some of them three-dimensional. Frames break the page up, and helpful
> menus are everywhere. Pictures are also heavily used: a bald eagle at the
> top of the page, Samuel Johnson, and Bradley Smith (the director of
> CODOH) himself. On the first page that a surfer sees, a counter reports
> that more than 500,000 people have accessed CODOH's homepage.
> CODOH understands the possibilities of the Web, and the group makes
> use of them (p. 48).

The theory of techno-ethos applies to hate sites that understand the power of the

Internet to demonstrate credibility by use of the technology in addition to academic

aspects to increase the impression of academic research rather than misinformation. The

Anti-Defamation League study supports this application of techno-ethos, "Smith's savvy

marketing technique was tailor-made for students, many of whom are comfortable with

the Internet, predisposed against authority, and willing to challenge received wisdom"

(2001, p. 28).

Credibility of Internet web sites is not based solely on the academic- and techno-

ethos as addressed above; rather the theory of remediation can also explain the power of a

Web site to disseminate misinformation. Bolter and Grusin (1999) contend that all media

remediates more traditional media in form and structure. "The computer is imitating

not an external reality but rather another medium" (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 28).

The idea that the Internet remediates other media is one explanation of the implied

credibility afforded to web sites using structures resembling a newspaper or academic

paper. According to Bolter and Grusin (1999), borrowing of one medium to define the

representation of another is the most powerful element, "We call the representation of one

medium in another *remediation*, and we will argue that remediation is a defining

characteristic of the new digital media" (p. 45).

One illustration of this theory is the fact that the Internet, at its current stage of

development does not represent a completely new and uninfluenced medium, rather it

exists on a continuum of displaying elements of one medium to a combination of many

other elements of many other media. More traditional media seem to be repurposed on the

Internet without the influence of multiple remediation structures. The authors articulate

this by saying, "There have been and remain many web sites that highlight other media

without any apparent critique. This respectful attitude is most common in remediations of

more venerable media: the printed book, static graphics, paintings, and photographs"

(Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 200).

Remediation is extremely important in understanding the motives for the structures

employed on the Internet. As the capabilities of the Internet increase to include animation,

and digital video and audio, many web sites are utilizing vast amounts of print. The

authors contend, "Old remediations were not abandoned, rather the Web still refashions

the personal letter, the book, and the magazine, but now it also refashions and reforms

CD-ROM or DVD multimedia, radio, film and television" (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p.200).

The importance of this theory lies in understanding the ways in which web sites can and

do use the structure of traditional media to emulate other media on the Internet. It is

possible to mislead and misinform the user by taking on the credibility of traditional

media, such as traditional newspaper and news media (Bolter & Grusin, 1999).

All of the studies conducted that analyze Internet hate speech methods

acknowledge the importance of both narrative and visual elements in the persuasiveness

of a message. These elements combine to give credibility to the hate messages being

disseminated. The combination of visual and narrative elements serves to disseminate

intentional misinformation via the Internet. The present research will contribute to the

existing findings by examining the specific visual symbols, visual structure elements,

terminology and tactics used on these sites.

Method

The population studied was hate sites that are disguised as educational, research,

and/or news sites as well as hate sites that use blatant tactics to disseminate hate speech.

In order to investigate the differences in the tactics used by these two classifications of

Web sites, both categories were examined using identical coding techniques. By using the

exhaustive lists compiled by Hate Watch of hate Web sites currently operational to

represent the population, all Web sites had an equal chance of being selected for

investigation thereby resulting in a representative sample. The Hate Watch database can

be found at www.hatewatch.org. T\he newest list was published in January of 2003 and

can be used in an html format or a PDF file. The list compiles just over 2,000 hate

sites, 1,800 of which are in English. Because of the lack of resources for translation, only

English language web sites were included in the random sampling.

According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center (2001), "we are now tracking some

2,500 problematic sites online" (p. 2). Although requested, the Simon Wiesenthal Center

was unable to furnish the researchers with a list of the problematic Web sites that are

mentioned above. Because the sites on the Hate Watch database fall short of the 2,500

sites mentioned as problematic by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, coupled with the fact

that it is virtually impossible to compile an exhaustive list of Internet sites because of the

speed with which sites are launched and removed, the sample drawn for the study may be

considered a convenience sample.

The sample was chosen from the population by using a stratification method.

Prior to the random selection of sites to be included, all sites were placed in one of two

categories: 1. web sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sites and 2. web

sites using blatant tactics for the dissemination of hate discourse. The web sites were

stratified based only on visual elements. Using the hate symbols database located on the

Anti-Defamation League web site, hate sites were separated based on the use of hate

symbols on the homepage. Two coders were supplied with all symbols on the database

and separated the sites based on the inclusion of hate symbols on the homepage. The

symbols used for the classification are included in Appendix C. The two coders were

trained to identify the symbolism by browsing the homepage and classifying the site

based on the graphics used. Although it seems as though this process would have resulted

in hate sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sources with no hate

symbolism in the content analysis, this was not the case. In the course of research, hate

sites in the disguised group did contain symbols, but the representation was manipulated

or hidden so well that the stratification process did not exclude them from inclusion in

this group.

Once the two groups were established, 50 sites were randomly selected from

each group resulting in a sample of 100 Web sites for investigation and analysis. Random

selection was carried out by assigning a number to each web site and using a random

number generator to determine the sites to be analyzed. This process ensured that every

web site had the same chance of being selected for inclusion and the results of the study

would be more valid.

The selected sample was investigated and coded over a two-week period during

the last two weeks of March 2003. The information gathered in this time frame served as

the data for the analysis, regardless of any later changes in the content and/or presentation

of the material. The date and time of the data collection for each site was recorded to

reflect the time period in which the Web site demonstrated the elements observed. By

limiting the data collection to a two-week time period, the content and the presentation of

the structures on the Web sites investigated are comparable.

The visual and textual elements of hate sites are broken down into four broad

categories: visual symbols, visual structure, extremist language, and Internet address

classification. Visual symbols are further organized into racist symbols, photographs,

cartoon graphics and Web banners. There were 59 types of racist symbols. They were

coded based on the presence of one or more type(s) on the Web site. For classification

purposes the number one equates that the symbol was present on the Web site and a zero

denoted the absence of a symbol. The symbols analyzed were only those present on the homepage. Because the Web sites studied contained hundreds of pages, using only the homepage for this study allowed for manageable investigation.

Photographs on the web sites were coded using the number assigned to them. If more than one of the descriptive elements were present in a photograph, all applicable numbers were coded for an accurate representation of the photograph depicted. Only photographs on the homepage were used for coding and included in this study. Photographs were studied carefully to decipher whether or not they had been digitally manipulated. The detection of manipulation was crucial because of the large amount of revisionist materials included on hate sites and the inclusion of manipulated material to support the false historical information. Because of the difficulty of identifying all forms of manipulation, only those which were blatantly obvious were recorded. An overwhelming majority of web sites contained six or fewer photographs on the homepage supporting the reasoning for coding only the first six photos depicted on the site. Each of the photographs investigated were coded according to what was depicted. The eight possible depictions included social activists for equality, activists for white supremacy, historical scenes, current news photos, violent scenes, manipulated Holocaust photos, accurate Holocaust photos and an "other" category.

Cartoon graphics and Web banners utilized the same classification system and were coded based on the homepage. These two elements could be applicable to both visual symbolism as well as visual structure, the next category. The visual structure category contained the elements of background color, text and graphics intensity on the homepage, font size, remediation structure and animated graphics and text.

Background color was coded in one of eight categories that were chosen based on the common usage of the included colors. For a color that was not included, the background was coded in the "other" category with a note on the color, and if more than three percent of the specified category occurred, then an additional classification was assigned. The background color of the web site is very important to the visual structure because it tends to influences the overall mood of the site. For example, white backgrounds are often used on newspaper sites.

Text and graphic intensity on the homepage was judged on a seven-point scale with one representing all text and no graphics to eight representing all graphics and no text. The middle levels are described in detail to reduce the subjectivity of the classification, and the coding of this category will remain consistent among all web sites in the sample. The textual/graphical mix on web sites helped to decipher the visual structure and intended message delivery strategy. This coupled with the font size helped to communicate the intentions of the web design, whether it was academic modeling or a graphical reliance.

The remediated web site structure classification is based on the theories of remediation, hypermediacy and immediacy in "Remediation" (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). The authors contend that all media remediates more traditional media in form and structure (1999). The medium which is remediated for Internet content falls into eight broad categories: newspapers, books, video/television, video games, research/academic papers, print magazines, a combination of two or more media, and an "other" category to encompass those forms which cannot be recognized.

The newspaper category was assigned to a site which resembled a traditional newspaper with a headline, a listing of feature articles, text organized in columns, a white or gray background, and photographs to support the accompanying story. The book category and academic/research paper category are similar in presentation but encompassed specific differences for distinction. A remediated book form has a white, gray or neutral background with the absence of graphics. The text is organized from left to right with no disruption in flow, similar to that seen in a word processing program. In contrast, academic/research paper style resembles word processing structure, may or may not contain graphics, and has citations and a reference section at the end of the document.

Video/television remediation style encompassed digital photography elements with movement of graphics and text. The motion on a homepage gives the impression of watching television. This classification encompassed graphics that were unanimated and realistic in appearance. This is in sharp contrast to the remediation of video games because of the highly animated nature required for a video game classification. The inclusion of a game on the web site did not automatically constitute the assignment of this classification; rather, the prominent remediated form was coded.

Print magazine remediation classification included colorful presentation with the inclusion of sharp photographs and inconsistent text sizes. These web sites included a large number of advertisements and promotions that resemble those in print magazines. Because many sites were not dominated by a single remediated form, the combination of two or more media was included. Web sites that remediate more than one medium were placed under this category and the forms were specified for the addition of categories based on the findings. The "other" category was utilized for web sites in which the

remediated form was not clearly identifiable. It was not expected that the "other" category would be required for many cases because of the similarity of web sites to traditional media forms.

The animated graphics and text category were coded using a "1" for the presence of one or both and a "0" for the exclusion of this element on the web site. This classification aided in the coding of the remediation structure. The elements included in the visual structure category encompassed information that enables the look and feel of the examined web sites to be articulated in understandable terms.

The extremist language category encompassed 29 descriptors that helped decipher the candid content of the message on the homepage of the site. An avoidance of the terms outlined may have been an indication of the intended misinformation of the message on the site. While conducting the analysis, it was assumed that more terms would emerge as a descriptor of racist terminology, and additional terms were coded and added to the preliminary list of terms.

The final category, Internet address classification, encompassed two parts: the actual name of the web site address and the classification in one of five categories including commerce (.com), organization (.org), network (.net), education (.edu), and "other." The Web site address was coded based on whether or not the URL name was descriptive of the content of the site. Many hate sites have an Internet address that is the name of the organization sponsoring the site and that would be awarded a "1." Web sites that used deceptive or misleading Internet address names were assigned a "2" and addresses that were neither accurate nor intentionally misleading received a code of "3" that represented the "other" category. According to Sandvig (2000), there are a number of

other third-level domain name classifications, but for the purposes of this paper only

the ones listed above were used.

Upon completion of the coding, Web sites were placed in categories based on the

results of the study. The categories were established upon completion because of the high

number of possible combinations of the elements being investigated. It was expected that

a pattern would emerge between similar web sites and similarities were identified and

placed in categories that describe the content as well as the structure of the page.

All coding was done by the author and one additional coder who received five

hours of training. An intercoder reliability test was conducted using 10 sample Web sites

randomly selected. Any discrepancies in coding were identified and corrected prior to the

beginning of the study. This reduced the possibility of consistent bias throughout the

study. By conducting the outlined methodology to investigate the visual and rhetorical

tactics used to disseminate hate speech on the Internet, a classification system has

emerged and will be applicable to other misleading web sites.

Results

The study sample consisted of 100 Web sites for analysis that espoused racist

and/or extremist ideology. The sample was chosen from a list compiling 1,800 Web sites

provided by www.hatewatch.org, representing 5.5% of all English language hate sites.

Because of the fluid nature of the Internet, the population from which the sample was

drawn may not represent the total number of current English language hate sites

operating on the Internet. This may cause doubt about the randomness of the sample.

The number of racist symbols in the database supplied by the Anti-Defamation

League equals 59, and all symbols were supplied to the coders for investigation. The total

amount of possible symbols, if all appeared on every homepage, equals 2,950. The

symbols present on the homepages of disguised Web sites consisted of six different types

with eight observations resulting in .27% of all possible visuals. Of the 59 possible

symbols, Web sites disguised as educational, news and/or research material displayed six

different symbols a total of eight times. The confederate flag was only present on 4% of

the 50 Web sites examined and accounts for 25% of all symbols present in this class of

web sites. Of the six different symbol categories present on the homepages of this class of

web sites, the swastika symbol appeared on 2% of the 50 homepages coded accounting

for 12.5% of the total symbols observed in this category. The remaining four hate

symbols in this category include one iron cross, one logo for the National Association for

the Advancement of White People (NAAWP), one Crosstar and two symbols which are

classified in the "other" category. The percentages of these symbols are as follows: iron

cross on 2% of homepages and 12.5% of total symbols, logo for the NAAWP is on 2% of

homepages and 12.5% of total, Crosstar is on 2% of homepages and equals 12.5% of total

symbols and "other" depiction is on 2% of homepages and accounts for 25% of total

symbols.

The number of symbols used on blatant hate sites equal 171 out of a possible

2,950 resulting in a percentage of 5.8% of total possible symbols. These 171 symbols are

broken up into 27 different categories including: Celtic cross on 46% of homepages

accounting for 13.45% of all symbols used, othala rune on 4% of homepages equaling

1.17% all symbols, heavy othala rune on 8% of homepages resulting in 2.34% of total,

confederate flag on 26% of homepages accounting for 7.6% of total symbolism, white

power fist on 2% of homepages equaling .58% of all symbols, swastika observed on 50%

of homepages accounting for 14.62% total symbols, SS bolts appeared on 14% of homepages accounting for 4.1% total symbolism, death's head depicted on 24% of homepages accounting for 7.02% of total symbols, iron cross appeared on 24% of homepages equaling 7.02% of total symbols, the observations of three sevens on homepages equals 6% accounting for 1.75% of total symbols, hammerskins logo 1 was observed on 2% of homepages accounting for .58% of all symbols used, skinheads fist was also observed on 2% of homepages equaling .58% of total symbolism, American Nazi Party logo was present on 2% of homepages with a total symbolism percentage of .58%, Aryan Nations was observed on 18% of homepages accounting for 5.26% of the total symbols, the hammerskins logo 2 was depicted on 4% of homepages accounting for 1.17% total symbolism, Ku Klux Klan blood drop appeared on 24% of homepages accounting for 7.02% total symbols, National Alliance logo was present on 6% of homepages accounting for 1.75% of all symbols used, iron eagle appeared on 20% of homepages resulting in 5.85% of the total, Stormfront logo was observed on 8% of the Web sites accounting for 2.34% of all symbols, World Church of the Creator logo appeared on 4% of homepages equaling 1.17% of total symbols, sturmabteilung appeared on 2% of sites accounting for .58% of total symbols, phineas priest was observed on 4% of sites resulting in 1.17% of total, wolfsangel appeared on 4% of sites accounting for 1.17% all symbols, swastika variant 2 was observed on 4% of homepages accounting for 1.17% of total, swastika variant 3 appeared on 8% of sites resulting in 2.34% all symbols, sunwheel was observed on 4% of homepages equaling 1.17% of total and the "other" category of symbols was present on 20% of sites accounting for 5.85% of total symbolism. For a complete listing of all results see Table 1.

Of the 50 hate Web sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sites,

58% contained at least one photograph on the homepage. The percentage of each photo

present on homepages was widely distributed among seven of the eight types of photos.

One category, manipulated Holocaust photos, was not present on any of the homepages

included in this study in the disguised category. According to the research, seven photos

classified in the category "social activists for equality" resulting in 10% of all photos

present in the disguised group. In the second category, "activists for white supremacy,"

there were 20 photographs coded which accounts for 28.57% of all photos observed, the

largest category in the disguised group. The category "historical scenes" account for 10

of the photos present in the disguised group and equals 14.29% of the total. The fourth

type of photo, "current news photos," was observed 11 times on homepages which equals

15.71%. The research observed three photos classified in the category "violent scenes"

resulting in 4.29% of all photos present in the disguised group. The seventh type of

photo, "accurate Holocaust photos," was observed once on a home page which accounts

for 1.43%. The eighth and final category, classified as "other," was observed 18 times on

homepages to equal 25.71% of all photos in the disguised group.

The photographs on blatant hate Web sites equal the number of photographs on

hate Web sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sites and equal 70 photos.

Of the 50 blatant hate Web sites included in this research project, 27 sites contained

photographs resulting in 54% of all blatant sites depicting photos. All photos were

unevenly distributed among seven of the eight categories. No photos were classified in

the coding as "accurate Holocaust photos" leaving all depictions to fall in one of the other

seven categories. In the category, "social activists for equality," there were six

photographs coded which account for 8.57% of all photos in the blatant category. The

second category, "activists for white supremacy," accounted for 41.43% of all photos, by

far the highest amount observed with 20 out of the 70 possible photos classified in this

category. The research observed four photos classified in the category "historical scenes"

accounting for 5.71% of the total. The fourth type of photo, "current news photos" was

observed on homepages four times resulting in a percentage of 5.71%. The fifth category,

"violent scenes," accounted for 10% of the total photos and the "manipulated Holocaust

photos" category was observed once resulting in 1.43% of the all the photos in this

category. The last category, "other" encompassed a large number of photos with 19

observations equaling 27.14% of all results. For a complete listing of all results see Table

2.

The presence of cartoon graphics on the homepages of disguised hate web sites

was observed in just over half the cases at 62%. Cartoon graphics on the homepages of

blatant web sites, in contrast, were substantially higher and were found on nearly every

page observed with a total of 96% containing a cartoon graphic. Web banners, such as

advertisements and cartoon graphics, showed a substantial difference between disguised

hate web sites and blatant hate web sites. Observations of web banners on the homepage

of disguised hate web sites equaled 22%. Web banners found on the homepage of blatant

hate web sites were much more frequent at 72% of sites containing a banner.

The background color of disguised hate web sites results in an uneven distribution

among eight different possible classifications. White as a background color on disguised

hate sites is by far the most prevalent with a result of 54% of the sites observed in this

category. The next seven categories were not as prevalent with 6% using a blue

background, 14% using black, 2% using a red background, 4% utilizing yellow, 4%

had a gray background, 4% displayed a patterned background and 8% were classified in

the "other" category in regards to background color. Because the "other" category did not

have repeating occurrences of a specific color, no other categories were added.

The observations of blatant hate web sites in the area of background color were

distributed among six of the eight categories. There were no occurrences of a yellow

background on the sites investigated, nor were there any occurrences which were

classified in the "other" category. Of the 50 blatant sites coded, the highest percent of

sites were classified in the black category with 32% containing a black background. The

next most prevalent background colors used, at 30%, were patterned backgrounds. The

remaining Web sites were distributed among the final four categories and consisted of

18% using a white background, 12% using a gray background, 6% displayed a red

background and 2% using a blue background on the homepage. For a complete listing of

all results see Table 3.

One element of the visual structure coded on the homepage evaluated the intensity

of the amount of text in relation to the graphics present. This was measured on a Likert

scale of seven possible combinations. On hate web sites disguised as educational, news

and/or research sites the majority of observations were classified in the first four

categories. The findings are as follows: 18% of the homepages in this category contained

just text and no graphics, 40% of the homepages contained a majority of text with only

one or two graphics (by far the largest percent observed), 22% of the homepages were

classified as being largely text with three to five graphics present, 18% of sites observed a

balance of text and graphics on the homepage and only 2% of sites were classified in the

largely graphic category which include text of only 51-100 words. There were no

homepages classified in the final two categories, majority graphics which entails a

homepage with 50 words or less and all graphics.

The results of the text and graphic intensity on the homepages of blatant hate web

sites were distributed differently than disguised sites. The category "balanced text and

graphics" was the largest percentage of homepages of blatant sites with 34%. The second

most prevalent category found on the homepages of blatant hate sites was "largely text"

at 32% representing this category. The last three categories (which were found to

represent the homepages observed) were "majority text" at 10%, "largely graphics"

equaling 8% and "majority graphics" at 16%. Blatant hate sites had two categories that

resulted in no observances; all text and all graphics. For a complete listing of all results

see Table 4.

The fonts on the homepages of the all web sites included in this research were

investigated based on the sizes used. Font size was coded in one of two categories, that

using 12-16 point font or less and those using the larger text size of 17-point font or

greater. The observations on the disguised hate Web sites were quite overwhelming with

94% of the homepages using fonts that were in the 12 to 16-point range. The font size

used on the blatant hate sites showed more balanced results with 58% encompassing text

in the 12-16 point range. For a complete listing of all results see Table 5.

The remediated web site structure coding scheme is broken up into eight different

categories as discussed in the methods section and includes newspaper, book,

video/television, video game, research/academic paper, combination of two or more, print

magazine and "other." Disguised hate web sites resulted in an uneven distribution with a

majority of the results classified in two categories. The category "newspaper" encompassed the largest percentage of sites at 38% of the homepages utilizing this remediation scheme. Research/academic paper, the second most prevalent structure utilized on the homepages of disguised sites, was observed on 22% of the sites. The observations on the remaining sites in this category were distributed among the remaining categories with 14% using the remediated structure of a book, 10% using a video/television structure, 6% classified as a print magazine, both the "other" category and the combination category were coded as representing 4% of the homepages each and 2% of the homepages utilized a video game remediation structure.

The remediated structure found on the homepages of blatant hate sites similarly showed an uneven distribution. The most prevalent structures observed on the homepages of blatant sites were the categories of "video game" and "video/television" accounting for 34% and 18% of the homepages respectively. The last four categories represented the remaining homepages with the following distribution: 16% using a newspaper structure, 12% depicting the structure of a print magazine, 6% using a research/academic paper structure, 6% classified in the "other" category, 4% classified as remediating a book structure and 4% using a combination of two or more structure types. For a complete listing of all results see Table 6.

The animated movement category was coded based on the movement of text and/or graphics, streaming video and other elements that demonstrate animation on the homepage. Hate Web sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sites observed animation on 40% of the homepages. Conversely, blatant hate sites utilized animated movement on 60% of the homepages investigated.

The racist language category is broken up among 29 different possible terms, and the homepage was used for this investigation. Each term was analyzed based on the percentage of times it appeared on the homepage as well as the percentage of its use in relation to all terms used. Because of the large amount of results in this area, only terms which appeared on 20% of the web sites or more will be identified in this section. For a complete listing of results see Appendix C. The total amount of possible terms that can be present on the homepages of the web sites investigated equals 1,450 terms. Of all the possible occurrences of the terms investigated, the amount found on the homepages of disguised hate web sites accounts for 12.34%.

Of all the terms included in the study, only seven were present on 20% of the homepages on the disguised hate sites. The results are as follows: "Revisionism" was present on 32% of homepages accounting for 8.94% of the total terms, "Jews" was observed on 52% of the sites investigated equaling 14.5% of all terms appearing on disguised sites, "Blacks" appeared on 20% of the homepages researched accounting for 5.59% of the total terms, the term Zion, or the variation "ZOG," which stands for Zionist Occupied Government, was present on 38% of the sites representing 10.61% of all terms included, "Holocaust" was observed on 40% of the homepages accounting for 11.17% of the total, "hate" was present on 42% of the sites equaling 11.73% of all terms, and "racialist" appeared on 32% of homepages accounting for 8.94% of the total terms.

There was a much higher occurrence of terms present on the homepage of blatant sites; the total amount of terms on these sites is 319 accounting for 22% of all possible terms that could be present. In contrast to the seven terms equaling 20% or more on the web sites investigated in the disguised category, blatant sites have double with 14 terms

present on 20% or more of homepages. The terms appearing on 20% or more of

homepages are as follows: "White power" is by far the most prevalent and is present on

76% of the homepages investigated accounting for 11.9% of the total, "Jews" appears on

56% of homepages resulting in 8.8% of the total, "Blacks" was observed on 20% of the

sites equaling 3.1% of the total, "White Aryan" was found on 60% of the sites accounting

for 9.4% of the total, "Klan" was present on 26% of sites equaling 4.1% of all terms,

"knights" was observed on 20% of homepages resulting in 3.1% of total, "Hitler"

appeared on 20% of sites accounting for 3.1% of all terms, "National Resistance" was

found on 20% of the homepages equaling 3.1% of the total, "Zion/ZOG" was observed

on 28% of sites equaling 4.4% of the total, "88[1]" was present on 26% of the homepages

accounting for 3.8% of the total, "Holocaust" was present on 22% of the homepages

which represents 3.4% of all terms, "hate" was present on 56% of the sites observed

resulting in 8.8% of the total, "National Socialist" appeared on 44% of the homepages

accounting for 6.9% of all terms, and "racialist" was observed on 64% of all sites

resulting in 10% of all terms observed on the homepages. For a complete listing of results

see Table #7.

The last category investigated for the research was the third level domain name of

the sites investigated. The third level address used on hate Web sites disguised as

educational, news and/or research sites is unevenly distributed among five different

types. The third level domain name, ".com," represents 54% of the addresses of disguised

hate Web sites, ".org" accounts for 32% of the addresses of disguised sites, ".net" is

observed as the address of 8% of the sites in the disguised group, ".edu" was used for the

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[1] The 88 represents a message because hate groups use the number 8 to represent the letter H as it is the eighth letter of the alphabet and the 88 represents "Heil Hitler".

address on 2% of the sites, and 4% of the address are classified in the "other" category for disguised sites.

The distribution of third-level domain names is also uneven for the blatant hate Web sites. More than half, 58%, of the sites in the blatant category use ".com" as the address name, ".org" accounts for 18% of all blatant Web sites, ".net" represents 12% of the third level domain names, ".edu" was not used for the blatant Web site group, and 12% of the addresses are classified in the "other" category. For a complete listing of results see Table #8 and Figures 1 and 2. Other results, such as anecdotal evidence will be addressed in the discussion section.

Discussion

Through this study a number of differences in the tactics used by hate groups on Web sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sites and blatant hate sites have been discovered. Because of the large amount of data, each of the results will be discussed based on the four broad categories of visual symbols, visual structure, extremist language and Internet address classification. It is essential to understand how each of these elements contributes to the communication style differences in terms of the visuals used as well as the language in order to disseminate the racist messages espoused on the sites investigated. Visual symbols will be the first category analyzed because of the importance of the elements to the overall structure of the site.

Visual Symbols

Because hate web sites were separated into the blatant or disguised category based purely on the presence of racist symbols on the homepage, it would be expected that the disguised hate sites would contain no depictions. The eight symbols found on the

homepages of disguised sites remained in the category because of the manner in which they were represented. The confederate flag in both occurrences was abstract in nature without a clear indication of what is depicted in the graphic. This was an attempt by the creator of the site to make the representation covert and not easily identifiable. The inclusion of an iron cross on the homepage of www.holywesternempire.org was disguised in a graphic at the bottom of the page making the immediate identification extremely difficult. As can be seen from the number of swastika variants in the list of racist symbols, this well known symbol can be depicted in many different ways, and the placement of the swastika on the homepage of the disguised web site is no exception. Although once identified the symbol was well disguised and extremely small in size.

The amount of racist symbols found on disguised hate sites is not surprising because of the method used to separate the sites as well as the fact that the creators of the sites may have intended to attract users to the sites by avoiding extremist symbolism. The symbolism used on blatant sites is much more extensive. A swastika is a well known symbol of white supremacy and appeared on 50% of the blatant hate sites studied. The second most frequently used symbol, a Celtic cross, was present on 46% of blatant homepages and these findings are just two examples of the use of racist symbols on blatant sites to make the intent of the organization known. The placement of the symbols on blatant homepages were prominent with a strong use of color. It seems apparent that the creators of the sites wanted the beliefs and ideologies easily recognizable through the use of racist symbols. The differences in the use of symbolism between disguised and blatant hate sites are dramatic but expected. When the differences in other areas of the investigation are analyzed, a more complete understanding will emerge.

The photographs included on the homepages of disguised hate sites were classified in six out of the seven possible categories with "activists for white supremacy" representing the most frequent at 28.57% of all photographs. Many of the photographs contained photos of men that were not commonly recognizable, but upon reading the accompanying text the identity of the people in the photos became known. The majority of the photos contained in this category depicted members of the revisionist movement. The large amount of revisionist web sites that are classified in the disguised category may be responsible for this finding and the photos depicted well dressed men, often standing in an educational setting such as a classroom or a lecture situation. Although these photographs depict activists for White supremacy, the depictions do not identify the ideology of the message contained in the sites because there were no men depicted in white robes while burning crosses for instance, which would alert a user to the racist discourse that accompanies the photographs. Blatant hate sites also had the highest percentage of photographs classified in the "social activists for White supremacy" category, but the depictions are quite different from those observed on disguised sites.

The photographs depicting social activists for White supremacy on blatant sites displayed people dressed in full racist uniform and participating in racist activities. A large number of these photos depicted Ku Klux Klan members dressed in full robes that are culturally recognizable as a racist group. It was found that 41.43% of all photos observed on blatant sites were classified in this category, and many depicted racist groups such as the KKK and skinheads taking action to further their cause. The placement of these photographs on the homepage allows the user to immediately recognize the ideology and intention of the site which is in sharp contrast to the disguised sites, where a

user would be forced to read the text on a homepage to understand the racial propaganda supported by the site. The "other" category was the second most frequently observed photo type on both the disguised and blatant sites representing 25.71% and 27.14% respectively. The remaining categories of photographs support sharp differences in the types included on the homepages of disguised versus blatant hate sites.

The category "current news photos" were observed 11 times equaling 15.71% of all the photos used on the homepages of disguised sites. The use of current news photos on the homepage may be used to add credibility to the content by depicting mainstream events accompanied with racist discourse that sends a conflicting message that is not easily identifiable. Current news photo were used in some cases to reinforce the structure used on the homepage such as those emulating a newspaper structure. By embodying recognizable news images on the homepage, users may be less equipped to recognize the extremist views accompanying the image.

The use of current news photos on blatant hate sites was much less frequent and represents only 5.71% of all photographs observed. Because blatant sites are not attempting to mislead and misinform users of the ideology supported on the site, current news photos are not needed to enforce the credibility of the message because users of the site already support the ideology. The majority of current news photos that were included on the homepage of blatant sites depicted President Bush accompanied by derogatory captions filled with racist beliefs. An example of one caption accompanying a photo of the president read "Jew Lover" which clearly communicates the beliefs embodied on the site. The category "violent scenes" contained more photos than current news photos and is more characteristic of the messages contained on the sites.

Violent scenes were observed on 10% of all photos included on the homepages

of blatant sites while only 4.29% of disguised homepages included images depicting

violent scenes. Blatant hate sites use violent scenes in a different way than disguised sites

because they attempt to use much more shocking and angering depictions whereas

disguised sites use violence to stir emotion and question beliefs. On the web site

www.armyofgod.com, classified as a disguised site, there is a photo located at the very

bottom of the page following a quoting of scripture against abortion that shows an

aborted fetus. This photo is very emotional and may result in a stirring of emotion on this

controversial topic. Blatant sites, in contrast, depict racial crimes and use them to stir

anger and a call to action by followers of the cause. The violent photos are meant to

support the racist assertions that non-Whites should be exterminated because of their

responsibility for the increase in violent crimes, and many of the photos depict an Black

person assaulting a White person. This type of photo is meant to move the user to action

and take steps to further the racist cause. Photographs depicting "social activists for

equality" are used with almost equal frequency on disguised homepages and blatant

homepages, but the context in which the photograph is included differs greatly.

The number of photographs depicting "social activists for equality" equals 10% of

photographs on disguised web sites and 8.57% on blatant homepages. Photographs of

social activists for equality on the homepages of disguised web sites seem to include the

image as a way of boosting the credibility of the message and may increase the likelihood

of a user taking the time to read the accompanying text. One of the most compelling

examples of this usage of a photograph depicting an activist of social equality on the

homepage of a disguised hate site can be found on www.martinlutherking.org. This web

site is one of the most disturbing included in the list of hate sites disguised as educational, research and or news sites because of the tactics employed. Prominently displayed in the center of the homepage is a photograph of Dr. King accompanied by other images that include him speaking and working with captions that seem to support a positive message, but this is not the true intent of the site. Rather, the site is demeaning and accuses the activist of cheating and underhandedness. The photos included on this specific site do not allow for the immediate recognition of the negative message embodied on the site. A number of other disguised sites use photographs in the same manner as the Martin Luther King site. Conversely, blatant hate sites seem to use photographs depicting activists for social equality in a much different manner.

On blatant hate sites, as previously stated, 8.57% of the photographs observed depicted an activist for social equality. Blatant hate sites seem to use this category of photographs with the intention of criticizing and demeaning the reputation of the activist and do not include the image to fool or mislead users as to the intention of the message. For example, one blatant hate site, www.nsdap.biz, depicts photos of famous World leaders such as President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair and digitally manipulates the image to make the photo look comical and the person depicted in the photo look silly and ridiculous. As can be seen by this category of photographs, blatant hate sites and disguised hate sites seem to use images to disseminate two very different impressions of the message, those that are upfront and obvious about the inclusion of the image as seen in blatant sites, and those that attempt to misinform users of the true intention of the message such as those included in the disguised list.

The photograph category "historical scenes" is also used differently by blatant versus disguised hate sites. The first major difference in the use of photographs depicting historical scenes between blatant and disguised sites is the frequency with which this type of photograph appears on the homepage of each category of sites. On hate sites disguised as educational, research and/or news resources, photographs depicting historical scenes were observed as 14.29% of the photographs coded. This percentage is most likely a result of the high amount of revisionist web sites included in the category of disguised sites. The majority of the historical scenes depicted on the homepages of disguised sites included images of social protests and war scenes that do not include holocaust depictions because of the separate category included for such images. The inclusion of historical scenes on blatant hate sites depicted much different scenes.

Of all the photographs included on the homepages of blatant hate sites, 5.71% depicted historical scenes. In contrast to the disguised sites, the historical scenes on blatant sites most often depicted racist rallies and protests rather than mainstream social and political protests. In addition to the racist rallies and protests depicted on the homepages of blatant sites, many of the photographs depict war scenes that concentrate on the German army. These depictions encompass members of the Third Reich standing in a "heil Hitler" stance, with confidence and stature. The historical scene photographs used on the homepages of the blatant sites seems to further the ideology on the hate site rather than include the photo for misleading purposes. This usage technique is in sharp contrast to those photos found on the disguised homepages. Because of the strong belief and support of the Holocaust by a majority of hate groups, two separate categories were included to reflect this ongoing dedication to the actions taken during the Holocaust.

The category "manipulated Holocaust photos" was included because of the large number of revisionist sites and the tendency by hate groups to deny the accuracy of the Holocaust. Surprisingly, there were no Holocaust photos that were obviously manipulated on the homepages of the disguised sites. Although there may have been some manipulated Holocaust photos, there were none that was readily identifiable therefore, none was coded. Blatant sites, in contrast, did include one obviously manipulated Holocaust photo which accounted for 1.43% of all photos coded. The photo, contained on the web site http://members.odinsrage.com/racistirc which is a manipulated Holocaust depiction, is extremely offensive to the memory of the Holocaust. In the image, the infamous concentration camp Auschwitz is depicted with a cartoon character positioned at the entrance and the captions read "Auschwitz, fun for the whole family" and "Gas a Jew, only 5 Euros." This depiction was obviously a manipulation of a true holocaust photo and the manipulation resulted in a grossly distasteful representation. The attempt to make a joke out of such a heinous tragedy is not only abhorrent; it also makes the ideology of the group obvious. The final category, "accurate Holocaust photos" also resulted in surprising findings.

Because of the large number of revisionist web sites included in the disguised category, it was expected that a high percentage of accurate Holocaust photos would be found on the homepages of disguised web sites, but that was not the case. Of all the photographs observed on the homepages of disguised Web sites, only 1.43% contained accurate Holocaust photos. Although this result is somewhat surprising, the lack of accurate Holocaust photos may be the result of a belief that including photos of the horror that occurred m ight undermine the arguments being set forth on the sites.

As can be seen from the investigation of the photographs used on disguised and blatant hate sites, many of the same categories are included, but the ways in which they are used differ greatly. The distributions of percentages across the different categories of photographs are similar for the blatant and the disguised web sites as can be seen in Table 2. Upon analyzing the results of the findings, it is clear that although the same categories of photographs are on both the blatant and disguised web sites, the ways in which they are used differentiate and define the two types of groups.

Cartoon graphics are included in the visual symbolism category of the coding and a wide discrepancy was found between the use of cartoon graphics on the blatant hate sites and hate sites disguised as educational, research and/or news sites. An overwhelming majority of blatant hate sites, 96%, included a cartoon graphic on the homepage. The high percentage of cartoon graphics on the homepages of blatant hate sites is conducive with the overall look and feel of the sites. Disguised hate sites do not employ the use of cartoon graphics on the homepage at such a high rate, but the percentage is well over half with 62% of homepages displaying a cartoon graphic on the site. This category, like the photograph category, fails to show the differences in the way the cartoon graphics are used on the blatant homepages versus the disguised homepages.

Cartoon graphics on blatant homepages are generally placed high within the frame and more prominent in size as compared with the cartoon graphics on disguised homepages. Disguised homepages placed the cartoon graphics in the bottom section of the site and were much smaller in size. Although this finding is not an overwhelming descriptor of the differences between blatant and disguised hate sites, an element very similar to cartoon graphics, web banners, showed the differences with greater clarity.

Web banners are often included on web sites to help direct users to other sites with similar beliefs and ideals, and this research uncovered some interesting findings on how Web banners are used by blatant as compared with disguised hate sites. There was a vast difference between the percentages of web banners displayed on the homepages of blatant homepages as compared with those placed on the homepages of disguised hate sites. Web banners were observed on 72% of blatant hate sites, while only 22% of disguised homepages included this element on the site. The web banners present on blatant homepages created a network of connected sites that allows a user to easily navigate from one hate site to another by using a direct route. This allows users with similar ideals and beliefs to find a plethora of like-minded sites while disguised sites do not make this connection so obvious by supplying web banners on the homepage. The majority of the disguised homepages did not advertise for or show any association with other hate sites. This lack of association to other hate sites may be an attempt by creators to hide the true intent of the message and mislead users to the discourse included on the site.

As can be seen from the differences in the visual symbolism used on blatant versus disguised homepages, the only overwhelming finding is in the area of racist symbols. Because racist symbols were used as a main determinant of whether the sites were classified as blatant or disguised this finding is not surprising nor is it a category that can clearly define the differences in any measurable way. The results found in the other areas fail to bring separate and distinct differences to light based on the criteria measured, but some interesting and important findings have emerged. The most compelling differences discovered are in the ways in which the items are used on the

homepage. The mere absence or presence of any item fails to explain the impression

the item is meant to have on the user of the site. Further research into the ways in which

the items are employed in the frame of the homepage is needed in order to define the

significance of the differences. The other areas investigated did uncover more definitive

differences in the methods employed by the blatant versus disguised hate sites.

Visual Structure

In order to determine the differences in the visual structure of the web sites

investigated five areas were coded to better define the elements employed by both blatant

sites and disguised sites. The first of the five areas is the background color of the Web

pages coded for this research. The background color of a web page is a very important

element to determine the overall feeling of a homepage and this was the first element

coded in the area of visual structure. Of the eight possible options for background color,

both the blatant and disguised homepage showed a skewed distribution.

The background color observed on the homepages of disguised sites was

unevenly distributed with an overwhelming percentage being classified as having a white

background. Of all the disguised homepages investigated, 54% were observed as using

white as the primary background color. This finding is not surprising considering the fact

that visual symbolism is largely downplayed and the approach taken by a majority of the

web sites observed seemed to favor simplicity in order to disguise the message. A white

background supports the need for the user to read the text in order to decipher the intent

of the message because visual cues are intentionally absent from the frame and

background color is an element of this visual cue. This finding is in sharp contrast to hate

sites that use blatant tactics. The research found that only 18% of all blatant homepages

investigated utilized white as a background color. This finding supports the assertion

that blatant hate sites employ a more visually telling color that is conducive with the

overall message being communicated by the web site.

The second most frequently employed background color by disguised hate sites is

black which accounts for 14% of all the homepages observed. This finding is in sharp

contrast to the percentage of blatant hate sites using a black background. The research

reveals that 32% of the pages investigated used this color. The black background used on

the homepages of blatant hate sites is congruent with the overall message being

communicated through the visual elements as well as the textual messages. Because of

the obvious message being relayed by blatant homepages, the black background serves to

further communicate the dark and extremist message being conveyed. Although the black

background encompasses the highest percentage of blatant homepages, a second category

is running a close second.

The category of a patterned background is the second most frequently occurring

background observed on blatant homepages. Representing 30% of all of the blatant

homepages coded, patterned background is the most graphic background used. The

majority of the patterned backgrounds used on the homepages of blatant sites depicted a

hate symbol pattern such as a swastika-based background. The use of a patterned

background on the blatant hate sites contributed to the complete message by representing

an item that further identifies the ideas communicated on the Web site. The disguised

hate sites used this option to a far lesser degree with only 8% displaying a patterned

background. Of the disguised sites that depicted a patterned background, there were no

occurrences of the pattern involving any discernable symbol or picture.

The remaining categories of background colors did not show any substantial results in the disguised or the blatant Web sites. Two categories, "yellow' and "other," showed no results for the blatant web sites. Conversely, disguised hate sites depicted at least one of each of the varieties of background color with the overwhelming majority classified as having a white background. In addition to the background color of a Web site, the text and graphic intensity on the homepage of a site is a very important element to understanding the structure of the site and the differences between blatant and disguised hate sites.

The text and graphic intensity on the homepages of both blatant and disguised hate sites was measured by using a Likert Scale with the category "all text" classified in the number one position and "all graphics" classified in the number seven position. This category shows a significant difference in the distribution between the blatant and disguised hate sites. The first echelon in the Likert scale is classified as a homepage that encompasses all text with no graphics present. This research classifies all of the elements in the visual symbols as constituting a graphic that includes racist symbols, photographs, cartoon graphics and Web banners. Using this definition of graphics, 18% of disguised homepages depicted no graphics on the homepage. This finding supports the idea that disguised hate sites may attempt to mislead users by omitting graphical cues about the ideals embodied on the site. In sharp contrast to this finding on disguised sites, there were no observed blatant sites that fell into this category. There was at a minimum one graphical element on the homepage of every blatant hate site studied, and the vast majority of those clearly identify the extremist ideologies supported by the creators of the sites.

The second level of the Likert scale, "majority text" is characteristic of the largest number of disguised web sites with 40% of the homepages of disguised sites being classified in this category. With only one or two graphics on the homepage in this classification, a user would still be required to read the text carefully to decipher the exact ideology of the creators of the site. The results of blatant web sites in this category amount to only 10% of the total homepages investigated for this research. Because only 10% of the blatant hate sites are included in this category, 90% of the sites investigated contain more than two graphical elements.

The third echelon of the Likert scale is characterized as "largely text," and disguised and blatant hate sites show a 10% difference in the results. Of all the blatant hate sites included in this study, 32% are classified as demonstrating largely text on the homepages. This result combined with the previous 10% containing majority text means that 42% of all the blatant sites included in the study are characterized as having more text than graphics on the homepage. This finding is in sharp contrast to disguised homepages which have 22% of the homepages classified as being largely text. The first three echelons of the Likert scale account for 80% of all disguised homepages. This statistic is very important because of the large discrepancy between disguised and blatant homepages with five or fewer graphical elements depicted on the homepage. The middle category, "balanced text and graphics" encompasses the largest number of blatant hate sites.

The research observed that 34% of all homepages investigated in the blatant category are classified as including balanced text and graphics. Disguised hate sites, by contrast, constitute about half of the number of the blatant sites in this category, with only

18% being classified as balanced text and graphics. The remaining two categories, largely graphics and majority graphics, account for 8% and 16% of blatant homepages respectively. This suggests a major difference in the ways in which the structures of disguised and blatant hate sites differ in the area of structure. Through the use of graphics, blatant hate sites seem to make the ideology known to the user through culturally recognizable symbols and signs. The text and graphic intensity on the homepage is extremely important in understanding the visual structure difference between blatant and disguised hate sites, and this, combined with the remaining elements included in the broad category of visual structure, will help to define the differences more clearly.

The size of the font used on the homepage of a Web site may have a strong impact on the success of the message that is being conveyed. Homepages that were classified as hate sites disguised as educational, news and/or research sites overwhelmingly employed a smaller font size. It was found that 94% of the disguised homepages included in this study used a font size of 12-16 point or less. This supports the assumption that the visual structure of a site is just as important as the visual symbolism and text in order to disseminate the total message; disguised or blatant.

In sharp contrast to the findings of the disguised sites, the blatant sites were more equally distributed between the two categories. With only 58% of the blatant hate sites being classified as encompassing a font size of 12-16 point or less, there is a strong discrepancy between the blatant and disguised sites. The reason for the large discrepancy between the two findings may be a result of the emphasis placed on the need for the structure to support the message. Blatant hate sites use language and symbolism to make

the message obvious, whereas disguised sites are attempting to mislead the user and all elements of the site should support this attempt. A large and outrageous font on the homepage of a disguised site may serve to discredit the message rather than mislead the user. One of the most important visual structure elements examined in this project is the remediated structure employed on the homepage of the site.

The categories included in the remediated web site structure classification are not mutually exclusive which is why the "combination of two or more" and "other" categories were included. Both the blatant and disguised hate sites showed an uneven distribution although in different categories. This result was expected because of the differences in the presentation of information on the two categories of sites.

The hate sites disguised as educational, news and/or academic sites show a large distribution in two out the eight possible categories. With 60% of the sites being classified as using a newspaper or research/academic paper structure, it is assumed that disguised sites are intentionally employing a structure used by reputable sites to further the dissemination of misinformation. Because the "combination" and "other" categories only represented 4% of the sites investigated, it seems that these hate sites chose a structure and stringently adhered to all elements to reinforce the reputability of the message. The next highest occurrence of remediation style is classified as emulating a book with 14% of disguised sites employing this structure on the homepage. Because the majority of disguised hate sites are classified as newspaper, research/academic paper or book, the assumption is supported that these groups are attempting to misinform users by using reputable structures for the dissemination of misinformation. As the results indicate, this was not such a major priority for blatant hate sites.

Although the blatant sites also showed an uneven distribution, the categories in which the sites were concentrated differed greatly from the disguised hate sites. In contrast to the disguised sites, a large amount of sites were classified in the "video game" and "television/video" categories with 52% of the sites classified as one of these categories. This finding suggests that the designers of blatant hate sites are using more interactivity and animation in the delivery of the message, and this may be because the message does not have to be disguised. The ability to directly relay the message to the user may give the designers more freedom to use graphic displays and streaming video. The content of the graphics and video on a large number of blatant hate sites would instantly alert a user to the ideology being communicated on the site. Disguised hate sites seem to be more covert in the presentation and must eliminate easily identifiable graphics.

Surprisingly, the next most frequently used structure by blatant hate sites was classified as "newspaper" with 16% using this structure. Although unexpected, this finding suggests that the structure chosen by blatant hate sites is not dictated by the need to deceive; rather, the choice of structure may be one based purely on aesthetics. This assumption may be supported by the number of sites classified in the "other" and "combination of two or more" categories because of the freedom that the creators take when designing the homepage of a blatant site.

When examining the differences between the remediated structures used on disguised hate sites versus blatant hate sites some assumptions may be supported. First and foremost, the importance of the structure used to reinforce the purpose of the message differs greatly when examining disguised sites as opposed to blatant hate sites.

With 74% of the disguised hate sites using a structure traditionally employed by reputable sources such as newspaper, colleges and academic search engines, it seems that high importance is placed on the remediated structure of the site in order to further the ruse. Flashing swastikas and streaming video of a lynching would be sure to tip off even the most naive Web server to the kind of ideology being supported by the site. Therefore, the elimination of graphics and video makes identification of ideology on the home page of a disguised hate much more difficult. The structure employed on blatant hate sites does not seem to play such a crucial role.

Blatant hate sites do not seem to be as concerned with legitimizing their message for Internet users because the goal does not seem to be misinformation. Rather, it seems the purpose of these sites is to communicate beliefs to people who already subscribe to the ideology. For a complete listing of remediation results see Table #6 . All other findings from this research support this assumption. The ways in which all of the results support one another will be examined at the end of this discussion. The next category, animated movement of text and graphics, supports the findings from the remediation category.

The finding of 60% of blatant hate sites utilizing animated movement of text and/or graphics on the homepage supports and is closely associated with the 52% of blatant sites classified as "video/television" and "video game". The remaining percentage of difference may be a result of the fact that streaming text, which is included in this category, would not be enough to classify the homepage as remediating video/television or a video game. The association is not as apparent when examining the disguised Web site findings.

With 40% of disguised hate sites classified as using animated movement of text and/or graphics on the homepage and only 12% classified as television/video and video game remediated structure, the remaining sites classified as having animated movement may be a result of animated text rather than graphics. On a number of homepages, advertisements and links on the homepage were the animated elements which may account for the large discrepancy between the two findings. With the advertisements and links accounting for some of the animation found on the homepages of disguised sites, the remaining sites classified as having animation may be attributed to different reasons. Because the only requirement of classification as displaying animation on the homepage of a disguised site was any movement, which may result in an inflated number being classified as showing animation. Although a great deal of information can be amassed by studying the visual symbols and structure, the picture would not be complete without an investigation of the terminology used on the Web sites.

Extremist Language

Because of the large amount of terms that could be construed as racist and/or extremist language, the scope was narrowed to include 29 terms that are the most frequently used by hate groups. Although there is not a large discrepancy between the number of terms that appear on disguised versus blatant hate sites with 27 and 28 out of the possible 29 terms respectively appearing on at least one of the homepages examined, the frequency with which the terms were used and the context in which they appear differ greatly.

As can be seen from the results of the visual symbolism and structural elements investigated, disguised hate sites seem to rely heavily on the presentation of a web site to

mislead and misinform Web surfers. When examining the terminology used on disguised sites, the hate groups seem to use similar terminology used on blatant sites but with less frequency and in different contexts. The use of extremist terminology on the homepages of disguised sights may not be enough to alert even the most skilled Web user of the ideology being communicated on the homepages.

Of the 27 terms found on the homepages of disguised sites, 13 of the terms were found on only one or two of the homepages which may serve to inflate the findings of the extremist terminology found. Conversely, of the blatant sites investigated, only six terms were found to appear on only one or two homepages. This finding suggests that disguised sites use extremist language less frequently than the raw data suggests and an examination of the words most recurrently found on the homepages is more descriptive of the tactics employed.

The most frequently used term on the homepages of disguised hate sites, "Jews" is found on more than half of the sites investigated. This term alone may not alert a Web user to the ideology of the site, but a surfer should question why a Web site would not use the more politically correct term of Jewish. Although the term "Jews" may not be enough to alert a user to the ideology of a site, this term was often coupled with other terms on the list which, as a group, may be more descriptive of the message being disseminated. The terms "revisionism," "Zion (ZOG)" and "Holocaust" were frequently found on the same homepages as "Jews."

The presence of all of these terms on the homepage of a disguised site may be more than enough to alert an educated web user to the message being disseminated, but when cloaked with a visual structure that seems reputable a naïve user may be easily

persuaded. This group of the most frequently appearing terms also supports the assumption that a vast amount of the disguised hate sites disseminate a revisionist ideology. Many of the revisionist sites attempted to support the message with misrepresentation of facts and the rewriting of history by including messages from highly educated people who support the revisionist message. Dr. Arthur Butz, a professor in academia, is often sited and quoted in the message as an attempt at credibility. Although the words in this group of terms may serve as an alarm at the ideology of a Web site, the derogatory nature of the words may not be immediately obvious.

Derogatory terms usually serve to inflame and offend people who do not agree with the ideology and if used on a disguised hate site with the intention of misinforming, the user may then understand that the site is not reputable. As with all other areas investigated, it seems that disguised hate sites temper the terminology used to further the subterfuge on the user by abstaining from using derogatory terms. The two terms that challenge this assertion are "Jews" and "Blacks".

The term "Blacks" was found to be present on 20% of the disguised hate sites investigated and this term, like "Jews", may be cause for alarm to an unsuspecting Web surfer. By using the term "Blacks," instead of African Americans, a reader may be suspicious of the site, but this is not something that can assumed unless the context in which the term is used is examined. The term "Blacks" may be deemed derogatory in nature but it is not as offensive as the term "nigger." For instance, by using the former term instead of the latter, the terminology seems less likely to incite anger and disagreement. In addition to the careful selection of terminology on disguised hate sites, other tactics are employed in an attempt at gaining credibility of the audience.

The term "hate" was used on many of the disguised hate sites investigated, but in a much different context than on blatant hate sites. While investigating the messages on blatant sites versus those on disguised hate sites, a trend surfaced in which blatant sites tended to project hate on other groups and supply facts to support the beliefs. Disguised hate sites, in contrast, seem to list people who hate the White Aryan race and suggest how to defend ourselves against oppressors. In essence, blatant hate sites seem to take an offensive position by projecting the hate on groups that are not White Aryan in heredity and religion, where as disguised sites take a defensive position by arguing that we need to protect ourselves against hate by other groups with hate. This may be the reason why the presence of the word "hate" was found so frequently on the disguised hate sites. Instead of clearly articulating the hate that the group projects on the disguised sites, it seems that they use hate as a defense against the ignorance and discrimination of others. In addition to the two tactics used by disguised hate sites previously discussed, disguised sites seem to use one additional tactic in order to mislead users.

The form of a term used on the disguised hate sites may be an intentional way that the groups further the subterfuge on a site by attempting to distract a user from the real meaning of the message. An example of this occurrence can be seen by the frequent use of the word "racialist" rather than the more readily identifiable form of "racist." The term "racialist" describes a theory rather than a personality trait, therefore removing emotion and personal conviction from the ideology. Racist, in contrast, may be used to describe a person rather than a theory making the term an adjective of a group rather than a theory. In essence, it is the presentation of the argument that differs greatly among the blatant

and disguised sites and not the ideology of the message itself. This careful message cultivation seems to be purposefully absent from blatant hate sites.

Although the number of words present on the homepages of disguised and blatant hate sites is virtually identical, the frequency with which the words are used differ greatly. The results show that 15 out of the possible 29 terms were used on the homepages of blatant hate sites at a rate of more than 20%. This finding is not surprising due to the fact that the audience of the blatant hate sites already agree with the ideology presented on the site. As previously stated, the blatant hate sites seem to project hate on other groups and the frequent use of derogatory terms supports this assumption. The term that was found on over three quarters of the blatant hate sites examined supports the assertion that these sites project hate onto other groups.

The term "White Power" is the most frequently used term found on the homepages of blatant hate sites and is descriptive of the tactics used to disseminate the racist message. In sharp contrast to the way messages are cultivated on the homepages of disguised sites, blatant sites seem to be more candid in the presentation of the information and instead of trying to persuade users to agree with the ideology the sites seem to embody a call to action. The use of such terms as "White Aryan," "resistance," and "National Socialist Movement" to such a high degree on the homepages of blatant sites supports this assertion. On disguised sites, the presence of these terms was negligible, supporting the fact that a call to action may immediately alert a user to the extremist ideology encompassed on the site.

The examination of racist terminology on blatant and disguised hate Web sites shows that a similarity exists between the terms used on the sites but a large discrepancy

between the frequency with which the terms are used and the context in which they appear within the message.

Third Level Domain Name Classification

The final area investigated, third-level domain name classification, did not yield shocking results. Of all the findings, the fact that 2% of disguised hate web sites used a ".edu" classification for the Internet address was the most significant. This classification may communicate to the user that the web site was created and maintained by an educational institution, thereby possibly lending credibility to the message. Because of the credibility that may be afforded to disguise hate sites simply because of this classification, it may be even more difficult for the extremist ideology to be identified by the audience.

This finding may support the assertion that all of the visual symbolism, structural elements, racist terminology and third-level address classifications used by disguised hate sites is strategically assembled to deceive the user and disseminate misinformation. One other finding from the third-level domain name category supports this assertion as well. The third-level domain classification ".org" was used twice as much for disguised hate sites as compared with blatant hate sites. Because the ".org" classification is most often used by reputable, credible organizations, the use of this third level domain name may serve to further deceive the audience.

As expected, the majority of the third-level domain name classifications, over 50% for both blatant and disguised hate sites, used the ".com" classification. Other than the fact that such a high percentage of the disguised hate sites used an ".org" classification and that one site was coded as using an ".edu" address name, the findings

of this section were not revealing as to the way the third-level domain name is used by the two groups but some conclusions can be drawn.

It does not seem that the third-level domain name is used as a definitive strategy by disguised sites to further the goal of deception. Rather, third-level domain name classification is a peripheral element that may used as a small piece in a larger puzzle. Although it was expected that more disguised hate sites would use an ".org" classification, this element may not have been a priority of designers because of the fact that many people can arrive at a web site by way of search engine rather than knowing the address and manually typing it in. This may be the reason that fewer than 40% of the sites were classified in this category.

Blatant hate sites did not seem to be as sensitive to the importance of the third-level domain name classification. This assumption is based on the fact that 12% of the sites coded were classified in the "other" category rather than utilizing one of the more well-known names. Because many of the more popular web hosts do not allow hate sites to be present on their servers, blatant hate sites are forced to jump around from host to host. As with the other categories, there are similarities and differences in the results of the third level domain name classifications of blatant and disguised hate sites.

Research Question Analysis

The discussion up to this point has outlined, in great detail, the differences in the communication styles of disguised and blatant hate sites. A restatement of the research questions with answers based on the findings of the research will help to bring the project full circle, and the relationship between the questions and research can be articulated. The

four broad categories investigated will be used to answer the following research questions.

The first question looks at the tactics employed by disguised hate groups and compares those findings with the tactics used by blatant hate sites. How do hate Web sites which employ traditional blatant tactics use visual symbols, visual structure, extremist terminology and third level domain name classifications differ from hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? The differences between the tactics used by disguised as compared with blatant hate sites are not always apparent from the hard data of the research but anecdotal evidence demonstrates large differences.

What are the visual symbols used on hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? The visual symbolism category includes hate and/or racist symbols, banners, graphics, photographs and streaming video that are present on the homepage and this broad category showed a large discrepancy between the blatant and disguised sites. Because the presence or absence of hate symbols on homepages was the basis for classifying a hate site as disguised or blatant, the fact that hate symbolism was largely absent from this category was expected. Blatant hate sites employed symbolism to a substantially higher degree, and the symbols were larger and more prominent in the frame.

The symbolism found on the disguised sites was small in size and intentionally designed to be covert and difficult to recognize. Symbolism is not used to by disguised hate sites to misinform users; rather a lack of symbolism seems to be the style used to mislead the audience. The symbols chosen, as well as the context in which they appear on

the homepage of the disguised sites, suggests that all of the elements of this category are placed to support the design of the overall site and support the structure employed as is shown by the findings of the next broad category,

What is the visual structure used on hate web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? To answer this question, the ways in which the textual and visual imagery are compiled on a web site to create the form of the site were examined. All of the results from this part of the investigation support the assertion that disguised sites actively use all of the elements investigated to misinform the user and seek to gain credibility for the web site among users. In addition to the symbolism and structure of the web sites investigated, this study sought to investigate if the language of the site was used in conjunction with the overall visual elements to disseminate misinformation. Blatant hate sites did not seem to place such an emphasis on the importance of the structure because it is not necessary to mislead and misinform users in order to gain adherence to the ideology. This fact was the reason for the next research question.

What is the frequency with which traditional extremist language is used in the text of hate web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? The frequency with which extremist language is used on disguised hate sites was higher than expected, but anecdotal evidence explains the reasons for this finding. It is important to note that only certain groups of words, which some people may consider to be less derogatory, were used to a much greater frequency than abhorrent racial slurs that are readily identifiable as communicating the ideology embodied the disguised sites. The racist language used on the site is important because it is one of the elements investigated

that has the ability to alert the user to the ideology being disseminated. Blatant hate sites used racist terminology to a much greater degree and were coded as employing terminology that was extremely derogatory.

What are the third-level domain names used in the URL addresses of hate Web sites that are disguised as educational, research, and/or news sites? The majority of the web sites investigated in the disguised hate site category utilized the very common, ".com" classification. The only result that bears repeating is the high percentage of sites that used an ".org" classification, which shows that this may be one way for disguised hate sites to further the ruse of credibility for the Web site. Blatant hate sites used the third-level domain name classification in a different manner than disguised hate sites because of the lack of emphasis on the need to mislead the audience. Although this study has resulted in important findings, it is not without limitations, and further research should be conducted to investigate this topic further.

Conclusion

This study was designed with the intent of establishing standards and patterns of the visual and textual methods used on hate web sites which disseminate misinformation. Although the method does not contain elements to measure the persuasiveness of the message, past research supports the idea that a message that uses academic- and techno-ethos, implicit messages and visual elements may have higher persuasiveness for the user. This project is not without limitations. Because of the fluid nature of the Internet, the Web sites studied for this project may not be functional in a month, thus limiting the ability to generalize the findings to sites outside of the study sample.

Using the Hate Watch database as the only source to compile the list of sites included in the study may have resulted in a skewed sample because the goal of the organization to protect the interests of the people against the ideology of hate groups. Hate sites that did not address recognizably racist messages may not have been included in the list of questionable web sites provided by the organization. By using only two coders for the research, there is a higher likelihood of consistent bias in the coding procedure. In order to reduce this effect, intracoder and intercoder reliability tests were conducted prior to beginning the analysis.

Although this study does have limitations, it will add to the current literature on the topic by setting more exact guidelines of the narrative and visual tactics used on both traditional hate sites as well as those disguised as educational, research and/or news sites. Because the current literature addressing the issue of hate sites on the Internet is limited, this research will help to answer questions as well as raise more.

Additional research that measures the persuasiveness and credibility of Internet hate messages that utilize the narrative and visual elements would be beneficial. The effects of exposure to hate Web sites over a long period of time should be researched to understand the power of this misinformation on the Internet.

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Appendix A

Sources Searched

Einstein Library Catalogue
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, Laura Leets, Internet rhetoric, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: All Available

Comm Abstracts
Keywords: Hate speech, internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: 1966-present

First Monday Electronic Journal
Keywords: Hate speech, internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: 1996-present

Academic Search Elite via Ebsco
Keywords: Hate speech, internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: Abstracts: 1984+ Full Text: 1990+

Anti-Defamatory League
Keywords: internet, misinformation, online, World Wide Web, persuasion, symbols, terminology
Time Frame: All Available

The Simon Wiesenthal Center
Keywords: Internet, misinformation, online, World Wide Web, persuasion, symbols, terminology
Time Frame: All Available

MasterFile Select via Ebsco
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: Abstracts: 1984+ Full Text: 1990+

Periodical Abstracts via ProQuest Direct
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: 1987+

PsycINFO via Ebsco
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: 1967+

Social Sciences Full Text part of WilsonWeb's OmniFile
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: Abstracts: 1994+ Full Text: 1995+

Google
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric, Laura Leets, Megan McDonald, cyberhate, hate rhetoric
Time Frame: All Available

Communication Abstracts
Keywords: Hate speech, Internet, misinformation, freedom of speech, propaganda, persuasion, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric
Time Frame: 1990-present

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Appendix B

Content Code Book

Visual Symbols:

1= present 0= not present

Racist Symbols

Celtic Cross
SOL (sun rune)
SS Bolts
Swastika
Iron Cross
SA
The Iron Eagle
Blood Drop
Deaths Head
Aryan Nation
Confederate Battle Flag
Three Sevens
Aryan Fist
Other

Photographs

1= Social Activists for Equality
2= Activists for White Supremacy
3= Historical Scenes
4= Current News Photos
5= Violent Scenes
6= Manipulated Holocaust Photos
7= Accurate Holocaust Photos
8= Other

Cartoon Graphics

Web Banner

Visual Structure:

Background Color
1= white 2= blue 3= black 4= red
5=yellow 6= gray 7= pattern 8= other

Visual Structure (Con't):

Text and graphics intensity on homepage
1= All Text (no graphics)
2= Majority Text (1-2 graphics)
3= Largely Text (3-5 graphics)
4= Balanced Text and Graphics
5= Largely Graphics (51-100 words)
6= Majority Graphics (50 or less words)
7= All Graphics (no text)

Font Size
1= 12-16 point 2= 17+ point

Remediated Website Structure
1= Newspaper
2= Book
3= Video/Television
4= Video Game
5= Research/Academic paper
6= Combination of two or more
7= Print Magazine
8= other

Animated Graphics/Text
1= present 0= not present

Extremist Language:

White power	Nigger
Christian Identity	Mud People
Revisionism	Kike
Jews	Zion (ZOG)
Blacks	88
White Aryan	Monkey
Resistance	Fag
The Klan	Sand nigger
Militia	Spic
Knights of the Klan	Gooks
Hitler	Border Jumpers
National Resistance	
Mien Kampf	

Internet Address Classification
1= .com 2= .org 3= .net 4= .edu
5=other

Appendix C

Celtic Cross	Outlined Othala Rune	Othala Rune	Heavy Othala Rune	Confederate Flag	White Power Fist
Nazi Low Riders	Swastika	Eagle on Swastika	SS Lightning Bolts	Deaths Head	Iron Cross
Three Sevens	Boots	Hammerskins	Hammerskin Logo	Crucified Skinhead	Skinhead Girl
Skinhead Fist	War Skins	American Front	American Nazi Party	Aryan Nations	Hammerskins
Ku Klux Klan	National Alliance	NAAWP	Crosstar	National Socialist	The Order

Posse Comitatus	Stormfront	Posse Comitatus	WCOTC	Elbow Web	AB Clover
Aryan Brotherhood	Black Guerilla	Rock Against Communism	The five percenters	skrewdriver	Sturmabteilung
Fourth Reich	Phineas Priest	Wolfsangel	Black Panthers	Peckerwood	Swastika Variant
Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant
Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Swastika Variant	Sun Wheel	Thor's Hammer

Table 1

Racist Symbolism Present on Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Racist Symbols	Disguised Websites		Blatant Websites	
	Percent of Home Pages	Percent of Total Symbols	Percent of Home Pages	Percent of Total Symbols
Celtic Cross	0%	0.0%	46%	13.45%
Outlined Othala Rune	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Othala Rune	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Heavy Othala Rune	0%	0.0%	8%	2.34%
Confederate Flag	4%	25.0%	26%	7.60%
White Power Fist	0%	0.0%	2%	0.58%
Nazi Low Riders	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika	2%	12.5%	50%	14.62%
Eagle on Swastika	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
SS Lightening Bolts	0%	0.0%	14%	4.10%
Deaths Head	0%	0.0%	24%	7.02%
Iron Cross	2%	12.5%	24%	7.02%
Three Sevens	0%	0.0%	6%	1.75%
Boots	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Hammerskins 1	0%	0.0%	2%	0.58%
Hammerskin Logo	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Crucified Skinhead	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Skinhead Girl	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Skinhead Fist	0%	0.0%	2%	0.58%
War Skins	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
American Front	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
American Nazi Party	0%	0.0%	2%	0.58%
Aryan Nations	0%	0.0%	18%	5.26%
Hammerskins 2	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Ku Klux Klan	0%	0.0%	24%	7.02%
National Alliance	0%	0.0%	6%	1.75%
NAAWP	2%	12.5%	0%	0.00%
Crosstar	2%	12.5%	0%	0.00%
Iron Eagle	0%	0.0%	20%	5.85%
The Order	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Posse Comitatus 1	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Stormfront	0%	0.0%	8%	2.34%
Posse Comitatus 2	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
WCOTC	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Elbow Web	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
AB Clover	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Aryan Brotherhood	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Black Guerilla	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%

Rock Against Communism	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
The Five Percenters	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Skrewdriver	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Sturmabteilung	0%	0.0%	2%	0.58%
Fourth Reich	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Phineas Priest	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Wolsangel	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Swastika Varient 1	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 2	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Swastika Varient 3	0%	0.0%	8%	2.34%
Swastika Varient 4	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 5	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 6	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 7	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 8	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 9	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 10	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Swastika Varient 11	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Sun Wheel	0%	0.0%	4%	1.17%
Thor's Hammer	0%	0.0%	0%	0.00%
Other	4%	25%	20%	5.85%

Table 2

Photographs Present on Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Photograph Type	Percent of Disguised Websites	Percent of Blatant Websites
Social Activists for Equality	10.00%	8.57%
Activists for White Supremacy	28.57%	41.43%
Historical Scenes	14.29%	5.71%
Current News Photos	15.71%	5.71%
Violent Scenes	4.29%	10.00%
Manipulated Holocaust Photos	0.00%	1.43%
Accurate Holocaust Photos	1.43%	0.00%
Other	25.71%	27.14%
No Photographs Present on Site	42.00%	46.00%

Table 3

Background Color Used on Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Background Color	Percent of Disguised Websites	Percent of Blatant Websites
White	54%	18%
Blue	6%	2%
Black	14%	32%
Red	2%	6%
Yellow	4%	0%
Gray	4%	12%
Pattern	8%	30%
Other	8%	0%

Table 4

Text/Graphic Intensity on the Homepages of Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Text/Graphic Intensity	Percent of Disguised Websites	Percent of Blatant Website
All Text	18%	0%
Majority Text	40%	10%
Largely Text	22%	32%
Balanced Text and Graphics	18%	34%
Largely Graphics	2%	8%
Majority Graphics	0%	16%
All Graphics	0%	0%

Table 5

Font Size Used on Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Font Size	Percent of Disguised Websites	Percent of Blatant Websites
12-16 Point	94%	58%
17+ Point	6%	42%

Table 6

Remediated Web site Structure Present on Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Remediated Website Structure	Percent of Disguised Websites	Percent of Blatant Websites
Newspaper	38%	16%
Book	14%	4%
Video/Television	10%	18%
Video Game	2%	34%
Research/Academic Paper	22%	6%
Combination of Two or More	4%	4%
Print Magazine	6%	12%
Other	4%	6%

Table 7

Extremist Language Present on Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Extremist Language	Disguised Websites		Blatant Websites	
	Percent of Home Pages	Percent of Total Terms	Percent of Homepages	Percent of Total Terms
White Power	8%	2.23%	76%	11.9%
Christian Identity	4%	1.12%	14%	2.2%
Revisionism	32%	8.94%	4%	0.6
Jews	52%	1.45%	56%	8.8%
Blacks	20%	5.59%	20%	3.1%
White Aryan	6%	1.68%	60%	9.4%
Resistance	4%	1.12%	10%	1.6%
The Klan	2%	0.56%	26%	4.1%
Militia	6%	1.68%	10%	1.6%
Knights of the Klan	0%	0.00%	20%	3.1%
Hitler	8%	2.23%	20%	3.1%
National Resistance	10%	2.79%	20%	3.1%
Mien Kampf	2%	0.56%	10%	1.6%
14 Words	2%	0.56%	12%	1.9%
National Socialist	14%	3.91%	44%	6.9%
Nigger	4%	1.12%	10%	1.6%
Mud People	2%	0.56%	6%	0.9%
Kike	2%	0.56%	2%	0.3%
Zion (ZOG)	38%	10.61%	28%	4.4%
88	4%	1.12%	26%	3.8%
Monkey	2%	0.56%	2%	0.3%
Homosexual Language	12%	3.35%	14%	2.2%
Spic	4%	1.12%	2%	0.3%
Gooks	2%	1.12%	2%	0.3%
Border Jumpers	2%	0.56%	4%	0.6%
Holocaust	40%	11.17%	22%	3.4%
Hate	42%	11.73%	56%	8.8%
Racialist	32%	8.94%	64%	10.0%
Sand Nigger	0%	0.00%	0%	0.0%

Table 8

Third Level Domain Name Classification of Disguised and Blatant Hate Sites

Third Level Domain Name	Percent of Disguised Websites	Percent of Blatant Websites
.com	54%	58%
.org	32%	18%
.net	8%	12%
.edu	2%	0%
Other	4%	12%

Figure 1

Distribution of Third Level Domain Name Classification: Disguised Hate Sites

Third Level Domain Name: Disguised Websites

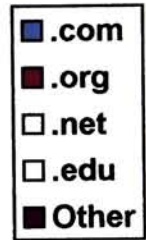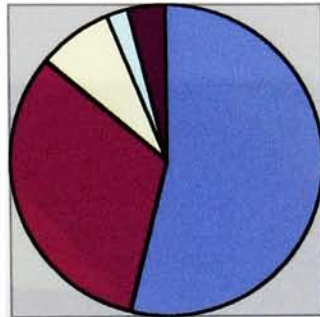■ .com
■ .org
□ .net
□ .edu
■ Other

Figure 2

Distribution of Third Level Domain Name Classification: Blatant Hate Sites

Third Level Domain Names: Blatant Websites