Collaboratory Against Hate Annual Report, March 2021-April 2022

Submitted by Kathleen Blee and Lorrie Cranor, CAH Co-Directors

Creating the CAH Structure

Website created: https://www.collabagainsthate.org/
- Members page and search directory
- Donation button
- Research page and interactive visualization maps
- Events
- Remembrance page for October 27, 2018

CAH Steering Committee established, with members from CMU, Pitt, Rand, and the Eradicate Hate Summit: https://www.collabagainsthate.org/about/team#steering

Social media accounts created:
- Twitter https://twitter.com/LabAgainstHate
- YouTube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCp3JGZbwozFbReGjXfWyGOw

Two mailing lists were created for members and external parties:
- Mailing List Subscribers (393)
- External Mailing List (38)

Newsletters are being created and distributed via our mailing lists: 10 issues

We hosted a total of six seminar sessions:
- 30 Lightning Talks from CAH members highlighting their research
- RAND presented *A Review of Public Data about Terrorism and Targeted Violence to Meet US Department of Homeland Security Mission Needed*
- Kathleen Blee and William Carter (Pitt) presented on *Expert Report on the Federal Case Against Leaders Involved with events in Charlottesville during August 2017*
- Heidi Beirich (Co-Founder and Chief Strategist for the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism) presented on *The Global White Supremacist Landscape: Challenges and Solutions*
- Michael Colaresi (Pitt) presented *Understanding the uses and abuses of machine learning in democratic systems*
- Kathleen Carley (CMU) presented on *The Nexus of Harm*

CAH Research Projects Underway

Working Group 1: Understanding and Countering Hate through Computational Analysis

- ○ Total Members (30)
  - ■ CMU (12)
  - ■ PITT (17)
  - ■ Others (1)

Working Group 2: Educational Interventions for Youth
- ○ Total Members (40)
  - ■ CMU (12)
  - ■ PITT (19)
  - ■ Other (9)

We have chosen 2 WG2 projects to seed fund:
- ○ Preventing Viral Racism on TikTok
- ○ Next Gen Project: Educational Intervention and Web-Based Game for Youth

Working Group 3: Extremism and Hate-motivated Violence among Active Duty Military, Veterans, and Civilians
- ○ Total Members (22)
  - ■ CMU (6)
  - ■ PITT (14)
  - ■ Other (2)

ADL (Anti-Defamation League) requested that CAH researchers assist with the following projects, each of which is underway:

- ● *Uncovering Communications Between Extremists and Government Officials* (3 members) - In this research project, we will be learning the extent and substance of communications between known extremists and extremist groups and Federal, state and local elected and government officials. ADL would like to use Freedom of Information requests and other mechanisms to gather any communications between officials and leaders of domestic extremist groups/movements. This nonpartisan study will request information from officials of both parties looking for associations with extremists across the ideological spectrum.
- ● *How International Actors Influence and Promote Extremism in the U.S.* (4 members) - While the role of foreign governments and overseas "troll farms" and bots in spreading disinformation is well-documented, less so is the role they play in influencing and propagating extremist narratives online. This project will involve research to help understand the extent to which malicious foreign actors may be driving the spread and mutation of domestic extremist ideologies. We would like to uncover the roots of various extremist phrases, hashtags and concepts to determine whether they are originating overseas, and whether international actors are driving the uptake of these narratives in the United States.
- ● *Improved Monitoring of Incels* (5 members) - Incel forums specifically incels.is, also found at incels.co – are a breeding ground for misogyny and violent fantasies, generally

targeting women but also involving self-harm. Unfortunately, these forums are resistant to most search functions. To understand and quantify the threat posed by incels and male supremacists, who tend to congregate on Pick Up Artist or Men Going Their Own Way/Men's Rights pages/forums, a powerful and accurate search function is critical. In this project, we will work to develop an intelligent search mechanism that would enhance and empower its ability to monitor incel spaces and disrupt threats and violent plots.

● *The Impact on Media on Shaping and Spreading Extremist Ideas* (2 members) - A research project that will provide a deep dive on media outlets to quantitatively and qualitatively track how they contribute to the spread of extremist ideas. This project will identify extremist ideas/ideologies promoted by media outlets, trace the origins of extremist-inspired ideas and rhetoric, evaluate how the media repackage and promote these ideas, uncover how extremists react to and exploit such rhetoric, and answer other questions.

Developing Future Research Projects

Hired 2 Postdocs for a term of two years
● Hana Habib is conducting research with her mentor, Dr. Geoff Kaufman in the Human Computer Interaction Institute at CMU, exploring how interventions informed by theoretical frameworks from the field of social psychology can be applied to combat online hate, such as anti-Muslim and other bigoted rhetoric on social media.
● Michael Yoder is conducting research with his mentor, Professor Kathleen Carley in the Institute for Software Research at CMU, that involves building victim-centered datasets of hate speech, developing computational approaches that incorporate social theory and context to better identify hate speech, and applying these approaches in real-world contexts.
● The postdocs have conducted interviews with 15 practitioners from non-profit organizations and tech companies who work on initiatives addressing hate to orient CAH researchers toward open research challenges in this space. They have identified broad research themes related to challenges faced by these organizations in addressing extremist hate and compiled a cross-disciplinary list of specific research projects that arose from these interviews. In communicating these research ideas, they hope to spur conversation and collaboration among CAH researchers and lead to contributions with translational impact in combating extremist hate.

Connected members to Facebook to help with FORT Pages API (6 members)

Organized meeting for CAH researchers and researchers at the Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab (PERIL) at American University and the Veteran's Administration at UCSF.

Lorrie Cranor met with the VP in the Meta policy office in Washington, DC in early April to discuss potential funding and collaboration. They expressed some interest in both, including

providing data on public posts that were removed for violating Meta policies related to hate. We will be following up in the coming weeks.

Disseminating Research

2021 Eradicate Hate Summit
- Kathleen Blee and Lorrie Cranor served on the executive steering committee
- Lorrie Cranor was a judge for the venture competition
- Kathleen Blee presented research talks at five panels
- CAH hosted a dinner reception with members of the Collaboratory and speakers at the conference. Total in attendance (50 members)
- Total CAH Members who appeared on panels (6 members)
- Total research posters presented at conference by CAH members (11 members)

Fundraising Efforts

- Biweekly meeting with our CMU and Pitt fundraising teams
- Received small grants from New Light and Dor Hadash Congregations, which were attacked in the TOL synagogue shooting
- The Co-Directors have had multiple meetings have been held with individuals and representatives from local and national foundations to discuss the mission of the CAH and solicit philanthropic support
- Will receive $600k over 3 years from the Shapira and Beacon foundations