

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 October 2017 09:20
To: Louise Edwards; Ben Wilkinson; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request

[REDACTED]

K

From: Louise Edwards
Sent: 24 October 2017 07:29
To: Ben Wilkinson; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request

Hi

[REDACTED]

Louise

From: Ben Wilkinson
Sent: 23 October 2017 17:43
To: [REDACTED] Louise Edwards
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 October 2017 17:18
To: Louise Edwards; Ben Wilkinson
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request

Sorry, realised I never followed this up earlier in terms of a line on Twitter bots. Claire is also now after a line on this for a meeting on Thursday so this might be a good place to start for that as well. The allegation is that a study found 13,000 automated Twitter accounts (bots) that tweeted messages in support of the leave campaigns and shared/retweeted eachother. The effect was to a) create a false sense of lots of people discussing and sharing these messages and b) it pushed up these messages on Twitter's trending list, meaning more real people were likely to see the messages. This feeds in to concerns raised about 'dark' things going on without scrutiny or regulation. I have a suggested (fairly long) line below as a starting point. I know Bob is leaning away from saying anything about whether we've received/not received evidence of things like this.

An Electoral Commission spokesperson said:

"The Commission is the regulator of political and campaign finance, and our regulatory remit is around the funding of and spending by parties, non-party campaigners and referendum campaigners. We do not regulate the contents of campaign adverts, but whether those placing the adverts have complied with the rules.

"Social media provides increased scale, speed and specificity of targeting compared with traditional campaigning methods, though the same rules still apply. Spending limits and rules on reporting spending and donations all apply to campaigners, parties and individuals if they engage in regulated campaigning around elections and referenda.

"Anyone who believes they have evidence suggesting impropriety in campaign funding should provide it to the Commission and the police immediately."

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 October 2017 13:37
To: Louise Edwards; Ben Wilkinson
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request
Reuters have just published their article so this may now all be academic;
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-interference/uk-says-its-democracy-is-secure-after-suggestion-of-foreign-meddling-in-brexit-idUSKBN1CS19U>
However, if we do think we should have a line on twitter bots it would be good to go ahead and agree one anyway.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 October 2017 13:16
To: Louise Edwards
Cc: [REDACTED] Ben Wilkinson
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request

Thanks Louise.

I'm unfortunately going home sick, but [REDACTED] has (exceedingly) kindly offered to take over on this. I've put the following together. Would you mind chatting with Cary about seeing the Twitter bot article? And just in case – have a try with the link again - https://www.buzzfeed.com/jamesball/a-suspected-network-of-13000-twitter-bots-pumped-out-pro?utm_term=.bpZWYyZJ#.ixNn8YL6

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Twitter bots

The journalist also asked about BuzzFeed’s [article](#) on Twitter bots. I know that last week we prepared a statement* referring to potential foreign interference of this nature but as the journalist has not enquired specifically about foreign interference I think it best to not use that line. In May, Claire’s [letter to the Guardian regarding social media](#) regulation was published – could we use this as info to send to the journalist about our remit?

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: Louise Edwards
Sent: 23 October 2017 12:05
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Journo regulation request

[REDACTED]

Louise

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 October 2017 10:52
To: Louise Edwards
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Journo regulation request

Hi Louise,

[illegible]

Twitter bots

The journalist also asked about BuzzFeed's [article](#) on Twitter bots. I know that last week we prepared a statement* referring to potential foreign interference of this nature but as the journalist has not enquired specifically about foreign interference I think it best to not use that line. In May, Claire's [letter to the Guardian](#)

[regarding social media](#) regulation was published – could we use this as info to send to the journalist about our remit?

I can't open links at the moment because my computer is, to put it mildly, malfunctioning. If I pop round when you're around can I look at this on your screen please? Thanks.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Thanks,

[Redacted]

**“The receipt of impermissible donations by registered campaigners or political parties campaigning at the EU referendum, either from the UK or overseas, would be a serious breach of the law. Anyone who believes they have evidence suggesting impropriety in campaign funding should provide it to the Commission and the police immediately.”*

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