

Russian group spent \$274,000 on Twitter ads during US election

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Researchers said US voters in the swing states in the 2016 election were disproportionately targeted by Twitter "bots" and fake news

A Russian media group with links to the Moscow government spent \$274,000 in 2016 on Twitter ads which may have been used to try to influence the US election, the social media firm said Thursday.

Twitter said it shared data with congressional investigators about ads

from Russia Today, which is suspected of spreading disinformation during the 2016 [election campaign](#).

A blog post by Twitter said its vice president for public policy, Colin Crowell, met with staff Thursday from two congressional panels investigating Russian interference in the election process.

"This is an ongoing process and we will continue to collaborate with investigators," the statement said.

Twitter said it examined efforts by foreign agents to interfere with the election after Facebook indicated it found 450 accounts which appeared to have been used for this purpose.

"Of the roughly 450 accounts that Facebook recently shared as a part of their review, we concluded that 22 had corresponding accounts on Twitter," the statement said.

"All of those identified accounts had already been or immediately were suspended from Twitter for breaking our rules, most for violating our prohibitions against spam."

The statement added that Russia Today, which was named in January in a US intelligence report on election interference, spent at least \$274,100 in 2016 for 1,823 [tweet](#) ads or "promotions" which "definitely or potentially targeted the US market."

"These campaigns were directed at followers of mainstream media and primarily promoted RT Tweets regarding news stories," the statement added.

"We are concerned about violations of our terms of service and US law with respect to interference in the exercise of voting rights," the

statement said.

"During the 2016 [election](#), we removed tweets that were attempting to suppress or otherwise interfere with the exercise of voting rights, including the right to have a vote counted, by circulating intentionally misleading information."

Twitter said some of the ads, or promoted tweets, aimed to deceive voters by telling them they could "text to vote," which has no basis in fact.

"We have not found accounts associated with this activity to have obvious Russian origin but some of the accounts appear to have been automated, the statement said.

"We have shared examples of the content of these removed Tweets with congressional investigators."

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