

The background of the entire page is a blue-tinted, cracked, and distressed version of the American flag. The stars and stripes are visible but heavily textured with cracks and peeling, suggesting a theme of decay or conflict.

Bankrolling Bigotry: An Overview of the Online Funding Strategies of American Hate Groups

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Executive summary

Project Overview

Hatred is surging across the United States. Figures released by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) suggest that the number of hate groups rose steadily between 2014 and 2018,¹ including a 55% growth in the number of white nationalist groups active between 2017 and 2019.² In 2018 the FBI announced that hate crimes were at the highest volume they had been for 16 years,³ and recent analysis from the Center for Strategic and International Studies identifies white supremacists as the most significant terror threat facing the US.⁴ This matches global trends where white supremacist terrorism has spiked by 320%,⁵ in part buoyed by a broad morass of hate against communities including Jews, Muslims, immigrants, people of colour, people with disabilities and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others (LGBTQ+) community.

This hatred has come to the streets over the course of 2020. As civil rights protesters have demonstrated across the country, groups such as the Proud Boys have incited hatred and participated in violent clashes. Such hatred threatens the safety, security and wellbeing of minority communities, and societal harmony writ large.

There is a clear need for greater efforts to be made to tackle hate groups. While these groups remain free to mobilise they can target minority communities with hatred and violence, as well as proselytise and recruit new members. The struggle against these actors plays out in many ways. Civil society groups produce counter-messaging, which undermines the propaganda of hate; specialist practitioners work to de-radicalise individuals involved in extremist movements; and activists and academics build evidence bases and advocate for changes from social media platforms to improve and enforce their policies against hate-mongers.

Another area where there has been successful activism over recent years is in limiting the ability of hate groups to raise funds. Advocacy groups like SumOfUs have helped wage campaigns that put pressure on companies whose products are used to facilitate the funding of hate.⁶ A number of individuals involved in promoting hatred have been banned from platforms such as PayPal, limiting their ability to make money or raise donations.⁷

The extent to which hate groups use different platforms to raise funds is currently not widely understood, however, so their efforts to limit this activity are not always effective. To improve our ability to check the scale and nature of online funding by hate groups, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and Global Disinformation Index (GDI) have analysed the digital footprints of 73 US-based hate groups, identified through existing studies conducted by the SPLC and Anti-Defamation League (ADL), with additional coding and vetting by ISD and GDI analysts. These groups were then assessed for the extent to which they used 54 funding mechanisms. The research aimed to map out the online infrastructure behind hate groups' financing and fundraising in order to support efforts to defund and therefore disempower hate movements in the US.

Through this research, we found that hate groups use popular platforms such as PayPal, Facebook Fundraisers and Stripe, although these platforms often have explicit policies supposedly preventing their use to facilitate hate or violence. Through this work we have improved our understanding of how different types of groups raise money using a broad spectrum of online platforms and services. This work has informed a series of recommendations which, if enacted, could diminish the ability of those who seek to spread hatred to succeed.

Key Findings

- **We analysed the digital footprints of 73 US-based groups involved in promoting hatred against individuals on the basis of their gender, sexuality, race, religion or nationality.** We checked for their use of 54 online fundraising mechanisms, which included 47 platforms, 5 different cryptocurrencies and the presence of membership or consulting services, ultimately finding 191 instances of hate groups using online fundraising services to support their activity.
- **The platform most commonly used by the hate groups studied was Charity Navigator, an organisation that assesses charities in the US and ranks them according to a certain set of criteria;** currently it is used by 29 groups. The second most commonly used platform was PayPal, currently used by 21 of the groups we analysed, followed by Facebook Fundraisers, currently used by 19 groups. Charity Navigator and Facebook Fundraisers are both powered by Network for Good, a fundraising software company that allows any non-profit with a profile on the non-profit information service Guidestar to use their service to raise funds.
- **A number of the hate groups analysed in this report have non-profit status in the US:** 32 of the 73 (44%) hate groups have either 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax status in the US. This potentially helps legitimise hate groups and provides them with avenues through which to raise money.
- **More than one-third (38%) of the platforms analysed do not have a policy which explicitly prohibits hate groups from using their services.** A majority – 29 of the 47 (62%) platforms – included in the investigation had policies designed to push back against or ban hateful activity in some way.
- **Hate groups used 24 of those 29 (83%) platforms with policies against hate speech, showing a failure to implement and enforce these policies.**
- **Different types of hate groups prioritised different funding mechanisms.** When identifying hate groups for analysis we subcategorised them according to their ideology. Through this we found that white supremacist organisations were least likely to use funding mechanisms such as onsite donation forms, crowdfunding mechanisms or onsite retail, instead preferring to use cryptocurrency donations. This potentially reflects proactive policy enforcement by funding platforms, suggesting that policy enforcement can become an effective tool limiting the activities of hate groups online. It may also be a result of the preferred mobilisation strategies of these groups, which prioritise decentralised organisation and the incitement of violence. Conversely anti-LGBTQ+ groups, which are in some instances well-established organisations that operate under the banner of legitimate religious groups, had the most diverse funding strategies.

Recommendations

- Platforms should adopt policies which limit their use by hate groups:** We found that 38% of the platforms studied did not have any policies in place prohibiting their use by hate groups. Furthermore, some platforms only had limited policies in place prohibiting violent organisations, but ignored their use by non-violent hate groups. The mass proliferation of hatred against minority communities helps inspire violence and fuels community polarisation and societal destabilisation. We recommend that platforms that facilitate organisational fundraising adopt comprehensive policies banning their use by groups that promote hatred and discrimination of individuals according to their identity, including gender, sexuality, race, religion, disability or nationality.
- Where platforms do have policies to prevent the abuse of services by hate groups, they should be more proactive and comprehensive in their enforcement:** Hate groups used 83% of the platforms we identified that had policies in place around hatred. It is essential that organisations are more proactive in the enforcement of their terms of service so that they live up to the values which they publicly express, and limit their abuse by hate groups. This might include greater resource allocation to safety and policy teams dealing with such issues on the platforms, or proactive outreach to experts who can provide support in identifying and analysing the activity of hate groups on the platforms.
- Industry bodies such as the Electronic Transactions Association or the Merchant Acquirer’s Committee should take on a leadership role in developing standard-setting guidelines about hate and extremism in order to encourage the broad adoption of policies to limit online fundraising tools for hate groups:** industry standard guidelines should be drawn up to help guide a more cohesive and uniform response to the misuse of financial technology by extremists at a policy level.
- Congressional debate on whether such groups should qualify for non-profit tax status:** 44% of the hate groups in our study are registered non-profit organisations in the US. An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) designation may act as a sort of kite mark, making platforms and payment providers wary of acting against a group. Through our research we found evidence that being registered as non-profits helped the groups studied raise funds. Following the outcome of the 2013 “IRS targeting scandal”, which found that the IRS had used inappropriate and politically-motivated criteria to identify tax-exempt applications, it is believed that the debate over the non-profit status of groups that discriminate against immutable characteristics should fall onto Congress.

Project Overview and Approach

Definitional Framework

Understanding Hate

This research seeks to understand how hate groups are able to use online platforms to raise funds to support their activity. A wide range of groups and individuals are motivated by the hatred of minority groups, and this hatred encapsulates a wide range of ideologies and targets. Some groups are primarily motivated by hatred of one particular minority community, while others seek to target and demean a wide range of marginalised groups. These different hate groups use a variety of techniques to advance their agenda – violent and non-violent, legal and illegal. Their methods range from political lobbying to trying to limit the rights of minority groups through to using terrorist tactics and real-world violence. While some hate groups may be categorised as domestic terror threats,⁸ others engage in distasteful, arguably dangerous, but constitutionally protected activity.

To recognise this wide range of actors and activity, we developed a broad definition of hatred for this research. Accordingly, for the purpose of this project, we define 'hate' as:

Beliefs or practices that result in attacking, maligning, delegitimising or excluding an entire class of people on the basis of immutable characteristics, including their ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

The related definition of hate actors used in this work is as follows:

Hate actors are understood to be individuals, groups or communities which actively and overtly engage in the above activity defined as 'hate', as well as those who implicitly attack and promote hostility and hate crimes towards such classes of people through, for example, the use of conspiracy theories and disinformation.

Identifying Hate Groups for Analysis

To identify hate groups active in the US in 2020, researchers drew on pre-existing literature identifying US-based hate groups from anti-hate organisations

including the SPLC and ADL. This was supplemented by insights from ongoing analysis being delivered by ISD, which uses quantitative and qualitative techniques to identify individuals and organisations engaged in promoting hatred online.

Where groups had been identified through the literature of external organisations, ISD and GDI researchers validated these claims through qualitative analysis of the online and offline activity of organisations to ensure that they met the definition of hate outlined above. To be included in our analysis, a group needed to have an identifiable membership base and identifiable activity such as the creation of literature or other content broadcasting hateful ideology, or involvement in street-based mobilisation. Accordingly, 'online-only' entities such as Facebook groups or pages were not included in our analysis unless it could be established that they were part of a wider organisation. Through this process, we identified 73 US-based groups for our analysis.

Sub-categorising Hate Groups

Taking the above definition into account, the hate groups that we analyse in this study should be seen as existing on a continuum. The groups often target similar minority communities through a wide range of activities. Recognising this, we have sought to break down the list of hate groups into subsets. This approach allows us to understand whether different subsets of organisations prioritise different fundraising mechanisms, allowing for a more nuanced response to the challenge.

To inform the subcategorisation of the 73 groups identified for this study, ISD and GDI researchers performed a qualitative analysis of the activity of these groups, paying attention to whether they primarily targeted particular minority communities, their primary strategies for mobilisation, and the ideology which underpins their activity. This process provided us with nine subcategories of hate groups. Three of these categories contained only one organisation; we grouped them into one category of 'outliers'. Table 1 lists and defines the subcategories of hate groups we identified and Table 2 lists the organisations we studied within each subcategory.

Table 1 Subcategories of hate groups analysed in this report

Subcategory	Definition
Anti-immigrant (8 groups)	Groups which attack, malign, delegitimise or exclude immigrants from American society.
Anti-LGBTQ+ (20 groups)	Groups which attack, malign, delegitimise or exclude LGBTQ+ people because of their LGBTQ+ identity. In most cases anti-LGBTQ+ groups covered in this study are associated with the Christian right.
Anti-Muslim (6 groups)	Groups which attack, malign, delegitimise or exclude Muslims because of their Muslim identity.
Militia or street protest (8 groups)	<p>Militia groups are anti-government actors who form into paramilitary units to protect against their political and ideological opponents. These groups often promote conspiratorial thinking about a 'new world order' seeking to undermine and control the US government.</p> <p>The militia groups covered in this report could also be categorised as 'anti-Muslim' or 'anti-immigrant'; they have been classed in a discrete subcategory because of the unique strategies they employ to advance their ideology.</p> <p>We also identified a number of violent street protest movements which do not adhere to a cohesive ideology, but engage in activity which attacks, maligns, delegitimises or excludes a wide range of minority communities. As their primary focus is on violent offline activity, which sometimes parallels and intersects with that of militia groups, these organisations have been grouped with militia organisations for the purpose of this subcategorisation exercise.</p>
White nationalist (9 groups)	Nationalist groups that believe that white people are a distinct cultural group, and that it is desirable to develop and maintain a distinct 'white' identity. These groups often propose the formation of ethnostates.
White supremacist (19 groups)	<p>Groups which outwardly espouse the belief that white people are innately superior to non-whites, often characterised by conspiratorial thinking tied to the role of Jews in geopolitics, the advocacy of violence towards non-whites, and the belief in and desire for an impending race war.</p> <p>There is cross-over between white nationalist and white supremacist groups. However, not all white nationalist groups outwardly advocate a supremacist ideology, so these groups have been differentiated in this study.</p>
Outliers Misogynist (1 group) Black supremacist (1 group) Holocaust denial (1 group)	<p>Misogynist groups attack, malign, delegitimise or exclude women, often characterised by their belief that cisgendered men are innately superior to people of other genders.</p> <p>Black supremacist groups promote the belief that Black people are inherently superior to white people. The organisation analysed for this study has outwardly been involved in anti-LGBTQ+ and antisemitic activity. However, because of its distinct ideology and membership base, it has been classed as a 'Black supremacist' group in this analysis.</p> <p>Holocaust denial groups promote 'revisionist' history, which negates the suffering of the Jewish people in the Holocaust or denies the occurrence of the Holocaust outright. While Holocaust denial activity is understood to be innately antisemitic, the group in question for this research does not actively amplify a supremacist worldview, negating their inclusion in the 'white supremacist' subcategory outlined above.</p>

Table 2 Overview of hate groups studied

Anti-immigrant**Organisations**

- Center for Immigration Studies
- Dustin Inman Society
- Federation for American Immigration Reform
- Numbers USA
- Oregonians for Immigration Reform
- ProEnglish
- The Remembrance Project
- We The People Rising

Anti-LGBTQ+**Organisations**

- Pass the Salt Ministries
- All Scripture Baptist Church
- Alliance Defending Freedom
- American College of Pediatricians
- American Family Association
- American Vision
- Center for Family and Human Rights
- Chalcedon Foundation
- Church Militant and St Michael's Media
- Eagle Forum
- Family Research Council
- Family Watch International
- Liberty Counsel
- MassResistance
- National Organization for Marriage
- New Independent Fundamental Baptist Network
- Pacific Justice Institute
- Ruth Institute
- Westboro Baptist Church
- World Congress of Families

Anti-Muslim**Organisations**

- Act for America
- American Freedom Defense Initiative
- Center for Security Policy
- Clarion Project
- David Horowitz Freedom Center
- The United West

Militia or street protest**Organisations**

- American Patriots USA
- American Revolution 2.0
- Patriot Prayer
- Patriot Wave
- Proud Boys
- Rise Above Movement
- Washington Three Percenters
- Oath Keepers

White nationalist**Organisations**

- America First Students
- American Freedom Party
- American Guard
- Groypers – Nick Fuentes
- New Jersey European Heritage Association
- Patriot Front
- VDARE
- Identity Dixie
- League of the South

White supremacist**Organisations**

- American Identity Movement (formerly Identity Evropa)
- American Nazi Party
- American Renaissance, website of New Century Foundation
- Atomwaffen Division
- Bowl Patrol or Bowl Gang
- Feuerkrieg Division (international)
- Keystone United
- Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
- Legion of St. Ambrose
- National Alliance
- National Socialist Movement
- National Justice Party
- Northwest Front
- NSC 131
- Order 15
- Shield Wall Network
- The Base
- Vorherrschaft Division
- Kingdom Identity Ministries

Black supremacist**Organisations**

- Nation of Islam

Holocaust denial**Organisations**

- Institute for Historical Review

Misogynist**Organisations**

- A Voice for Men

Table 3 Overview of funding platform by subcategory

Primary platform

Type of platform	Definition
Offsite retail sites	Retail platforms like Amazon, Teespring and CafePress exist completely separately from any one organisation’s website, acting as a marketplace for essentially anyone to sell specific goods. Hate groups sometimes use these platforms to sell propaganda books and videos and various merchandise.
Donations from purchases	Some platforms act as an intermediary between third-party customers and vendors, whereby registered organisations receive money from purchases of products not sold in their own shops. eBay for Charity and AmazonSmile allow users on their platforms to donate a small percentage of purchases of unrelated products to charities that are registered through the services.
Cryptocurrency sites	Cryptocurrency wallets using Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin and Monero are employed in order to evade traditional pathways of tracing, identification and accountability.
Content subscription sites	Multimedia platforms like DLive, SubscribeStar, Patreon and YouTube Super Chat offer content creators the option of accepting payment during livestreamed video as a virtual tip jar, as well as in exchange for premium content locked behind a paywall.
Crowdfunding sites	Platforms like GoFundMe and Facebook Donations allow users to set up donation ‘events’ for specific organisations or built around particular purposes.
Direct requests for funding	Some websites include direct requests for funding, membership or consultation fees, often solicited through appeals for cheques to be sent via mail. These websites do not constitute funding platforms, but we included them in our analysis as these direct requests for funding are an additional mechanism through which groups can raise funding.

Understanding Funding Mechanisms

To better understand the landscape through which hate groups are able to raise funds we identified 54 mechanisms that enable groups to monetise their online activity, including through merchandising, crowdfunding, payment platforms which enable online donations, and content subscription models.

These platforms can be divided into two distinct categories depending on the domain on which a transaction takes place: **primary platforms** and **intermediary platforms**.

Primary platforms are those that facilitate financial interactions between organisations and individuals directly on the platform. This includes e-commerce marketplaces like Amazon and Cafe Press, eBay for Charity, and content subscription sites like Patreon.

Intermediary platforms are those that facilitate financial interactions between organisations and individuals off the platform, sitting directly on top of an organisation’s own website architecture to offer individualised e-commerce stores, direct donation buttons and secure donation forms. This includes retail platforms like Stripe and Shopify, payment platforms like PayPal and Cash App, and donation form sites like AneDot and Charity Navigator.

Table 3 Overview of funding platform by subcategory

Intermediary platform

Type of platform	Definition
Onsite retail sites	Platform services like Shopify, Stripe and WooCommerce sit underneath an organisation's website architecture to provide for the direct sale of merchandise and other goods without being redirected to another website.
Flexible fund collection sites	Platforms like PayPal, WePay and Cash App allow users to collect money from anywhere online, including through an embeddable link on a website, remote donations from third-party apps, or direct transfers between different users on the platform.
Charity aggregation sites	Sites like Charity Navigator compile organisations, rate them, display information about them (such as their tax status) and provide donation buttons.
Onsite donation forms	Platform services like Anedot, Revv and Donorbox provide a way for organisations to embed donation forms on their own sites.

Underlying the vast majority of online financial transactions are the credit card companies, Visa and Mastercard. While those companies should be held accountable for enabling the funding of bigotry and hate, their near-ubiquity in the payment ecosystem has caused them to set extremely high bars for policy violations related to the “direct incitement of violence” or engagement in illegal activities, as was the case after the August 2017 Unite the Right violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.⁹

For the purposes of this research, we chose to focus more narrowly on technology platforms that facilitate financial interactions between organisations and individuals directly on an organisation's website, or as a standalone web-based platform through which such

financial interactions take place. Policy teams at these companies may have more latitude to act on the basis of the findings in this report.

Methodology

To link the presence of the 73 hate groups selected for this project with the 54 funding mechanisms referred to above, we began by identifying the social media assets and web domains associated with each group. We identified all websites associated with each group, as well as social media accounts linked with each group on Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Gab, BitChute and Minds. In total we identified 60 websites and 225 social media assets linked to the groups in our set.

We then deployed three analytical approaches to map ties between the groups and funding mechanisms studied:

- Using Method52,¹⁰ we performed a search across these social media entities for posts containing terms and phrases associated with fundraising.¹¹ We then manually reviewed the data gathered to identify instances of groups fundraising through their social media activity, removing all false positives from our set.

- We used a series of advanced web searches to search for mentions of each hate group studied across e-commerce, crowdfunding and subscription sites.¹²
- We used BuiltWith to view the detailed technology and metadata profiles associated with each group's website to identify every instance of these websites linking to platforms within the onsite retail, flexible fund collection or onsite donation form categories.¹³ Wherever possible, researchers took comprehensive measures to verify that groups were current users of a service, but we reserve the possibility that in some instances, this may have captured historical data.

We compiled the data we gathered using the methods outlined above into a unitary dataset, which logged all instances of the hate groups we identified using online funding mechanisms.

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Findings

Prioritisation of Funding Mechanisms by Different Subsets of Hate Groups

Across our analysis we found that different subsets of hate groups seem to prioritise different methods of fundraising. Notably, there were some groups which we could not identify using any online fundraising mechanisms at all: 1 of 8 (12.5%) anti-immigrant groups; 2 of 20 (10%) anti-LGBTQ+ groups; 1 of 8 (12.5%) militia or street protest groups; 2 of 9 (22%) white nationalist groups; and 11 of 19 (57%) white supremacist groups. All groups categorised as “anti-Muslim” or “other” used at least one identifiable funding mechanism.

These findings reveal a pattern whereby groups that focus on white identity appear not to prioritise the use of online funding mechanisms. In particular **white supremacist organisations – which of the subcategories of hate group selected for this study are most likely to prioritise the use of violence¹⁴ – notably did not use online fundraising services as a strategy.** This is likely a reflection of both the overall strategies employed by white supremacists and the policy enforcement of funding platforms.

It has been observed that contemporary white supremacist activity is shifting towards a ‘post-organisational’ paradigm, which prioritises loose allegiance to fluid networks of actors, as opposed to allegiance to established long-lasting organisations.¹⁵ Accordingly, groups such as Atomwaffen and The Base, which have a fluid membership, are less likely to see the need to establish themselves as legitimate or semi-legitimate organisations with an institutional infrastructure. Furthermore, as these groups prioritise the inspiration and delivery of violence, linking to online funding platforms would likely jeopardise their operational security through providing avenues of investigation for security services and law enforcement.

Of the 21 instances where we were able to identify white supremacists using online funding mechanisms, 11 (52%) related to requests for donations through cryptocurrencies. This highlights the preference of these groups for fundraising “off-grid” using methods which are more difficult to trace than mainstream methods. This trend was matched by the Holocaust

denial group selected for analysis, potentially reflecting the fact that 16 European countries have laws against Holocaust denial including Austria¹⁶, Belgium¹⁷, the Czech Republic¹⁸, France¹⁹ and Germany.²⁰

The way white supremacist organisations prioritise the use of cryptocurrencies might reflect the internal strategies of hate groups in general and policy shifts by those platforms, and the enforcement of these policies. In recent years, a number of platforms including PayPal introduced policies to counter extremist organisations using them. The terms of service of 29 platforms examined in this study prohibit language that promotes hate or intolerance, though the nature of the policies varies. A number of them have acted against violent white supremacists and high profile extremist influencers.²¹

This could suggest that limiting a group’s ability to raise funds through more mainstream methods may force groups to raise money through less regulated means. Here an interesting parallel can be drawn to the broader use of social media by hate groups, where banning on one platform prompts the use of fringe fora which are either specially created for use by hate groups, or where the terms of service or enforcement of such terms are lax enough to facilitate their continued use by these organisations.²²

Beyond the preference shown by white supremacist organisations for cryptocurrencies, we identified additional trends when the subsets of hate groups were examined against the results of the funding platform mapping. **Anti-immigrant groups prioritise flexible and multisite fund collection; anti-LGBTQ+ groups crowd funding; anti-Muslim groups the use of charity aggregation platforms; and militia or street protest groups and white nationalist groups onsite retail options.** These findings potentially point towards differences in the way that groups organise: seemingly official and established anti-LGBTQ+, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim organisations use more traditional fundraising mechanisms associated with charities; more reactive, street-based groups and white nationalist organisations prioritise raising funds through the sale of merchandise.

The subset of hate groups that was found most frequently to use fundraising or finance platforms in our data was anti-LGBTQ+ organisations. We found instances of anti-LGBTQ+ groups using all of the different types of funding mechanisms selected for analysis. This potentially reflects the perceived legitimacy of anti-LGBTQ+ activity in the US, where organisations operating under the banner of Christian and evangelical groups have been involved in promoting homophobia.²³

Use of Charity Status by Hate Groups

The perceived legitimacy of these groups and their causes is also potentially related to the way they structure themselves. Of the 20 anti-LGBTQ+ organisations analysed, 14 (70%) have Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) non-profit status. Organisations operating under 501(c)(3) status can receive tax-exempt donations. Those operating under 501(c)(4) status cannot, however they have more freedom to engage in political lobbying. Similarly, several groups hold charity status: 6 of the 8 anti-immigrant groups we identified; 6 of the 6 anti-Muslim groups; 3 of the 8 street protest or militia groups; 1 of the 9 white nationalist groups; and 2 of the 19 white supremacist groups.

These findings suggest that there is a relationship between charity status and the volume of fundraising platforms used by a particular cohort of hate group. To better understand this relationship, we compared the average number of funding platforms used by our subsets of hate groups with the percentage of that hate group cohort which have charity status using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (Table 4). We found that there was a moderate positive correlation between charity status and number of online mechanisms used, with a score of $r_s = 0.6$, indicating that charity status plays a role in how groups fundraise online.

More broadly this raises a number of implications around the way in which those who seek to legitimise hateful activity abuse the US charitable system. Groups actively involved in promoting exclusionary attitudes towards minority communities are able to register as non-profits and thus be recognised as beneficial to the

Table 4 Comparison of charity status to average number of funding mechanisms by hate group

Group type	Average number of funding mechanisms	Groups with charity status (%)
Anti-Muslim	3.30	100
Anti-immigrant	2.75	75
Anti-LGBTQ+	3.70	70
Militia or street protest	2.38	37.5
White nationalist	2.80	11
White supremacist	1.10	1

“public interest”. Specifically the IRS includes within this bracket groups which are organised for:

- Relief of the poor, the distressed or the underprivileged
- Advancement of religion
- Advancement of education or science
- Construction or maintenance of public buildings, monuments or works
- Lessening the burdens of government
- Lessening of neighbourhood tensions
- Elimination of prejudice and discrimination
- Defence of human and civil rights secured by law
- Combatting community deterioration and juvenile delinquency²⁴

The ambiguity around granting such groups charity status often centres around their ability to present themselves as “educational” organisations.²⁵ The term educational is not defined by the IRC, instead it is defined by Treasury regulation, which states

an organisation may be educational so long as it presents “a sufficiently full and fair exposition of the pertinent facts as to permit an individual or the public to form an independent opinion or conclusion”. This definition and scope has resulted in contradictory court decisions over whether the educational standard is unconstitutionally vague in relation to First Amendment rights.²⁶

In May 2013, an audit report from the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration²⁷ confirmed that the IRS had used inappropriate criteria to identify tax-exempt applications for review, in what became known as the “IRS targeting scandal”. The report found that the IRS was improperly pulling organisations’ exemption applications based on keywords such as “tea party,” “patriot” and other political sounding names. The cases were eventually settled under the Trump Administration with an apology from the IRS, monetary awards and attorney fees.

The outcome of the IRS targeting scandal shows that the IRS is supposed to take a disinterested, neutral position with respect to beliefs, and therefore further debate on this subject should fall onto Congress. The last major policy update, Revenue Procedure 86-43, was adopted in 1986, and many of the issues we have documented occurred years after the procedure was adopted. In September 2019, legal expert Marcus Owens testified at a House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee Hearing, explaining that the IRC is “silent on standards of speech” and has increasingly lost the ability to enforce what limited standards do exist. Additionally, Owens highlighted the case study of white supremacist Richard Spencer, who exploited a flaw in the tax-exemption status approval process known as the “secondary market” to register his National Policy Institute as a 501(c)(3) through the use of an employer identification number of a dormant, previously approved organisation.²⁸

Table 5 Use of funding mechanisms by hate group type

	Onsite retail	Flexible or multisite fund collection	Charity aggregation	Crowdfunding	Onsite donation forms	Crypto currency	Offsite retail	Content subscription or donations	Consultations or membership fees	Donations from purchases
Anti-immigrant	1	7	6	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-LGBTQ+	8	7	14	15	11	3	7	2	3	3
Anti-Muslim	3	2	5	4	4	0	2	0	0	0
Militia or street protest	5	4	1	1	2	0	3	3	0	0
White nationalist	6	1	1	1	2	5	2	5	0	0
White supremacist	2	0	1	0	0	11	1	4	2	0
Outlier 1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outlier 2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Outlier 3	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0

Note: bold text shows the most commonly used funding mechanism in each hate group type.

That hate-promoting organisations can obtain non-profit status potentially validates these groups by implying that their activity is condoned by the US government as providing some form of good to society. Furthermore, this has a number of implications for policy responses around limiting these groups' activities. The fact that some hate groups have non-profit status could serve to justify their use of a platform's services. While hate groups continue to use the US tax code in this way, it is hard for financial platforms and payment systems to refuse service to organisations the US government has deemed to be for the public benefit.

Overview of the Use of Funding Platforms by Hate Groups

The platforms and services available for groups to use within each type of funding mechanism varies across groups. In this section we outline how subsets of the groups we analysed use specific platforms within each funding category. Table 6 shows how often hate groups use individual platforms.

Use of Charity Aggregation Sites

The single most commonly used platform in our research was Charity Navigator (29 of the 73 groups, or 40%). The majority of anti-LGBTQ+ (11 of 16, 69%) and anti-Muslim (5 of 6, 83%) organisations are hosted on the site, as are the Black supremacist organisation Nation of Islam, militia organisation Oath Keepers, white nationalist group VDARE and white supremacist group American Identity Movement.³¹

The Charity Navigator website catalogues charitable organisations and rates them on a variety of metrics. Organisations featured on the site are granted a "Donate to this Charity" button, and while the site only evaluates a subset of those organisations, the donation functionality is present whether a group has been rated or not.

When groups earn an evaluation from the site, ratings are based on their financials and transparency, so organisations earn high marks for how efficiently they use donations to carry out their mission – even if that

mission is related to hateful activity. For example, The American Family Association, which frames itself as "combatting the homosexual agenda",³² has an overall score of 90.71 out of 100 and 4 out of 4 stars.

Charity Navigator's donations are powered by Network for Good, a fundraising software company that also powers Facebook Fundraisers. Network for Good works in partnership with GuideStar, a service which provides information on US non-profits to fundraising services. In order for a non-profit to be eligible to receive donations through fundraising services using Network for Good, they simply need to claim their profile on GuideStar, opt-in to receive donations, and ensure that their address details are up to date.³³

In 2017, GuideStar added labels to 46 non-profits after they were designated hate groups by the SPLC,³⁴ but removed the annotations following "harassment and threats" directed at GuideStar staff.³⁵ A defamation lawsuit filed against GuideStar by Liberty Counsel was subsequently thrown out in January 2018 after a judge ruled that labeling the group as such was "an informative statement" and was not "commercial speech"³⁶.

Charity aggregation sites that utilize services such as Network for Good and GuideStar do not necessarily play an active role in selecting which organisations can and cannot utilize their services. This is further proof of the need for congressional debate around what kind of organisations can qualify for non-profit status, but also suggests that non-profit aggregation services should play a more active role in vetting the services they are promoting, particularly when, as is the case with Charity Navigator, they provide a ratings service which potentially helps to validate hate groups.

Beyond granting hate groups an easily accessible donation button, Charity Navigator reinforces the notion that non-profit status offers hate groups a stamp of legitimacy, listing them alongside non-hate-based charities and classifying them as "educational organization"³⁷ or "humanities organizations".³⁸

Table 6 Frequency of use of individual platforms by hate groups

Type of funding mechanism	Platform	Frequency of use by a hate group	Type of funding mechanism	Platform	Frequency of use by a hate group	
Onsite retail	BigCommerce	1	Crypto	BTC [Bitcoin]	11	
	Shopify	2		ETH [Ethereum]	3	
	Square	0		LTC [Litecoin]	4	
	Stripe	13		Monero	2	
	WooCommerce	7		LINK [Chainlink]	1	
	Facebook Pixel for Shopify	1		BitPay	1	
	X-Cart	1		Coinbase	1	
	FoxyCart	1				
Flexible or multisite fund collection	PayPal	21	Offsite retail	Amazon	13	
	USAePay	1		Teespring	1	
	eTapestry	0		Redbubble	0	
	WePay	1		Zazzle	1	
	Cash App	0		Minutemen Coffee Company	1	
Charity aggregation	Charity Navigator	29	Cafe Press	0		
Crowdfunding	GoFundMe ²⁹	7	Content subscription or donation	DLive	3	
	Facebook Fundraisers	19		Entropy	2	
Onsite donation forms	BlueFire Giving	1		Streamlabs	2	
	Process Donation	1		SubscribeStar	3	
	Anedot	4		Patreon	5	
	StreamElements	1		YouTube Super Chat	1	
	Braintree	1	Cameo	0		
	Donorbox	1	Consultations or membership	Consultations or membership	6	
	Gravity Forms	4		Instant Car Donation	0	
	Revv	2	Side money from purchases	AmazonSmile	0	
	Qgiv ³⁰	1		eBay for Charity	3	
	Cornerstone	3				
	Formstack	1				
	MX Merchant	1				
	RaiseDonors	1				
GiveForms	1					

Use of Platforms that Offer Donations from Purchases

In some cases, it is possible for organisations to receive money from purchases of products not sold in their own shops. eBay for Charity allows non-profits to receive a small portion of the money from the sale of particular products. ISD and GDI uncovered products being sold to the benefit of three anti-LGBTQ+ organisations through the service.

Use of Crowdfunding Platforms

The research highlighted how some groups' non-profit status appears to allow them to skirt more stringent terms of service governing hateful activity on crowdfunding platforms.

Crowdfunding platforms are a way for groups to pitch themselves, or be pitched by supporters, to a broader audience than the ones they may attract to their website through other means. In addition to allowing specific fundraisers to benefit particular organisations, both crowdfunding platforms in our analysis – Facebook Fundraisers and GoFundMe – list certain organisations as non-profits to which people can contribute directly.

Facebook Fundraisers is currently available for use to support 19 hate groups, the third most used funding mechanism analysed in this study. The majority of anti-LGBTQ+ groups (12 of 20, 60%) exist on the portal, as well as three anti-immigrant, two anti-Muslim, one militia and one white nationalist organisation. Facebook Fundraisers provides donation functionality for these groups, and gives users the chance to set up and promote customised fundraisers benefiting them, such as for a birthday. Seven groups are present on GoFundMe, either listed as a charitable organisation or hosting their own fundraisers or both.

The use of Facebook Fundraisers and GoFundMe by hate groups shows that previous actions by the platforms to stem hate activity on their services has been ineffective. Hate groups can use the platforms to raise funds because they have non-profit status. Facebook has taken steps to remove hate groups from their platform in recent years, and has a number of

policies prohibiting the use of their platform for violent and hateful purposes.³⁹ Similarly, GoFundMe⁴⁰ has a robust set of policies around the use of its service for promoting hate and has made a concerted effort to respond quickly to campaigns in clear violations of its policies around hate and intolerance.⁴¹

All of the above cases of fundraising mechanisms highlight the complications caused by hate groups having non-profit status. Indeed, in the cases of Facebook Fundraisers and GoFundMe, a group's non-profit status acts as one of the main determinants over whether an organisation can use the platform. The legitimacy that non-profit status gives to these groups makes it extremely hard for platforms to deny services to such organisations. Any decision-making by Charity Navigator staff relies largely on existing adjudications made by the IRS.

This highlights the uneasy balance between the responsibility of private organisations to set what is acceptable use of their platform, and the US government's responsibility to uphold freedom of speech at the same time as regulating what groups can exist as non-profits. In a number of instances groups which are provided a home on Charity Navigator have been removed from social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.⁴² The types of groups GoFundMe and Facebook Fundraisers are hosting seem to diametrically oppose the values around hate and extremism publicly expressed by these platforms in their policies. In all cases, it is within the ability of these online platforms to look beyond the official non-profit status of these organisations and to examine the activity these individual organisations are engaged in to make decisions about their suitability for their online services. However, in the long term, a reassessment of the current use of charitable status by hate groups should be sought in order to protect the use of charitable status for groups genuinely providing a public benefit.

Use of Platforms Offering Flexible Fund Collection Services

The most used funding mechanism after Charity Navigator is PayPal, which 21 (28%) of the groups use in some way to collect donations or payments. The appeal of PayPal for these groups is predictable, given

the service's ubiquity and the myriad ways there are to integrate it into fund collection processes, whether by embedding a form on a website or simply providing a username in video descriptions. Of the subsets of hate groups analysed, only white supremacists were not represented among PayPal's user base. A number of groups used services that had flexible services similar to PayPal, such as USAePay and WePay. We could find no evidence of hate groups using the flexible services Cash App and eTapestry.

Three of the platforms in the flexible fund collection category address the promotion of hate in their terms of service. PayPal states that its services cannot be used to promote hate, violence, racial or other forms of intolerance. WePay also contains hate and intolerance policies, as does Cash App.⁴³ The remaining services identified had no terms of service in place.

This highlights a disparate policy landscape governing flexible fund collection, as well as gaps in enforcement of these policies. Despite explicitly prohibiting the use of its services for promoting hatred and violence, PayPal is used by multiple organisations analysed in this report, such as Patriot Prayer, which has been involved in multiple cases of street violence,⁴⁴ and the American Freedom Party. This suggests that the platform needs to be more effective in enforcing the terms of service which it lays out.

Hate groups could exploit the fact that platforms like USAePay and eTapestry do not have policies in place addressing the promotion of hate. Although USAePay is only used by one of the groups identified in this analysis, and eTapestry is currently not used by any of the organisations, hate groups might use them in the future should they be barred from other platforms.

Use of Online Retail Services and Platforms

One of the more common ways identified to generate revenue for hate groups in this study is through the sale of products on online marketplaces, using both onsite and offsite services. We identified 16 instances of hate groups using offsite market places. The most popular of these is Amazon.

Despite efforts to remove certain specific types of merchandise, such as items bearing the Confederate flag following the mass shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, of nine African Americans by a white supremacist, Amazon continues to provide a platform for the sale of goods that promote hate or provide funding to hate groups. We identified 13 hate groups offering products on the site in this study.⁴⁵ Some offer apparel and accessories. However, the most common way we identified groups using Amazon is as a distribution centre for reading material promoting their ideologies in the form of ebooks, physical texts and online magazine subscriptions. This is especially true for anti-LGBTQ+ organisations.

To a much smaller degree, some groups use other retail sites that exist outside their own websites and largely do not discriminate in the vendors they host; for example, the militia group Patriot Wave boasts a robust clothing and accessory shop on Teespring,⁴⁶ and Zazzle hosts a variety of products for the misogynist organisation A Voice for Men.⁴⁷

Either instead of or in addition to the options for selling merchandise offsite, many groups have shopping portals on their websites where people can buy merchandise from them directly. While these shops function as extensions of an organisation's broader website, in most cases they are supported by platforms that provide the infrastructure necessary for e-commerce and payment companies that facilitate financial transactions.

The most used service we identified for onsite retail is Stripe, which offers payment processing for 14 groups, including the majority (4 of 6) of anti-Muslim and nearly half (4 of 9) of the white nationalist organisations. Other services specialise in providing the entire infrastructure needed to set up a retail operation as part of their broader website operations services. The most commonly used of these was WooCommerce, an e-commerce plug-in for WordPress, which appeared in seven stores in our analysis: three militia groups, two white supremacist groups and two white nationalist organisations. Another three groups use Shopify's e-commerce tools, while other smaller services like X-Card and FoxyCart are used less frequently, by one group each.

As with flexible fund collection platforms, the policy landscape governing groups' monetisation through onsite and offsite merchandising is complex and uneven. Five of six platforms in the offsite retail category ban promoting hate on their platforms in their terms of service. Amazon prohibits products (excluding books) that promote, incite or glorify hatred.⁴⁸ Its policies regarding books are more lenient, stating that the platform provides its customers with access to "a variety of viewpoints, including books that some customers may find objectionable".⁴⁹

Although Amazon's policies regarding books demonstrate a hands-off approach, the platform has acted against hate content before. In 2019, the platform removed books by Joseph Nicolosi, who had authored several books about conversion therapy – a controversial and pseudoscientific practice that aims to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.⁵⁰ The platform also took stringent action in March 2020 by removing over 1 million listings that contained false claims about Covid-19.⁵¹ This suggests that Amazon's policies on books are adjusted in specific circumstances, but without consistency when making decisions over hateful published content.

Minutemen Coffee Company, a retail site that sells merchandise and coffee specifically supporting militia movements, was used once in our analysis and does not feature any platform policies. Zazzle does not allow content that can be viewed as discriminatory on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or disability.⁵²

CafePress, a platform not found to be used by any group in this investigation, employs a robust set of content moderation policies, based on a traffic light grading system, which is used for all content on the site.⁵³ The platform has in place several guidelines on prohibited content, while indicating that CafePress has the final say in what content is allowed on the site. The fact that this report did not find examples of hate groups using CafePress suggests that content moderation policies that are clear and enforced rigorously can be effective.

Five of eight onsite retail platforms have language in their terms of service that prohibit users from

promoting violence, hate and intolerance through their services, including Shopify,⁵⁴ Square⁵⁵ and Stripe.⁵⁶ WooCommerce, X-Cart and FoxyCart do not contain policies around hate or intolerance.

The fact that hate groups largely seem to use Amazon in ways that are sanctioned by its terms of service – through the distribution of literature – highlights the opportunistic nature of these organisations, but also suggests that the platform should consider revising its terms of service. Platforms facilitating onsite retail seem to be plagued by either poor enforcement of their policies, or a complete lack of an adequate framework for governing their use by hate groups. WooCommerce, for example, should consider adopting policies preventing the use of their platforms by hate groups after this investigation found American Renaissance using the service. American Renaissance has published material claiming, "There is a difference between blacks and whites – analogous to the difference in intelligence – in psychopathic personality considered as a personality trait."⁵⁷

While Shopify and Square expressly prohibit hateful content, Stripe falls short of this, only having in place policies prohibiting the celebration and promotion of "unlawful violence" that is based on identity. However the platform is used by organisations like Patriot Front and VDARE, which although not directly violent themselves, actively promote a white nationalist worldview which has been closely tied to violence in the US.⁵⁸

Use of Content Subscription and Livestreaming Platforms

Many funding mechanisms allow groups to sell goods or collect donations. However, the recent growth of paid content and “freemium” models has created a market for groups to raise money by creating content, such as live streams, recorded video or audio podcasts. Sometimes users receive a benefit for payment, such as access to “premium” content. In other cases, users can donate for the sake of recognition from the content creators, or purely for the sake of knowing they are supporting a cause they believe in.

The most commonly used platforms hosting paid content were Patreon and SubscribeStar, both of which allow creators to offer “subscription tiers”. Users who contribute a particular amount are entitled to exclusive releases and sometimes greater access to the content creators themselves in the form of chats and video meetings.

Paul Elam, founder of “men’s rights group” A Voice for Men, who is a promoter of misogynistic content and once declared October “Bash a Violent Bitch Month”,⁵⁹ has accounts on both Patreon and SubscribeStar. Patreon is also home to two of the anti-LGBTQ+ groups identified in this study and two militia groups. SubscribeStar hosts one of the white nationalist organisations and one of the white supremacist groups analysed here.

Beyond these content subscription services, a number of organisations use livestreaming services which allow for the collection of donations or tips while the content creator is broadcasting. While groups on services like Patreon and SubscribeStar typically offer static or prerecorded content that is “unlocked” through subscription models, the streaming services in our analysis allow creators to stream live for free, but offer donation features to users. These donation features are a way to fund content creators they support, but also to appear prominently in the chat window during streams; all of the streaming services in our analysis reward donors with some kind of visual indicator and privileged placement in the chat box. This increases the likelihood that a viewer will be seen and recognised, whether by the streamer or the broader viewing community, in an often crowded and fast-moving conversation.

Compared with other funding mechanisms, livestreaming payments tend to be leveraged by newer organisations within our dataset. Notably, of the four hate groups using these streaming services, three use multiple streaming platforms. One white supremacist group and a white nationalist group use DLive, Entropy and Streamlabs, and another white nationalist group uses both DLive and Streamlabs. Only one group, the militia group Patriot Prayer, uses YouTube Super Chat, an extension of YouTube’s live streaming functionality available only to approved users.

Patreon,⁶⁰ DLive,⁶¹ Streamlabs,⁶² SubscribeStar⁶³ and YouTube Super Chat⁶⁴ were used 14 times across our analysis. All contain policies on promoting hate. This reveals a gap between the policy and enforcement on monetised content creation platforms that have existing policy guidelines banning hateful activity, and suggests that all of the above channels need to apply their terms of service more rigorously. Entropy and Cameo do not have terms of service banning hateful activity. Cameo was not used by any groups in our analysis, but notably we found Entropy to be used mostly by white nationalist and white supremacist groups, whose members are often involved in overt racism.

Use of Onsite Donation Forms

Onsite donation forms were used by 20 of the hate groups studied, and in most cases these donations are facilitated by a service that provides forms specifically for the purpose of making donations. Of all the types of funding mechanisms analysed for this study, online donation forms provided the most variety, with 14 distinct services to choose from, but they are nonetheless a simple and convenient way for hate groups to collect funds on their websites.

The most popular of these services were Anedot and Gravity Forms, which appeared four times each in our analysis. Cornerstone, a specifically “Christian-friendly” form service, was used by two anti-LGBTQ+ groups and one anti-Muslim organisation analysed here.

Out of this large cohort of donation platforms, five contain specific language in their terms of service

around promoting hate – Revv,⁶⁵ RaiseDonors,⁶⁶ Anedot,⁶⁷ StreamElements⁶⁸ and GiveForms.⁶⁹ Donorbox⁷⁰ has specific language on hate-inspired violence. These six platforms were used ten times in our analysis. The eight platforms that do not specifically mention promoting hate in their terms of use – BlueFire Giving, Braintree, Cornerstone, Formstack, Gravity Forms, MX Merchant, Process Donation and Qgiv – were used ten times.

As with the other types of platforms analysed here this highlights gaps in the enforcement of pre-existing policies, and in the terms of service around promoting hate. The fact that we identified as many instances of hate groups using platforms that did have terms in place to ban hateful activity as those that did not have any relevant terms of service suggests that policies may be more of a pretence than a reality for many online services, and they are not proving an effective deterrent to violating activity.

Use of Cryptocurrencies

As discussed above, a number of platforms have been effective at targeting white supremacist and white nationalist communities for removal from their services following public pressure, notably in the aftermath of the August 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville. Once de-platformed from larger funding platforms, some organisations started to promote their Bitcoin wallets as a means of maintaining a revenue stream.

Cryptocurrency is notable for its privacy protections and the lack of a centralised authority policing transfers. These features make it especially appealing for groups that cannot use other services, are engaged in illegal activity, or who know that donors may not want to be exposed for supporting a controversial organisation.

While some anti-LGBTQ+ groups, a Holocaust denial organisation and a misogynist group all accept cryptocurrency donations according to our study, the approach was most popular among white nationalist and white supremacist organisations. Of 28 such groups in our analysis, 8 (29%) accept Bitcoin donations, and of those, 4 accept another

form of cryptocurrency as well, such as Ethereum, Litecoin, LINK or Monero. As with streaming services, cryptocurrency seems to be most popular among newer organisations.

Of the cryptocurrency services analysed here, only the cryptobroker Coinbase contains explicit policies around using its service in the incitement, promotion and encouragement of hate.⁷¹ One example of its enforcement of this set of policies was its ban of Milo Yiannopoulos from the platform in 2019.⁷² However Coinbase itself only acts as an exchange for cryptocurrency, and the adoption of policies within the cryptomarket is highly unlikely given its decentralised nature.

As with the adoption of fringe social media platforms in the wake of deplatforming efforts from larger technology platforms, groups that are removed from more mainstream funding platforms can, if they are willing, find ways to raise funds through cryptocurrency services. However, considering the limited number of users of cryptocurrencies, it is likely that when these groups are forced to use them they raise fewer funds than if they use more widely available financial services and donation platforms. Accordingly, advocacy around more comprehensive anti-hate policies at an industry level, and for the more effective implementation of these policies is imperative, even if cryptocurrencies remain an open channel for hate group fundraising.

Table 7 shows the platforms used by organisations in this study, grouped by funding mechanism, and whether they have a policy prohibiting hate or intolerance.

Table 7 Platforms within each funding mechanism, their hate policy and frequency of use by organisations studied

Funding mechanism	Platform	Policy prohibiting hate or intolerance	Number of uses
Onsite retail	BigCommerce	Yes	1
	Shopify	Yes	2
	Square	Yes	0
	Stripe	Yes	13
	WooCommerce	No	7
	Facebook Pixel for Shopify	Yes	1
	X-Cart	No	1
	FoxyCart	No	1
	Flexible or multisite fund collection	PayPal	Yes
USAePay		No	1
eTapestry		No	0
WePay		Yes	1
Cash App		Yes	0
Charity aggregation	Charity Navigator	Yes	29
Crowdfunding	GoFundMe ⁷³	Yes	7
	Facebook Fundraisers	No	19
Onsite donation forms	BlueFire Giving	No	1
	Process Donation	No	1
	Anedot	Yes	4
	StreamElements	Yes	1
	Braintree	No	1
	Donorbox	Yes	1
	Gravity Forms	No	4
	Revv	Yes	2
	Qgiv ⁷⁴	No	1
	Cornerstone	No	3
	Formstack	No	1
	MX Merchant	No	1
	RaiseDonors	Yes	1
	GiveForms	Yes	1
	Cryptocurrency	BitPay	No
Coinbase		Yes	1
Offsite retail	Amazon	Yes	13
	Teespring	Yes	1
	Redbubble	Yes	0
	Zazzle	Yes	1
	Minutemen Coffee Company	No	1
	CafePress	Yes	0
Content subscription or donation	DLive	Yes	3
	Entropy	No	2
	Streamlabs	Yes	2
	SubscribeStar	Yes	3
	Patreon	Yes	5
	YouTube Super Chat	Yes	1
Donations from purchase	Cameo	No	0
	AmazonSmile	Yes	0
	eBay for Charity	Yes	3

Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates how hate groups abuse financial technology. Organisations frequently use these platforms seeking to drive hostility against minority communities and exclude them from society. It also shows how different types of groups use a wide variety of types and numbers of platforms to raise funds, with particularly egregious white supremacist communities finding fewer homes for their fundraising activities online than anti-LGBTQ+ groups, for example, whose agendas are often masked behind the banner of Christian and evangelical activism.

More broadly our research demonstrates how the structure governing non-profits in the US helps to legitimise the activities of hate groups and provides technology platforms with a reason to allow their proliferation on their services to generate income.

The results prompt a wider reflection of the relationship that the US has with hate. In particular, it raises questions as to whether hatred against certain communities, such as LGBTQ+ people, Muslims and immigrants, is socially acceptable to the extent that fundraising for these types of organisations is still widely supported and enabled by technology platforms and their ability to hold non-profit status.

In thinking about where improvements could be made to prevent hate groups using financial platforms, it is worth recalling the barriers that white supremacists are now clearly facing in their online fundraising efforts. This finding raises the hope that, in time, with effective advocacy and public education, other types of hatred will be seen as unacceptable not only by a broad public but also by institutions and companies that might enable their fundraising and financial activities, willingly or inadvertently. Effective policies and enforcement can, and in some cases have, pushed dangerous organisations out of the mainstream world of fundraising online.

This work also highlights a number of concrete policy challenges facing the financial technology industry. Over half of the platforms we analysed have policies in place limiting their abuse by hate groups. However, 38% of the platforms studied did not have any terms of service governing their use by hate groups. Where possible, these companies should emulate their peers

to design policies for their services that shield them from use by hate groups. Companies that do have a track-record of enforcing their policies in certain instances, including GoFundMe and PayPal, should act as leaders in their industry and aim for comprehensive and timely action against hate actors on their sites.

Although a number of platforms do have policies against hate, the results suggest that enforcement of these policies is patchy. In total, groups we have identified as spreading hate used 83% of platforms with policies against hate, showing that platforms need to be more proactive and comprehensive in enforcing these policies.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have had very public struggles with the use of their platforms to drive violence, hatred and societal polarisation. Although further work is needed to improve their responses to hate and extremism, these platforms have adopted and to some degree upheld policies against these grave societal harms as a result of public scrutiny and pressure. Nonetheless, the findings of this report demonstrate that mainstream platforms like Facebook and YouTube still provide services to hate groups in ways that benefit them financially.

These loopholes within Facebook and YouTube, as well as the services provided by platforms in the financial services sector, require the same scrutiny as that given to topics around content moderation, which have resulted in meaningful policy changes.

Annex

Table 8 Classification of groups by the SPLC and the ADL

Group	SPLC	ADL
The Remembrance Project	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁵	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁶
Center for Immigration Studies	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁵	Group elevates anti-immigrant views ⁷⁶
Federation for American Immigration Reform	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁵	Extreme anti-immigrant group ⁷⁶
Numbers USA	Anti-immigration ⁷⁷	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁶
Dustin Inman Society	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁵	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁸
ProEnglish	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁵	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁹
Oregonians for Immigration Reform	Anti-immigrant ⁷⁵	Anti-immigrant ⁸⁰
We The People Rising	Anti-immigrant ⁸¹	Anti-immigrant ⁸²
Pass the Salt Ministries	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	Notes speaking at 'anti-semitic, racist' Christian Identity conference in 2008 ⁸⁴
All Scripture Baptist Church	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Alliance Defending Freedom	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
American College of Pediatricians	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
American Family Association	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	Religious right; notes Fischer's extreme anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric ⁸⁵
American Vision	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Center for Family and Human Rights	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Chalcedon Foundation	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Church Militant and St Michael's Media	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Eagle Forum	Hard right ⁸⁶	
Family Research Council	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	Notes extreme anti-LGBTQ+ views ⁸⁷
Family Watch International	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Liberty Counsel	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
MassResistance	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	

Table 8 Classification of groups by the SPLC and the ADL

Group	SPLC	ADL
National Organization for Marriage	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸⁸	
New Independent Fundamental Baptist Network	Anti-LGBTQ+ (referenced as Faithful World Baptist Church) ⁸³	
Pacific Justice Institute	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Ruth Institute	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Westboro Baptist Church	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	'Virulently homophobic, anti-Semitic hate group' ⁸⁹
World Congress of Families	Anti-LGBTQ+ ⁸³	
Act for America	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁰	Anti-Muslim ⁹¹
American Freedom Defense Initiative	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁰	
Center for Security Policy	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁰	Neo-conservative think tank that has 'promulgated... anti-Muslim conspiracy theories' ⁹²
Clarion Project	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁰	
David Horowitz Freedom Center	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁰	An 'ultra-conservative organization', Horowitz himself is 'anti-Muslim' ⁹³
The United West	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁰	Anti-Muslim ⁹⁴
American Patriots USA	White nationalist ⁹⁵	
American Revolution 2.0	Patriot group ⁹⁶	
Patriot Prayer	Far-right, 'frequently engaging in violence' ⁹⁷	'Espouse virulently anti-Muslim views' ⁹⁸
Patriot Wave	'Reflects the overlap between the so-called boogaloo movement and the racist far-right' ⁹⁹	A 'boogaloo Facebook group' ¹⁰⁰
Proud Boys	General hate ¹⁰¹	'Misogynistic, Islamophobic, transphobic and anti-immigration.' ¹⁰²
Rise Above Movement	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist ¹⁰³
Washington Three Percenters	Anti-government ¹⁰⁴	'Anti-government extremists... part of the militia movement' ¹⁰⁵

Table 8 Classification of groups by the SPLC and the ADL

Group	SPLC	ADL
Oath Keepers	Anti-government ¹⁰⁴	'Anti-government right-wing fringe organization... anti-government extremists' ¹⁰⁶
America First Students		'Was created by Groyper activists', who they call 'white supremacists' ¹⁰⁷
American Freedom Party	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist group ¹⁰⁸
American Guard		Hardcore white supremacists ¹⁰⁹
Groypers – (Nick Fuentes)	White nationalists ¹¹⁰	'Vocal supporters of white supremacist' ¹¹¹
New Jersey European Heritage Association	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist group ¹¹²
Patriot Front	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist group ¹¹³
VDARE	White nationalist ⁹⁵	Racist anti-immigrant; Brimelow is a 'white supremacist' ¹¹⁴
Identity Dixie	Neo-confederate propaganda; counts 'white nationalists' among members ¹¹⁵	
League of the South	Neo-confederate ¹¹⁶	White supremacist ¹¹⁷
American Identity Movement	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist ¹¹⁸
American Nazi Party	Neo-Nazi ¹²¹	Neo-Nazi ¹¹⁹
New Century Foundation with website American Renaissance	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist ¹²⁰
Atomwaffen Division	Neo-Nazi ¹²¹	Neo-Nazi ¹²²
Bowl Patrol or Bowl Gang		White supremacist ¹²³
Feuerkrieg Division	Neo-Nazi ¹²¹	Neo-Nazi ¹²⁴
Keystone United	Racist skinhead ¹²⁵	White supremacist ¹²⁶
Knights of the Ku Klux Klan	Ku Klux Klan ¹²⁷	White supremacist ¹²⁸
Legion of Saint Ambrose	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist ¹²⁹
National Alliance	Neo-Nazi ¹²¹	White supremacist ¹³⁰
National Socialist Movement	Neo-Nazi ¹²¹	Neo-Nazi ¹³¹

Table 8 Classification of groups by the SPLC and the ADL

Group	SPLC	ADL
National Justice Party	White nationalist ⁹⁵	
Northwest Front	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist ¹⁰⁰
NSC [National Socialist Club] – 131	White nationalist ⁹⁵	Neo-Nazi ¹³³
Order 15		White supremacist ¹³⁴
Shield Wall Network	White nationalist ⁹⁵	White supremacist ¹³⁵
The Base	White nationalist ⁹⁵	Militant neo-Nazi ¹³⁶
Vorherrschaft Division		White supremacist ¹³⁷
Kingdom Identity Ministries	Christian identity ¹³⁸	Christian identity ¹³⁹
Nation of Islam	Black separatist ¹⁴⁰	Black nationalist ¹⁴¹
Institute for Historical Review	Holocaust denial ¹⁴³	Holocaust denial ¹⁴²
A Voice for Men	Male supremacy ¹⁴⁴	

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