

## Russian social media 'bots' push GMO-autism link, new report shows

Social media accounts sponsored by the Kremlin have whipped up fears about western food and water supplies, analysis shows.

Scores of tweets sent from accounts controlled by Russia have portrayed genetically modified (GM) foods as dangerous, and attacked companies that deal in the technology. Most of the accounts purported to be run by westerners. Experts say that the tweets are part of a bigger campaign to spread disinformation in the West.

Accounts known to have been controlled by a troll farm linked to the Kremlin pushed baseless claims of a link between GM crops and autism.

Dozens of the accounts also stoked unease over the safety of glyphosate, a common weedkiller. One tweet read: "Massachusetts Institute of Technology doctor reveals link between #glyphosate, GMOs and the autism epidemic." One message suggested that fluoride in water caused cancer.

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Renée DiResta, a specialist in disinformation who has advised the US Congress, said that the anti-GM messages were part of a tapestry of disinformation aimed at discrediting accepted science .... Analysis conducted for The Times suggests that discussion of GM online was being manipulated by automated social media accounts, or bots. Ms DiResta collected about 241,000 tweets and retweets from the discussion on Twitter about GMO over 60 days.

**Read full, original article:** [Kremlin bots sow fear in West about GM crops and vaccines](#)