

Fears of gene editing in the US could be stoked by Russian disinformation attacks

[There's a] risk to gene drive research that has flown under the radar. This threat combines legitimate concerns about the safety of gene drives with skepticism about science and information warfare. Russia, or another U.S. adversary, could use the megaphone of social media to stoke worries about genome editing in the U.S.

...

As [a report](#) prepared for the U.S. Senate shows, Russia used every major social media platform, including Snapchat, Pinterest, and Tumblr, to target specific demographic groups in an effort to influence the 2016 presidential election. Similar information warfare tactics could be used to exploit Americans' [lack of knowledge](#) and opposition to particular forms of genome editing.

...

Such a campaign would be designed to fuel false stories, undermine the public's trust in science, and reduce the U.S.'s national economic competitiveness by dealing a blow to life sciences research. It could reduce public support, and possibly funding, for basic research in gene drives.

...

Lots of journalists report scientific breaking news in ways that are rigorous and accessible. Readers would do well to use them as their go-to sources for their science and tech news. That isn't to say that social media platforms can't play an important role in communicating scientific developments. They can. But a healthy dose of user skepticism may help mitigate the risk of weaponized bionarratives damaging important scientific advances.

Read full, original post: [Don't Let Russia Undermine Trust in Science](#)