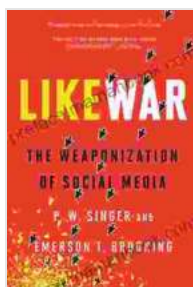


# LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media

The term "likewar" was coined in 2011 by the US military to describe the use of social media to influence public opinion and advance political goals. Since then, likewars have become increasingly common, as governments and political parties have realized the power of social media to shape the narrative and mobilize supporters.

Likewars are fought on a variety of platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. They typically involve the use of bots, trolls, and other automated or fake accounts to spread propaganda, amplify messages, and attack opponents. Likewars can also be used to create division and sow discord within a target population.



## Likewar: The Weaponization of Social Media by P. W. Singer

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 7286 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 421 pages



One of the most high-profile examples of a likewar was the Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election. The Russian government used a network of bots and trolls to spread disinformation about Hillary

Clinton and promote Donald Trump. This effort was successful in influencing public opinion and may have helped Trump win the election.

Likewars are not limited to the United States. They have been used in a variety of countries around the world, including Brazil, India, and the United Kingdom. In many cases, likewars have been used to suppress dissent and silence political opponents.

The rise of likewars poses a serious threat to democracy. Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to inform and engage the public. However, it can also be used to deceive and manipulate people. Likewars are a reminder that social media is a double-edged sword. It can be used for good or for evil, and it is up to us to decide how we use it.

## **The Tactics of Likewar**

Likewars are fought using a variety of tactics, including:

- **Bots:** Bots are automated accounts that are used to spread propaganda and amplify messages. They can be programmed to post on a variety of topics, and they can be used to create the illusion of support for a particular candidate or cause.
- **Trolls:** Trolls are people who are paid to post inflammatory or disruptive comments on social media. They often try to provoke reactions from other users and create division within a target population.
- **Fake accounts:** Fake accounts are created to impersonate real people. They can be used to spread disinformation, promote

propaganda, and attack opponents. They can also be used to create the illusion of support for a particular candidate or cause.

- **Disinformation:** Disinformation is false or misleading information that is spread intentionally to deceive people. It can be used to damage the reputation of a particular candidate or cause, or to promote a particular agenda.
- **Amplification:** Amplification is the process of spreading a message to a wider audience. It can be used to promote propaganda, amplify disinformation, or attack opponents. Amplification can be achieved through the use of bots, trolls, and fake accounts.

## The Impact of Likewars

Likewars can have a significant impact on public opinion and political outcomes. They can be used to spread disinformation, promote propaganda, and attack opponents. They can also be used to create division and sow discord within a target population.

The impact of likewars can be particularly harmful in democratic societies. Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to inform and engage the public. However, likewars can undermine the public's trust in social media and in the democratic process itself.

## How to Protect Yourself from Likewars

There are a number of things that you can do to protect yourself from likewars:

- **Be aware of the tactics of likewars.** The more you know about how likewars are fought, the better equipped you will be to spot them and

avoid being influenced by them.

- **Be critical of the information you see on social media.** Not everything you see on social media is true. Before you share or believe something, take the time to verify it.
- **Be mindful of your own behavior on social media.** Don't share or post anything that you wouldn't want others to see. Remember that everything you post on social media is public and can be used against you.
- **Support independent journalism.** Independent journalists are essential for holding those in power accountable and for providing the public with accurate information. Support independent journalism by subscribing to a newspaper or magazine, or by donating to a non-profit news organization.

Likewars are a serious threat to democracy. They can be used to spread disinformation, promote propaganda, and attack opponents. They can also be used to create division and sow discord within a target population. It is important to be aware of the tactics of likewars and to be critical of the information you see on social media. We must also support independent journalism and hold those in power accountable for their actions.

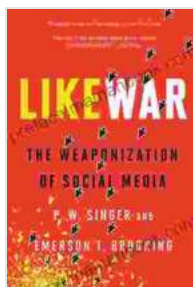
### **Image Alt Text**

Image 1: A group of people using social media on their phones. The image is used to illustrate the use of social media in likewars.

Image 2: A troll posting inflammatory comments on social media. The image is used to illustrate the use of trolls in likewars.

Image 3: A fake account being used to spread disinformation on social media. The image is used to illustrate the use of fake accounts in likewars.

Image 4: A group of people protesting against likewars. The image is used to illustrate the importance of standing up to likewars.



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