Nodes are the leading voices in the ISIS Twittersphere. They enjoy a prominent status and are the primary content creators for the network. A group of two or three clustered users will often swap comedic memes, news articles, and official ISIS tweets, allowing them to pool followers and more easily spread content both to new audiences and throughout their network.

Amplifiers largely do not generate new content but rather retweet and “favorite” material from popular users. Ultimately, because they post little, if any, original content, it is often unclear whether these accounts correspond to real-life ISIS sympathizers or are programmed to post automatically.

Nearly 1/3 of the tracked accounts are purportedly operated by women. Most American ISIS supporters online communicate in English. Many accounts use avatars of black flags, lions, and green birds (a symbol of martyrs). Increasingly avatars feature Americans arrested on terrorism charges, killed waging jihad abroad, or committing attacks in the US.

Shout-out accounts primarily introduce new, pro-ISIS accounts to the community and promote newly created accounts of previously suspended users, allowing them to quickly regain their pre-suspension status. A unique innovation of the online ISIS scene, they tend to have the largest followings in the Twitter landscape and play a pivotal role in the community’s resilience, despite frequent account suspensions.

New research & analysis from the Program on Extremism
The George Washington University

Read the full report: ISIS in America
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