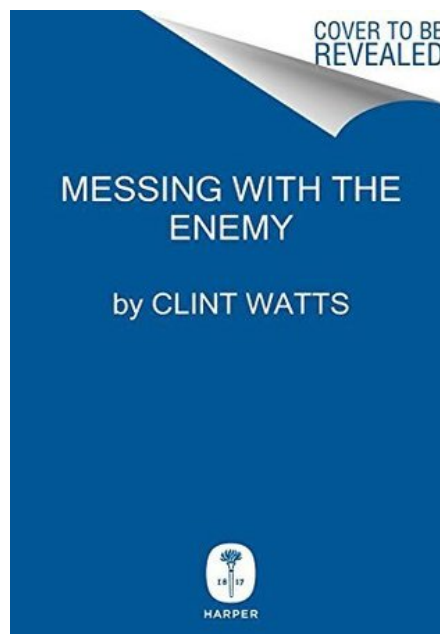




Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News

Clint Watts

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News

Clint Watts

Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News Clint Watts

A former FBI Special Agent and leading cyber-security expert offers a devastating and essential look at the misinformation campaigns, fake news, and electronic espionage operations that have become the cutting edge of modern warfare—and how we can protect ourselves and our country against them.

Clint Watts electrified the nation when he testified in front of the House Intelligence Committee regarding Russian interference in the 2016 election. In *Messing with the Enemy*, the cyber and homeland security expert introduces us to a frightening world in which terrorists and cyber criminals don't hack your computer, they hack your mind. Watts reveals how these malefactors use your information and that of your friends and family to work for them through social media, which they use to map your social networks, scour your world affiliations, and master your fears and preferences.

Thanks to the schemes engineered by social media manipulators using you and your information, business executives have coughed up millions in fraudulent wire transfers, seemingly good kids have joined the Islamic State, and staunch anti-communist Reagan Republicans have cheered the Russian government's hacking of a Democratic presidential candidate's e-mails. Watts knows how they do it because he's mirrored their methods to understand their intentions, combat their actions, and coopt their efforts.

Watts examines a particular social media platform—from Twitter to internet Forums to Facebook to LinkedIn—and a specific bad actor—from al Qaeda to the Islamic State to the Russian and Syrian governments—to illuminate exactly how social media tracking is used for nefarious purposes. He explains how he's learned, through his successes and his failures, to engage with hackers, terrorists, and even the Russians—and how these interactions have generated methods of fighting back. Shocking, funny, and eye-opening, *Messing with the Enemy* is a deeply urgent guide for living safe and smart in a super-connected world.

Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News Details

Date : Published May 29th 2018 by Harper

ISBN :

Author : Clint Watts

Format : Kindle Edition 304 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Politics, Cultural, Russia, History, War



[Download Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media Wor ...pdf](#)



[Read Online Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media W ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of
Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News Clint Watts**

From Reader Review *Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News* for online ebook

Rayrumtum says

This book by a former FBI agent focuses on the use of social media platforms by terrorists, WIKIPEDIA, Alt-Right and Russian operatives conducting information operations against democracy in the US and other countries. The book emphasizes how the internet greatly enhances the success of these operations as compared to the old days. Not only is the internet a fast and cheap way to spread disinformation, but it also makes it easier to target specific audiences. The Russians may not be so interested in Trump per se as they are in undermining the government's legitimacy regardless of who is in power. The Russian use of thousands of automatic bots is used to create a sense of a majority view even though that is in no way the opinion. The main Russian media themes are: alleging corruption or incompetence, social commentary to foment religious, racial, and socio-economic divisions, to undermine capitalism talking about wealth disparity and imperialism, and to just sow fear so people can't determine truth from fiction.

The author describes an available tool called Hamilton 68 which allows you to see the themes Russian information operators are running at that time. A similar one has been set up for the Germans known as Artikel 38.

He believes the notion of wisdom of crowds is no longer relevant. Rather it is overwhelmed by what he calls social media nationalism, click bait populism, and a general disregard for expertise so everyone can hide in their own bubbles without hearing conflicting views.

He ridicules US efforts to combat that because of bureaucratic inertia and lack of creativity. One leaves the book feeling depressed. How can we do something before it is too late for our democracy? Although this leaves a feeling of hopelessness, people should at least read this book to find out what is at stake.

Mary says

I found this book to be a "page-turner" but not in a good way: I kept flipping ahead to see how many more pages there were to the end of the next section and I must confess to skimming a bit from time to time. Surprisingly, the book also lacks an index. All the same, I'm glad I made it through because, otherwise, I wouldn't have come across this great sentence on page 236, "... Starbucks in the social media era has become the place where people come together to communicate with other people who aren't there."

Harry Allagree says

Having seen former FBI analyst Clint Watts a number of times on MSNBC as a commentator, and liked his forthrightness, I was interested to see what he had to say in his book. He writes well & that came in handy a number of times because the book contains a lot of technical jargon. But he spells out definitions & uses helpful acronyms.

Overall, he shows how the internet & its evolving tools have been valuable, especially in dealing with terrorism. Having worked within the government, he makes it clear that it's a whole lot easier to do work outside the bureaucracy than within it. He has a fascinating background & certainly the creds to demonstrate that he knows what he's talking about.

Watts shows the effects, good & (mostly) not-so-good, of social media today. He particularly uses two examples: the rise of ISIS & the election & aftermath of the "useful idiot" (his term, not mine) who currently occupies the White House. Frankly, it appears that the U.S. is at this moment in deep doo-doo, though Watts suggests ways in which each of us could work to turn that around.

A few pithy quotes:

"Ultimately, America's problem in counterinfluence [vs. authoritarians of any ilk, esp. Russia] is that we don't know what to say, because we don't know what we believe in."

"...it won't be the Russians who come to dismantle our collective psyche; it will be Americans willfully doing it to one another in pursuit of their own personal gain."

"Clickbait populism -- the promotion of popular content, opinions, and the personas that voice them -- now sets the agenda...Clickbait populism drives another critical emerging current: social media nationalism...This social media nationalism provides its virtual citizens with shelter from reality and replaces real-world compromise with the collective virtual pursuit of shared preferences...[These] have led to a third phenomenon:...the death of expertise...social media users...have selectively chosen information and expertise they like over that which is true or even real..."

"...we must remember that people still have a choice. The backbone of preference bubbles, social media nations, and global commerce is ultimately trust...The erosion of trust in social media may lead the less educated to rely more heavily on their preference bubbles, and the more educated to become apathetic and disengaged from democracy..."

"American democracy, a highly imperfect system, remains the best chance for citizens to thrive and strive, and I will continue to support and pursue its best interests, in both the physical and virtual worlds."

Lizzie says

I'm torn, because this is a fantastic, accessible collection of the latest research on weaponized information, disinformation, propaganda, and online radicalization. Watts follows the Russia disinformation arc from early efforts to boost Syria through the U.S. presidential elections in 2016 and onto the current state of affairs. The heart of this analysis is accessible through this fantastic article at War on the Rocks coauthored by JM Berger and Andrew Weisburd. Watts presents as close as possible to an even-handed take in this messed up American political moment, and his contempt for conspiracists ranges from xenophobic authoritarianism to credulous anti-vaccine activism. The point is not so much the impact of Russian misinformation campaigns on the 2016 election, although Watts has a hypothesis, but rather that the Russian government has been able, in true judo-champion fashion, to turn the interests and activities of U.S. citizens against each other and against the liberal institutions that lie at the heart of our way of life. Watts' most critical point is also his truest- Russia will not bring about the end of the U.S. republic- Americans will. It's up to us to change our behavior and survive, or not.

The book's narrative thread relies upon Watts as a first person narrator, and it is here that I was less impressed. The Carfizzi anecdote might lend credence to Watts' contention that he is personally, constitutionally suited to the role of 'messaging with the enemy,' but I've never had a taste for the cruel or the juvenile. Watts' later Cassandra-like litany of all the times he was right, he was ahead of the curve, and he was ignored was absolutely right but unlikely to win him any friends. For all his contempt for government

bureaucracies and the vast majority of the people who staff them, perhaps it is only another similarly-ignored bureaucrat who can really feel his pain on that one. Regardless, the litany is again juvenile and detracts from what is otherwise a very serious and thoughtful book with a bibliography well-worth plumbing.

Ailith Twinning says

"Messing with the Enemy" is one story at the beginning. It was mildly amusing, wish there had been more of it.

The closing arguments in the last chapter are actually rather nice - basically "We need more community, in real life."

Everything in between is basically "I'm kinda like Will Graham from Red Dragon/Hannibal (the series)." but for terrorists. There's an absolute and willfully blind faith in the USA. Everything it does is de-facto in service to freedom, democracy and righteousness. Snowden is a coward and/or a villain, Russia is still the Great Imperial Enemy, the US is incapable of Psy-Ops (nevermind that we jointly invented modern propaganda), and Manning was a well intentioned, but thoroughly wrong, child who was ultimately vindicated (no mention whatever of the conditions of detention, the results of detention, or indeed, the WHY of detention). And the greatest enemy of the US of all? Americans that don't believe what they're told, especially deliberate lies. And his little "Of course I'd capture, torture and kill if ordered - because he's a terrorist. I wouldn't even think about it."

Dude. . . just. . . go fuck yourself. I'd say check up on US history, but I suspect you know, if anything, more about our crimes than I do, with more certainty, and you just support them.

You got one thing absolutely right tho mate, you do indeed have the mind of a terrorist.

J. says

I liked the background, experience, and expertise of the author. I appreciated the first five chapters of the book as a matter of curiosity about Islamic terrorism and I believe he gave it thoughtful and and balanced treatment. You won't find any nationalist fear mongering or racism in this book which I appreciated.

I really liked chapters 6-10 where he laid out his thesis on social media and it's uses, Russian use of the internet and how pervasive it is and precautions we should all take when using/social media and excellent advice about how to evaluate and protect yourself while using social media.

I especially appreciated his solution for using social media as an effective and thoughtful tool to continue fostering and protecting American values and the responsibilities of citizenship by interacting more with each other day-to-day.

I liked his description of what a solution might provide and look like but found myself longing to hear his ideas and more of a detailed focus on how this might be accomplished. In any case I'd say it's a good read and social media users and the public generally will find it enlightening and useful. I also liked his thesis about how the Russians did in fact use social media to attack our democracy and attempt and in fact influence the outcome of our election without casting aspersions about who did or didn't win as apparently the Russian goal was more about sowing discord and mistrust than who won. Their goal was to discredit to

the world and mostly to Americans the effectiveness of democracy as an effective and non corrupt system of government for the people of America or anywhere else for that matter. I do recommend the book.

Sandra Reyes says

Messing with The Enemy by Clint Watts was a gift from my husband for graduation. The title of the book was what really intrigued me. At first it was difficult to get into because it was hard to keep track of the terrorists he talked about and the various terrorist groups they came from. This book was crazy! I liked how Watts built up to the good stuff, making sure you understood everything and how it all tied together. We all love social media, but I don't think anyone really thinks about how it could be used as a weapon against us. It can, it will, and it has. Look at what happened in the 2016 election. This is not the first time that Russia has threatened our democracy through cyber attacks, but this time using troll armies and "black" propaganda, to name a few. We were too stupid to see what they were doing to us. This book opened my eyes in so many ways. I'll share just a few of Watts' most jaw-dropping statements but there is so much stuff in this book that I wish I could share but IG doesn't give me enough space:

"The Russians didn't have to hack election machines; they hacked American minds."?

"The erosion of trust in social media may lead the less educated to rely more heavily on their preference bubbles, and the more educated to become apathetic and disengaged from democracy. If that happens, democracies will lose ground to authoritarians, Science will retreat under attack from zealots, and countrymen will turn on one another, to propel their own personal preferences over the greater good." Stay informed, be careful what "news" you're sharing, try to get out of your filter and preference bubbles. Watch out for those algorithms. And STAY. INFORMED.

Elmwoodblues says

goodreads is about the deepest extent to which my 'social media' footprint goes, so there was a 'told-ya-so' aspect to picking up this book. However, what were once just sad small anecdotes about the drama and danger of Facebook etc, has for me become a question of just how we all got so divided so quickly; there are bright shining clues in this book.

Clint Watts has a dense, sometimes jumbled writing style, and was not compelling enough as a character for me to enjoy some of his self-congratulations. Fortunately, he is generous in quoting other books (from de Tocqueville *Democracy in America* to *The Long Tail* and *Machine, Platform, Crowd*) for insight as to how we got here. I take it to come from one word: **preference**. Watts writes:

"Unbridled preference, when accumulated on a global scale, has torn the fabric of societies, crippled democratic institutions, and polarized audiences ...turned smart crowds into dumb mobs, preferred fictions over actual facts...an environment where humans have access to more information than ever but actually understand less about the physical world."

A quote from *The Death of Expertise* by Tom Nichols adds to the looking-glass aspect of our divided self-delusion:

"...any assertion of expertise produces an explosion of anger from certain quarters of the American public, who immediately complain that such claims are nothing more than fallacious 'appeals to authority,' sure signs of dreadful 'elitism,' and an obvious effort to use credential to stifle dialogue."

It is indeed too easy for any of us to, as Watts says, '...with a few clicks.. and a Google search or two, (think we are) as smart as a medical doctor, a dietitian, or (our) elected leaders.'

Ultimately, there is no simple, definitive 'surviving' strategy laid out by Watts, though knowledge of the dangers is a start. Russian use of confusion and disinformation, division and relentless obfuscation, is perhaps little different than advertising snake oil was 100 years ago, cigarettes 30 years ago, Enron stock 10

years ago. Caveat emptor, and we are all buyers.

Kien Pham says

Ok, I didn't know when he said "messaging with the enemy," he meant it in a pranking sense. I saw the author in Bill Maher during the 5-6 minutes sit down following the monologue and he was very out together and eloquent. He didn't come across that way in the book. He seemed juvenile, just like his pranks. I rather read something else right now.

Scull17 says

A good overview of how al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, ISIS, WikiLeaks, the Kremlin, etc. have all used the internet and social media to influence and manipulate the public. Turns out the author is quite adept at this manipulating business as well: a tangible example of this is his Twitter chats with terrorist Omar Hammami; the exchanges show how they are designed in order for Hammami to eventually discredit himself.

The book, however, suffers from repetition of its ideas (and sentences: by my count, the author repeated three times how no one was interested in his research so he had to go back to his day job; and three times he mentioned that he and his colleagues were getting poorer), but I do think the societal ills outlined in its pages are serious and the U.S. government needs to support the work being done by the author and people like him.

As for the 2016 presidential election, the author asserts: "Without the Russian influence effort, I believe Trump would not have even been within striking distance of Clinton on Election Day." And yet, curiously, just a few sentences down (on the same page 161) we get: "No one will ever be able to prove without a doubt whether Russia did or did not win the election for Donald Trump." So if you can't prove it, why do you believe it?

The book also has its LOL moments: the phone pranks (immature, yes, but the "wild dogs running around the meat plant" killed me); the description of young analysts languishing in defense contracting hell; and that psychological disease called Facebook-envy.

Thank you Goodreads Giveaways and Clint Watts for this book. From it I learned that "Americans appear, at least on social media, to be absolutely miserable, downtrodden, victims of their excess and unfortunate to be alive." Lol.

Mel says

Clint Watts, former student of West Point and officer in the Army, has been combatting terrorism and studying terrorists as part of the FBI and beyond. He is such an interesting character with a deep understanding of how the internet and more specifically how social media has allowed recruitment across borders, hacking into government databases/emails and the swaying of national elections, and the spread of conspiracies and Fake News™. Definitely worth a read for any other avid followers current events and breaking news cycles.

A says

Imagine if in the title “Russians” was replaced with for example “Africans” or “Arabs”

What a disgusting display of casual racism and xenophobia.

Donna Hines says

We are under attack by more than one perpetrator and it's a mental mind game that requires intelligence, expertise, and skill.

Manipulation, propaganda, and the abuse of power and control is at the heart of the matter.

For those not understanding how narcissists and those with personality trait disorders operate I can give you some clues: manipulation, gaslighting, mirroring, projection, blame, shame, intimidation, threats, blackmail, corruption, smoke and mirrors, dependency, isolation, silence of victims.

How's that...

Well look troll armies are in full force online.

Hecklers, Honeypots (sexy lil things), and Hacker accounts are popping up literally all over.

Yet, our country's response is to sit and wait. To review and take notes. To line up the red tape and limit what our intelligence agencies can and can't do.

Social bots are using algorithms to create personas and content that steal your information.

Wiki Leaks and other individuals such as Chelsea Manning (Former Bradley Manning) and Edward Snowden have used the secretive information to disseminate across all boundaries.

Panama Papers uncovered "a 2 bn trail leads all the way to Vladimir Putin."

Hidden money in off shore accounts, spear phishing, inciting fear into the minds of our nation is now upon us.

How we respond is up to the level of the information being understood, produced, and processed.

Fake media?

Well, I will tell you don't believe everything you hear.

I can tell you from experience narcissists are experts at being con men and women. They prey upon those who will not challenge them. They hope they can tell half truths and falsehoods just long enough to devalue and discard after acquiring the supply, attention, and pedestal placement they seek.

It's use and abuse at its finest.

I often say I spent 13 yrs married to the worst type of narcissist 'malignant narcissist' and now I can't stomach to watch our nation under attack.

While I cannot diagnose 'DT' from this location, I can tell you the same warning signs that finally appeared for me I hope also appears for our civilians.

"People use social media as a forum for gaining social validation" says Kaspersky in a Pittsburgh study.

"Social media makes everyone believe they are an expert on everything..."

We cannot allow the American Dream, our Democracy, Our Freedoms to falter.

We must educate, we must vote, we must come together peacefully to protest, we must contact those in office and voice our concerns.

The elite, the privileged, the powerful and corrupt shall not gain a foot hold or we are all in trouble.

Maggie says

This was a difficult book for me to read but I'm glad I did. There is far reaching insight into social media and how it affects what we read and in many ways, believe. I also found myself thinking about my older brother who was a Marine commander and had the same impish sense of humor and ability to "mess with" anyone about anything just to get a reaction. My bother was killed in 1996; I'm sure he would have had a great deal to say about the 2016 election and the Russians as well as North Korea were he living. Hope he is praying for us and our democracy.

I highly recommend Ft. Zumwalt graduates, students, teachers, staff and personnel take the time and opportunity to read what this Ft. Zumwalt North High School graduate has to say. Clint Watts is to be commended for his research and work on understanding how the enemy thinks and acts. Watts has warned us; he has sounded the alarm. Who among us is listening? How will we respond? I, for one, will continue to read a wide variety of published news articles reviewed by editors and publishers. I will continue to educate myself on current events. I will listen to those who do not share my political beliefs and attempt to engage in respectful discourse. And, most important, I will vote.

D'Juan Eastman says

Lying about known facts makes it hard to believe the authors other accounts. The chapter on wikileaks makes the book read like a!teenage history.
