

Countering Hypermedia Seduction for Terrorist Recruiting

Katharina von Knop
Freie Universität Berlin

Terrorist groups use the Internet to drive every aspect of their business: Psychological Warfare, Data Mining, Fund-Raising, Recruitment and Mobilization, Planning & Coordination and Internet Indoctrination. Radicalization of individuals is a group dynamic process often activated or boosted by radical Islamic websites. Terrorism and anti-terrorism are based on narratives and which story is able to persuade the majority of people will win. I argue that the West is losing the war on terrorism because our story is not persuasive enough and that we do not use the gateway of mass persuasion, the internet effectively enough. Fighting radical terrorist groups, it will take more than firepower to win the battle of ideas which has to be fought in the digital battlefield. The terrorist infrastructure and their belief system has to be attacked on air, web and ground.

The goal of this paper is an analysis of possible tactics tailored for countering Islamist narratives in the Internet and to emphasize elements of strategy for countering Islamist narratives. The first part will provide a tactical analysis discussing methods of neutralization of terrorist websites and chat-rooms and the second part will discuss the Web as a Counter-propaganda tool. The basis of the findings has been a broad analysis of political internet campaigns.