

Content sources

[1] <https://archive.is/20150311180404/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121564928060441097> "It was started by Christopher Poole in his Long Island bedroom in 2003 when he was 15 years old."

[2] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "One of these users was a fifteen-year-old kid who lived with his mother in Westchester, New York, named Christopher Poole."

[3] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/09/25/absolutely-everything-you-need-to-know-to-understand-4chan-the-internets-own-bogeyman/> Huge swaths of the site are dedicated to anime, manga and other Japanese cultural outputs, a legacy of the site's creation in 2003. When 4chan's founder, Christopher ("moot") Poole, created the site in October of that year, he drew largely on the community in one of Something Awful's anime forums. Poole, 15 at the time, is now in his mid-20s.

[4] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "One of these users was a fifteen-year-old kid who lived with his mother in Westchester, New York, named Christopher Poole. And at the time, he was deeply unhappy. "I was overweight bordering on obese," he wrote on his blog years later, "drank two liters of cola every day, spent a good 6–12 hours per day playing video games in a bedroom with blacked-out windows, and rarely went outdoors or socialized."

[5] <https://archive.is/20150311180404/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121564928060441097> "He was a fan of the popular Japanese image Web site 2chan and wanted to create a version for American audiences."

[6] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Raspberry Heaven users often skimmed 2chan for weird, odd, or gross pictures and then posted the links in the IRC or on SA. One of the teens who loved doing this was moot."

[7] <https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "4chan is a simple image-based bulletin board where anyone can post comments and share images."

[8] <https://archive.is/20150311180404/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121564928060441097> "'It's like Craigslist -- hugely simple and highly useful,' says David Weinberger, a fellow at Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet and Society."

[9] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Items like titled threads, usernames, elaborate upload interfaces, and an archive system organized chronologically were jettisoned on 4chan."

[10] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "In a moment that would have profound historical consequences, the fifteen-year-old translated the Japanese Nanashii ("Nameless") into "Anonymous," and "Anonymous" became the default username on 4chan."

[11] <https://www.technologyreview.com/2010/08/23/200890/radical-opacity/> Poole recalls how Babel Fish translated the kanji signifying Futaba's default username: "Nameless." He changed it to "Anonymous," and that, more or less, was that.

[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "/b/ is the first board we started with, and it is, in many ways, the beating heart of the website."

[13] <https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/sites/4chan> In 4chan's first months, the imageboards consisted of: /b/ – Anime/Random (later split to [/a/](#) – [anime](#), with [/b/](#) renamed to just 'Random')

[14] <https://web.archive.org/web/20031008225412/http://img.4chan.net/b/imgboard.htm>

[15] <https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "4chan opened to the public on October 1st, 2003."

[16] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "...he registered 4chan.net on October 1, 2003, because, according to him, pant.su (Japanese for "pants") was taken."

[17] <https://4chan.org/4channews.php/?all#118> THE NEXT CHAPTER by moot - 1/21/15 @ 11:00AM EST

(...) It was truly an honor to serve as 4chan's founding administrator

[18] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Moot also hung out in one of the many satellite chat rooms orbiting SA, an Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channel named Raspberry Heaven."

[19] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2XQOuKvHkk> "...and uh posted it to an IRC channel of about 20 people and from the IRC channel of 20 people you know we've never advertised the site and so that that channel of 20 people uh you know spread it and it's all been Word of Mouth..."

[20] <https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "The site began as a small image dump for those communities that soon spread like wildfire and garnered enough traffic and popularity to become its own fully fledged community."

[21] <https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "Different boards are dedicated to different topics, from Japanese anime, manga, and culture to videogames, music, and photography."

[22] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...the first step is going to the website if you are not already on it the URL is HTTP column4 ch.org this is the main page of 4chan.org which allows you to go into the individual boards a board is like a section with a topic and everybody should talk about that topic for example travel the most active board is random which allows any topic and is under the board letter of SLB SL which you can find on the main page..."

[23] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2XQOuKvHkk> "...so the way the software works is that you can only have something like uh 160 threads that exist at any given time on a specific board and for every new thread that's posted an old one gets bumped off..."

[24] <https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "To start a new thread, you must upload an image. 4chan is primarily an imageboard after all!"

[25]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...4 Chen operates an image board which means every thread starter must also upload an image as well as text... by clicking reply you can view all the replies to the thread and post your own reply if you wish..."

[26] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...now you are wondering how to add your own reply no doubt you have seen the form at the top of the page this is where you add a reply..."

[27]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2XQOuKvHkk> "...for every new thread that's posted an old one gets bumped off and it it's kind of led to this you know this is this like constant waterfall where if something you post doesn't resonate with the community doesn't get responded to and bumped up it falls off the site..."

[28]<https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "To post as 'Anonymous', simply do not fill in the [Name] field when submitting content."

[29]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...the name field should normally be left blank which will result in posting under the name of anonymous... email is a field that should never be filled in... again subject is a field that never needs to be filled and as nobody uses it..."

[30]<https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "To reply to a thread with an image of your own, click the [Reply] link and fill in the post box as you normally would, making sure to specify an image for attachment."

[31]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...the comment box is the actual message that will be posted on the board here is where you should write your reply..."

[32]<https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "If you're using our inline extension, simply click the post number you'd like to reference and it will bring up a Quick Reply window for you to write your response in."

[33]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...if you want to reference or reply to another post on the thread click the reply number shown here this will add a line of text to your reply box at the top two forward arrows followed by the number you clicked..."

[34]<https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "When this limit is reached, a thread will no longer "bump" to the top of the board, causing the thread to descend through the pages until it is bumped off of the last page and pruned."

[35]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2XQOuKvHkk> "...for every new thread that's posted an old one gets bumped off and it it's kind of led to this you know this is this like constant waterfall where if something you post doesn't resonate with the community doesn't get responded to and bumped up it falls off the site and there's no archive and so it's it's kind of like lost to time..."

[36]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLyzVPaO4pY> "...on the main page is where you can create a thread when creating a thread the same rules should be followed..."

[37]<https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "To start a new thread, you must upload an image."

[38]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "...we have a very very very liberal kind of blanket no advertising policy... anything that looks remotely like advertising is especially spamming uh other image board websites... and so we've just decided to ban it outright..."

[39] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "At the beginning of 2006, the ten million get had been achieved, and by March, the twenty-six million get. By more traditional metrics, 4chan was receiving somewhere between 900,000 and 3 million unique page views a month."

[40] <https://archive.is/20150311180404/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121564928060441097> 2008 "Since then it has grown to more than 3 million monthly users, according to Mr. Poole."

[41] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wluw_Ut3unA 19:03

[42] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzRYYTTcQpo> "...in lie of these kind of structural barriers Community has erected these kind of sociocultural barriers to to understand you know to understand the community to to the language um and how to kind of act on the site and if you if you were a new user and you post I mean there's this concept of lurk more people will identify that immediately and will kind of like reject you..."

[43] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wluw_Ut3unA

[44] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "Now, six and a half years later, over seven million people are using it, contributing over 700,000 posts per day."

[45] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2XQOuKvHkk> "...so the way the software works is that you can only have something like uh 160 threads that exist at any given time on a specific board and for every new thread that's posted an old one gets bumped off and it it's kind of led to this you know this is this like constant waterfall where if something you post doesn't resonate with the community doesn't get responded to and bumped up it falls off the site..."

[46] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "What the site's known for, because it has this environment, is it's fostered the creation of a lot of Internet phenomena, viral videos and whatnot, known as 'memes.'"

[47] The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "Speaking to the ubiquity of trolling memes across social media, danah boyd (2017) goes so far as to argue that 4chan helped create meme culture as we now understand it; the ephemeral nature of the site, the result of limited server space, demanded that older content constantly be replaced by new."

[48] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The fast-paced way it churned through content and voted only the best posts to live meant that it began generating art that had literally evolved to survive as sufficiently funny, interesting, or attention-grabbing."

[49] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2XQOuKvHkk> "...and so it's led to that almost of survival of like the best ideas are the ones that really you that resonate with the community and stick are the ones that you see again and again again and that's how you know aim is born on 4chan..."

[50] <https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "Posts were deleted when they stopped getting new engagement, which typically happened quickly, especially if the messages failed to provoke."

[51] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "For years, one 4chan image represented the beta's ideology more completely than any other: Pepe the Frog."

[52] <https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "The QAnon movement is believed to have originated on its /pol/ board in late October 2017, as well as several popular memes including lolcats, rickrolling, wojaks, and Pepe the Frog."

[53] <https://4chan.org/faq#whojan> Moderators are individuals selected to perform general site maintenance. They may delete posts globally, ban users, sticky and close threads, etc. (...) "Janitors" are a class between "end user" and "moderator." They are given access to the report system and may delete posts on their assigned board(s), as well as submit ban requests.

[54] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxRNRi7bOSI> "...you can pretend the moderation on 4chan has always been very uh hands off to put it lightly um and I I and I I think that's a good thing right..."

[55] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzRYTTcQpo> "...well there's some basic rules that just say like don't don't be totally crazy and break the law um um we're still figuring that one out okay..."

[56] <https://4chan.org/rules>

[57] <https://rulesoftheinternet.com/>

[58] <https://www.dictionary.com/culture/slang/rules-of-the-internet> The founder of 4chan, Christopher Poole, has said that the rules became so popular that users tended to ignore 4chan's rules in favor of their own homemade *rules of the internet*.

[59] <https://rulesoftheinternet.com/>

[60] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "To encourage this, he added many new niche boards to discuss comics, cooking, music, LGBT issues, science, toys, video games, and so forth."

[61] e.g. <https://4chan.org/4channews?all#96> Moot 02/29/08 – The most obvious change over these past few weeks has been the addition of new trial boards. Nine in total were added, which include: [Fashion](#), [Health & Fitness](#), [Hardcore](#), [Transportation](#), [Sports](#), [Toys](#), [Travel](#), [Japan/General](#) & [ROBOT9000](#).

[62] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "And we've gone from one board to 48 boards."

[63] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "/b/ is the first board we started with, and it is, in many ways, the beating heart of the website."

[64] <https://archive.is/20140925202032/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/09/25/absolutely-everything-you-need-to-know-to-understand-4chan-the-internet-s-own-bogeyman/> "Two of those — /b/ and /pol/ — are primarily responsible for 4chan's less-than-stellar reputation."

[65] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/rickroll> "According to 4chan founder m00t, the 'rickroll' phenomenon began on /v/ (video games) circa May 2007, when someone posted

a link to Rick Astley's music video disguised as a sneak preview for the then newly released video game Grand Theft Auto IV."

[66] https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/mx53y/i_am_youtube_user_cotter548_aka_the_inventor_of/ 2007 was the year, and every gamer across the globe was awaiting the arrival of GTA:IV. I used to frequent an image-board called 4Chan, and they were having a discussion about what was to be included in that game.

[67] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/rickroll> "On May 15th, 2007, one of the earliest known instances of the music video was uploaded under the title 'Rickroll'D' by YouTuber Cotter548."

[68] <https://observer.com/2012/09/meet-shawn-cotter-the-man-behind-the-rickroll/> Meet Shawn Cotter, the Man Behind the Rickroll

[69] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oADU2PlzhD0> My name is Shawn Cotter, and I'm the inventor of the meme on the Internet called the Rickroll.

[70] https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/mx53y/i_am_youtube_user_cotter548_aka_the_inventor_of/ I am youtube user Cotter548, AKA the inventor of the Rickroll. (...) I decided to show people the new trailer that Rockstar had put out for the next year release of GTA. Of course, nobody suspected that there was no trailer video, when the video started, the user would instead be listening to the soothing sound of Rick Astley, and the video caption said "You just got Rickroll'd".

[71] <https://archive.is/20150311180404/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121564928060441097> "A friend sends an email suggesting you take a peek at an 'amazing' online video and passes along the link. You follow the link, but instead of the video you expect, you've been sent to the music video of Rick Astley's 'Never Gonna Give You Up,' a hit song from 1988."

[72] https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/mx53y/i_am_youtube_user_cotter548_aka_the_inventor_of/ In the first day, 20K people were rickrolled, and by the end of the week, we were close to 250K people.

[73] <https://archive.is/20150311180404/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121564928060441097> "Over the past year, Rick Rolling has become an online sensation, pushing Mr. Astley's video past 16 million views on YouTube."

[74] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/rickroll> "Since May 2007, numerous versions of the music video on YouTube have garnered hundreds of millions, largely driven by the widespread practice of 'rickrolling' and subsequent resurgence in popularity of the song over the following decade."

[75] [How Rick Astley's No. 1 Hit Became the Internet's Iconic RickRoll Meme](#)

[76] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/rickroll> "In November 2008, the Rickroll meme came to a full circle when Rick Astley himself appeared on a float during the 2008 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, lip synching to his classic hit from 24 years ago (shown below, right)."

[77] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/pools-closed> "Pool's Closed is a catchphrase associated with a series of raids carried out by Anonymous against the online social networking site Habbo Hotel, where members of the group formed human blockades to obstruct the entry points of popular hangouts with their avatars dressed in afros and business suits. The first raid was launched in July 2006 after rumors began to spread

on [4chan](#) that some Habbo moderators had a tendency to ban users based on the skin colors of their avatars."

[78] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "'Pool's closed due to AIDS,' the men would declare whenever a child's avatar tried to get near."

[79] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/pools-closed> "In early 2008, a Texan named Mary Alice Altorfer came across a "Pool's Closed" sign in her neighborhood and called the local news station with a claim that it was promoting racial discrimination."

[80] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQGQYx84iPM> "Mary Alice says some people suggested it was just an online inside joke brought to the real world"

[81] https://habboxwiki.com/2006_Habbo_Raid On July 6th, 2006 a group of people from the website 4chan decided to raid the hotel by forming blockades around entrances of public rooms and also the entrance of the [Lido](#) pool making it impossible for users to get inside. Later not only 4chan users but also users from other websites joined the raid and the "Pool's closed" meme spread outside of Habbo.

[82] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/pools-closed> "As time passed and the raids continued, the operation also became more organized and complex, with detailed instructions on how to participate:"

[83] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "And it wasn't long after that anons began leaving their mothers' basements for their first real-life raids."

[84] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "In 2007, anons dressed in wizard's robes made their way up and down lines of sleeping children in major cities as the tykes queued up in front of bookshops for the latest volume of Harry Potter."

[85] http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/article2100186.ece But representatives of J. K. Rowling and her publisher were struggling to get the genie back in the bottle yesterday after every page of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows was apparently leaked on the internet three days ahead of the official publication date.

[86] <https://medium.com/@bwcutler1000/the-deathly-hallows-flickr-leak-a-cautionary-tale-about-the-fragility-of-internet-history-c7f668fdc81e> Well, in the days leading up to the United States release of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, two competing leaks appeared online. One, uploaded by internet. user Tocsinfilm, included every page of the book photographed individually on the leaker's carpet. Ergo, the fanbase dubbed this the "Carpet leak". (...) Well, as July 21st came and went the internet learned what it had suspected: the Carpet Leak, indeed, had been the real book.

[87] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "In trolling, as a rule, the more people you piss off, the better; what matters are the lulz—the laughs you get from trashing someone's peace of mind."

[88] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Absurdly, 4chan's ultra-nihilistic, ultra-apathetic culture of post-90s indifference went through a black hole and emerged on the other side as a genuine political force."

[89] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "Since the beginning of the campaign, there'd been a tension between its "lulzfags," who held that Anonymous must have no higher cause than its own cruel amusement, and the "moralfags," for whom the cause of fighting an oppressive cult was an end in itself."

[90] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Late in 2007, double agents inside Scientology's organization leaked an internal promotional video of Tom Cruise giddily proselytizing the benefits of Scientology as the theme song from his latest blockbuster Mission: Impossible played in a mind-numbing loop over his meditations."

[91] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "Days earlier, a nine-minute video excerpt of an interview with Tom Cruise had appeared unauthorized on YouTube and other Web sites."

[92] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "On January 15, 2008, the video was mailed to an anti-Scientology activist, who, in turn, sent it to NBC. However, fearing a lawsuit from the Church of Scientology, NBC didn't run it and the embarrassing clip ended up on YouTube."

[93] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "In the evening of January 15, 2008, a 31-year-old tech consultant named Gregg Housh sat down at the computer... Days earlier, a nine-minute video excerpt of an interview with Tom Cruise had appeared unauthorized on YouTube and other Web sites."

[94] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Late in 2007, double agents inside Scientology's organization leaked an internal promotional video of Tom Cruise giddily proselytizing the benefits of Scientology as the theme song from his latest blockbuster Mission: Impossible played in a mind-numbing loop over his meditations."

[95] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxag33MbSh8> "...why because the Church of Scientology was trying to censor a video that had been leaked of Tom Cruz..."

[96] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "Produced by the Church of Scientology, the clip showed Cruise declaring himself and his co-religionists to be, among other remarkable things, the "only ones who can help" at an accident site. ... But then, suddenly, it was gone: Scientologists had sent takedown notices to sites hosting the video, effectively wiping it from the Web."

[97] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "The story is, Scientology had this embarrassing video of Tom Cruise. It went up online. They got it taken offline and managed to piss off part of the Internet."

[98] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Soon, an anon floated the idea on 4chan of a raid against Scientology in the name of one of the few values anon agreed upon: freedom of information on the internet."

[99] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Soon, an anon floated the idea on 4chan of a raid against Scientology in the name of one of the few values anon agreed upon: freedom of information on the internet."

[100] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/>

"But this time, maybe because the church was stifling not just unflattering content but potential comedy gold, the tactic seemed to inflame the chortling masses."

[101] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "The image uploaded with the post displayed the snakey golden Scientology logo. "I think it's time for /b/ to do something big," the anon reasoned."

[102] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/>

"By the time the attacks started on January 18, Housh and many of the now 200 others on the chat channel were devoting every spare moment to the cause..."

[103] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "As usual, Anonymous retired to its IRC channels to sift through its bag of tricks: crank phone calls, pizza deliveries, and DDoS attacks, all of which began after a matter of hours."

[104] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/>

"...the remote team unleashed a rolling barrage of distractions on the Scientology center, tying up phone lines with prank calls and faxes."

[105] <https://davidkushner.com/article/anonymous-vs-scientology/> Initially, the response took the form of typical "raids": Scientology Web sites were hacked and overwhelmed with phantom users. Endless "black faxes" (pages filled entirely with a uniform black tone) spooled through Scientology fax machines, depleting ink cartridges and rendering them useless. Pizzas arrived at churches around the world, including a reported 300 at the headquarters in Amsterdam alone.

[106] <https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-video-that-made-anonymous/> began "Operation Chanology," which initially involved DDoSing Scientology websites, faxing black pages (because fax machines were still a thing), leaking Church documents online, and endless prank phone calls.

[107] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/>

"Within a couple of days, a consensus emerged: They would take down the main Scientology Web site with a massive distributed denial-of-service attack, or DDoS."

[108] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "...the more sophisticated hackers in the group coordinated DDoS attacks using a junk-packet spitter the original anon programmer had dubbed the "Low Orbit Ion Cannon.""

[109] <https://davidkushner.com/article/anonymous-vs-scientology/> Initially, the response took the form of typical "raids": Scientology Web sites were hacked and overwhelmed with phantom users.

[110] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "DDoS attacks in which enemy websites and IRC channels were deluged with meaningless requests for data until they crashed."

[111] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/>

"Instead of a press release, Housh and the others made a video introduction in the name

and voice of the hive mind itself. ... it appeared on YouTube on January 21, titled 'Message to Scientology.'"

[112] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "'We are Anonymous. We are Legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget.'" ... The video was an instant success."

[113] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "And so these people, over 7,000 people, less than one month later, organized in a hundred cities around the globe and -- this is L.A. -- protested the Church of Scientology..."

[114] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/project-chanology> On the scheduled date, over 7000 Anonymous members from 100 cities across the globe came together in protest in front of Scientology churches.

[115] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "When the day arrived, thousands of Anonymous members, many with their faces obscured by scarves or Guy Fawkes masks, turned out in scores of cities to protest lawfully and nonviolently..."

[116] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "They all wore masks, mostly Guy Fawkes masks inspired by the Wachowski brothers' adaptation of *V for Vendetta*."

[117] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "When the day arrived, thousands of Anonymous members, many with their faces obscured by scarves or Guy Fawkes masks, turned out in scores of cities..."

[118] <https://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/16360/1/a-history-of-the-anonymous-mask> The protesters wore the masks to allow them to demonstrate without worrying about being harassed.

[119] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "Private detectives and law enforcement have named hundreds of the most active Chanologists, lawyers have sent warning letters not only to their homes but also to their parents..."

[120] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The mix of inane pop culture and the infamous bullying tactics of the Church made for a ripe opportunity. In fact, Scientology had been warring with information freedom advocates and hackers since the days of Usenet."

[121]

https://www.salon.com/2015/03/15/6_insane_ways_the_church_of_scientology_has_tried_to_silence_its_critics_partner/ 6 insane ways the Church of Scientology has tried to silence its critics (...) The Church's modus operandi stems from a policy called "[fair game](#)," which states: An enemy of Scientology, referred to as a suppressive person (SP), "may be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologist. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed."

[122] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "He looked horrified and perplexed. 'These are terrorists,' he insisted, of course having no idea who they were, which was message board users. 'This is a terrorist organization.'"

[123] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "They are a terrorist organization,' says Tommy Davis, a church spokesperson. 'Their intention is to instill fear and incite hate. There is no other explanation.'"

[124] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "Private detectives and law enforcement have named hundreds of the most active Chanologists, lawyers have sent warning letters not only to their homes but also to their parents... A New Jersey 18-year-old named Dmitriy Guzner was indicted for taking part in the Chanology DDoS attacks; he pleaded guilty this May."

[125] <https://youtu.be/FfgVIAkKSZ4?t=45>: Reporter: You are leveling these accusations at this group, the FBI which is looking into it, says it has found nothing to connect this group Anonymous to what you're talking about, or death threats against members of the Church."

[126] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "And so these people, over 7,000 people, less than one month later, organized in a hundred cities around the globe and -- this is L.A. -- protested the Church of Scientology, and they have continued to do so, now, two full years after the fact."

[127] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "If Chanology is dying, however, it's being awfully leisurely about it: After an early falloff, the numbers at the monthly protests have been roughly stable."

[128] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "But now 'Anonymous' had two meanings. To those using 4chan, it was still the collective of chan-board users. But it was also Anonymous, the shadowy cabal of hackers as reported in the press."

[129] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxag33MbSh8> "...6,000 hit the streets and a political movement was born at that time."

[130] <https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "Project Chanology may well be the first movement to realize the kind of ad hoc, loosely coupled social activism that many have hoped the ad hoc, loosely coupled architecture of the Internet would engender."

[131] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "And the template for the internet-organized protest would soon be copied, along with the Guy Fawkes masks, in Tahrir Square and Zuccotti Park."

[132] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Anonymous, at that point a half-indifferent-troll/half-hopeful-activist amalgam, spent 2009 and much of 2010 flexing its collective muscle, figuring out what it was by performing cartwheeling pranks and cyberbullying."

[133] <https://archive.is/20140925202032/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/09/25/absolutely-everything-you-need-to-know-to-understand-4chan-the-internet-s-own-bogeyman/> "Dusty the cat: an abused cat in Oklahoma whose video was posted to YouTube; 4chan tracked down the cat's owner and sent his details to police."

[134] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "In 2010, angry that the Australian government was going to place restrictions on online pornography, Anonymous

began performing distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks on its websites in a campaign they called 'Operation Titstorm.'"

[135] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "However, despite its middling results, 'Operation Avenge Assange' finally succeeded in focusing Anonymous on the same countercultural enemies as the 90s hackers: the institutional powers of corporations and the state."

[136] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNzeiRO-cU0> "...angry internet activist launched a massive cyber assault on the company disabling its website visa and PayPal who've also suspended services to WikiLeaks are also being targeted..."

[137] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "And on the heels of #OperationAvengeAssange, Anonymous launched #OpTunisia in early January, defacing the Tunisian government's websites with pro-democracy messages as the democratic uprising snowballed."

[138] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "During this period, Anonymous... metamorphosed into Anonymous, an anti-corporate, anti-power structure, pro-democracy hacker collective, which went on to play a key role in international protests and revolutions."

[139] <https://www.newamerica.org/insights/cascades-anonymous-hack-hbgary/> HBGary Federal, a company that sold digital security services to the federal government

[140] <https://www.bloomberg.com/profile/company/0164622Z:US> Hbgary Federal, Inc. provides a comprehensive suite of software products to detect, analyze, and diagnose advanced persistent threats and targeted malware.

[141] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Inspired by the success of the HBGary leaks, the hackers involved broke away and formed a splinter cell called Lulz Security (LulzSec) a few months later..."

[142] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxag33MbSh8> "...they spell I SEC I u LZ s e c... they went on a 50-day rampage of sorts where they hacked into all sorts of corporate and government websites..."

[143] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "By September 2011, they had all been arrested (with the exception of avunit). After the FBI discovered the identity of Sabu in June, he flipped and began working as an informant."

[144] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "After the arrests of its principal members, Anonymous was never the same. The collective endured, playing a part in prosecuting the Steubenville rape case, throwing its support behind the Ferguson protests in 2014, and combating the alt-right. But 2012 proved to be its high-water mark."

[145] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "During the height of 4chan's bright period in 2008, Poole had created a "new /b/," intended to be the throbbing heart of

4chan's creativity, absent all the darker and stupider elements that had afflicted the random bin."

[146] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "B is kind of a petri dish and kind of a grand experiment and so we we again we used to do this all the freaking time when I was younger..."

[147] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The new board was called "ROBOT 9000."

[148] <https://boards.4chan.org/r9k/>

[149] <https://wiki.bibanon.org/4chan/History> February 20 - (...) Robot 9000 was an experimental board based on the idea that killing repetition would impose originality. A comparison script would mute the poster if the post was previously found within /r9k/ post database.

[150] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "'ROBOT" referred to a moderator program that automatically deleted spam, previously posted images, and copy-pasted text."

[151] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "During the height of 4chan's bright period in 2008, Poole had created a "new /b/," intended to be the throbbing heart of 4chan's creativity, absent all the darker and stupider elements that had afflicted the random bin."

[152] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "...the spirit of the original RNK which was kind of the gentleman's you know be and original content and all that..."

[153] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Brennan described to me how /r9k/ began transitioning from /b/-style games "to try and thwart the robot moderator" to something very different."

[154] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The easiest way to get past the [original content] image filter was to just take your own picture."

[155] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "In /r9k/, former self-identified /b/tards took to calling themselves "gentlemen.""

[156] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "We would write in the high Elizabethan style, hence the "gentlemen." Instead of saying "LOL," we would write, "this gave me such exquisite laughter." But over time ... it started to evolve into stories, then personal stories."

[157] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "One of these robots was a boy from upstate New York named Fredrick Brennan. (...) In fact, Brennan, who went by the handle "HotWheels" online, had led an extraordinarily difficult life. Brennan suffers from

osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle bone disease, and is confined to a wheelchair."

[158] https://archive.is/20260223164810/https://www.lemonde.fr/en/pixels/article/2026/02/23/death-of-fredrick-brennan-creator-of-8chan-forum-where-qanon-emerged_6750792_13.html "Born in 1994, Brennan suffered from a rare disease, osteogenesis imperfecta – also known as 'brittle bone disease' – which makes bones extremely fragile and leads to severe growth delays and significant disability."

[159] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWDF9WFtro4> Fredrick „Hot Wheels“ Brennan

[160] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) ""But over time ... it started to evolve into stories, then personal stories."

[161] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "But over time ... it started to evolve into stories, then personal stories. Then people started writing about their own lives. And we were all on 4chan so all our lives sucked! If our lives hadn't sucked, we would have been on Myspace or Facebook. The kind of person an image board attracts ... it led /r9k/ into a lot of depressive stories. What's the common link between these stories? Well, we're all ugly. We're all alone."

[162] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "So people started posting photos they took. Their own face. Their own room. And what did they have in common? They were all sad."

[163] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "So people started posting photos they took. Their own face. Their own room. And what did they have in common? They were all sad."

[164] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "The board had slowly filled up with people who referred to themselves as "robots" because they identified as autistic or intensely withdrawn loners."

[165] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) ""We used to say that there's an oppression Olympics [in American culture], like, a competition among oppressed minorities to see who was the most oppressed. Well, instead of an oppression Olympics, it became a depression Olympics."

[166] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "By 2011, few people were using /r9k/ and Poole deleted it because it had "long since stopped being about original content.""

[167] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "I made the mistake of deleting it what was that three years ago or uh about three years ago when I removed R9K..."

[168] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "When moot closed /r9k/, the then seventeen-year-old Brennan was devastated, as were the rest of the robots."

[169] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) ""It was [an] affront to decency. My identity was so wrapped up in this site. It was psychologically damaging when he removed those two boards.""

[170] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Instead of dissolving, the /r9k/ community expanded and hardened. Brennan used his programming skills to start alternative chans and IRC networks devoted to the new ultra-hikikomori, /r9k/ lifestyle. The largest and most dedicated of these sites was Wizardchan."

[171] https://archive.is/20260223164810/https://www.lemonde.fr/en/pixels/article/2026/02/23/death-of-fredrick-brennan-creator-of-8chan-forum-where-ganon-emerged_6750792_13.html "...Wizardchan, a smaller and misogynistic forum for male virgins, where he briefly served as administrator."

[172] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "The name derived from a joke among Japanese otaku that if you reached the age of thirty a virgin, you "became a wizard.""

[173] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) ""When I was administrator of Wizardchan," Brennan told me. "Four moderators committed suicide.""

[174] <https://knowyourmeme.com/editorials/interviews/ga-with-fredrick-brennan-of-8chan> I first became involved in Wizardchan when I saw it linked from 4chon.net in December of 2012. I was a regular poster until the original administrator of the site, mr_pacific, wanted to sell it. He was tired of the site and needed money. The community was very small then but I decided to buy it from him and I was the administrator from March 2013 to September 2013.

[175] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Eventually, Brennan and the rest of the /r9k/ community convinced Poole to restore the board on 4chan as "Robot9001.""

[176] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "I realized the error my ways and I decided that uh you know it was it was inconsiderate of me to have removed that board and um I mean yeah so I don't think uh uh there's any reason to remove it i mean people obviously still enjoy it and uh are free to enjoy it i mean even if it doesn't uh serve its original purpose..."

[177] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Eventually, Brennan and the rest of the /r9k/ community convinced Poole to restore the board on 4chan as "Robot9001." And it not only endured, but ballooned into a place for super-otaku, who, in their extremity, put the otaku of early 4chan to shame."

[178] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "...it doesn't serve its original purpose but um a lot of people still use it and again find you know take comfort in it... 360,000 people visit R9K in a given month and so again they find utility from it then who am I to uh to say otherwise"

[179] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "'Hikikomori' literally meant 'pulling inward,' and it describes the sociological phenomenon of older children refusing to abandon the comfort of their parents' home or seeking extreme isolation in apartments because of economic downturns or their own numb unwillingness to face society."

[180] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "As a society of ribald boys, 4chan had always been obsessed with masculine competition (and the subsequent humiliation when the contest was lost). The popular slang 'epic win' and 'fail' were 4chan inventions. But the robots of /r9k/ soon elaborated upon these, referring to themselves as 'beta males,' and those out in the world, enjoying romantic success, as 'alpha males' or 'Chad Thundercocks' (a buff jock who was healthy, social, and went outdoors), first as a joke, then earnestly."

[181] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Betas developed elaborate memes about throwing tantrums in front of their mothers to get more 'chicken tendies.'"

[182] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Borrowing a term from statisticians in the U.K., the Pepe-loving betas on /r9k/ soon began calling themselves 'NEETs' (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), paring down complex social and psychological problems into a simple economic one."

[183] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "These were complemented by Reddit pages dedicated to the newly coined interest groups 'incels' (involuntary celibates) and 'vocels' (voluntary celibates)."

[184] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Borrowing a term from statisticians in the U.K., the Pepe-loving betas on /r9k/ soon began calling themselves 'NEETs' (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), paring down complex social and psychological problems into a simple economic one."

[185] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Weirdly, they defined their existence by their lack of employment, not, for example, by being the sons of mothers, good friends, artists, intellectuals, or members of a certain faith. And by this simplified metric, they considered themselves worthless, undeserving of meaningful company because they have not earned it."

[186] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Elliot Rodger suffered from its damning corollary: if one couldn't 'achieve' status, wealth, and women, one was doomed to be worthless."

[187] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Likewise, they imagined society and romantic interactions not as generous cooperative effort, but as a hierarchy of winners and losers, alphas and betas."

[188] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Treating life like a

computerized hierarchy drove the creation of the first generation of otaku and hikikomori in hyper-competitive Japan in the 1980s. And by 2015, it had created a vast new group of hikikomori fixated on competition because they seemed to be forever losing."

[189] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "If society was a hierarchy, there were only two ways to account for your status at the bottom: either you lost because of your own flaws or someone else cheated and took your place in the middle or at the top of the hierarchy. In this second scenario, conveniently, the onus is placed elsewhere (on Jews, outsiders, and so forth)."

[190] From cyberfascism to terrorism: On 4chan/pol/ culture and the transnational production of memetic violence - Thorleifsson - 2022 - Nations and Nationalism - Wiley Online Library: "The content posted by the self-identifying male users I observed routinely marked various out-groups as enemies of not only the white race and nation but also the white civilization as a whole. Antisemitism is the 'master frame' at /pol/ and by far the most prevalent form of online racism. Jews are framed as responsible for the 'white genocide'. A much shared meme on /pol/ is the antisemitic Happy Merchant Meme, a cartoon that depicts a heavily stereotyped Jewish man with a black beard, long hooked nose, a hunched back, crooked teeth and who is greedily rubbing his hands. ¹ At /pol/, the meme is routinely posted alongside texts discussing how powerful Jews are behind societal ills and facilitating the ongoing white genocide (Figure 1)."

[191] <https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/happy-merchant> Common themes found in Happy Merchant comics are mostly based on anti-Semitic ideas, such as a Jewish conspiracy to control the world economy and media; Holocaust denial; and blaming the Jewish conspiracy for promoting [feminism](#), homosexuality, "racemixing," or causing any current calamity.

[192] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Young men, "alone together" on the internet, formed echo chambers of misogyny that offered them much-needed (though erroneous) explanations for why they had done so poorly in their romantic endeavors."

[193] <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2015/04/28/gamergate/> Gjoni is a highly cerebral, 25-year-old software developer who was recently fired from Massachusetts General Hospital's robotics lab.

[194] https://ggwiki.deepfreeze.it/index.php/Eron_Gjoni Occupation: Independent programmer

[195] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The main event occurred in August 2014, when a jilted young man named Eron Gjoni decided to get revenge on an ex, game developer Zoe Quinn, by writing an angry blog post about her."

[196] <https://universityofsunderland.shorthandstories.com/sex--lies-and-shitposting/index.html> On August 16, 2014, a man named Eron Gjoni published a blog post. It was called 'The Zoe Post' and read more like a dramatic novel, describing in great detail the downfall of a relationship between Gjoni and game developer Zoe Quinn.

[197] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Gjoni's whiny blog post would be the central document around which gamergate would revolve, though it's a bizarre read

for anyone who lives their life out of doors: a rambling, 10,000-word document interspersed with memes, screenshots, and videos."

[198] <https://archive.ph/MelYt> "Spend quite a bit of time talking about how she would never ever cheat on anyone because that violates sexual consent — all the while cheating on me 1. With Nathan Grayson 2. And Robin Arnott 3. And Joshua Boggs"

[199] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "...in mid-August, one of Quinn's ex-boyfriends claimed, in a series of disturbingly intimate and VERY long blog posts, that she had cheated on him with several men in the gaming industry — ostensibly to get ahead in her career."

[200] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "So Gjoni put them up on his own site, and they soon found their way to 4chan and the rest of the chanverse."

[201] <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2015/04/28/gamergate/2/> He first planted it on two video-game sites, Penny Arcade and SomethingAwful, and it quickly found its way to a third, 4chan, whose online communities had a history of harassing women gamers.

[202] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "In February 2013, she released the semi-autobiographical, text-based adventure game *Depression Quest*."

[203] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The chanverse believed Quinn was leveraging her gender to promote her game, and for that purpose had used her relationship with a game reviewer to earn a favorable review for *Depression Quest*."

[204] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "In February 2013, she released the semi-autobiographical, text-based adventure game *Depression Quest*."

[205] <http://www.depressionquest.com/dqfinal.html> *Depression Quest* – an interactive (non) fiction about living with

Depression. By zoe quinn, patrick lindsey, isaac schankler

[206] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "Some people were really into *Depression Quest*, including several video game critics. Other players took issue with what they considered the artsiness, the non-game-iness of the game."

[207] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "When she began receiving harassing messages, she quickly traced the source back to a post on Wizardchan. And then, to the wizards' horror, she called them out on Twitter, lifting the rock on their obscure sanctum."

[208] Ibid.

[209] <https://x.com/UnburntWitch/status/411235061195759616>

[210] <https://x.com/UnburntWitch/status/411235215277715456>

[211] <https://archive.is/GPv0P> - comments

[212] <https://archive.is/Gao7i> "The way it was described in the media is not the way that it happened at all."

[213] <https://archive.is/Gao7i>

[214] <https://archive.is/Gao7i>

[215] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "In February 2013, she released the semi-autobiographical, text-based adventure game Depression Quest."

[216] <http://www.depressionquest.com/dqfinal.html> Depression Quest – an interactive (non) fiction about living with

Depression. By zoe quinn, patrick lindsey, isaac schankler

[217] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "They viewed its uncomplicated design as evidence that it was a bad game in comparison to what they were used to—elaborate AAA studio confections that immersed the player in a hyper-real fantasy world."

[218] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "Some people were really into Depression Quest, including several video game critics. Other players took issue with what they considered the artsiness, the non-game-iness of the game."

[219] <https://archive.ph/XQvXI> This group of games shares few similarities with Super Mario's spatial-reasoning puzzles and Call of Duty's shooting-gallery tests of reaction speed, typical attributes of video games that dominate the medium.

[220] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "While both he and Quinn denied the allegations that she somehow traded sex for coverage, outraged gamers had already taken to Twitter, Reddit and 4chan by the tens of thousands to protest the so-called ethical breaches in gaming journalism."

[221] <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/gamergate-chat-logs> "Anonymous **users on reddit and 4chan** spun this material into a story about how Quinn allegedly slept with multiple gaming journalists in return for coverage, though the allegations did not support such a claim."

[222] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJWR9-6TU00> "...it all kind of began when um an indie game developer veler by the name of Zoe Quinn uh was accused by an angry ex-boyfriend of uh Sleeping with someone in order to get good reviews for her game..."

[223] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJWR9-6TU00> "gamergate sort of became an issue where people wanted to discuss ethics within games journalism but um because of the reaction towards her um it also became an issue about misogyny and and the way women are treated in games..."

[224] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Gjoni's post depicted Quinn as this character. The chanverse believed Quinn was leveraging her gender to promote

her game, and for that purpose had used her relationship with a game reviewer to earn a favorable review for Depression Quest. (Gjoni later admitted that this was not true, and the implication was the result of a typo he had made.)"

[225] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4SnO5U2G4w> "...the thing is, the matter was looked into. No review about depression quest was ever written by anyone she was sleeping with. None of the allegations of professional misconduct stuck."

[226] <https://archive.is/Gao7i> "Some media outlets recanted their story, but by then the damage was already done."

[227] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4SnO5U2G4w> "...mainstream outlets like Time The New Yorker The Guardian and The Washington Post began to cover the issue they covered it from the angle of being troubled and confused by the ferocity with which people were clinging to the idea that harassing Quinn was a viable path to greater integrity in games journalism..."

[228] <https://web.archive.org/web/20131216080331/http://indiestatik.com/2013/12/13/female-game-developers/>

[229] <https://archive.fo/HrOwB#selection-503.0-503.79>

[230] <https://archive.fo/LoXg7#selection-1403.1-1403.55>

[231] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Quinn's life soon exploded in an unprecedented level of harassment, even for the internet."

[232] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "Instead, anonymous hackers posted Quinn's personal information, including her address and nude pictures, shortly after her ex's blog went up."

[233] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Users attempted to score points by digging up obscure personal information about Quinn, hacking the accounts of those they believed associated with her, and sending hateful messages via phone, email, fax, and delivery services."

[234] <https://time.com/4927076/zoe-quinn-gamergate-doxing-crash-override-excerpt/> I'd never thought anyone would bother to try to hack my accounts, (...) That was until the flood of tweets from my own account — ones that I didn't recognize. (...) The hackers weren't just posting calls for me to die or talking about what a fat slut I was; they were sharing my personal information: my old address in Canada, cell-phone numbers from a few years back, my current cell-phone number and my current home address.

[235] <https://archive.ph/MelYt> "If this post did anything, it boosted support for Zoe among radical feminists who bought that this was an attack on her. It boosted her support from fellow developers and her friends as well for the same reason."

[236] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJWR9-6TU00> "...things got even heavier when other women like game developer Brianna who came out in support of the woman at the center of this Revenge attack..."

[237] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "But within

days, Gamergaters had also attacked Anita Sarkeesian, a feminist writer and media critic, after she posted a new video in her ongoing series about women and gaming."

[238] <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-29626809> However, Ms Sarkeesian has linked the intimidation attempt with a wider controversy dubbed GamerGate. "Multiple specific threats made stating intent to kill me and feminists at USU. For the record, one threat did claim affiliation with #gamergate," she tweeted. "At this point supporting #gamergate is implicitly supporting the harassment of women in the gaming industry."

[239] <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/people/zoe-quinn> Phil Fish's Twitter Rant

Also on August 17th, indie game developer [Phil Fish](#) defended Quinn on Twitter, calling those who were attacking her "cowards" and claimed he was "canceling projects" in retaliation (shown below).

[240] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9L_Wmeg7OTU "I THINK WOMEN ARE PERCEIVED AS THREATENING BECAUSE WE'RE ASKING FOR GAMES TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE."

[241] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAyncf3DBUQ&t=85s> Brianna Wu: It's terrorism on women in this industry

[242] <https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2014/09/17/exposed-the-secret-mailing-list-of-the-gaming-journalism-elite/> Several prominent gaming journalists across America are part of a secret mailing list on which they discuss what to cover, what to ignore, and what approach their coverage should take to breaking news, Breitbart London can reveal.

[243] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4SnO5U2G4w> "...part of what made gamergate folks cry conspiracy was an almost simultaneous outpouring of editorials with the same thesis gamers are dead now..."

[244] <https://gamicus.fandom.com/wiki/Gamergate> On 28 August 2014, Games Writer Leigh Alexander published an article on Gamasutra titled "'Gamers' don't have to be your audience. 'Gamers' are over," and during the next few days, several technological and gaming outlets followed suit with similar articles, all generally and typically based on the premise that 'Gamers are dead'

[245] Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "'Gamers are over,' games writer Leigh Alexander famously declared in 2014 during #gamergate."

[246] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4SnO5U2G4w> "...already the gamergate people were spending a narrative of editorial misconduct inclusion at the highest levels that games journalists were somehow fundamentally hostile towards games and gamers hostile or economically predatory and the editorial response played into that perfectly I don't think anyone considered it but all of these gamers are dead articles poured just gallons of gasoline out of the fire..."

[247] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "On one side are independent game-makers and critics, many of them women, who advocate for greater inclusion in gaming. On the other side of the equation are a motley alliance of vitriolic naysayers: misogynists, anti-feminists, trolls, people convinced they're being manipulated by a left-leaning and/or corrupt press, and traditionalists who just don't want their games to change."

[248] <https://archive.is/20141014221821/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/10/14/the-only-guide-to-gamergate-you-will-ever-need-to-read/> "Whatever Gamergate may have started as, it is now an Internet culture war."

[249] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJWR9-6TU0Q> "it started with an allegation against a female gamer of sexual favors for good reviews and quickly turned into an allout culture War"

[250] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuquS2jWT3Y> "dark corners of the web like 4chan saw the Zoe post and launched a tirade of attacks and death threats on her eventually it became so ugly that 4chan had enough yes 4 channel"

[251] <https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2014/09/new-chat-logs-show-how-4chan-users-pushed-gamergate-into-the-national-spotlight/> Chat logs show how 4chan users created #GamerGate controversy

[252]

[253]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "have you had sex with Anita 3684 anita being Anita Sarkeesian I assume uh no in fact I you know I didn't even have an opportunity to meet her i I was at XOXO Festival in uh was it September last year and I saw her talk and uh no I didn't I actually didn't even get to meet her so I don't even think I saw her um I mean I think she was mobbed most of the time but um"

[254] https://edramatica.com/M00t%27s_GamerGate_Sellout "moot: They said if I didn't stop Gamergate on 4chan, they would write an article that "exposes" 4chan for the "true cesspit" it is. They're also going to basically get feminists to hack in and take down my site. [9/18/14 12:44 AM] moot: And coincidentally, I got a letter that threatened to lynch me in the streets, from a group of hackers who strongly support feminism. [9/18/14 12:44 AM] moot: A day before this, I went to see Anita speak at XOXO, and she was absolutely lovely. Behind the scenes, I got to have a word with her. We hit it off perfect, and we're now friends through online communication. [9/18/14 12:44 AM] moot: I told her my situation, and her advice was to get my mods to delete everything Gamergate on site. [9/18/14 12:44 AM] moot: I was reluctant, but after that day, I did what she said. You all remember the day I told you to delete Gamergate shit, we were convinced it would work. [9/18/14 12:44 AM] moot: But it didn't fucking work."

[255]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "been some really funny fake chat logs um uh you know over the years and and it's always hilarious because again like I don't I don't actually uh talk in the IRC channels that often i don't consult moderators or janitors i don't share my thinking i don't uh in that sense I've been a pretty bad people manager um you know it's not a committee it's not you know consensus driven all it's really just I make decisions and and you know sometimes communicate to them a lot of time they're you know pretty much completely in the dark um uh and I really again like barely use IRC these days um so every time I see the chat looks I you know I laugh because again like nothing could be further from the truth most of the you know channels are you know silent uh a lot of the time but um anyway and so again like so the you know organization is basically completely flat with me at top and so uh again like really unhealthy as far as uh you know what should happen to me if I were to become incapacitated or"

[256]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "have you had sex with Anita 3684 anita being Anita Sarkeesian I assume uh no in fact I you know I didn't even have an opportunity to meet her i I was at XOXO Festival in uh was it September last year and I

saw her talk and uh no I didn't I actually didn't even get to meet her so I don't even think I saw her um I mean I think she was mobbed most of the time but um"

[257] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Faced with dual crises in which his userbase was acting vilely toward women, Poole simply banned all discussion of gamergate sitewide, citing 4chan's rules against personal harassment; anonymous responded with outrage."

[258] <https://archive.is/Gao7i> "The massive surge in visitors was a result of 4chan founder Chris Poole's controversial decision to ban all discussions relating to GamerGate on the site, prompting many users to migrate to Brennan's 8chan instead."

[259] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "As during previous crackdowns, the gamergate ban inspired a resentful exodus to copycat chans."

[260] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Now he was despised as a "SJW shill" and "sellout" who "betrayed us.""

[261] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Now the most popular topic of conversation on /v/ was grouching about him, as he was lumped in with the hated Anita, Zoe, and the other public figures who had spoken out against gamergate. Just a few years prior, the entire site had worked tirelessly to make him Time's Person of the Year. Now he was despised as a "SJW shill" and "sellout" who "betrayed us.""

[262] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "When moot livestreamed a Q&A in 2013, he was barraged with the same question from /pol/, who, unlike the rest of 4chan, despised him: "Are you a cuck?" "I went from being a 'faggot' for the better part of ten years to a 'cuck,'" moot concluded."

[263] <https://archive.is/Gao7i> "Gone are the days where mods are gods, and the rules keep getting more and more strict on 4chan even though there is no legal requirement for them to do so."

[264] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Eventually, the disaffected users settled on 8chan, a site created by none other than Fredrick "HotWheels" Brennan."

[265] <https://archive.is/Gao7i> "Since then, he has moved to Brooklyn to work as a freelance computer programmer, and by October last year, he had even started his own imageboard site called 8chan."

[266] https://archive.is/20260223164810/https://www.lemonde.fr/en/pixels/article/2026/02/23/death-of-fredrick-brennan-creator-of-8chan-forum-where-qanon-emerged_6750792_13.html "In particular, the most vocal core of Gamergate, a misogynistic movement that claimed to "defend video games," settled on 8chan with Brennan's blessing."

[267] <https://archive.is/Gao7i> "The massive surge in visitors was a result of 4chan founder Chris Poole's controversial decision to ban all discussions relating to GamerGate on the site, prompting many users to migrate to Brennan's 8chan instead."

[268] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "By the end of the year, moot had quit his site, selling it to Hiroyuki Nishimura, the founder of 4chan's progenitor 2channel."

[269] <https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "In 2015, Poole announced that he had decided to sell 4chan to a Japanese businessman named Hiroyuki Nishimura."

[270] <https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> In 2015, Poole announced that he had decided to sell 4chan to a Japanese businessman named Hiroyuki Nishimura.

[271] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig>

[272] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "for those of you who are just tuning in i've been doing this for almost eight hours for seven and a half hours now again there's there's no way I'm gonna get to uh to all of your uh questions at this point"

[273] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "But in retrospect, gamergate opened up a new chapter for both 4chan and American politics."

[274] <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/pepe-frog> "Pepe the Frog is a cartoon character that has become a popular internet meme (often referred to as the 'sad frog meme' by people unfamiliar with the name of the character)."

[275] <https://archive.is/20200901150356/https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/aug/31/feels-good-man-pepe-frog-4chan-documentary-film> "He's green. He's cute. He feels good, man. And he's an internationally recognized icon of hatred and bigotry."

[276] <https://archive.is/20200901150356/https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/aug/31/feels-good-man-pepe-frog-4chan-documentary-film> "He's Pepe the Frog, and he's the subject of a new documentary tracking his unlikely journey from humble comic-book beginnings to a controversy involving death threats, lawsuits and scores upon scores of online neo-Nazis."

[277] <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/pepe-frog> "The character first appeared in 2005 in the on-line cartoon Boy's Club."

[278] <https://archive.is/20200901150356/https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/aug/31/feels-good-man-pepe-frog-4chan-documentary-film> "The beady-eyed, smiley-faced amphibian Pepe originated as one of the main characters from Furie's comic Boy's Club, a minor underground sensation about four anthropomorphized pals who mostly chill out and get loaded."

[279] <https://archive.is/20161013215929/http://time.com/4530128/pepe-the-frog-creator-hate-symbol/> "Boy's Club debuted in 2006, with the forthcoming series earning some good reviews in the comic book world."

[280] <https://archive.is/20161013215929/http://time.com/4530128/pepe-the-frog-creator-hate-symbol/> "Users online started cut-and-pasting Pepe's heavy-eyed, froggy face and the phrase 'feels good, man' and shared it on Internet message boards as a quick visual description of how they were feeling after an event."

[281]<https://archive.is/20200901150356/https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/aug/31/feels-good-man-pepe-frog-4chan-documentary-film> "Users of forum sites like Reddit and 4chan, complex social networks offering a sense of kinship to many IRL loners, turned the "feels good man" panel into a meme with constantly shifting meaning."

[282]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "With every iteration of the Pepe-as-silly-loser meme, Pepe got unhappier. "Feels good man" turned into "Feels bad man," his smile flipping into a frown."

[283]<https://news.artnet.com/buyers-guide/pepe-art-angle-transcript-2077584> "So we chart how Pepe becomes this emoji, essentially. He goes from the "feels good, man" frog to the "feels sad, man" frog to the "feels bad, man" frog."

[284]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "As /r9k/ robots posted and reposted Pepes to playfully mock their status as grotesque outsiders whose very visage was disturbing to "normies," they ushered in a renaissance of frogs that soon appealed to all the netizens who every year had a little more in common with withdrawn, internet-soaked hikikomori."

[285]<https://news.artnet.com/buyers-guide/pepe-art-angle-transcript-2077584> "There's one particular panel where Pepe transforms from the "feels good, man" frog to the "feels sad, man" frog that coincides with the financial meltdown of 2008, which coincides with these groups of predominantly young men online who are all talking about how the world is conspiring against them."

[286]<https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/pepe-frog> "Internet users appropriated the character and turned him into a meme, placing the frog in a variety of circumstances and saying many different things."

[287]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019)"Nicki Minaj posted a female Pepe with her butt in the air on Instagram. Katy Perry tweeted a crying Pepe while complaining about her jet lag."

[288]<http://time.com/4530128/pepe-the-frog-creator-hate-symbol/> "Or just another famous person sharing a Pepe meme because it's cool (like Katy Perry and Nicki Minaj did in the past)."

[289] <https://news.artnet.com/buyers-guide/pepe-art-angle-transcript-2077584> "In a cautionary tale that shows how images take on a life of their own online, Pepe later went viral for a much darker reason. During the 2016 election, the image was co-opted by a particular brand of alt-right activists on the platform 4chan."

[290] <http://time.com/4530128/pepe-the-frog-creator-hate-symbol/> "But I know this: It's completely insane that Pepe has been labeled a symbol of hate, and that racists and anti-Semites are using a once peaceful frog-dude from my comic book as an icon of hate."

[291] <https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>

[292] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-RdSQpH6y8>

[293]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "During the period between the height of Gamergate and when Trump announced his candidacy for president in June

2015, it is not possible to know exactly how many new recruits were attracted to trolling spaces, how many existing users quietly stepped away out of concern, or how many stayed put and were subsequently radicalized throughout the election cycle, like a lobster cooking in a slowly heated pot."

[294] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "By the end of the year, moot had quit his site, selling it to Hiroyuki Nishimura, the founder of 4chan's progenitor 2channel."

[295] <https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "In 2015, Poole announced that he had decided to sell 4chan to a Japanese businessman named Hiroyuki Nishimura. Nishimura previously owned 2chan, a Japanese website which inspired 4chan."

[296] <https://x.com/BuzzFeedNews/status/645965457984495616>

[297] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Nishimura's style of running 4chan was shrugging and distant."

[298] <https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "Janitors who spoke with Motherboard described Nishimura as being almost completely hands off, leaving moderation of the site primarily to RapeApe."

[299] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "And as gamergate crystalized anons' resentment of feminism and social justice politics into a doctrine, a cottage industry of bloggers and vloggers popped up to fill the void."

[300] <https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-helped-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "Over time, /pol/ has come to dominate the public perception of 4chan, overshadowing the quieter, less vile topic areas which make up much of the activity on the site."

[301] <https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/15/notorious-image-board-4chan-hacked-and-internal-data-leaked/> "Yet 4chan's strongest legacy comes from its political boards, where alt-right rhetoric can radicalize young users into adopting white supremacist ideals."

[302] The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "By 2015, the white supremacist website The Daily Stormer was already actively recruiting on 4chan, particularly on its /pol/ or "politics" board, as that board supplanted the /b/ board as 4chan's most active and infamous destination."

[303] <https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/sites/pol/> "/pol/ became a surprising source of political influence during the 2016 United States Presidential Election, as many memes created and popularized there entered mainstream discourse."

[304] <https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-helped-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "According to academic researchers, 4chan's /pol/ has become one of the most prodigious factories for content on the internet. And the boundaries of its influence spread far beyond the borders of 4chan itself, affecting everything from YouTube to Twitter to mainstream Republican politics."

[305]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "When the first split with Anonymous occurred in 2008, it was partly moot's disinterest in politics that kept the site from tilting into political activism."

[306]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "While there was a lot about early trolling that was clear and consistent, one thing the subculture did not exhibit was a clear, consistent politics."

[307]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "In addition to engaging in far-right identity antagonisms, for example, participating trolls on 4chan's /b/ board frequently attacked far-right communities and media figures, with Fox News and its conservative pundits, along with white evangelical Christians, particularly favorite targets."

[308]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "In addition to engaging in far-right identity antagonisms, for example, participating trolls on 4chan's /b/ board frequently attacked far-right communities and media figures, with Fox News and its conservative pundits, along with white evangelical Christians, particularly favorite targets."

[309]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Several years earlier, Anonymous had raided the infamous neo-Nazi site Stormfront."

[310]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "And, as had occurred with so many other sites targeted in raids, Stormfront users were not only clued into 4chan's existence, but soon became absorbed in image-board culture themselves."

[311]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "In January 2010, Poole created a news section for 4chan (/new/). But things did not go as expected. A year later, he was forced to delete the board because it had "become [S]tormfront."

[312]<https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/sites/pol> "The reasoning behind this decision was primarily based on moderator Moot's belief that /new/ had strayed from its intended purpose and become a gathering place for racists."

[313]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "When moot removed the board his neo-Nazi problem didn't disappear. The population simply took up residence in the international (/int/) and weapons (/k/) boards."

[314]<https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/sites/pol> "The board was originally created in 2011 as a replacement for /new/, which was 4chan's primary board for the distribution and discussion of news."

[315]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "In November 2011, Poole again attempted to address the issue by reversing his previous measures. He created a containment board to replace /new/: "politically incorrect" (/pol/)."

[316]<https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "“It was started as a containment board,” one former moderator told me about /pol/."

[317]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "He created a containment board to replace /new/: “politically incorrect” (/pol/)."

[318]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "And in some sense this worked—Nazis flooded into /pol/."

[319]<https://archive.is/20240801134817/https://www.britannica.com/topic/4chan> "After its creation in 2011, the /pol/ (“politically incorrect”) forum became a haven for far-right rhetoric and conspiracy theories."

[320]<https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "4chan's more recent extremist element can be traced back to an infamous board: “politically incorrect,” which is listed as “/pol/” on the site. Ostensibly devoted to discussing politics, /pol/ threads often involve users calling each other racist terms, arguing for the genocide of whole nations or ethnicities, or debating about whether different concepts are “degenerate”—a Nazi term of art for material (or people) that ought to be purged."

[321]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Soon after Trump announced his candidacy in the summer of 2015, /pol/ and /r9k/ produced a few Donald Trump Pepes, depicting him as “smug Pepe,” the loser candidate who would represent their issues, and then smug Pepe locking immigrants out of the United States (depicted as wojaks)."

[322]<https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/sites/pol> "From June 2015 onwards, the term has been heavily associated with the businessman and 2016 United States elected President Donald Trump, with /pol/ users using the “meme magic” to make Trump win the elections and transform the country under a similar ideology."

[323]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Trump’s obsession with humiliation (his own and others’), his angry insistence on sorting the world into winners and losers, spoke to all of this."

[324]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NH0QNs9Cc4E> "By the time that bus video emerged it seemed to countless Americans it was one unexplainable problem to many caught on tape apparently boasting of sexual assault and when you’re a star they let you do it you can do anything whatever you want grab them by the do anything."

[325] Trump has long history of offensive comments about women

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trump-offensive-comments-women>

[326]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NH0QNs9Cc4E> "[F]alling fast in the polls Trump took that and ran with it the election is being rigged by corrupt media."

[327]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3LjfmUDXbU> "[Y]es this is shocking but not surprising it follows years of framing the media as enemies of the people and more

aggressive taunts from the president today the media is the biggest problem we have as far as i'm concerned single biggest problem the fake news and the big tech."

[328]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "The term "troll" was also used – by supporters and detractors alike – to characterize "alt-right" media personalities like former Breitbart editor Milo Yiannopoulos, avowed white nationalist Richard Spencer, and of course Trump himself, who was often crowned as the biggest troll of them all."

[329]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "And Trump, too, as the prince of puffery, was an invocation of the same right—to choose the liar, the fantasy, the troll."

[330]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Like the inscrutable, apocalyptic visions of the biblical Daniel, Trump appeared first as a reality TV star, then Pepe the Frog, then president of the United States."

[331]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "Ultimately, however, the joke's on the journalist; "All Publicity is Good Publicity," one section header reads."

[332]<https://news.artnet.com/buyers-guide/pepe-art-angle-transcript-2077584> "Donald Trump hosted at least two events, one at his country club in Florida and one in the White House, where he specifically invited meme artists to celebrate their work."

[333]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "And incredibly, on October 13, 2015, Trump himself retweeted /pol/'s depiction of him as Pepe along with /pol/'s tag line, "You can't stump the Trump.'"

[334]<https://archive.is/20161013215929/http://time.com/4530128/pepe-the-frog-creator-hat-e-symbol/> "A smug Trump-Pepe was shared by Trump himself on Twitter in the beginning of the election race, a move I assumed was a nod to young voters."

[335]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "Soon after Trump announced his candidacy in the summer of 2015, /pol/ and /r9k/ produced a few Donald Trump Pepees, depicting him as "smug Pepe," the loser candidate who would represent their issues, and then smug Pepe locking immigrants out of the United States (depicted as wojaks)."

[336]<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn987yqnee9o> "Later, it was deployed to show support for Trump, including one notable meme retweeted by Trump himself, depicting Pepe with Trump's signature suit and hair."

[337]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "At times, "troll" was used to identify irony-poisoned aggressors associated with sites like 4chan, 8chan, and parts of Reddit and Twitter forwarding a pro-Trump, anti-PC, anti-"social justice warrior" agenda."

[338]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "It began when cable news pundit and "Never Trump" establishment conservative Cheri Jacobus noticed the strange connection between Pepe and the trolls harassing her on Twitter gamergate-style."

[339]<https://dissentmagazine.org/article/dont-feed-the-trolls-alt-right-culture-4chan/> "When one poster noticed that GOP consultant Cheri Jacobus had tweeted that "the green frog symbol is what white supremacists use in their propaganda," they were amused that someone would think such a thing. After some conversation about how the meme had been coopted by "normies" (one user noted that Katy Perry had recently tweeted a Pepe), the thread decided to make Jacobus's observation true, in order to reclaim 4chan's intellectual property and ensure that nobody would want to be associated with the depressed green frog."

[340]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Jacobus rewarded the trolls who sent the most shocking images by retweeting them to prove her point, cementing the connection /pol/ wanted to make: that Pepe was indeed a white supremacist symbol."

[341]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Within an hour of Jacobus' Pepe tweet, someone had posted it to /pol/."

[342]<https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-help-ed-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "The /pol/ forum often hosts threads in which users talk about flooding other, unrelated boards with racial slurs and bigoted imagery."

[343]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "They wanted to make the connection real, and so they began flooding Jacobus with the most offensive, racist, and pro-Trump Pepe memes they could scrape from the bottom of the chans: Trump-loving Pepes gripping assault rifles; Pepes with swastikas on their foreheads, Manson-style; smug Pepes in yarmulkes watching the twin towers fall."

[344]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "As usual, 4chan resented "normies stealing our memes.""

[345]<https://knowyourmeme.com/sensitive/memes/sites/pol> "This was particularly the case with Pepe the Frog, as /pol/ and /r9k/ users created multiple Pepe memes with fringe and Nazi imagery as a means to "de- normify" the meme."

[346]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "And as a bonus, each tweet flung the filthiest Pepes /pol/ could devise into Jacobus' followers' social media feeds, the "cuckservative" Republican establishment."

[347]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "They wanted to make the connection real, and so they began flooding Jacobus with the most offensive, racist, and pro-Trump Pepe memes they could scrape from the bottom of the chans: Trump-loving Pepes gripping assault rifles; Pepes with swastikas on their foreheads, Manson-style; smug Pepes in yarmulkes watching the twin towers fall."

[348]<https://archive.is/20241025152846/https://www.thedailybeast.com/how-pepe-the-frog-became-a-nazi-trump-supporter-and-alt-right-symbol/#selection-667.0-671.227> #FrogTwitter considered Jacobus, the first prominent person to be duped, its first scalp and inundated her with ever more Pepe images and Trump memes, some of which were violent and sexually explicit. In one, a blond woman is decapitated before Pepe has

intercourse with her headless body. In another, Jacobus's face is photoshopped onto a topless woman kneeling before Trump, who is himself photoshopped to wear a Nazi uniform.

[349]<https://archive.is/20200901150356/https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/aug/31/feels-good-man-pepe-frog-4chan-documentary-film> "Suddenly, the friendly frog was being given Hitler moustaches and Trumpian combovers by fringe extremists pairing the reluctant mascot with racist, homophobic and antisemitic invective."

[350]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "we need more people to send her racist peepes. we need an anti woman one now. that will probably double trigger her."

[351] <https://www.jenniferhalllee.com/blog/tag/Cheri+Jacobus>

[352]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "For the trolls I studied, the specific nature of the target, including its political orientation, was often less important than its overall "exploitability," that is to say, its likelihood of generating the strongest possible reaction in audiences, which included audiences of other trolls."

[353]<https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/pepe-frog> "In the fall of 2016, the ADL teamed with Pepe creator Matt Furie to form a #SavePepe campaign to reclaim the symbol from those who use it with hateful intentions."

[354]<https://archive.is/20161013215929/http://time.com/4530128/pepe-the-frog-creator-hate-symbol/> "Before Pepe the Frog was a meme designated a hate symbol by the Anti-Defamation League, he began his life as a blissfully stoned frog in my comic book *Boy's Club*, where he enjoyed a simple life of snacks, soda and pulling his pants all the way down to go pee."

[355] Trump named Bannon the campaign's "chief executive" in August 2016.
<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/07/575953068/the-rise-and-fall-of-steve-bannon>

[356] Bannon, whose position in the White House was at times opaque, served from Aug. 17, 2016 to Aug. 18, 2017.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/steve-bannon-leave-white-house>

[357]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "At still others, it labeled the activities of far-right outlets like InfoWars, Ending the Fed, and, most conspicuously, Breitbart, all of which harnessed and commoditized Trump's Make America Great Again (MAGA) base."

[358]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Bannon hired Yiannopoulos just before the young blogger discovered his vast new audience of "shat-upon" gamers."

[359]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FvADt-mJ_o "my guest this week is a writer for breitbart.com and a general Rabel Rouser and Renaissance Man Milo yannopoulos welcome to the show"

[360]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Six months after gamergate

began, Yiannopoulos left trash talking other tech bloggers for the greener pastures of gamergate."

[361]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfJZP5kCmL8> "when you have so many of these uh different media Outlets talking about gamergate yeah yeah obviously who's going to jump in grifters people who want to take advantage and being that gamer Gates rooted in this anti-progressive anti-feminist antisocial Justice Warrior train of thought uh who jumps in right Wingers you have people like Adam Baldwin uh Milo yannopoulos"

[362]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "There he discovered his audience, an immense population of disenfranchised young men who were largely voiceless. Though he had next to nothing in common with them, who better to lead them, Yiannopoulos decided, than himself?"

[363]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "If power and privilege was a zero-sum game, betas figured, feminism and equal rights for minorities meant that white men had been degraded in the hierarchy and had to fight for scraps of power, just like any other identitarian faction."

[364]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) ""They may not be the hottest people in the world, they might not be the sexiest or the most socially fluid, but I like them. They're decent, real people, and they are being shat on by everyone else.""

[365]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfJZP5kCmL8> "...being that gamer Gates rooted in this anti-progressive anti-feminist antisocial Justice Warrior train of thought uh who jumps in right Wingers you have people like Adam Baldwin uh Milo yannopoulos... who tried to jump in as an anti-bullying Crusader who was trying to defend gamergate..."

[366]<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/milo-yiannopoulos-five-things-know> "While he refers to himself as "the world's most fabulous supervillain," and claims to be a conservative and a fearless bulwark against the encroaching forces of "political correctness," Yiannopoulos is in actuality a provocateur who specializes in attacking groups he dislikes. He particularly despises the left and promotes what he calls "a new cultural libertarianism."

[367]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "The tour had been organized by Yiannopoulos' former boss at Breitbart News, Steve Bannon, and the richest man in the world, an eccentric computer programmer named Robert Mercer. The tour had been a campaign stunt. But Bannon likely had weightier matters on his mind now. He had just entered the White House with Trump, and Yiannopoulos, ever the self-promoter, continued on his merry way from college to college to speak about how, in a phrase he also borrowed from 4chan, "feminism is cancer."

[368]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "When Milo Yiannopoulos was tasked by Steve Bannon and Robert Mercer to reignite the 4chan-Tumblr culture war in real life in 2016, he needed to find Tumblr culture IRL. This task proved easy. Tumblr had gone to college."

[369] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/28/milo-yiannopoulos-campus-speaking-tour-colorado>

[370] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "What had once been a longstanding online cultural war between the male-dominated 4chan and the primarily female image-sharing website tumblr.com solidified into a literal physical conflict."

[371] A mostly peaceful demonstration turned violent in Berkeley, Calif., when left-wing counterprotesters clashed with right-wing protesters and Trump supporters on Sunday. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/28/546641577/scattered-violence-erupts-at-large-left-wing-berkeley-rally>

[372] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90mKkGdIAxs> "Before protesters in black arrived, Cal students were overwhelmingly peaceful. But the violence far spoiled what students wanted."

[373] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "The Ku Klux Klan arrived in droves in their wizard's robes, as did many leather-clad biker gangs. So too came the nerdy boys of /pol/, easy to spot because most of them carried flags with 4chan's four leaves on them dedicated to Kek, the ancient Egyptian frog god of obscurity (now resurrected as a meme that resembled Pepe)."

[374] <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/stories/people-groups-and-symbols-charlottesville/>

[375] The woman who died when a car rammed into a group of people protesting against a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville was named on Sunday as Heather Heyer, a 32-year-old legal assistant with a law firm in [Virginia](#), who repeatedly championed civil rights issues on social media.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/13/woman-killed-at-white-supremacist-rally-in-charlottesville-named>

[376] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F2kPRW6ZuA> "The suspected driver 20-year-old James Alex Fields Jr. is behind bars... one person a 32 year old woman left dead 19 more rushed to the hospital five in critical condition"

[377] Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "Where did Fields get the idea to drive into the protesters? As many noted afterward, ramming protesters had been a frequent joke in alt-right chat rooms and memes."

[378] Three months before James Alex Fields allegedly drove his Dodge Challenger into a crowd of counter-protesters at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, he posted an Instagram meme showing a car plowing into a group of protesters <https://wtop.com/virginia/2018/12/facebook-blocks-reporters-meme-post-in-charlottesville-car-murder-case>

[379] A self-professed neo-Nazi who allegedly used his car as a lethal weapon, killing a woman and injuring 35 other people during a chaotic demonstration by white supremacists here in August, was charged with first-degree murder Thursday after being jailed for the past four months on a lesser homicide charge. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/driver-accused-of-plowing-into-charlottesville-crowd-killing-heather-heyer-due-in-court/2017/12/13/6cbb4ce8-e029-11e7-89e8-e6dec16379010_story.html

[380]<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn987yqnee9o> "A man seen wearing a Pepe shirt during the 6 January 2021 riot at Capitol Hill, where Trump supporters attempted to prevent his loss to Joe Biden"

[381]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3LjfmUDXbU> "supporters of donald trump stormed the u.s capitol as the electoral college votes from the presidential election which joe biden won were being tabulated and confirmed... anger fueled by a president who refuses to concede defeat in the face of court after court turning back his challenges"

[382]FINAL REPORT Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol December 22, 2022 117th Congress Second Session House Report 117-663.pdf "Knowing that he and his supporters had lost dozens of election lawsuits, and despite his own senior advisors refuting his election fraud claims and urging him to concede his election loss, Donald Trump refused to accept the lawful result of the 2020 election... A perimeter security line of Metropolitan Police intended to secure the Capitol against intrusion broke in the face of thousands of armed rioters—more than 2,000 of whom gained access to the interior of the Capitol building."

[383]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3LjfmUDXbU> "tonight d.c police say four people died in that attack one who was shot the other three died from medical emergencies"

[384]FINAL REPORT Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol December 22, 2022 117th Congress Second Session House Report 117-663.pdf "The rampage left multiple people dead, injured more than 140 people, and inflicted millions of dollars in damage to the Capitol."

[385]<https://archive.is/20240801134817/https://www.britannica.com/topic/4chan> "In November 2019, after three months offline, 8chan changed its name to 8kun and began transferring content to the new site... 8kun became a hub for participants in the January 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol."

[386]<https://archive.is/20220309155624/https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nana.12780> "In the United States, the QAnon conspiracy theory that originated in chan culture inspired the storming of Capitol Hill, an unprecedented attack on American democracy."

[387]FINAL REPORT Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol December 22, 2022 117th Congress Second Session House Report 117-663 <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GPO-J6-REPORT> "Multiple other posts made it clear that the U.S. Capitol was the target on January 6th, with one poster writing that people should bring "handcuffs and zip ties to DC," so they could enact "citizen's arrests" of those officials who certified the election's results.³⁵⁷ Another post highlighted the "most important map for January 6th. Form a TRUE LINE around the Capitol and the tunnels." ³⁵⁸ That "post included a detailed schematic of Capitol Hill with the tunnels surrounding the complex highlighted." ³⁵⁹

[388]Mobilising the Mob The Multifaceted Role of Social Media in the January 6th US Capitol Attack.pdf https://pure.eur.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/191076262/Mobilising_the_Mob.pdf "Furthermore, users exchanged schematics of the Capitol, brainstormed battle tactics, including using a flagpole as a weapon, shared maps of the Capitol tunnel system, discussed effective restraints (e.g. zip ties) for detaining members of Congress, and contemplated bringing weapons to the Capitol to hinder the election certification process"

[389] <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nana.12780> "The violent escalations of cyberfascism propagated at chan platforms, where conspiracy theories are used in calls

for the destruction of the current system in order to let a new one emerge, is a worrying trend."

[390]FINAL REPORT Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol December 22, 2022 117th Congress Second Session House Report 117-663.pdf "These are people who want to take America backward, not toward some imagined prior greatness, but toward repression... White supremacists. Violent extremists. Groups that subscribe to racism, anti-Semitism, and violent conspiracy theories; those who would march through the halls of the Capitol waving the Confederate battle flag."

[391]<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nana.12780> "The violent escalations of cyberfascism propagated at chan platforms, where conspiracy theories are used in calls for the destruction of the current system in order to let a new one emerge, is a worrying trend. The terrorist attacks of 2019 illustrate how cyberfascism that mobilizes passions to violently fight for the endangered ultra-nation and civilization lends itself to offline violence."

[392]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "What had once been a longstanding online cultural war between the male-dominated 4chan and the primarily female image-sharing website tumblr.com solidified into a literal physical conflict."

[393]www.lemonde.fr/en/pixels/article/2026/02/23/death-of-fredrick-brennan-creator-of-8chan-forum-where-qanon-emerged_6750792_13.html "A central figure in the English-speaking world of anonymous forums and the creator of 8chan, the site where the QAnon conspiracy theory took root, Fredrick Brennan died on January 10."

[394]<https://www.britannica.com/topic/4chan> "In early 2018 there appeared to be a struggle for control of the "voice" of Q, and it was at this point that Qdrops migrated to 8chan and Ron Watkins likely became Q."

[395]<https://archive.is/20240801134817/https://www.britannica.com/topic/4chan> "Alt-right, neo-Nazi, and white supremacist groups have used the sites as a recruitment tool, and conspiracy theories (most notably "Pizzagate" and QAnon) have originated and propagated on 4chan and 8chan."

[396]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "The Ku Klux Klan arrived in droves in their wizard's robes, as did many leather-clad biker gangs. So too came the nerdy boys of /pol/, easy to spot because most of them carried flags with 4chan's four leaves on them dedicated to Kek, the ancient Egyptian frog god of obscurity (now resurrected as a meme that resembled Pepe)... 'But your Kek flag is based on a neo-Nazi flag,' I countered. 'And you're marching with neo-Nazis.'"

[397]<https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-helped-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "WASHINGTON, DC – AUGUST 12: Counterprotestors to the Unite the Right 2 rally burn a Kekistan flag, a white nationalist symbol, in the middle of 15th St. NW near the White House on August 12, 2018 in Washington, DC."

[398]FINAL REPORT Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol December 22, 2022 117th Congress Second Session House Report 117-663.pdf "Hundreds of other participants in the January 6th attack have pleaded guilty, been convicted, or await trial for crimes related to their actions that day."

[399]<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/online-far-right-movements-fracture-wake-capitol-riot-n1254459> "Several QAnon supporters were arrested after storming the Capitol last week, including Jacob Chansley, whose lawyer said his client believed he was 'answering the call of our president.'"

[400]<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/online-far-right-movements-fracture-wake-capitol-riot-n1254459> "Online far-right movements are splintering in the wake of last week's Capitol riot, as some radical anti-government movements show signs of disillusionment with the relatively hands-off approach of some QAnon conspiracy theorists amid warnings of future violence."

[401]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "The notorious imageboard 4chan is down following what appears to be a major hack of its backend. The hackers claim to have exposed code for the site, the emails of moderators, and a list of mod communications. This happened, it seems, as part of a five year long, inter-image board beef between users of 4chan and Soyjak, another image board that splintered off of 4chan."

[402]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "Users struggled to load 4chan on the evening of April 14, 2025, according to posts on other imageboards and forums."

[403]<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/april-2025-4chan-sharty-hack-and-janitor-email-leak> "4chan was reportedly hacked by internet users claiming to be part of the Soyjak.Party community on April 14th, 2025."

[404]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "On Monday, 4chan went offline around 2:02 p.m. EST, with over 1,200 outage reports logged on Downdetector."

[405]<https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/15/notorious-image-board-4chan-hacked-and-internal-data-leaked/> "At the time of writing, 4chan's website was not loading, and users on social media reported the site being intermittently down for hours."

[406]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "When you attempt to access a specific board, the connection times out."

[407]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "When 4chan was hacked on the night of April 14, the /qa/ board briefly returned."

[408]<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/april-2025-4chan-sharty-hack-and-janitor-email-leak> "The hackers brought back the deleted /QA/ board, and temporarily granted access to 4chan's administrative site."

[409]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "A few hours before that, the banned board /qa/ reappeared on the site and someone using the hiroyuki account, named after 4chan's owner Hiroyuki Nishimura, posted "FUCKING LMAO" and "U GOT HACKED XD."

[410]<https://trending.knowyourmeme.com/editorials/guides/what-is-soyjakparty-the-imageboard-that-hacked-4chan-history-and-culture-of-the-infamous-sharty-explained> "Among the things the hackers did before 4chan got shut down was reinstate the /qa/ board and display the following board message: /QA/ RETURNS. SOYJAK.PARTY WON"

[411]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "4chan admins had taken all servers offline to contain the fallout, though the post claimed the servers were already fully compromised."

[412]<https://www.theregister.com/security/2025/04/28/4chan-back-from-catastrophic-attack-with-tale-of-cash-woes/967002> "When they had finished downloading what they wanted, they began to vandalize 4chan at which point moderators became aware and 4chan's servers were halted, preventing further access."

[413]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "'Tonight has been a very special night for many of us at the Soyjak party," a message on the Soyjak imageboard said."

[414]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "'Today, April 14, 2025, a hacker who has been in 4cuck's system for over a year, executed the true operation soyclipse, reopening /qa/, exposing personal information of various 4cuck staff, and leaking code from the site.'"

[415]<https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/15/notorious-image-board-4chan-hacked-and-internal-data-leaked/> "Messages on a rival message board, which TechCrunch has seen, celebrated the hack, with one person claiming that the hacker responsible for the breach was inside 4chan's system "for over a year.'"

[416]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "Once they gained access, the hackers leaked source code, admin logs, and email addresses of moderators—known on 4chan as "janitors" or "jannies"—some of which were linked to real names and .edu domains."

[417]<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/april-2025-4chan-sharty-hack-and-janitor-email-leak> "The thread contained several bits of leaked information, a look into the /j/ board as well as the entirety of the "yotsuba.php" code, which handles features like posting and reporting."

[418]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "The hiroyuki account was flagged in bold red as an admin, suggesting the person posting the messages had control over a real admin account."

[419]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "A few hours before that, the banned board /qa/ reappeared on the site and someone using the hiroyuki account, named after 4chan's owner Hiroyuki Nishimura, posted "FUCKING LMAO" and "U GOT HACKED XD."

[420]<https://www.fyresite.com/security-matters-what-we-learned-from-the-4chan-hack/> "On April 14, 2025, 4chan was hacked. Not through elaborate code manipulation, but due to a decade-old Ghostscript version left unpatched."

[421]<https://www.fyresite.com/security-matters-what-we-learned-from-the-4chan-hack/> "Ghostscript hadn't been updated on 4chan for over a decade, leaving an incredible amount of vulnerabilities that would have been fixed with updates."

[422]<https://www.theregister.com/security/2025/04/28/4chan-back-from-catastrophic-attack-with-tale-of-cash-woes/967002> "With this entry point, they were eventually able to gain access to one of 4chan's servers, including database access and access to our own administrative dashboard."

[423]<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/april-2025-4chan-sharty-hack-and-janitor-email-leak> "The hackers brought back the deleted /QA/ board, and temporarily granted access to 4chan's administrative site."

[424]<https://www.theregister.com/security/2025/04/28/4chan-back-from-catastrophic-attack-with-tale-of-cash-woes/967002> "When they had finished downloading what they wanted, they began to vandalize 4chan at which point moderators became aware and 4chan's servers were halted, preventing further access."

[425]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "This all has roots in a five year old meme fight."

[426]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "/qa/ was a "questions and answer" imageboard on 4chan."

[427]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "Five years ago, users spammed the /qa/ board with soyjaks."

[428]<https://trending.knowyourmeme.com/editorials/guides/what-is-soyjakparty-the-imageboard-that-hacked-4chan-history-and-culture-of-the-infamous-sharty-explained> "but when Soyjak memes rapidly grew in popularity in late 2010s, it was hijacked by Soyjak aficionados who plagued it with their beloved drawings of soy-fuelled males all day long."

[429]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "Soyjak is a popular meme you've probably seen before. It's a balding man with glasses and shaggy beard, his mouth agape in docile joy."

[430]<https://trending.knowyourmeme.com/editorials/guides/what-is-soyjakparty-the-imageboard-that-hacked-4chan-history-and-culture-of-the-infamous-sharty-explained> "And it lasted for a while, but as /qa/ grew bold and fond of raiding other boards, it was ultimately banned in November 2021 for its transgressions, with the lion's share of its popularity finding a new home on Sharty."

[431]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "According to cybersecurity collective VX-Underground, the roots of the breach may lie in long-standing tensions between 4chan's /qa/ board—once used for site discussion—and the /lgbt/ board, which became a target of user raids."

[432]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "The 4chan spinoff grew into a subculture with millions of posts online."

[433]<https://trending.knowyourmeme.com/editorials/guides/what-is-soyjakparty-the-imageboard-that-hacked-4chan-history-and-culture-of-the-infamous-sharty-explained> "The board is responsible for countless Soyjak variants and related memes that would go on and spread across the web."

[434]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "Unable to quash the tide of soyfaced jpegs, 4chan shut down the entire /qa/ board."

[435]<https://trending.knowyourmeme.com/editorials/guides/what-is-soyjakparty-the-imageboard-that-hacked-4chan-history-and-culture-of-the-infamous-sharty-explained> "And it lasted for a while, but as /qa/ grew bold and fond of raiding other boards, it was ultimately banned in November 2021 for its transgressions, with the lion's share of its popularity finding a new home on Sharty."

[436]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "Launched in 2020 as a site for sharing "Soyjak" memes—a soyjak is an emasculated man—Soyjak Party grew into a major hub for former 4chan users, particularly from the now defunct /qa/board, the questions and answers section of 4chan that contained messages related to the site's operations."

[437]<https://decrypt.co/314990/4chan-breach-chaos-data-major-hack> "When moderators shut down /qa/, some of its displaced users migrated to Soyjak Party, where resentment toward 4chan's leadership continued to grow."

[438]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "This happened, it seems, as part of a five year long, inter-image board beef between users of 4chan and Soyjak, another image board that splintered off of 4chan."

[439]<https://trending.knowyourmeme.com/editorials/guides/what-is-soyjakparty-the-imageboard-that-hacked-4chan-history-and-culture-of-the-infamous-sharty-explained> "After in November 2021 4chan's /qa/ was shut down, a large portion of its posters migrated to Soyjak.party, shaping the core userbase of the imageboard."

[440]<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/april-2025-4chan-sharty-hack-and-janitor-email-leak> "On April 25th, 2025, 4chan went back online."

[441]<https://www.theregister.com/security/2025/04/28/4chan-back-from-catastrophic-attack-with-tale-of-cash-woes/967002> "Two weeks after the incident and the website is back up and running, with the breached server replaced and critical software fully updated."

[442]<https://www.theregister.com/security/2025/04/28/4chan-back-from-catastrophic-attack-with-tale-of-cash-woes/967002> "'4chan is back,' its statement concluded. 'No other website can replace it, or this community. No matter how hard it is, we are not giving up.'"

[443]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "Though the functionality that allows users to upload new posts and images has remained down, and some features have not yet been restored, the blog post proclaimed, '4chan is back. No other website can replace it, or this community.'"

[444]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "What's undeniable is that 4chan helped form the content ecosystem as we know it."

[445]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "4chan could just as easily disappear again, but its sensibility endures in a grungy corner of our brains, a shitposting thread that can never be erased."

[446]<https://archive.is/20140925202032/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/09/25/absolutely-everything-you-need-to-know-to-understand-4chan-the-internet-s-own-bogeyman/> "First, 4chan is the original incubator for a huge number of memes and behaviors that we now consider central to mainstream Internet culture."

[447]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "What's undeniable is that 4chan helped form the content ecosystem as we know it."

[448]Dale Beran, It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office (New York: Crown, 2019) "The fast-paced way it churned through content and voted only the best posts to live meant that it began generating art that had literally evolved to survive as sufficiently funny, interesting, or attention-grabbing."

[449]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "The ephemeral nature of the

site, the result of limited server space, demanded that older content constantly be replaced by new."

[450] [ibid.](#)

[451]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kt2QQPbVGE> "Because there's no you know every other site now is has either points or reggae dates or unique IDs or or you know some sort of crediting just as like you know so and so submitted this and fortunately doesn't have that and yet it's it's a you know highly engaged Community that's constantly creating..."

[452]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "In other platforms like you know say Twitter again if you want to get a message in front of people on Twitter you have to have a lot of followers how to get a lot of followers you have to have influence... 4chan is really the only website I would say on the entire internet that you know affords you an opportunity to get a uh you know a message in front of just a gazillion people without without anything right without you know building that following..."

[453]<https://archive.is/20260407042903/https://www.wired.com/2009/09/mf-chanology/> "It was the source of the lolcat craze (affixing captions like 'I Can Has Cheezburger?' to photos of felines), the rickrolling phenomenon (tricking people into clicking on links to Rick Astley's ghastly 'Never Gonna Give You Up' music video), and other classic time-wasting Internet memes."

[454]<https://archive.is/Gao7i> "Imageboards are the most important medium for free speech on the internet. Even though fringe groups often come out due to anonymity and spread opinions that the vast majority don't agree with, they absolutely should still have the ability to."

[455]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "And sites like it are kind of going the way of the dinosaur right now."

[456]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "...my TED talk in 2010 so what is that it's about exactly five years ago it was February 2010 uh you I refer to 4chain as kind of a dinosaur dinosaur and so a relic uh of that uh you of that past era..."

[457]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "'It's pretty archaic internet infrastructure,' Jared Holt, a researcher at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue focussing on domestic extremist movements on the web, told me."

[458]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_1UEAGCo30 "They're endangered because we're moving towards social networking. We're moving towards persistent identity. We're moving towards, you know, a lack of privacy, really."

[459]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "The kind of real-time one-upmanship that happens on X, TikTok, and video podcasts; the culture of "owns," clapbacks, and online putdowns—all of it crystallized on 4chan."

[460]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "X, which under the ownership of Elon Musk has loosened content-moderation policies and allowed the kind of conspiracy theories and graphic imagery that once thrived on 4chan."

[461]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "The brain poisoning of the internet is now perpetuated through closed groups on Telegram or Signal, which offer some encryption and automated erasure of messages."

[462]<https://archive.is/20250430102400/https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/how-the-internet-left-4chan-behind> "It survived as a basement of the internet—dingy, subterranean, and in a state of arrested development..."

[463]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "...more or less um the site has not uh uh you not declined and not grown dramatically over the years but it's really just maintained this pretty um uh respectable amount of traffic so"

[464]<https://4chan.org/faq#what4chan> "4chan is powered by a rack of colocated servers and a CDN (CloudFlare), enabling us to serve more than 100 terabytes of data per day, and over 680 million pageviews to more than 22 million unique visitors per month!"

[465]<https://archive.is/20250109213156/https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-man-who-helped-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine/> "It now claims around 22 million visitors a month."

[466]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "in a normal month 4chain will serve about 20 to 22 million unique visitors and serve about uh then it was serving about 500 million page views a month now it's actually closer to 610 615 but anyway you in that month we served 45 million unique visitors and about 980 or so million page views"

[467]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "[B]ut again more or less um the site has not uh uh you not declined and not grown dramatically over the years but it's really just maintained this pretty um uh respectable amount of traffic so"

[468]Dale Beran, *It Came from Something Awful: How a Toxic Troll Army Accidentally Memed Donald Trump into Office* (New York: Crown, 2019) "4chan was ultimately so influential on mainstream culture because it was the center of a counterculture."

[469]<https://archive.ph/T9ejB#selection-1159.0-1159.142> "There are the platforms, the World Wide Web, the deep web, the dark web, and then, as far off its own soul and humanity as one can dig itself, there's the Low Life Web where basement dwellers wage war over who can be the most insufferable human being alive."

[470]<https://archive.is/20140925202032/http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/09/25/absolutely-everything-you-need-to-know-to-understand-4chan-the-internets-own-bogeyman/> "In a phrase, what happens on 4chan does not stay on 4chan — not when it gets big, anyway. In-jokes and other benign ephemera tend to filter out organically, via users' other online networks and social media accounts."

[471]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "Because they were being seen by so many eyes firsthand on 4chan and secondhand via social media sharing and further remixing, troll-made memes began appearing in Hollywood films, cable television shows, and even retail chains like Hot Topic (Phillips 2015)—all of which ensured that the memes and their underlying trollish sensibility reached ever-widening audiences, whether or not those audiences had any idea that a particular meme had been a 'trolling thing' first."

[472]The Oxygen of Amplification Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators Online By Whitney Phillips "Because they were being seen

by so many eyes firsthand on 4chan and secondhand via social media sharing and further remixing, troll-made memes began appearing in Hollywood films, cable television shows, and even retail chains like Hot Topic (Phillips 2015)—all of which ensured that the memes and their underlying trollish sensibility reached ever-widening audiences, whether or not those audiences had any idea that a particular meme had been a 'trolling thing' first."

[473]<https://archive.is/20251013132959/https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-communications-regulator-confirms-20000-4chan-fine/> "The provider of online message board 4chan has been fined £20,000 by the U.K.'s communications regulator Ofcom for failing to respond to requests for information about its compliance with the Online Safety Act."

[474]<https://therecord.media/4chan-fined-ofcom-uk-online-safety-act> "The fine — which will increase by £100 (\$133) per day from Tuesday — is a small penalty by the standards of most commercial entities."

[475]<https://therecord.media/4chan-fined-ofcom-uk-online-safety-act> "That month, 4chan and Kiwi Farms — an online harassment hub — filed a lawsuit against the British government arguing its enforcement of the Online Safety Act was an infringement of their rights."

[476]<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c624330lq1ko> "In a follow-up post on X, 4Chan's lawyer Preston Byrne wrote: 'In the only country in which 4chan operates, the United States, it is breaking no law and indeed its conduct is expressly protected by the First Amendment.'"

[477]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "I think it's going to be around for a really long time so uh thanks for uh again thanks for making it really special..."

[478]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYUKJBZuUig> "I mean that was the again that was the era of creativity and memes and uh you know that was like when B was really at B was in its heyday then so maybe maybe that was the golden era..."

[479] On January 30th, 2026, the Department of Justice (DOJ) published roughly 3.5 million pages from the Epstein Files as part of the "Epstein Files Transparency Act." According to the DOJ[1] site's post, the files also included "more than 2,000 videos and 180,000 images" in addition to emails and other documents. The files can be searched through and viewed by the public via the "Epstein Library" archives hosted on the DOJ[2] site. That same day, users on 4chan's[3] /pol/ board began digging through the files and discovered that Christopher "moot" Poole was in the documents numerous times when searching keywords such as "moot," "chris poole," "christopher poole" and "christopher_poole." <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/jeffrey-epstein-4chan-connection>

[480]<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/10/struggling-to-navigate-the-epstein-files-here-is-a-visual-guide> "In total, the DOJ identified six million pages of evidence. But so far, it has only released 3.5 million pages, including some 180,000 images and 2,000 videos."

[481]<https://archive.is/20260213211123/https://www.theverge.com/tech/879132/moot-4chan-jeffrey-epstein-meeting-pol> "Speculation about the timing arose after emails found in the millions of documents released by the Department of Justice showed Epstein and venture capitalist Boris Nikolic discussing a meeting between Epstein and moot in 2011, as well as failed attempts to meet later."

[482]<https://www.ms.now/opinion/jeffrey-epstein-4chan-chris-poole> "In October 2011, years after Epstein pleaded guilty to sexual misconduct with a minor, an adviser to Bill Gates named Boris Nikolic emailed Epstein about wanting to introduce him to a 'cool guy.'"

[483] <https://www.ms.now/opinion/jeffrey-epstein-4chan-chris-poole> "The same month that Nikolic introduced Epstein to Poole, 4chan launched a politically oriented forum called /pol/, which became popular with right-wing extremists."

[484] <https://www.ms.now/opinion/jeffrey-epstein-4chan-chris-poole>

[485] <https://www.ms.now/opinion/jeffrey-epstein-4chan-chris-poole>

[486] <https://web.archive.org/web/20131216080331/http://indiestatik.com/2013/12/13/female-game-developers/>

[487] <https://archive.fo/HrOwB#selection-503.0-503.79>

[488] <https://archive.fo/LoXq7#selection-1403.1-1403.55>