
From: Tom Phillips <tom.phillips@buzzfeed.com>
To: Alan White <alan.white@buzzfeed.com>
CC: Luke Lewis <luke.lewis@buzzfeed.com>; Richard James <richard.james@buzzfeed.com>
Sent: 12/2/2014 12:52:21 PM
Subject: Re: CEN story

Yes I will liaise.

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:50 PM, Alan White wrote:

Happy to aim for December 19.

Will try to do a bit of work over the weekend and get the full list of debunked and debunkable stuff together.

Tom are you ok to do all the liaising with Craig?

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:40 PM, Luke Lewis wrote:

I don't know, Christmas is not a complete dead zone. People still go on the internet and read things.

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:37 PM, Tom Phillips wrote:

Let the three of us have a look at what material we've got already before we put a specific deadline on it. We'll revisit in a day or two and see if we're looking at a couple of weeks' turnaround, or if we should set a deadline in January instead (no point publishing over Christmas, I suspect.)

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:33 PM, Luke Lewis wrote:

We should put a deadline on it though, otherwise it'll never happen. Publish by December 19?

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:32 PM, Richard James wrote:

But what you guys have lined up sounds bang on and has potential to be really incredible.

Richard James | News Editor UK | @richjamesuk

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On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:31 PM, Richard James wrote:

We aren't immune to publishing fake news/falling for hoaxes ourselves, so as long as we focus on the incredible pick-up this guy's ridiculous stories get across the world we're on firmer footing than simply screen grabbing 10 Mail stories.

Could tie in the fact second/third sourcing, getting unique quotes, is disappearing from news room as they simple turn to churning out as many stories (no matter how improbable) as possible.

Richard James | News Editor UK | @richjamesuk

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On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:27 PM, Luke Lewis wrote:

All sounds good, as you say we should not take an aggressive or holier than thou tone.

I like the idea of styling CEN as a "viral bullshit factory", but "king of viral hoaxes" may be better. We'll see.

Can't wait to read it.

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:14 PM, Alan White wrote:

Errr just that we might need to substitute "Bullshit" for something a little milder. Or maybe not.

I think we're treading a real tightrope with this piece. Because the truth is that however much we hedge it we will be saying "Look at the shit Metro / Mirror / Mail run as truth and that we don't." Which is fine, it's just that as Tom says it needs to be sensitive - it's a wider look at how the whole process of news production has changed, not a straight up hit job on him and the people buying the stories. Well, not quite.

On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 5:08 PM, Tom Phillips wrote:

Hey chaps – so Alan and I had a good hangout with Craig Silverman this afternoon, talking about CEN and fake news. We're keen to collaborate with him (and he wants to work with us) on a long-ish piece about CEN – he's

already got a lot of research on some of their stories, and on the organisation/bloke behind it. It sounds to us a lot like it's not just a news agency that sells dubious stories, the guy may be quite odd/dodgy in many ways.

We're keen that it shouldn't look like we're running a hit piece on our competitors for publishing CEN stories, so we're going to try and focus it more on the debunking, the agency itself, and a general ~thinkpiece~ take on the production of viral news. (And acknowledge that we personally have both run CEN pieces in the past.)

Working title, thanks to Alan, is "How One Man In Austria Became The King Of Viral Bullshit".

Thoughts/questions?

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