



Global Network
on Extremism & Technology

Accelerationism: The Active Club Network

Center on Extremism, Terrorism and Counterterrorism,
Accelerationism Research Consortium, United States of America

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User Journeys in Online Extremist Groups

This project by the Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET) looks at the user journeys of individuals who enter and participate in the online spaces of extremist communities. A user journey here refers to the distinct path a user may follow to reach their goals when accessing and using an online space belonging to extremist communities.

User journeys are particularly important in offering insights into the rationale and motivations of users on the one hand, and to the inner workings of extremist online communities on the other. This is vital for understanding goals and objectives.

In selecting the ideologies for this project, we drew upon extremist communities – rather than extremist and terrorist organisations or groups – including those actors that participate in the extremist milieu and share ideas but do not necessarily operate in concert. These ideologies include those of formal and well-defined extremist organisations of White supremacist and anti-government extremist groups in the United States, supporter networks of Islamic State (IS), and looser communities of extremist actors including accelerationists, incels and chan site members who operate on shared platforms, congregating around common beliefs but without the connection of formal membership.

This project is a response to the growing interest in understanding how individuals enter and participate in online spaces of extremist communities. A core goal of the project was to understand the role of algorithms in leading users to extremist communities, including the changes in algorithmic recommendations that lead users to more extreme content online. However, examining these changes proved impossible due to the precautions taken by the expert contributors to the project, such as the use of separate technology and VPNs throughout their research.

The project also highlights the distinct posting behaviour and operational security protocols of different groups, usually along ideological lines.

Executive Summary

This report is the fourth in a series of short reports that look at the user journeys of individuals in extremist communities. This report focuses on the Active Club Network (ACN), which is a decentralised and transnational neofascist accelerationism sub-community within the broader accelerationist movement. The accelerationist element is particularly noteworthy. This sub-community consists of small, individually informed organisations that emphasise White fraternal brotherhood, Evolian traditionalism, and preparation for war against a perceived White genocide.

The focus on the ACN is due to its presence across several social media platforms, maintaining accounts on both mainstream and alternative platforms. The focus is also partly because the user journey of its members and adherents is mostly characterised by a more robust multi-platform experience. The study used focused groups which mainly comprised individuals who have accessed, observed and occasionally participated in the private communication channels of these accelerationist movements. The names of all communities mentioned during the focus group, including those that participants accessed, have been removed. The report highlights platform use, violence, attacks and gender dynamics.

Key findings on accelerationism are:

- For some of these groups such as ACN – the focus of this report – user journey is mostly characterised by a robust multi-platform experience, in which affiliated accounts across various accounts link with each other in order to give their content maximum visibility.
- Online platforms used by ACN include Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. Telegram remains a central hub where Active Club members and its adherents can gather, share propaganda and coordinate among themselves.
- Active Clubs intentionally eschew overtly violent tactics and activities mainly to avoid drawing the attention of law enforcement.
- Within these Clubs, women are rarely spoken of, while men are expected to adhere to traditional roles as leaders and physical protectors of their families.

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1 Overview

Accelerationism is an umbrella term encompassing many disparate philosophies which promote disruption to accelerate the collapse of our current liberal democratic society, on the basis of the flaws inherent in the liberalism and capitalism of our current societal, political and economic systems.

Militant accelerationism is then set of strategies and tactics to commit violence as the only viable solution to deal with the world, and help prompt or accelerate the inevitable demise of our current systems, ultimately improving and rejuvenating our society and its social, political and economic systems.

The accelerationist online ecosystem has several distinctive characteristics, including being mainly based on Telegram as part of the 'Terrorgram' network, its culture of saintdom, an intersection with far-right movements including the Boogaloo boys, involuntary celibacy, eco-fascism, White supremacy and conspiracy theories. This section of the report provides a deep dive into a single community within the accelerationist ecosystem: the ACN. The ACN demonstrates how adherents to accelerationism have learnt from previous content moderation and deplatforming efforts and have adapted their online behaviour accordingly.

The ACN is a decentralised and transnational neofascist accelerationist movement. Neofascist accelerationism is a particular sub-community within the broader accelerationist movement which adheres to a set of ideologies within a fascist framework as its motivation for adopting accelerationist strategies and tactics. The ACN consists of small, individually-formed organisations which promote a White fraternal brotherhood, Evolian traditionalism, and preparation for war against a perceived White genocide. Established in 2020 by Robert Rundo following widespread arrests of Rise Above Movement (RAM) members in 2018, the Active Club model prioritises imperceptibility to law enforcement by concentrating its efforts on localised recruitment across state and national boundaries. In doing so, it aims to avoid criminalisation, designation and excess attention, while simultaneously building resiliency against the organisational disruption to which more established, hierarchical groups are vulnerable.

Online, the ACN maintains a presence across several social media platforms, cultivating accounts on both mainstream and alternative platforms, such as Telegram. On their mainstream accounts, Active Clubs offer a more sanitised and acceptable lens of their existence and activities to appeal to users and gain sympathisers. From there, Active Clubs provide links to their more egregious content to push individuals deeper into their ideology and brand, with the aim of driving them into offline engagement.

The ideology to which Active Clubs subscribe is particularly compelling, and has motivated multiple instances of offline violence. Similar to its predecessor, the RAM, the ACN adheres to neofascist accelerationism. Motivated by the teachings of notorious fascists such as Julius Evola and Savitri Devi, neofascist accelerationists believe that society has devolved to an irreparable degree, due to a perceived rise in Jewish and immigrant influence, and that the White race and traditional “European” culture is facing an existential crisis. Neofascist accelerationists that adhere to Evolian traditionalism refer to this current state of degeneracy and progressive barbarity as the Kali Yuga, also known as the Dark Age. According to Evola’s teachings, to save the White race and greater society, adherents must “accelerate” through the Dark Age and spark an apocalyptic conflict that will result in humanity returning to a Golden Age.

Preparation for this metamorphic conflict is the cornerstone of Active Club identity and its activities. Ardent efforts in training and recruiting sympathisers are ultimately to prepare for war, on both physical and spiritual levels. Active Clubs are also devoted to countercultural messaging to fight against Jewish influences beyond the physical. As believers of conspiracy theories such as the Great Replacement¹ and White genocide, members perceive that Jews are manipulating the media to villainise the White populace. Thus, Active Clubs invest heavily in spreading the “truth” via online social media platforms.

¹ Matthew Kriner, Meghan Conroy, Alex Newhouse, and Jonathan Lewis, “Understanding Accelerationist Narratives: The Great Replacement Theory,” GNET, July 1, 2022, <https://gnet-research.org/2022/05/30/understanding-accelerationist-narratives-the-great-replacement-theory/>.

2 Methodology

The study used focus groups, which mainly comprised individuals who have accessed, observed and occasionally participated in the private communication channels of these accelerationist movements. The names of all the communities mentioned in the focus groups, including those accessed by the participants, have also been removed. The focus groups took place over three hours and concentrated on three core areas: access and onboarding, posting behaviour and content, and exiting communities.

This project received ethics clearance from King's College London.

3 Public Activities of Accelerationists: The ACN

Platform Use

The user journey of Active Club members and adherents is characterised by a robust, multi-platform experience in which Active Club accounts on various platforms link to each other to give their content maximum visibility. Official Active Club accounts representing various geographic locations – as well as affiliated online merchandise stores and aesthetic branding accounts – are present on:

- Mainstream media platforms – including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
- Alternative video-sharing platforms – including Bitchute and Odysee
- Messaging platforms – including Gab and Telegram
- Several Active Club-run websites and merchandise shops.

Of these platforms, the most dominant is Telegram, a central hub where Active Club members and adherents can gather, share propaganda and coordinate among themselves.

Mainstream media platforms are primarily used by Active Club members to spread affiliated propaganda to a larger, more moderate audience in the hope of garnering additional support and bolstering the number of Active Club recruits. A primary element of this strategy is the intentional branding of the ACN (particularly across mainstream media platforms) as a positive space for community-building and fraternity, rather than as a threatening entity that targets various out-groups. A post on a large Active Club Telegram channel expands on this strategy:

“Active clubs shouldn’t be menacing and scary, that image is burnt out and distasteful to the youth who would rather be bettering themselves through the brotherhood and positive influence of the active club model. Active clubs should be focused on having regular group fitness and community building; as Rundo said, you don’t have to signal or try hard to be edgy. A group of strong white men is a fascist statement in itself.”

Accordingly, Active Club accounts on mainstream media platforms emphasise the importance of physical training and organisational camaraderie through photos, videos and captions depicting Active Club members training together. Alternative media platforms appear to be intended for a more radicalised audience. Active Club accounts on video-sharing platforms like Bitchute and Odysee primarily post re-uploaded propaganda videos originally posted to an influential Active Club website. The videos range in topic from short-form activism tutorials to documentary-style content on the

persecution of the White race and public Active Club engagements. Similarly, Active Club accounts on Gab share explicit content and engage overtly with accelerationist networks.

The ACN on Gab is also deeply affiliated with other accelerationist entities, including the Nordic Resistance Movement,² NSC131, the White Lives Matter network³ and other White supremacist groups.

The ACN coalesces on the Telegram platform, probably due to the lack of oversight and disciplinary measures taken against malign users. This platform boasts the largest Active Club presence across all media and messaging platforms, with the vast majority of established Active Clubs using Telegram for central communications, coordination with other affiliated organisations, propaganda dissemination efforts and membership vetting. Active Clubs are particularly collaborative on Telegram, with a core behaviour across Active Club channels being the frequent linking to and reposting of other Active Clubs' Telegram messages to their own channels in order to circulate messages across the network. This network is characterised by the affiliation of many smaller Active Club channels, sometimes geographically based, with big-tent channels designed to represent the central information and coordination nodes of the Telegram network. The highly centralised structure indicates that, with the removal of a few key nodes, the network would be vulnerable to temporary fragmentation.

The Active Club Telegram network is important for building group identity through the targeting and monitoring of groups that Active Clubs deem a threat to their values. For example, many Active Clubs repost and share content from channels of which the primary purpose is to keep track of antifa and antifa-related activities. Descriptive network analysis revealed that reposts from a certain channel act as integral bridges of information across the ACN on Telegram⁴. This channel monitors a lawsuit brought against Christian Exoo, a self-described anti-fascist who was accused of doxxing Daniel D'Ambly in their workplace, among other claims.

Despite the ACN's tactical use of different media platforms to reach a range of audiences, the uploaded material often reflects posts created on other platforms. In some instances, videos uploaded to one platform (usually to an Active Club website or Telegram) are reposted to several other Active Club accounts on other platforms. On other occasions, the same image is uploaded across platforms to demonstrate adherence to a particular principle or aspect of the network's ideology. This mimicry can also manifest in posted captions or comments, with the rhetoric in one post closely mirroring (if not outright copying) the terminology of uploads on other platforms.

This process of collective identity-building through the spread of information about groups deemed hostile to Active Clubs helps mobilise and give meaning to the core objectives of Active Club

2 Center on Terrorism Extremism and Counterterrorism, "Dangerous Organizations and Bad Actors: Nordic Resistance Movement," Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, November 18, 2022, <https://www.middlebury.edu/institute/academics/centers-initiatives/ctec/ctec-publications/dangerous-organizations-and-bad-actors-nordic>.

3 Center on Terrorism Extremism and Counterterrorism, "Dangerous Organizations and Bad Actors."

4 Kendra French and Kojin Glick, "Using Brokerage to Understand Group Identity: Building Belief Profiles." Unpublished manuscript, May 16, 2023, typescript.

membership. The goal of identifying these groups as potential points of first contact in a future conflict has two important effects.

Firstly, given the preparatory nature of the activities promoted by Active Clubs, influential actors can use the constant monitoring of hostile groups to underline the inevitability of the future conflict for which they train.

Secondly, bringing attention to individuals like Christian Exoo, and highlighting his efforts to doxx people with similar belief profiles to Active Club members allow these channels to weave together an atmosphere where violence can be easily justified as retaliatory. Despite the fact that Active Clubs shy away from the limelight and avoid direct confrontation, the spectre of violence is an integral part of the motivation to join them and continue training with them.

Across platforms, Active Club accounts and affiliates are identifiable by a number of characteristics. Official Active Club accounts typically upload imagery or video footage of individuals or groups in physical training, often wearing clothing or adorning their tools and weapons with accessories associated with Active Club-affiliated brands. Often associated with these uploads are captions expressing encouragement for individuals to join their local Active Club. Active Club accounts are also identifiable by their strong tendency to link to other platforms. Most commonly, links to Active Clubs' Telegram channels are found in the account bios of other platforms. Additionally, Active Club accounts reference accelerationist concepts and individuals, including the Kali Yuga and Julius Evola, and discuss fascist concepts as well as conspiracy theories like the Great Replacement theory. Though these concepts are sometimes referenced on mainstream platforms, they are more commonly discussed in alternative spaces, probably in an effort to keep the content on mainstream media more acceptable to non-extremist audiences. Active Club accounts also frequently post graphics or photos of Robert Rundo with the caption "Free Rob Rundo", in a reference to his March 2023 arrest in Romania on US federal rioting charges. This caption and associated imagery are also sold as merchandise to be distributed or displayed as physical propaganda. By contrast, Active Club members are not as easily identifiable as official Active Club accounts, though they typically follow or otherwise engage with content posted to official Active Club platforms.

Online, individuals sympathetic or otherwise affiliated to the ACN can locate Active Club social media and messaging accounts with relative ease. On some platforms, keyword search terms including "Media2Rise" (an Active Club-operated media outlet), "Will2Rise" (alternatively, "W2R" – an Active Club-run retail site and brand) and even "Active Club" can direct interested parties to Active Club-affiliated accounts. However, some media platforms are beginning to counteract this.

The majority of official Active Club accounts also provide links to their other social media accounts (most commonly, Telegram). In some instances, Active Club accounts use Linktree to provide users with URLs for all affiliated accounts across platforms. Active Club channels on the Telegram platform are particularly

involved in providing links to affiliated accounts on other platforms, with several channels providing links not only to their own media accounts, but also to Active Club transnational accounts.

Telegram also fosters the transition of interested parties from “affiliate” to “member”, with several official Active Club channels using separate “vetting channels” or designated contact persons for interested parties to connect with for further information and instructions. If these individuals are formally accepted and invited to join the Active Club in question, they will be granted access to a private Telegram channel (or other means of private communication) exclusively for members, for purposes such as coordinating training sessions and conducting physical propaganda dissemination.

Active Club accounts, primarily those officially representing a particular Active Club, have been deplatformed across various platforms on several occasions. To combat the loss of various platforms, the ACN employs two key tactics to ensure survivability. Firstly, most Active Club accounts link to other affiliated accounts on their other media platforms. Secondly, users engage heavily in recidivist activity, often creating new accounts under similar names within days of account termination. These new accounts can quickly garner large followings via promotions of the new account on the Active Club’s other social media platforms. In some instances, other Active Clubs will also promote the creation of these new accounts. This methodology ensures that the ACN is always on the maximum number of platforms possible to increase its transnational reach.

Violence and Attacks

Active Clubs intentionally eschew overtly violent tactics and activities to avoid law enforcement attention, which proved detrimental to its predecessor organisation. Despite this, Active Clubs continue to represent a key node in the accelerationist agenda. Across neofascist accelerationist literature, there is a recurring theme of a trinity of roles that individuals and entities can play in furthering the accelerationist goal of societal collapse. For example, in Iron March,⁵ forum founder Alexander Slavros’s *The Awakening of a National Socialist*, the protagonist encounters three mentors – The Scholar, The Warrior and The Adventurer – who each impart guidance on the making of the ideal fascist. Three roles are presented again in the manifesto of Juraj Krajčík, the perpetrator of the 2022 Bratislava terrorist attack and Terrorgram’s first official Saint.

Krajčík offers a three-pronged approach to accelerationism:

1. “The Movement”
2. Passive resistance
3. Active resistance.

⁵ Alex Newhouse, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, “The Threat Is the Network: The Multi-Node Structure of Neo-Fascist Accelerationism,” January 7, 2022, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-threat-is-the-network-the-multi-node-structure-of-neo-fascist-accelerationism/>.

In its report⁶ on the Bratislava attack, the Accelerationism Research Consortium found that the first approach, referred to as “The Movement”, represents overtly militant accelerationist entities such as the skullmask network.⁷ Their role is to engage in violent action against the Jewish enemy and they are described by Krajčik as “a shield, absorbing the blows of the enraged, wounded beast, while the other two prongs flank the beast and deliver crushing blows to its sides”. As a neofascist accelerationist entity, Active Clubs align ideologically with “The Movement”. However, their activities largely fall under the “passive resistance” course. In line with the “passive resistance” approach, Active Clubs’ fervent efforts and emphasis on physical preparation for war – alongside their intentional circumvention of law enforcement – indicate that their aims are focused not on pre-emptive organisational martyrdom to further the destined clash and revival of humanity, but on passive preparation for such an event.

Gendered Dynamics

Active Clubs predominantly emphasise the involvement of men over women, though both are expected to play certain roles within the community. Men are expected to be the leaders and physical protectors of their family unit and of the White race as a whole, thus necessitating frequent physical training, tactical training and preparation for future battle. Active Club discussions, in both internal communications and online posts, emphasise the importance of men adhering to traditional gender roles and prioritising physical and mental strength. Women, by contrast, are rarely spoken of in Active Club communications, though their roles appear to centre on being child-rearers, homemakers and supportive wives, in an apparent rejection of modern gender roles. This rejection extends to what are perceived to be incorrect gender norms, including feminist women, “feminine” men and LGBTQ+ individuals. These identities are deemed innately inferior as well as a manifestation of a degenerative, progressive society.

In rare instances, female-run Active Clubs have been created to bolster women’s participation within the ACN, though this does not appear to be a central goal of the network. In these female-run Active Clubs, women train together to learn practical survival skills to help support and nurture their families, including land navigation while hiking, starting fires, cooking outside and sanitising wounds. Children are sometimes included in events associated with these Active Clubs.

A core emphasis of these Clubs is the encouragement of women to raise children with a lived experience of “struggling” towards greatness in a replication of their ancestral struggles. Such “struggles” are most often discussed in the context of striving towards physical strength, with obstacles presenting barriers to

6 Julia Kupper, Kacper Rękawek, and Matthew Kriner. “Terrorgram’s First Saint: Analyzing Accelerationist Terrorism in Bratislava.” The Accelerationism Research Consortium, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6193e52959704a0c3b5b4b0c/t/6421ecf5721fc579c2799737/1679944949837/ARC_Terrorgrams+First+Saint_Bratislava.pdf. Accessed June 23, 2023.

7 H.E. Upchurch, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, “The Iron March Forum and the Evolution of the ‘Skull Mask’ Neo-Fascist Network,” December 22, 2021, <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-iron-march-forum-and-the-evolution-of-the-skull-mask-neo-fascist-network/>.

the completion of physical tasks. Notably, female-run Active Clubs do not appear to harness extremist narratives as their male-run counterparts do. Nor do these Active Clubs appear to have strong social media presence, and communication with these groups is only made possible following a successful vetting process.

4 Private Activities of Accelerationists: The ACN

Accelerationist movements including the ACN, like several other far-right communities, use a number of methods for vetting members. One such method is the use of invitations issued to new members through recommendations and referrals. Other methods include the use of evidence and action. Here, potential members may be asked to provide evidence of their identities, such as photographs. These methods are essentially intended to establish the willingness and loyalty of potential members. Other forms of vetting include in-person events, which are mostly perceived to be secure.

5 Conclusion

Champions of Evolian traditionalism and greater neofascism, Active Clubs represent an essential ACN cog in the militant accelerationist machine that churns towards societal collapse. The ACN and its construction present a novel challenge for law enforcement and tech companies in their fight against extremist entities. Conceived by Robert Rundo in response to the demise of his earlier RAM, Active Clubs' intentional withholding of explicitly extremist content (particularly on mainstream platforms) and abstinence from overt engagements of violence protect the network from large-scale crackdowns, both online and offline. Worryingly, the Active Club brand and existence are increasingly regarded as a success by other accelerationist and far-right organisations and movements, possibly inspiring new terrain for extremist organising.



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