

# COP, LOOK, LISTEN

ISSUE 5 | Sunday 13 November

Hi,

Welcome to the fifth edition of **COP, LOOK, LISTEN** in 2022, a bulletin covering information attacks and anti-climate communication trends in and around COP27.

**As delegates enjoy a much-needed day off in Sharm el-Sheikh, this is a Sunday Special in partnership with [Graphika](#).**

**Under the microscope: [mobilisation against ESG and the US right-wing](#).**

We welcome requests from journalists, civil society and policymakers to provide evidence where relevant. If you have a lead regarding climate mis-/disinformation, malign influence operations or other suspicious activity, please email [contact@caad.info](mailto:contact@caad.info). All requests will be reviewed from both an ethical and technical perspective, ensuring data is used responsibly to map and counter these threats.

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**UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: Mobilisation against**

# ESG and the US right-wing

## 'Where Are They Now?': Online Worlds Collide

### OUR VERDICT:

The climate community needs to double down on support for **campaigns** to keep **greenwashing** out of ESG, as companies look for opportunities to backslide on commitments to appease critics. Because social media algorithms amplify salacious content over quality, those spreading outlandish disinformation are rewarded while those posting the (sometimes dry or technical) truth are shouted over.

## The Culture Warriors Come for ESG



10:11 pm · 21 Sep 2022 · Twitter Web App

4,780 Retweets 1,585 Quote Tweets 20.4K Likes

Top-performing ESG posts suggest links to an ongoing **[“anti-woke” campaign](#)**, funded by conservative activist **[Leonard A. Leo](#)**.

The three **[most engaged tweets](#)** including the phrase “ESG” within our dataset were pro-oil, anti-renewable energy and espoused anti-trans beliefs. 20 of the 25 most engaged tweets came from right-leaning, climate denial and pro-oil actors, drowning out the more numerous environmentalist voices in the conversation.

Past Graphika mappings of the climate denial space have shown this community as tied to, but distinct, from the U.S. Right-wing (see [‘Deny, Deceive, Delay’](#) for details). **However, accounts engaging with climate denial content are nearly indistinguishable from other U.S. right-wing audiences in both their following patterns and content consumption, marking a convergence of these two communities.**

**Computationally speaking, climate denialists in our analysis are no longer defined as distinct from right-wing culture wars influencers.**

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## The Crossover Episode No-one Asked For

As CAAD's COP26 research [found](#), topics related to climate change have been turned into an effective bogeyman in the ongoing ‘culture war’. False claims and conspiracies around **[“Climate lockdowns,”](#)** Biden **[“banning red meat,”](#)** and Democrats touting **[“bug-based diets”](#)** have all been effective talking points for influencers battling so-called “woke” liberalism. Underpinning these claims is the argument that sustainable policies and initiatives will impinge on the civil liberties of the individual.

This year, ESG (environmental, social, and governance) investing was one of the most prominent climate-related topics, and the meeting ground for once-distinct climate disinformation networks. Analysis by Graphika shows a network of anti-“woke” [partisan professionals framing ESG](#) as an attack on freedom, and as evidence of a strategic liberal agenda.

ESG involves assessing a company’s investments or sustainability outlook - it is a key issue at COP, and numerous businesses pledged more sustainable portfolios in the lead-up to COP27.

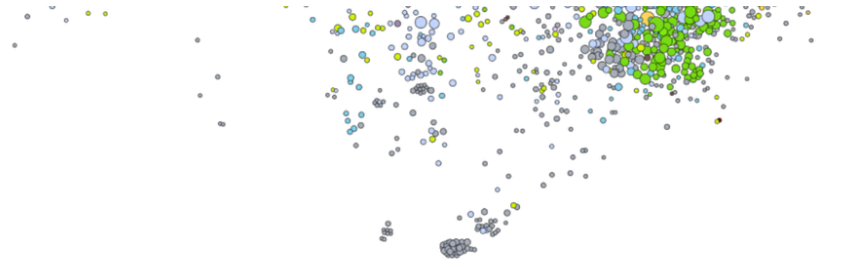
Communities hostile to [such efforts, or advancing other Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals](#), have mobilised in response. Our analysis examines the communities engaged with this anti-“woke” framing, key amplifiers, and overlap with other ‘culture war’ topics, as well as the apparent impact on the overall discussion around ESG.

**It is within the anti-ESG space that our analysis shows accounts specific to climate disinfo, once a distinct subset of actors within the larger conservative political sphere, have fully merged in their audiences and messaging.**

## What We Found: Network Analysis

The following map was made by collecting all English-language tweets including the term “ESG” throughout the month of October, filtered to the 13,000 most interconnected accounts. It represents the communities most engaged with the ESG investing conversation, ranging from the international finance sector and environmental sustainability advocates to international conspiracy accounts and the U.S. right-wing.





Communities that make up the online conversation around ESG (Graphika: November 2022)

**The U.S. Right-Wing group was the largest community in this map and accounted for the greatest portion of posts in the ESG investing conversation on Twitter.** The next largest were two Financial and Investment-focused groups, and an Environmentally-focused group. Structurally, U.S. Right-Wing (USR) and International Environmentally-focused (IEF) groups make up opposite, dense poles of the network, while the center of the map is composed of more sparsely connected business and financial interest groups (B+FI). The tight-knit nature of the two poles suggests that accounts from the USR and IEF groups are a more cohesive community that follow one another, compared to less interconnected accounts that make up the B+FI groups.

There are two clusters in the U.S. Right-Wing group defined by their interest in climate denial content and following figures such as [Steve Milloy](#). These clusters, though, are embedded in the larger U.S. Right-Wing group, suggesting that **accounts engaging with climate denial are nearly indistinguishable from other U.S. Right-wing audiences in their following patterns and content consumption.** This is notable because previous Graphika mappings of the climate denial space showed the community as tied to, but distinct from, the broader U.S. Right-wing. The change suggests a convergence of these two communities in recent months.

Segment	Tags	Number of nodes	Percent of map	Density
> US Right-Wing		3,866	29.97	0.90%
> INT Business Tech Finance Crypto		2,720	21.09	0.40%
> US Financial Services Sector		1,352	10.48	1.67%
> Unclustered		1,250	9.69	0.09%
> INT Environmental Sustainability		1,077	8.35	2.28%
> US Dem Pols Experts		854	6.62	0.21%
> UK Politics		602	4.67	1.23%
> Kpop Music		554	4.29	3.20%
> CAN Conservative		389	3.02	4.83%

> INT Conspiracy Anti-Vaxx Activists	183	1.42	1.92%
> INDIA Politics	53	0.41	0.98%

Groups in the ESG map, organized by percentage of the map

## Network Influencers

**Looking at influential accounts in the U.S. Right-Wing group, we can see how ESG discourse has been dominated by a mix of contrarian figures engaging with various “culture wars” issues, and how embedded climate denialists have become in this network.**

Long-time culture wars amplifier [Jack Posobiec](#) (1.8m followers) has the biggest audience of any node in our mapping and a large margin of in-map followers over any other account. He also shared the eighth most engaged [tweet](#) including the term “ESG” during our data collection period.

Other influential accounts in the group include [The Daily Wire](#) (1.2m followers), founded by Ben Shapiro and [funded by fracking](#), former Dilbert cartoonist [Scott Adams](#) (777k followers), and [PragerU](#) (~765k followers), an organization with a long history of sharing [climate misinformation](#) along with [transphobic](#) and [other](#) regressive content. (To note: CAAD’s ‘Deny, Deceive, Delay’ report profiles these actors in some detail). Also prominent were US Midterms candidate and election fraud conspiracist [Kari Lake](#) (678k followers - her Gubernatorial race in Arizona is [yet to be called](#) as of 09:00 UTC on 13/11/22) and [Sharyl Attkisson](#) (399k followers), an [amplifier](#) of COVID-19 conspiracies and misinformation.



**Jack Posobiec**    
@JackPosobiec



**Bill Clinton and the CEO of Blackrock are holding an ESG summit at the Clinton Foundation**

**(Yes, really)**



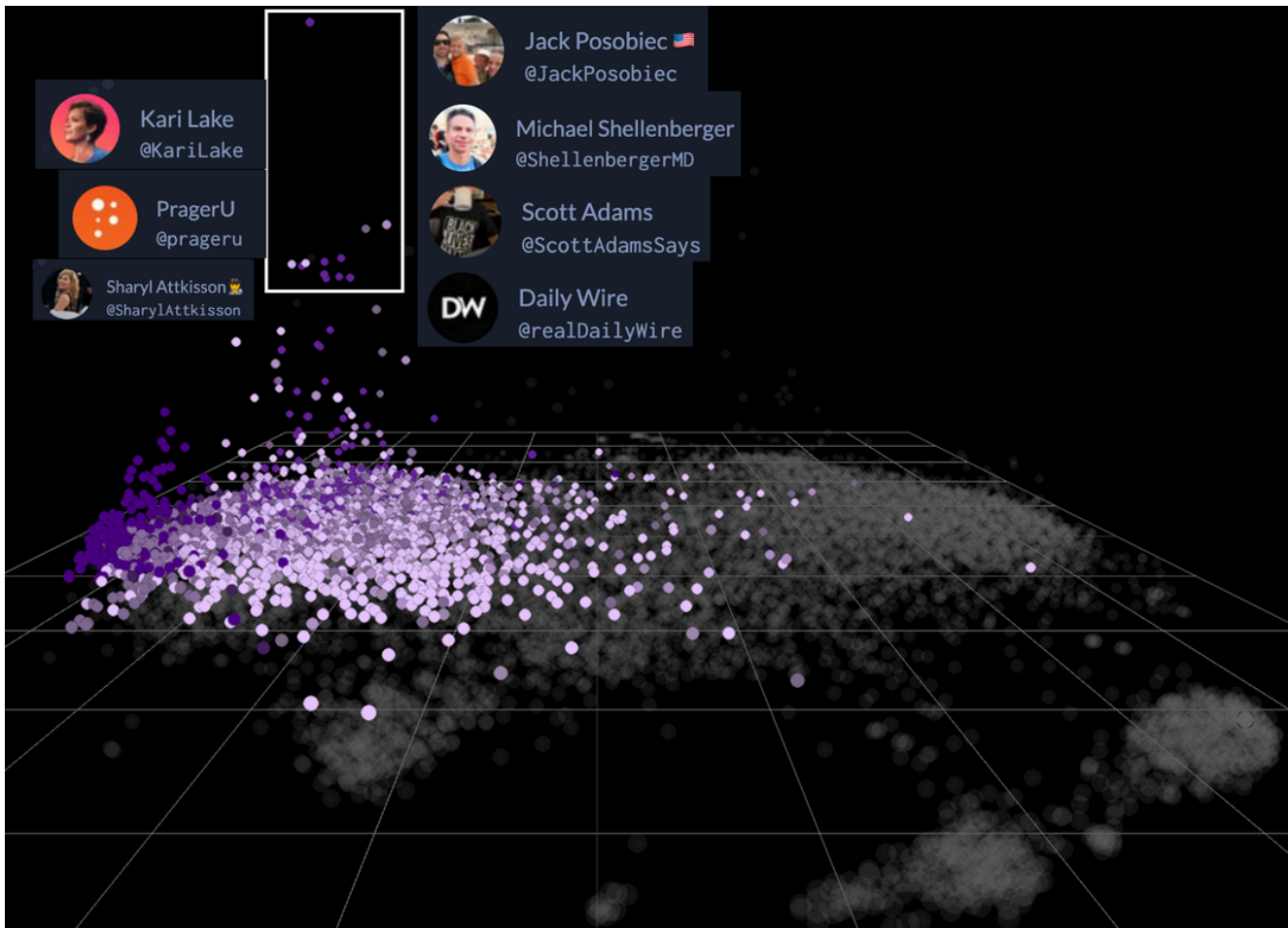
From **Will Hild**

10:41 pm · 20 Sep 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

**2,418** Retweets   **222** Quote Tweets   **4,843** Likes

Notably, climate denialists in our map are no longer distinct from right-wing culture wars influencers, at least from a computational perspective. This overlap is also evident in the influential accounts among the U.S. Right-Wing group. Prominent climate sceptic [Michael Shellenberger](#) (341.5k followers) is central to the U.S. right-wing group in the ESG conversation - [see earlier editions](#) of 'COP, Look, Listen' this week for updates on his activity during COP27.

Again, this suggests that **climate denialists are becoming more enmeshed with the online 'culture wars' machinery, creating a landscape in which climate topics can more easily be framed and amplified as a divisive issue among broader right-wing audiences.**



*The most influential nodes in the ESG conversation are a mix of climate denial accounts, election denial U.S. midterm candidates, and culture war figureheads*

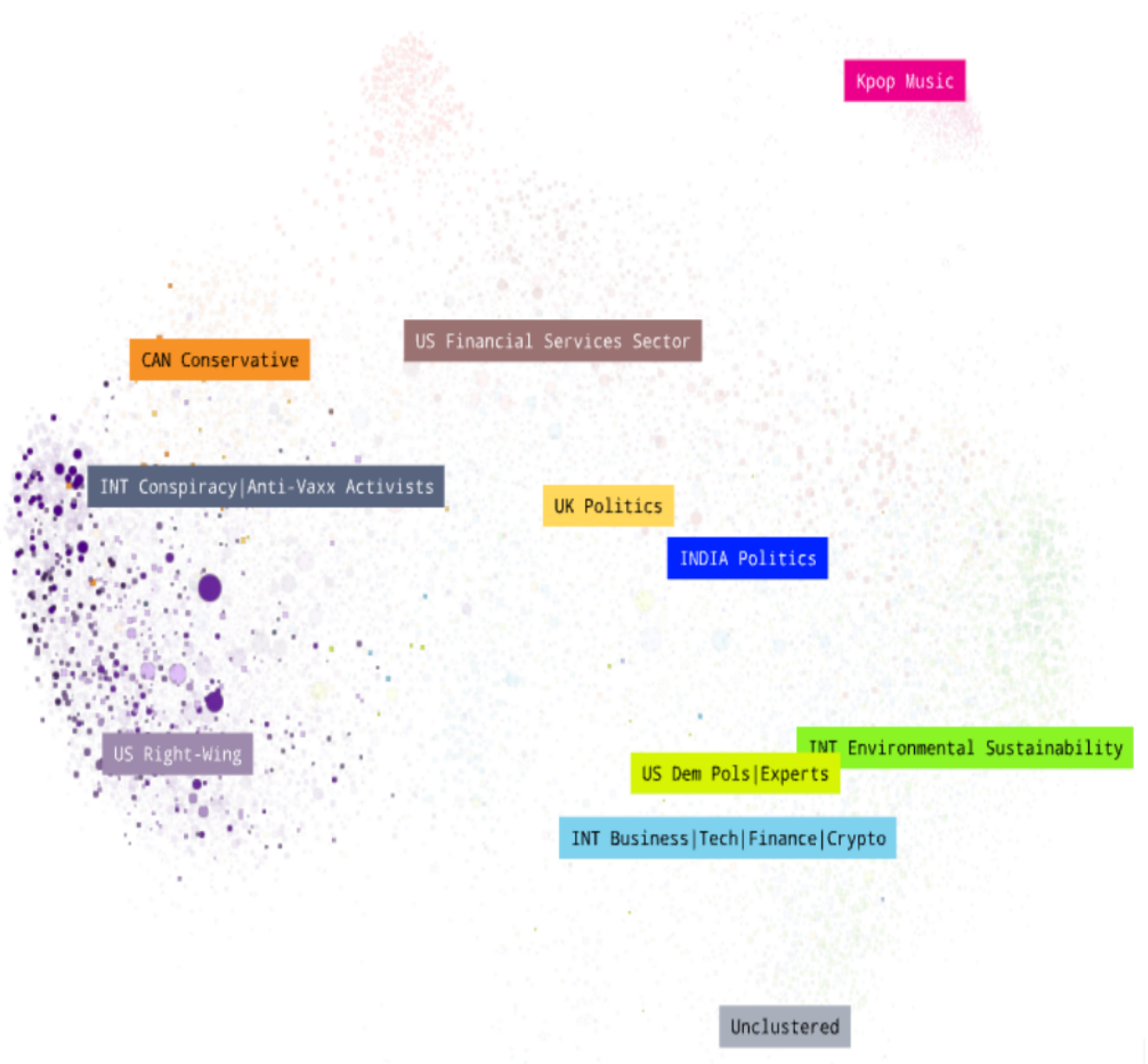
## Come-One-Come-All Conspiracism

**521 accounts present in the ESG conversation were also found in the ‘Groomer’ debate** that Graphika mapped in April 2022 (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for more analysis on the latter). 464 of these, or 89% of the overlapping accounts, also belong to the U.S. Right-Wing group in the ESG map. A similar pattern is found across other ‘culture wars’ and conspiracism analysis:

- 601 accounts appear in both the ESG map and a U.S. Voter Fraud map from May 2022, 94% of which are in the ESG U.S. Right-Wing group;
- 479 accounts appear in the ESG and the May 2022 Monkeypox Conspiracy map, 38% of which are in the ESG U.S. Right-Wing group; and
- 170 accounts appear in both the ESG and May 2022 COVID Anti-vaxx map, 46% of



which are in the ESG Right-Wing group for.



Accounts highlighted in the ESG Investing map that are also found in Graphika's 'Groomer Debate' map – 89% are members of the U.S. Right-Wing group

The recurrent members across these networks suggests there is a set of accounts focused on various wedge issues, climate among them. **Influencers in this group do the work of framing and amplifying climate topics as a culture wars issue, making it more palatable for a broader right-wing audience, beyond the usual climate denial community.**

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# ESG Culture War Narratives



**Vivek Ramaswamy** @VivekGRamaswamy · 20 Sep



The Great Reset is not a conspiracy theory. It's the single greatest threat to democracy in self-governing nations. The video footage in the chain below is revealing.



**Will Hild** @WillHild · 20 Sep



@BlackRock CEO Larry Fink, @Unilever CEO Alan Jope and one of the UN's ESG Czars Damilola Ogunbiyi just spoke on an ESG panel, led by Bill Clinton, at the Clinton Global Initiative's September meeting.

You can't make this stuff up. Clips incoming.

(thread )

[Show this thread](#)



50

603

1,413



**Consumers' Research**



@ConsumersFirst

JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon confirms that the ESG agenda is hurting the American economy and that MORE oil and natural gas production is needed:

LIVE



5:02 PM · Sep 21, 2022 · Twitter Web App

**1,587** Retweets   **307** Quote Tweets   **5,907** Likes

Narratives hostile to ESG investing claimed elites were using it as a power grab and a form of “[woke capitalism](#)” corruption. Popular [tweets](#) in the U.S. Right-Wing group also connected the issue to conspiracies like the Great Reset, a theory alleging that a cabal of global elites is using social welfare policies to enact authoritarianism. In one [video](#) (seemingly now unavailable), Jack Posobiec explicitly lays out the connection between these two topics.

Equally, **some popular [tweets](#) claimed that a social credit system related to carbon footprint is underway, implying that such measures are a pretext for State surveillance and control. Other accounts argued that “woke capitalism” will be used to deny those opposing the “liberal agenda” basic necessities like [electricity and water](#).**

While less frequent, other narratives shared familiar misinformation about the production of [sustainable energy](#) and the need for [oil and gas](#). This is not the first time we have observed climate being [folded](#) into ideologically-driven conspiracy theories.

The three [most engaged tweets](#) including the phrase “ESG” were pro-oil, anti-renewable energy, and espoused anti-trans beliefs. One post came from Consumers' Research, [a dark-money, anti-ESG group](#) backed by [billion-dollar-donation recipient](#) Leonard Leo, who

successfully engineered the conservative takeover of the Supreme Court.

**Consumers' Research**  
@ConsumersFirst

Rep. @RashidaTlaib asked all major bank CEOs to submit to her ESG agenda and stop funding fossil fuels.

Their response?

JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon: "Absolutely not and that would be the road to Hell for America."



5:11 PM · Sep 21, 2022 · Twitter Web App

4,813 Retweets 1,583 Quote Tweets 20.5K Likes

**B.F. Randall**  
@Mining\_Atoms

COPPER  redux. I live near one of the largest copper mines on earth (Kennecott Utah Copper - KUC). I helped manage a smaller copper mine for 8 years. Observation: Wind/Solar/Battery Proponents & ESG bean-counters are completely out of touch with copper mining & production.



6:09 PM · Oct 23, 2022 · Twitter Web App

5,302 Retweets 1,571 Quote Tweets 16.1K Likes

**Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene**  
@RepMTG

ESG and wokeness are killing the Democrats, but the left's trans kid agenda is the nail in their coffin.

Parents will protect their children with their lives and will ditch a political party in a heartbeat when that party comes after their kids.

Remember Virginia.

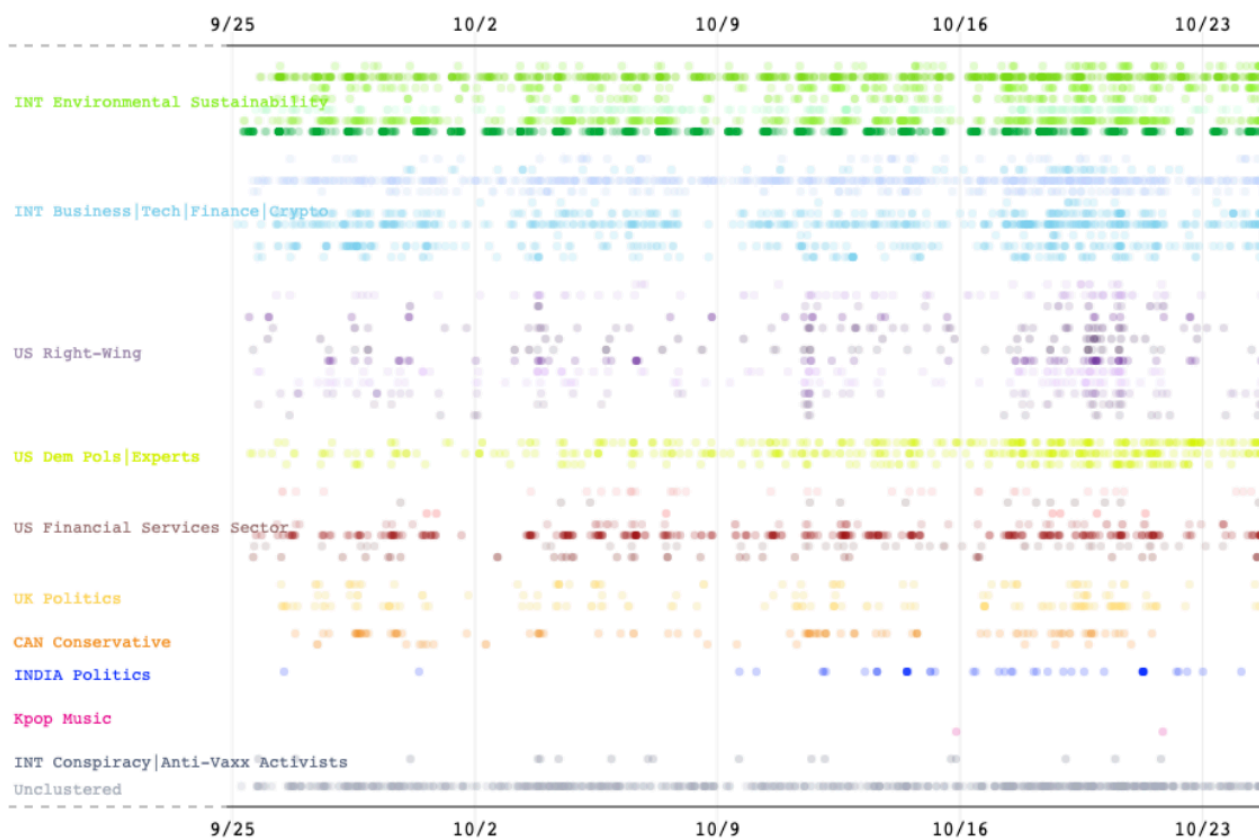
8:46 AM · Sep 24, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

4,034 Retweets 184 Quote Tweets 17.3K Likes

The most engaged tweets including the phrase "ESG" during our data collection period were pro-oil, anti-renewable energy, and espoused anti-trans beliefs

## Lost in the Noise: The Spinner Takes It All

Tweets that drew the most engagement almost all came from right-leaning actors. However, our data shows that the International Environmental Community far outpaced this group in discussing ESG investing (see chronotope below). This reflects the core challenge when a climate topic is framed and amplified as a culture war issue: **engagement from ideologically driven accounts far outweighs more consistent, reliable messaging on sustainable investing. It's not the topic, but rather the divisive framing that wins attention and engagement.**



*U.S. Right-Wing accounts were not as engaged with the hashtag #ESG as environmental and finance-focused segments in the map, despite having the most engaged posts*

Much of the intel in this bulletin was powered by [Beam](#) - an award-winning system developed by CASM Technology and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue to track and confront information threats online. The bespoke climate dashboards used by

CAAD collate, enrich, and visualise data from around 3000 actors across climate denial, political, media, industry, influencer and conspiracy ecosystems online, as well as over 250 media outlets worldwide. The system also analyses millions of posts across 4Chan, Facebook, Instagram, MediaCloud, Reddit, Telegram, Twitter and YouTube to capture content broadly related to COP27, as well as discussions around specific policy areas such as Loss and Damage. Complementary tools from Dewey Square Group, [CARDS](#), Graphika and the University of Exeter have provided invaluable analysis in tandem.

## Media Requests

If you are a media outlet or a journalist with a data request, or in need of a spokesperson, please feel free to get in contact with our team at [contact@caad.info](mailto:contact@caad.info), who will do their best to assist with any requests.





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