

China’s disinformation dissemination patterns in 2024

In recent years, China has consistently utilized hybrid methods and guided public opinion against Taiwan, particularly provoking narratives of “U.S. skeptic,” “military skeptic,” and “Lai skeptic,” attempting to undermine public confidence in the government and heighten social divisions.

1. Trends and developments

1.1 Disinformation volume

In 2024, a total of 2.159 million instances of disinformation were recorded, exceeding the 2023 total of 1.329 million. (As shown in Figure 1)

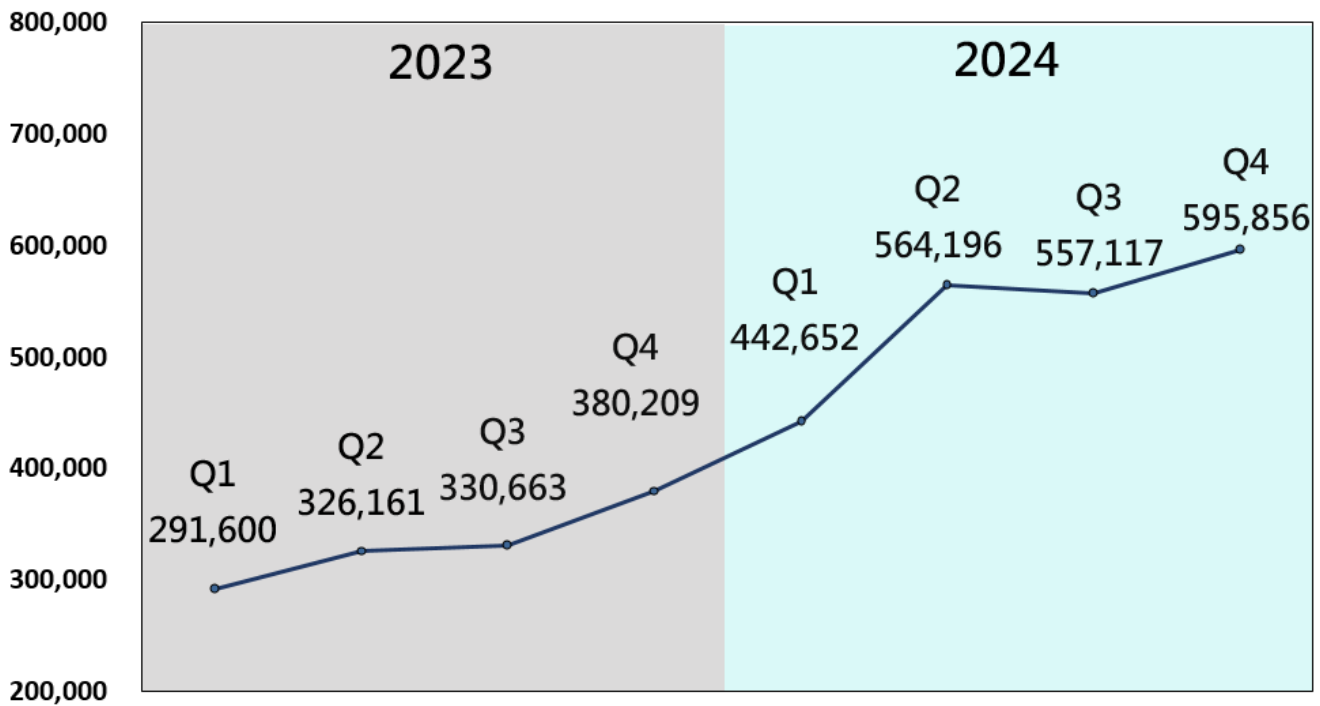


Figure 1: Statistics on China’s Disinformation Against Taiwan

1.2 Dissemination platforms

China disseminates disinformation across 8 types of platforms, including Facebook, Chinese media outlets, news outlets, video channels (including

YouTube, TikTok, Douyin, and Xigua Video), forums (such as PTT, Dcard, Mobile01), X (former Twitter), Weibo, and others. Facebook is the primary platform for disinformation dissemination, showing a 40% increase compared to 2023. The amount of disinformation spread on video platforms, forums, and X has then grown significantly (151%, 664%, and 244%, respectively), indicating that the young generation is the primary target of these disinformation campaigns. (As shown in Figure 2)

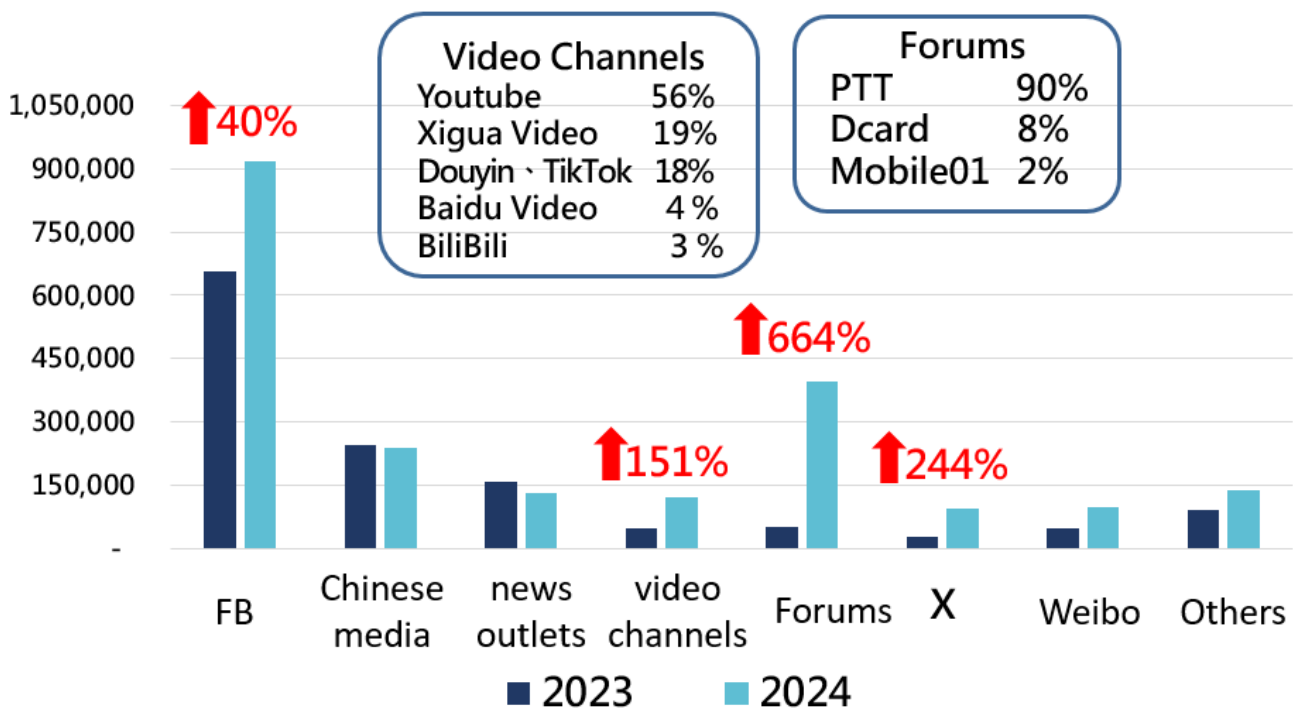


Figure 2: Statistics on Common Platforms for Disinformation

1.3 Inauthentic accounts

Inauthentic accounts commonly share characteristics such as hidden basic information, lack of personal life details, unusual patterns in friend connections and interactions with other accounts, modular comment patterns, or alignment with China’s official propaganda. In 2024, 28,216 inauthentic accounts were

reported, an increase of 11,661 sets compared to 2023. Facebook had 21,967 inauthentic accounts, making it the primary platform for such activity. There was also a significant increase in inauthentic accounts on TikTok, X, and Douyin, reflecting how changes in Taiwanese social media usage habits have driven the evolution of inauthentic account activities. (As shown in Figure 3)

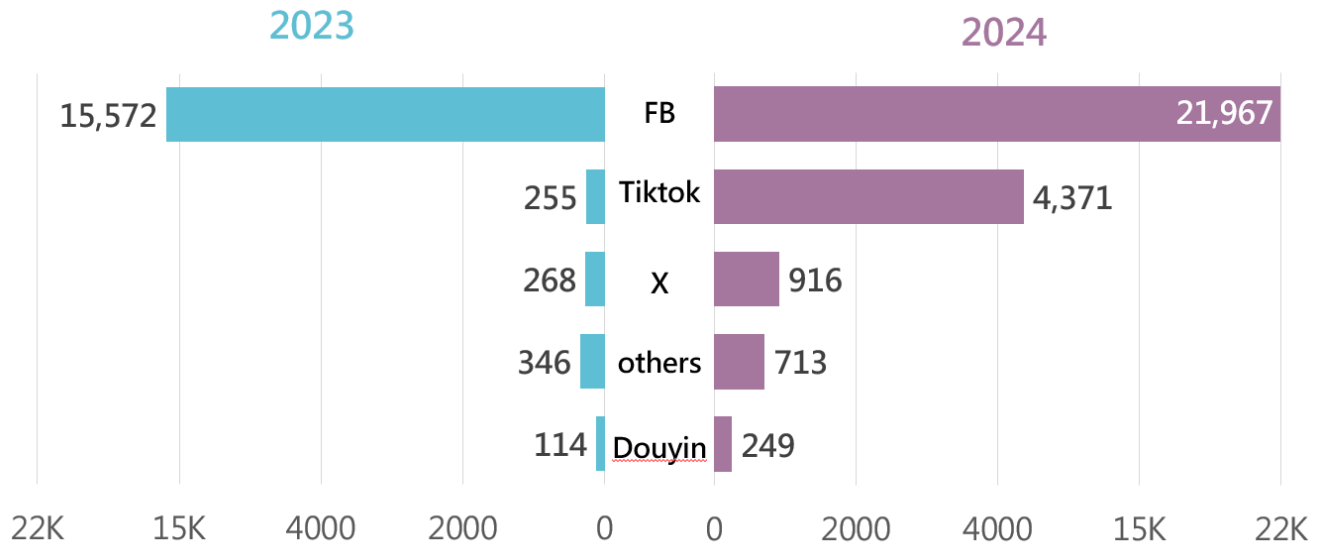


Figure 3: Statistics on Social Media Platforms of Inauthentic Accounts

2. Methods and patterns

2.1 Using inauthentic accounts to disseminate disinformation

China extensively uses inauthentic accounts to flood comment sections on social media platforms used by Taiwanese people, spreading manipulated videos and meme images to influence public opinion. During the 2024 “two-in-one” (presidential and legislative) elections, the Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB) uncovered 40 inauthentic Facebook accounts, 20 Facebook fan pages, and YouTube channels managed by foreign operators. These accounts were used to disseminate disinformation targeting specific

candidates, attempting to influence voters' decision and disrupt our electoral process.

2.2 Utilizing hacking to impersonate Taiwanese and produce fake posts

China steals Taiwanese users' PTT and Dcard platform accounts and hack into network devices, impersonating Taiwanese citizens to spread disinformation. During the "Joint Sword" military exercises in 2023 and 2024, China impersonated personnel from the ROC Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard to disseminate false information, fostering an atmosphere of distrust in the military.

2.3 Amplifying the deterrent effect of PLA's military exercises

China exploits the timing of military exercises around Taiwan to combine official accounts and self-media channels to exaggerate the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s capabilities of "locking down Taiwan" and "countering U.S.-Japan intervention." For example, during the "Joint Sword" series of military exercises, China utilized self-media operators and internet influencers to amplify official narratives, spreading videos and images of PLA naval and air force training. This was done to intensify disinformation narratives about "cross-strait confrontation" and "U.S.-Japan unwillingness to aid Taiwan." They increasingly used video platforms like TikTok and YouTube to spread these messages, amplifying their intimidation effect.

2.4 Utilizing AI technology to generate disinformation

With the rapid development of generative AI technology in recent years, these technologies have become increasingly sophisticated and accessible. They can be used to mass-produce accounts, videos, images, and text content, which can then be rapidly and widely disseminated across social media platforms through fake accounts and automated scheduling. Recently, China has been using Deepfake technology to fabricate video clips of Taiwanese political figures' speeches, attempting to mislead the Taiwanese public's perception and understanding.

2.5 Operating proxy accounts to spread official propaganda

China actively establishes convergence media brands or proxy accounts on platforms such as Weibo, TikTok, and Instagram, working to spread official media content and Taiwan-focused propaganda while attempting to obscure their connections to Chinese official sources in order to lower audience's vigilance. For instance, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the "Global Times" have established proxy accounts, such as "Chaoyang Shaoxia" (朝陽少俠, imitating younger version of 「朝陽群眾」 - "Chaoyang masses") and "BuYiDao," (補一刀, meaning "make up for it") to spread disinformation undermining Taiwan-U.S. relations extensively. Additionally, TikTok accounts such as "Taiwan XiaMi Gong" (臺灣蝦米貢, meaning "Chat casually in Taiwan") and "Wanwan FaDianJi" (灣灣發電姬, meaning "Taiwan Power Hime") maintain close ties with China's official media outlet "Strait Herald," amplifying Chinese official statements regarding Taiwan.

2.6 Disseminating pro-China narratives by fake websites

To conceal its official involvement, China has commissioned public relations (PR) firms to establish “multilingual” fake websites, guiding international public opinion in favor of China and against Taiwan. For instance, China commissioned the Chinese PR firm Shenzhen Haimai Yunxiang Media to create fake media outlets such as the Czech “Bohemia Daily” and Spanish “Güell Herald.” These sites redistributed reports from Chinese state media outlet CGTN, promoting narratives that the “One China” principle as the international mainstream view and that Taiwan government responsible for escalating tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

3. Our responses

China exploits the transparent and open nature of democratic systems, combined with the widespread use of social media platforms and generative AI technology, to conduct cognitive warfare through disinformation dissemination. This approach aims to manipulate target audiences psychologically and disrupt the social order and values of target countries, raising significant international alarm.

Currently, Taiwan has established a “whole-of-government” mechanism to provide real-time reporting and jointly counter China’s cognitive warfare threats. In 2024, 3,900 instances of disinformation were reported to government ministries and departments to support their response planning. Additionally, the NSB shared disinformation prevention experiences with like-

minded countries through more than 100 international exchange activities in 2024, assisting international democratic community in building capacity to counter cognitive warfare from authoritarian countries.