

Partisan Publishers and Political Content

*Everything You Need to Know
about the state of political news
across social media*

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Politics and Partisan News

Politics has become increasingly ubiquitous in how we talk to each other, especially on social media.

Last year, we did a report focused on the rise of hyper-partisan publishers, and this report will be a continuation of that theme.

From the mainstream of CNN and Fox News, to the political points of view of the Daily Wire and Mother Jones, to the outright conspiracy theories that abound on some websites, there is plenty to talk about when it comes to politics and the news, perhaps now more so than ever.

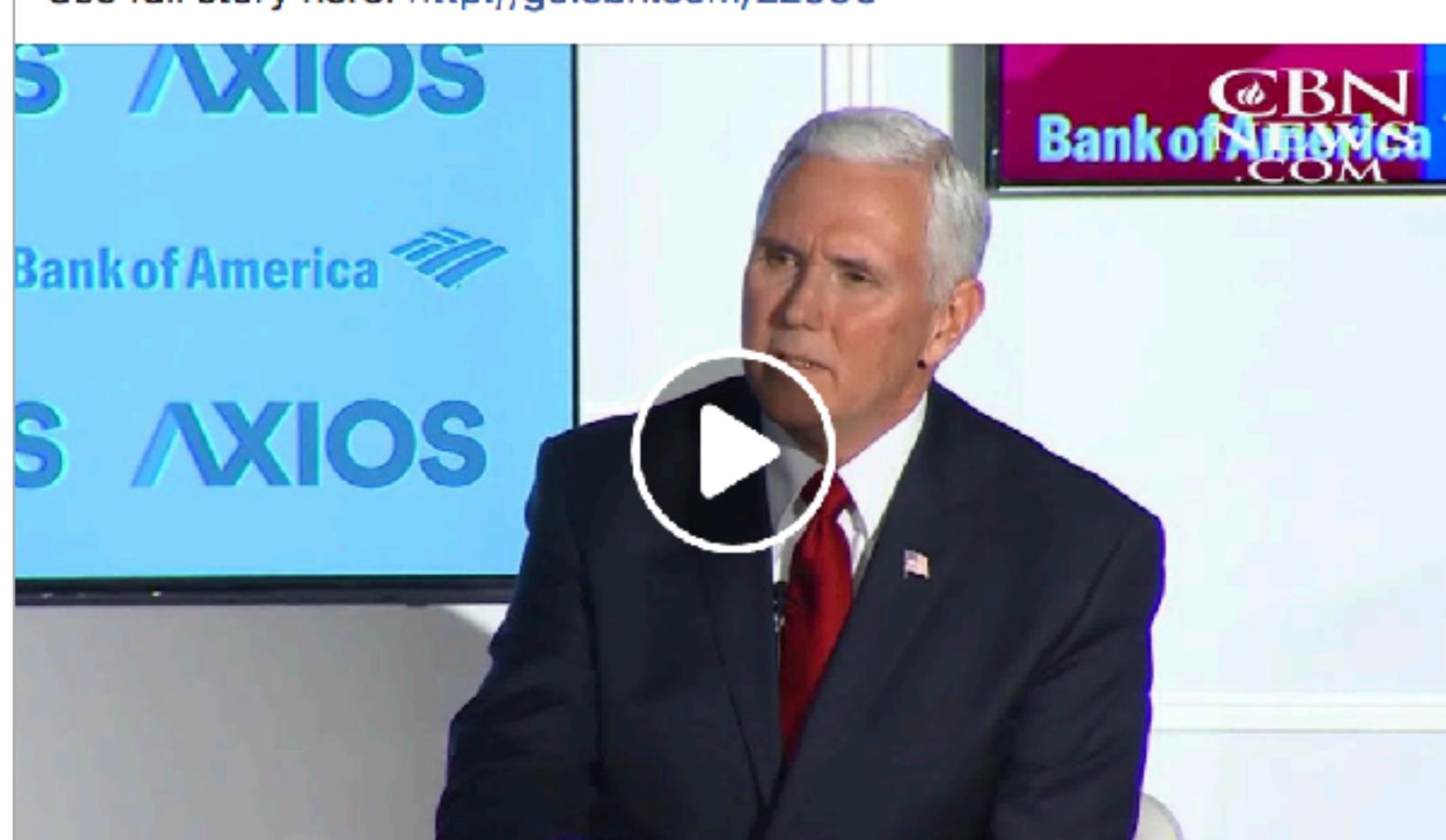
In this report we will look at:

- The most **successful mainstream publishers** writing about politics
- Outlets that approach politics **writing from a left/right angle**
- Known **sources of fake/biased news** and who is driving engagements on these articles

Two of the Most Engaged Stories of the Year so Far

 CBN News
14 February •

Vice President Mike Pence responds to [The View's Joy Behar](#) and her accusation that Pence has "mental illness" because he listens to Jesus. See full story here: <http://go.cbn.com/22996>



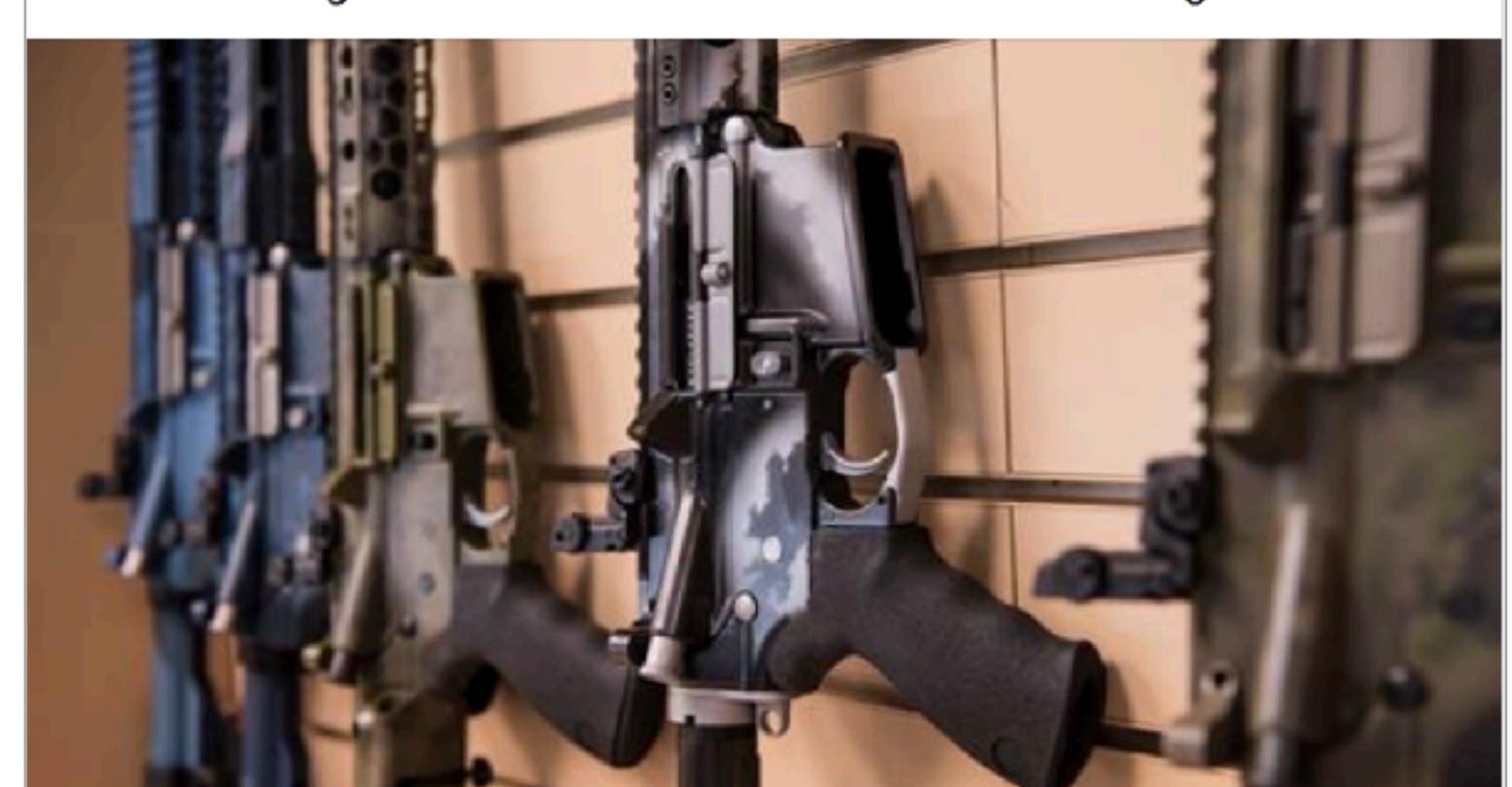
5 AXIOS
Bank of America

252K 58K Comments 545K Shares 22M Views

Like Comment Share

 The Atlantic
22 February •

Heather Sher, a radiologist, treated victims of the Parkland shooting: "How could a gunshot wound have caused this much damage?"



THEATLANTIC.COM
What I Saw Treating the Victims From Parkland Should Change the Debate on Guns

9.8K 390 Comments 13K Shares

Like Comment Share

Politics as a topic in the mainstream

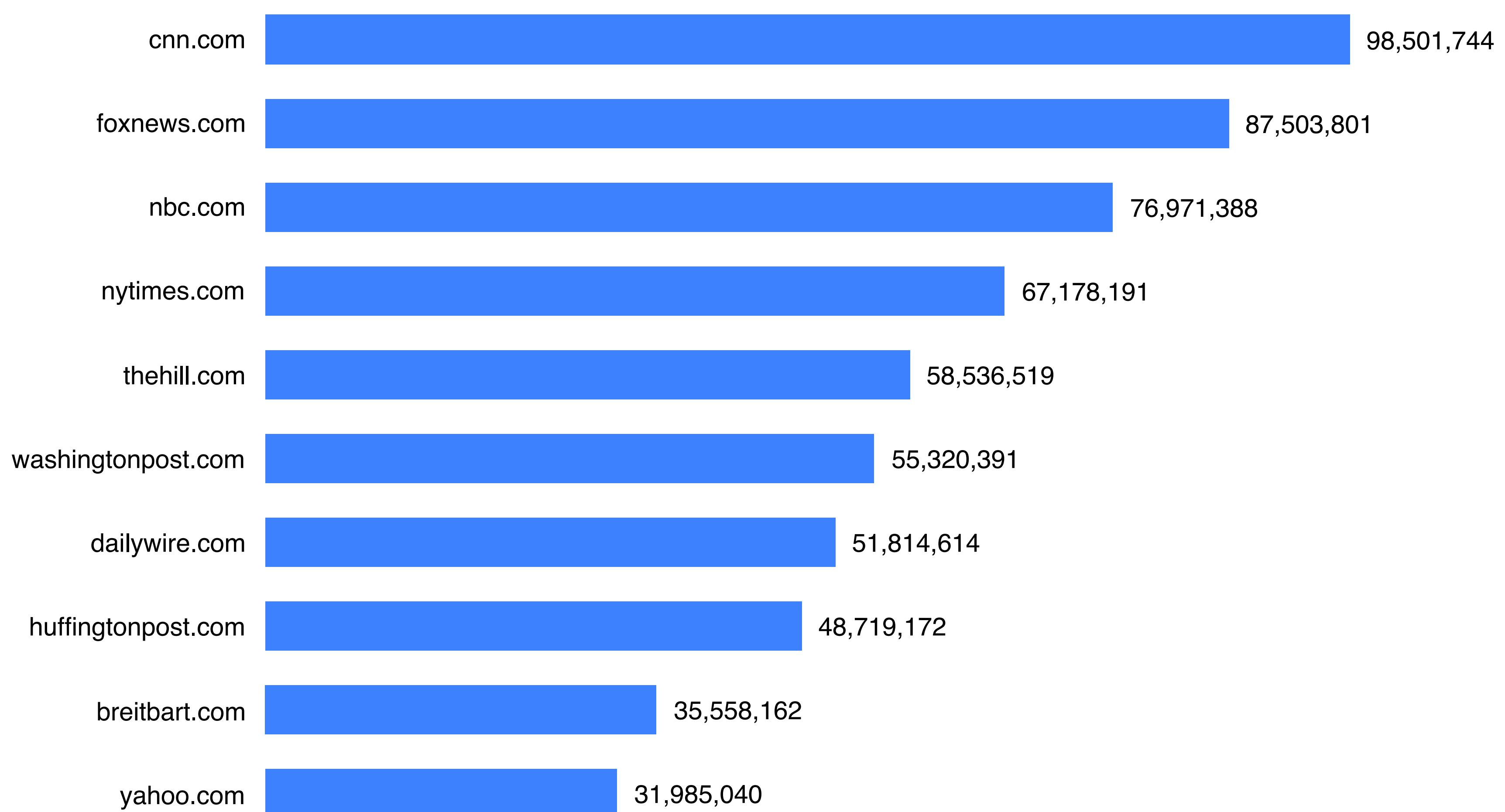
Top Publishers Writing on Political Topics

Before jumping into the hyper-partisan side of things, we wanted to find the legacy publishers that drive the most engagements to their political content. To do this we searched for stories containing around a dozen political keywords, to see which publishers had the most engagements to that content in 2018 so far.

CNN came out on top of the rankings with nearly 100 million engagements on its political content, with **Fox News** and its affiliated networks coming in second with around 87 million engagements.

A couple of interesting trends to note here were The Hill outperforming The Washington Post in terms of engagements, and the appearance of The Daily Wire and Breitbart in the top ten ahead of a number of traditional, established publishers.

Total Engagements on Political Content



Top Political Stories of the Year

Interestingly, the top political stories of the year were not from the top publishers but rather **breakout hits from smaller publications**. Indeed, roughly half of the top stories did not come from publishers that featured in the top ten publishers.

The top post came from publisher LGBTQ Nation, concerning a proposed change in adoption laws for LGBTQ couples, which garnered more than 1.5 million Facebook engagements.

The Atlantic, despite not featuring in the top ten publishers, did feature twice in the top ten stories rankings, with a Parkland shooting story and a story on President Trump both featuring, with hundreds of thousands of Facebook engagements each.

Top Political Stories of 2018 So Far

ACCOUNT	HEADLINE	FB ENGAGEMENTS
LGBTQNATION.COM	Republicans vote to make it legal nationwide to ban gays & lesbians from adopting	1,585,934
NYTIMES.COM	U.S. Opposition to Breast-Feeding Resolution Stuns World Health Officials	1,552,675
THEATLANTIC.COM	What I Saw Treating the Victims From Parkland Should Change the Debate on Guns	1,361,696
INSIDER.FOXNEWS.COM	Report: US Therapists See Increase in Patients With 'Trump Anxiety Disorder'	1,210,606
AMERICANMILITARYNEWS.COM	BREAKING: North Korea begins returning remains of missing US troops from Korean War, Trump says	1,079,388
WASHINGTONPOST.COM	Trump derides protections for immigrants from â€˜shitholeâ€™ countries	1,077,270
ABCNEWS.GO.COM	Americans rank Barack Obama as best president of their lifetimes: Poll	998,676
NBC25NEWS.COM	President Trump proposes mandatory drug testing for food stamp recipients	956,044
YAHOO.COM	Pelosi, House Democrats block veterans' health care bill	931,898
THEATLANTIC.COM	Every Republican Has a Choice: Their Country, or Trump	919,809

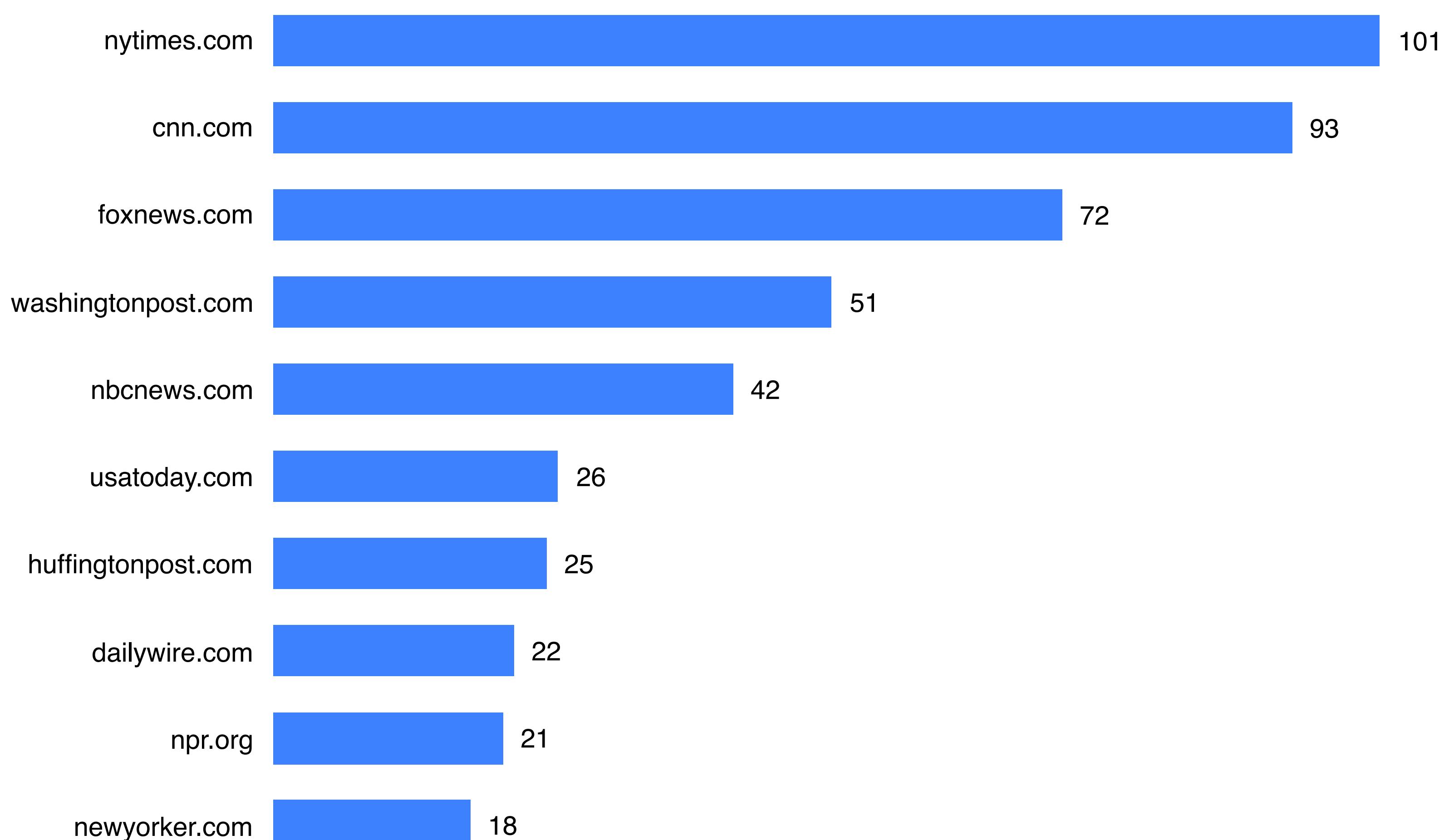
Who Has the Most Top Stories?

Because there is a rather large disparity in terms of the number of stories published, with CNN and Fox News vastly outstripping the rest, we decided to look at the number of stories that each publisher had in the top thousand stories by Facebook engagements.

This changed the picture significantly. **The New York Times** had the most stories in the top 1,000, with its 101 articles making up some ten percent of the total. CNN and Fox News were next in line, before Washington Post, which contributed 5 percent of the top 1,000 stories.

Daily Wire still made an appearance by this metric, with 22 stories in the top 1,000. We saw that NPR and The New Yorker both broke in, with the latter's success in terms of engagements mostly driven by satirist Andy Borowitz.

Number of Stories in Top 1000 Political Stories

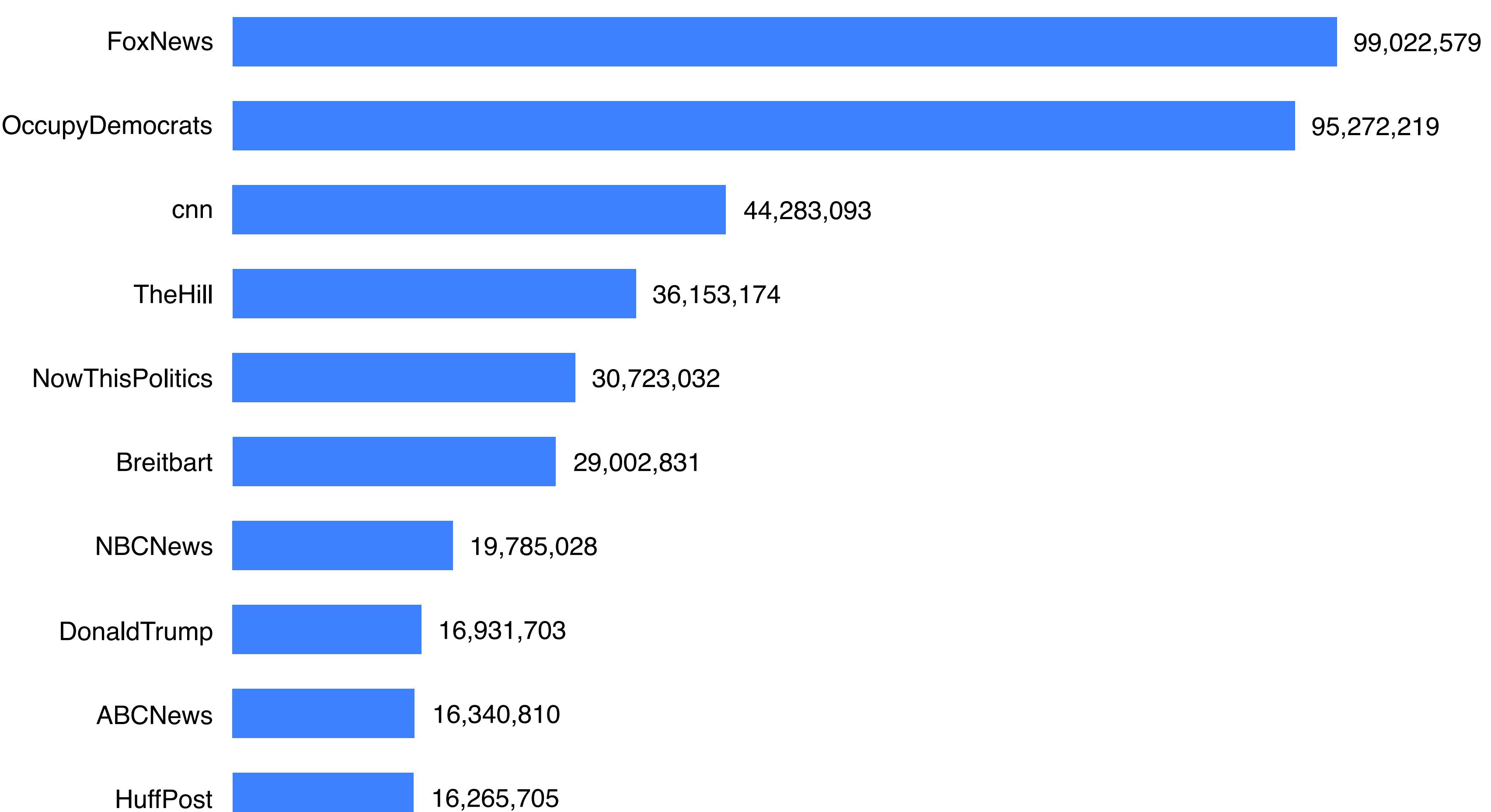


Top Facebook Pages for Political Posts

The top Facebook Pages for mainstream political content were **Fox News** and **Occupy Democrats**, by a considerable distance. Both publishers have driven nearly 100 million engagements on their Facebook native content for 2018 so far.

Most of these Pages are the Facebook Pages of publishers, though one notable exception is the Page of Donald Trump, which has almost 17 million engagements on content on the Facebook Page for the year so far.

Top Facebook Pages For Political Content



Top Political Facebook Content

The top political Facebook posts were a mix of news organizations, comedy shows, and posts from politicians and activists.

The top post came from **CNN**, and was a native video showing a speech given by a Parkland survivor at a town hall, with a video from the evangelical Christian Broadcast Network not far behind in terms of engagements, with both close to a million engagement each.

The vast majority of the posts were **native videos**, with the only exceptions being a photo poll from the National Republican Congressional Committee and a status from Barack Obama about the dangers of nuclear weapons to the world.

Top Political Facebook Posts of 2018 So Far

ACCOUNT	POST TYPE	HEADLINE	FB ENGAGEMENTS
CNN	NATIVE VIDEO	This Florida shooting survivor just delivered an impassioned speech about gun laws	933,420
CBN NEWS	NATIVE VIDEO	Vice President Pence Responds to "Mental Illness" Accusation	863,196
NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE	PHOTO	Do you want Republicans to win in 2018? Comment YES/NO to vote.	671,110
ATTN:	NATIVE VIDEO	Arnold Schwarzenegger Has a Message for Trump	647,252
BARACK OBAMA	STATUS	There are few issues more important to the security of the United States than the potential spread of nuclear weapons, or the potential for even more destructive war in the Middle East.	621,314
THE TYLT	NATIVE VIDEO	Make Fun of Trump's Hair?	605,832
NOWTHIS POLITICS	NATIVE VIDEO	Trump Told a False Statement Every 4.5 Seconds at the State of the Union	592,202
THE LATE LATE SHOW WITH JAMES CORDEN	NATIVE VIDEO	Trump to Robert Mueller: 'It Wasn't Me' (w/ Shaggy)	563,613
OCCUPY DEMOCRATS	NATIVE VIDEO	Proof the Trump Tax Plan Was A Scam For Workers	545,826
AJ+	NATIVE VIDEO	Racist Rant in LA	535,737

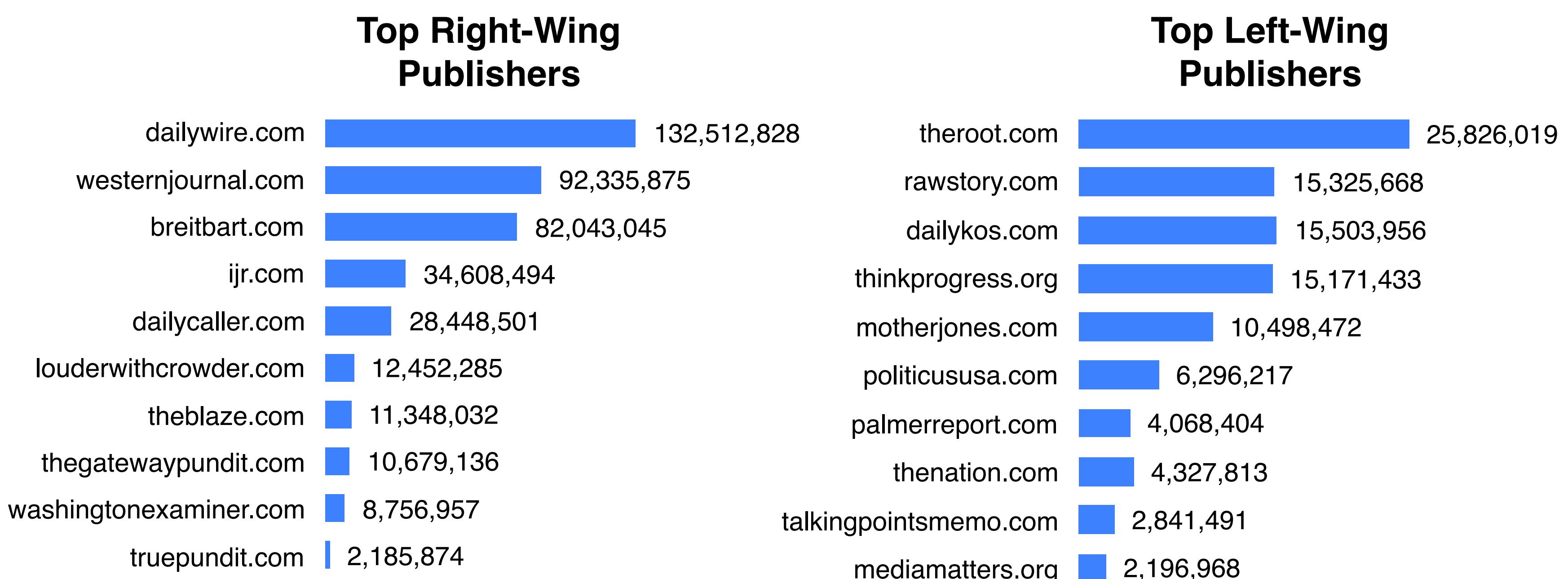
Politics through a lens

Publishers by Ideology: Left-Wing & Right-Wing

The first thing to note when we are looking at left vs. right in terms of content production, is that there are significantly more producers of right-wing content than there are of left-wing content. Only **88 publishers** are identified in our left-wing category compared to **357 publishers** for the right.

This categorization is based on third-party definitions of political affiliation, with the sites then tagged as such in our database.

This is actually a slight decrease when compared to the last iteration of this report, when there were 373 on the right and 87 on the left, but they still significantly outnumber the left in number, as well as engagement.



The Daily Wire is by far the top publisher among its peers in terms of engagements to its content, with more than 130 million Facebook engagements to its web content for the year.

Indeed, the top five for the right-wing significantly outperformed even the leaders in the left-wing category, the top of whom was The Root with nearly 26 million engagements for the year, still fewer than The Daily Caller, which was fifth place for the right-wing publishers.

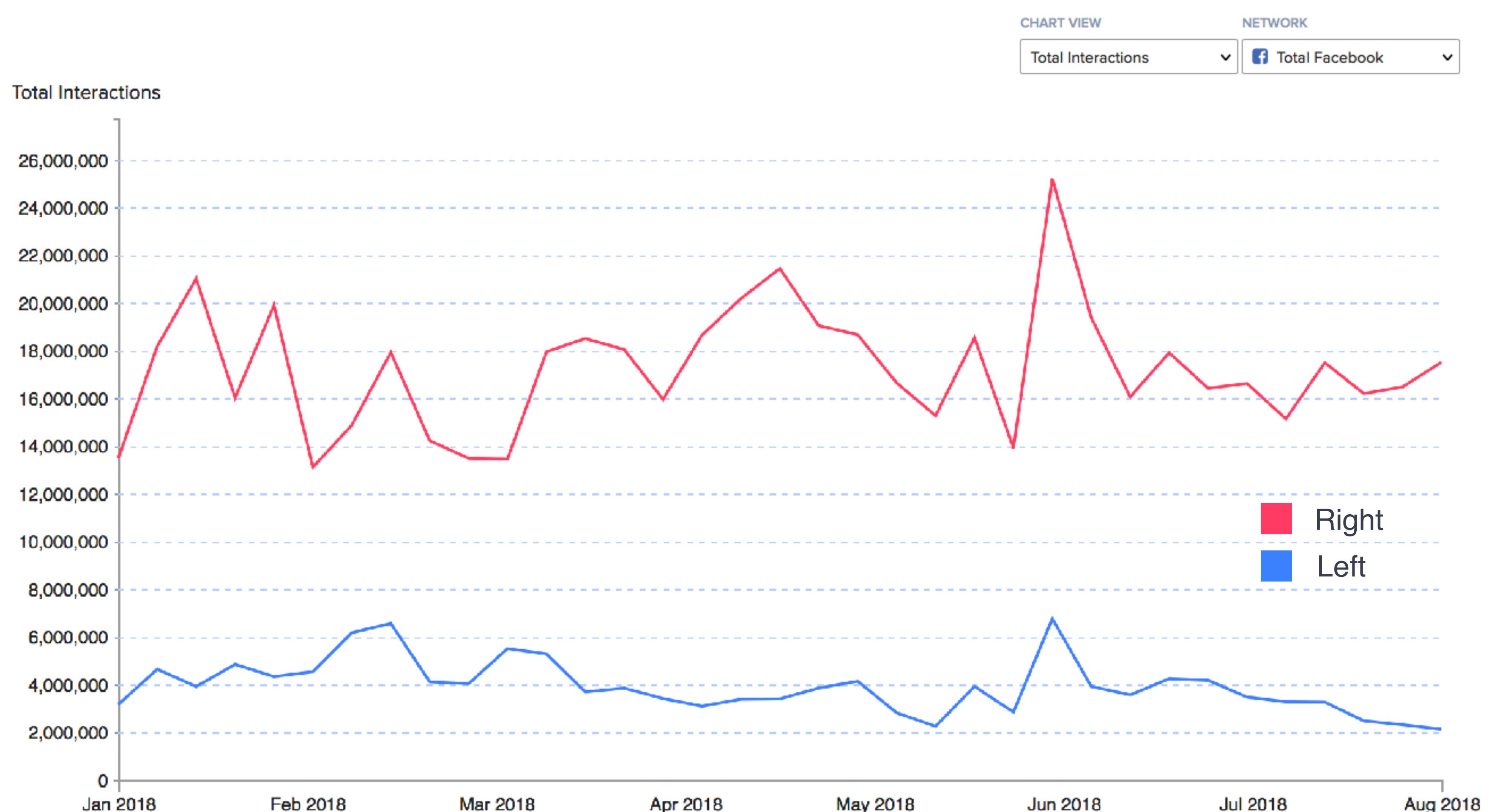
Engagements of Left-Wing & Right-Wing Publishers

Below is the graph of engagements over time for the year for our 'Right' category vs. our 'Left' category on NewsWhip Analytics. Again, these definitions are based on third-party analysis of affiliation.

As is obvious from the graph, right-leaning content is driving significantly more engagement on social. This is partially down to the fact that there are simply more publishers in the category, and therefore more content to work with, but the difference is still a marked one.

When we switch the view to average engagement the story changes a little, with left-wing publishers slightly outperforming their right wing counterparts with 888 average engagements per post vs. 847 for the right-wing publishers.

Right Wing Publishers vs. Left Wing Publishers



Left vs. Right: Top Ten Publishers

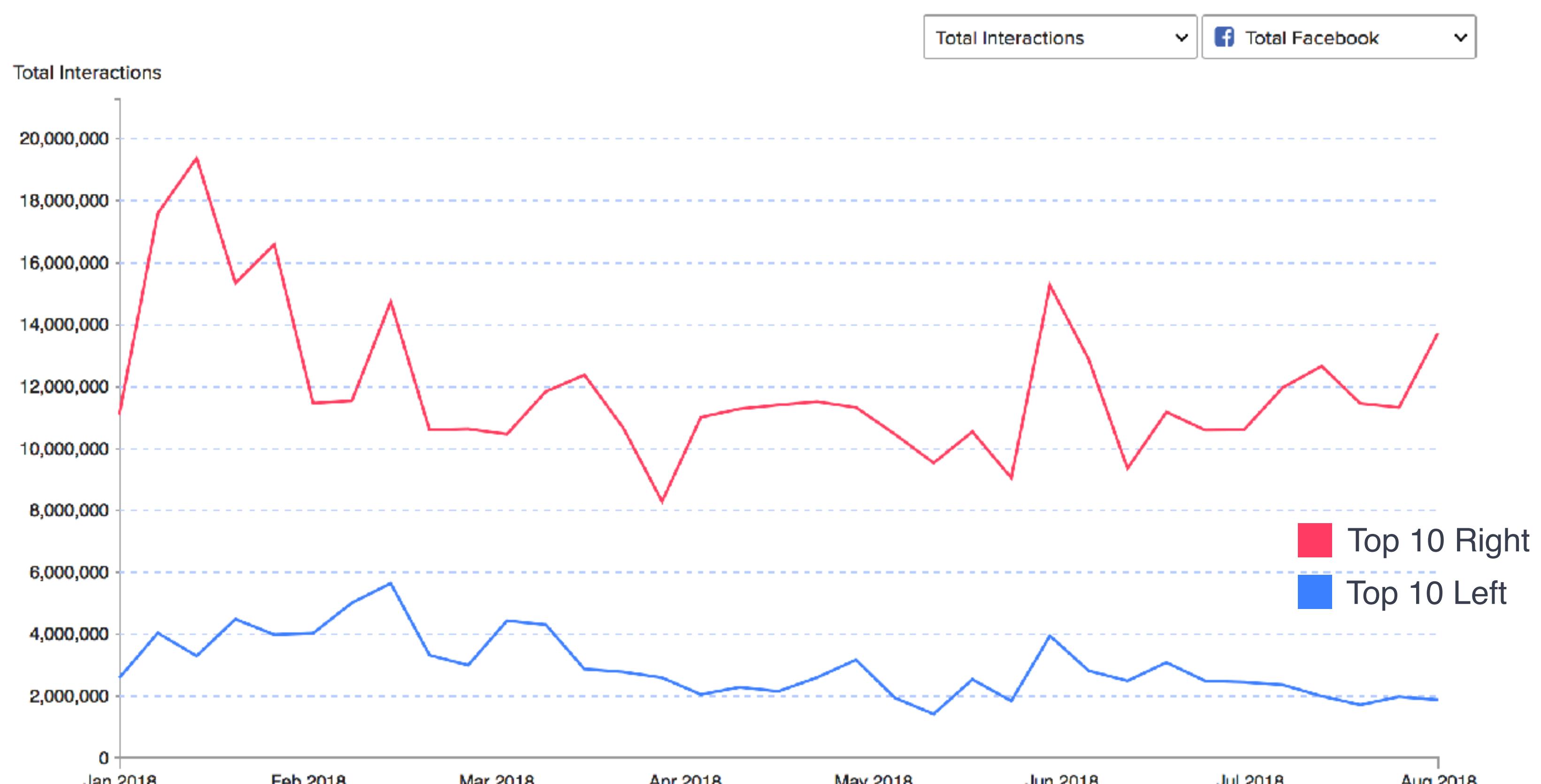
This pattern remains the same when we narrow it down to just the top ten publishers from each side of the political spectrum.

The right-wing content continues to drive significantly more engagement than that from its left-wing counterparts, maintaining a steady lead throughout the year.

Unlike on the previous page, the right-wing publishers also have a lead in terms of average engagements, with an average of 1,702 Facebook engagements per article for the top ten publishers versus just 1,111 for their left-wing rivals.

This suggests that there is a long tail to the right-wing content, but that the majority of the engagement is driven by the very biggest players in the field.

Top Ten Right Wing Publishers vs. Top Ten Left Wing Publishers



Top Stories in Top Right-Wing Publishers

IJR came out on top of the rankings, with an article that drove more than 863,000 engagements about a homeless man handing out resumes and finding a job.

The list was, however, dominated by The Daily Wire, which took six of the top ten spots, mainly with political content, some of which came in video form.

The successful articles appeared to differ somewhat running the gamut from attempting to expose liberal hypocrisy, to offering the ‘truth’ of a given situation, to headlines designed to create an emotional reaction, but there can be no doubting the power of some of these articles, which received hundreds of thousands of engagements each.

Top Stories in Right Wing Publishers

ACCOUNT	HEADLINE	FB ENGAGEMENTS
IJR.COM	Instead of Asking for a Handout, Homeless Man Gives Out Resumes. Now He Has Hundreds of Job Offers	863,178
LOUDERWITHCROWDER.COM	WATCH: Parkland's Emma Gonzalez Admits to Bullying the Shooter. A Few Things...	481,710
WESTERNJOURNAL.COM	Boy Scouts Lose 425,000 Boys 1 Week After Announcing Name Change	478,959
BREITBART.COM	Black Panther Criticized for Lack of LGBT Representation	449,916
DAILYWIRE.COM	BREAKING: CNN Reports FOUR Broward County Deputies Waited Outside School As Children Were Massacred	374,067
DAILYWIRE.COM	The Media Are Lying About Trump Separating Illegal Immigrant Families. Here's The Truth.	364,883
DAILYWIRE.COM	DREAMers Threaten To Leave The Country If Congress Doesn't Reach A DACA Deal	358,976
DAILYWIRE.COM	WATCH: Actor Mario Lopez Shares Baptism At Jordan River: 'I Have Decided to Follow Jesus'	357,848
DAILYWIRE.COM	Every Single Government Authority Failed In Parkland. And They Expect Americans To Forfeit Our Self-Defense Rights To Them?	354,450
DAILYWIRE.COM	WATCH: Two Transgenders Blow Out Girls In State Meet	351,319

Top Stories in Top Left-Wing Publishers

Unsurprisingly, the list of top stories from left-wing publishers contains a lot of the same headlines as we saw from the right-wing publications.

Provocative headlines abound, with stories that inspire emotions particularly successful.

Blogging site The Daily Kos had the top story among these publishers, just edging out Think Progress' coverage of the aftermath of the Parkland shooting with its piece on a political ad in Texas that drove more than 450,000 engagements.

It's worth noting that this was well below the 800,000 or so engagements that the story on the homeless man in IJR drove for the right-wing publishers.

Top Stories in Left Wing Publishers

ACCOUNT	HEADLINE	FB ENGAGEMENTS
DAILYKOS.COM	This political ad from a mother in Texas running for Congress might be the best we've EVER seen	455,441
THINKPROGRESS.ORG	Three major car rental companies dump the NRA	440,357
THEROOT.COM	White People Are Cowards	430,316
RAWSTORY.COM	GOP Senate candidate flips out over 'women's rights': 'I want to come home to a cooked dinner every night'	380,426
MOTHERJONES.COM	Emma Gonzalez is responsible for the loudest silence in the history of us social protest	370,645
THEGRAPEVINE.THEROOT.COM	Black Oakland Electric Slides on Racism by Throwing Big Ass Cookout in Park Where White Lady Called Cops	366,565
THEROOT.COM	Baltimore Cops Kept Toy Guns To Plant Just In Case They Shot An Unarmed Person	363,774
RAWSTORY.COM	Watch: Mother of slain Florida student screams at Trump live on camera -- and CNN's Brooke Baldwin falls apart	337,643
THEROOT.COM	22-Year-Old Becomes the 1st Black Female Nanoscientist in Virginia	332,453
THEROOT.COM	Say Her Name: Marielle Franco, a Brazilian Politician Who Fought for Women and the Poor, Was Killed. Her Death Sparked Protests Across Brazil	310,493

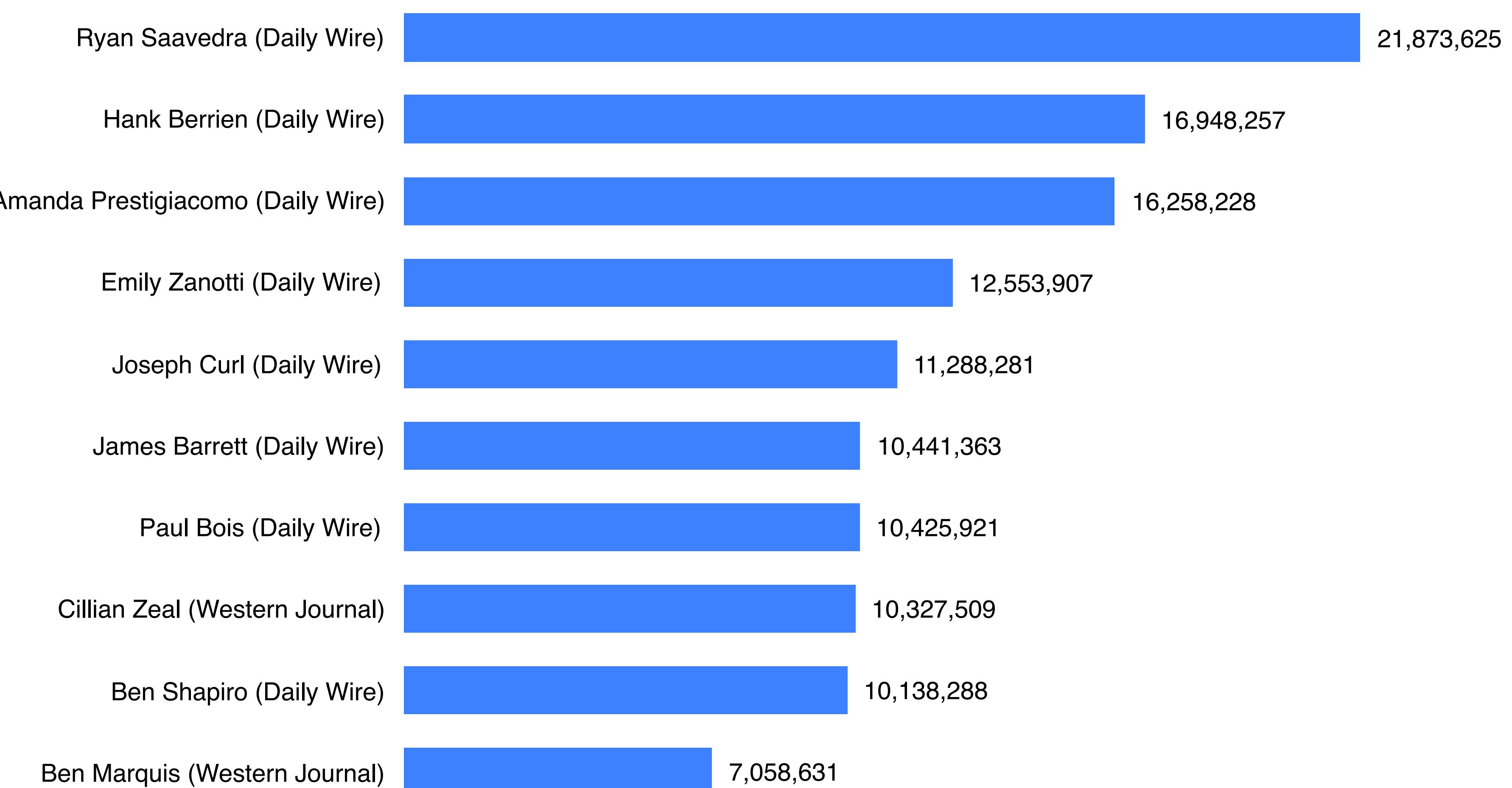
Top Authors for Left/Right Publications

There is a pretty clear winner when it comes to which publishers had authors in the top ten for partisan publishers, and that was The Daily Wire. The publisher had eight of the top ten authors for these publications for the year, with Ryan Saavedra alone driving more than 20 million engagements on his articles by the middle of August.

Hank Berrien and Amanda Prestigiacomo rounded out the top three, with more than 16 million engagements each.

The only other publisher that had authors in the top ten was Western Journal, whose authors Cillian Zeal and Ben Marquis ranked eighth and tenth respectively.

Top Authors in Partisan Publications



Fake/Biased News Sources

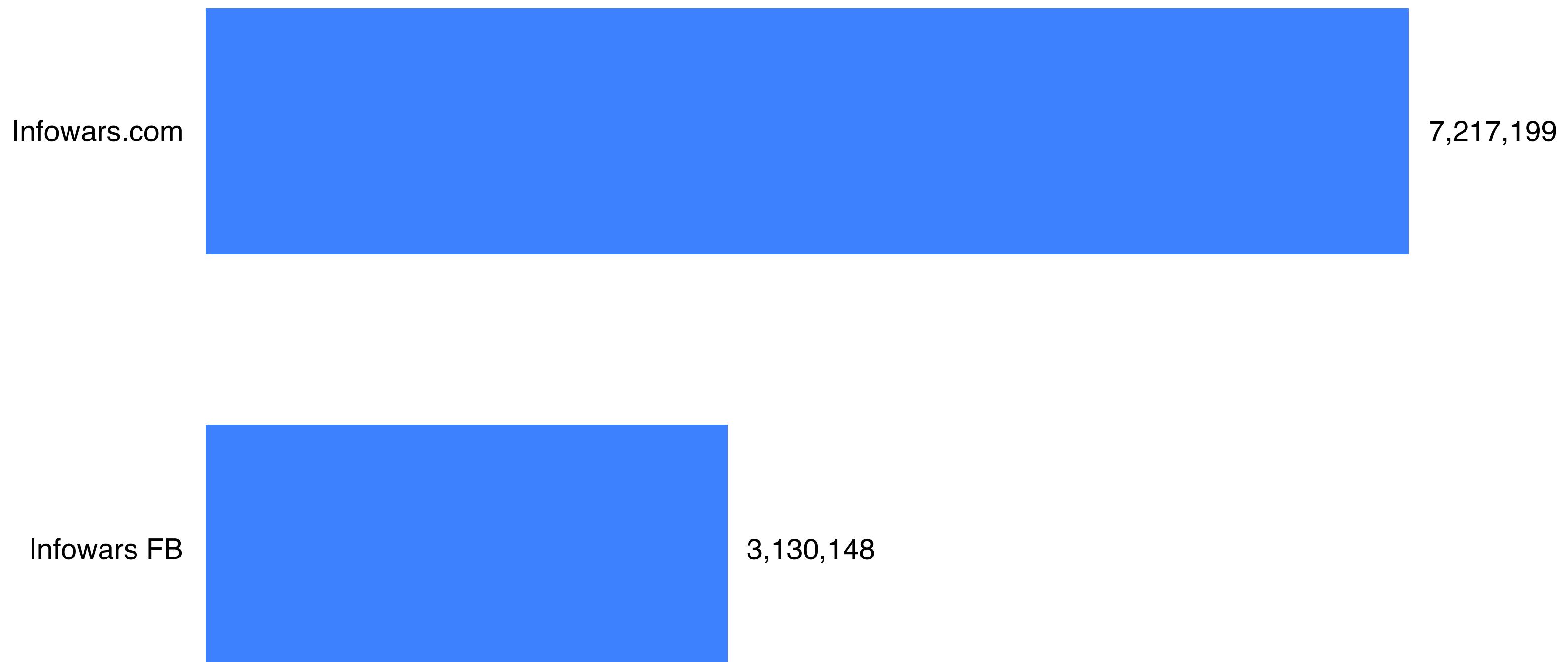
InfoWars: Web vs. Facebook Native

InfoWars is, according to numerous third-party sources, one of the foremost purveyors of conspiracy theories and inaccurate news currently active. InfoWars' banning from Facebook and other platforms caused a big stir at the beginning of August, with accusations of censorship flying in many directions.

However, when we took a look at the engagements to InfoWars' domain content and Facebook Page respectively, we found that their website content actually received a far higher number of engagements, with **more than double** the engagements on its web content than on its native Facebook content for the year to date.

As we'll see in the next couple of pages, while the banning from Facebook has been significant, **it has not stopped their content from being shared** and engaged with by individual users.

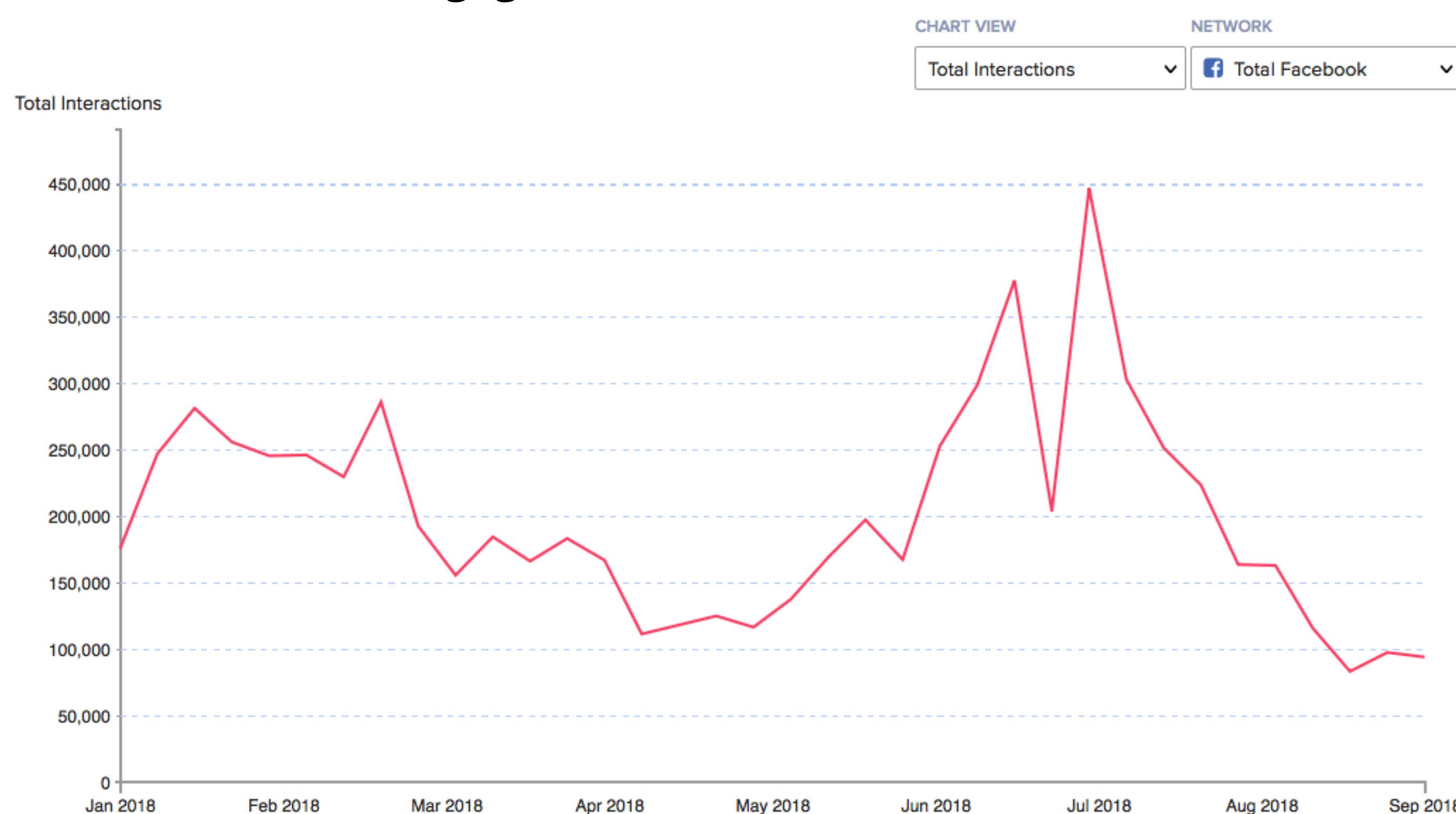
FB Engagements for Infowars Domain Vs FB Page for 2018



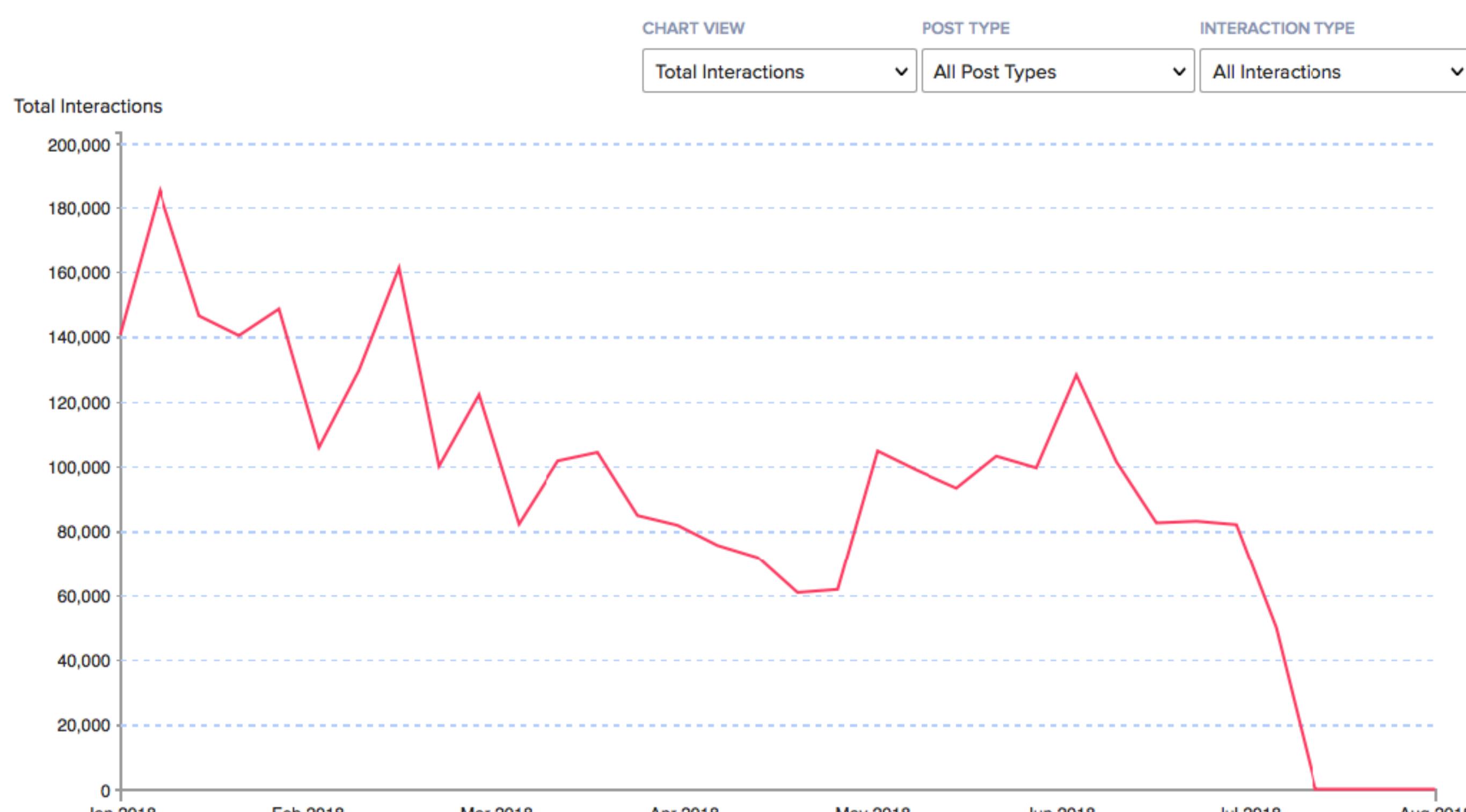
InfoWars Engagements to Web Content

As we can see from these graphs, although engagement to the InfoWars Facebook Page fell off throughout the year and was eventually cut off completely, engagement to the web content remained fairly strong even after the ban, with hundreds of thousands of engagements to the content still coming every week. We'll examine the time after the ban more closely on the next page.

FB Engagements to Infowars Domain Content



Engagements to InfoWars FB Page



InfoWars Engagements Since Mid-July

Here we can see the drop off in engagements from just before the ban to just after. There is some drop in engagements to the web content, as you would expect given that the site's Facebook Page is a significant driver of those engagements, but there are still clearly a significant number of shares coming from individuals and other Facebook Pages.

Facebook Engagements to Infowars' Web Content



Engagements to InfoWars' Facebook Native Content



Politifact Fake News Sources: Facebook Engagement

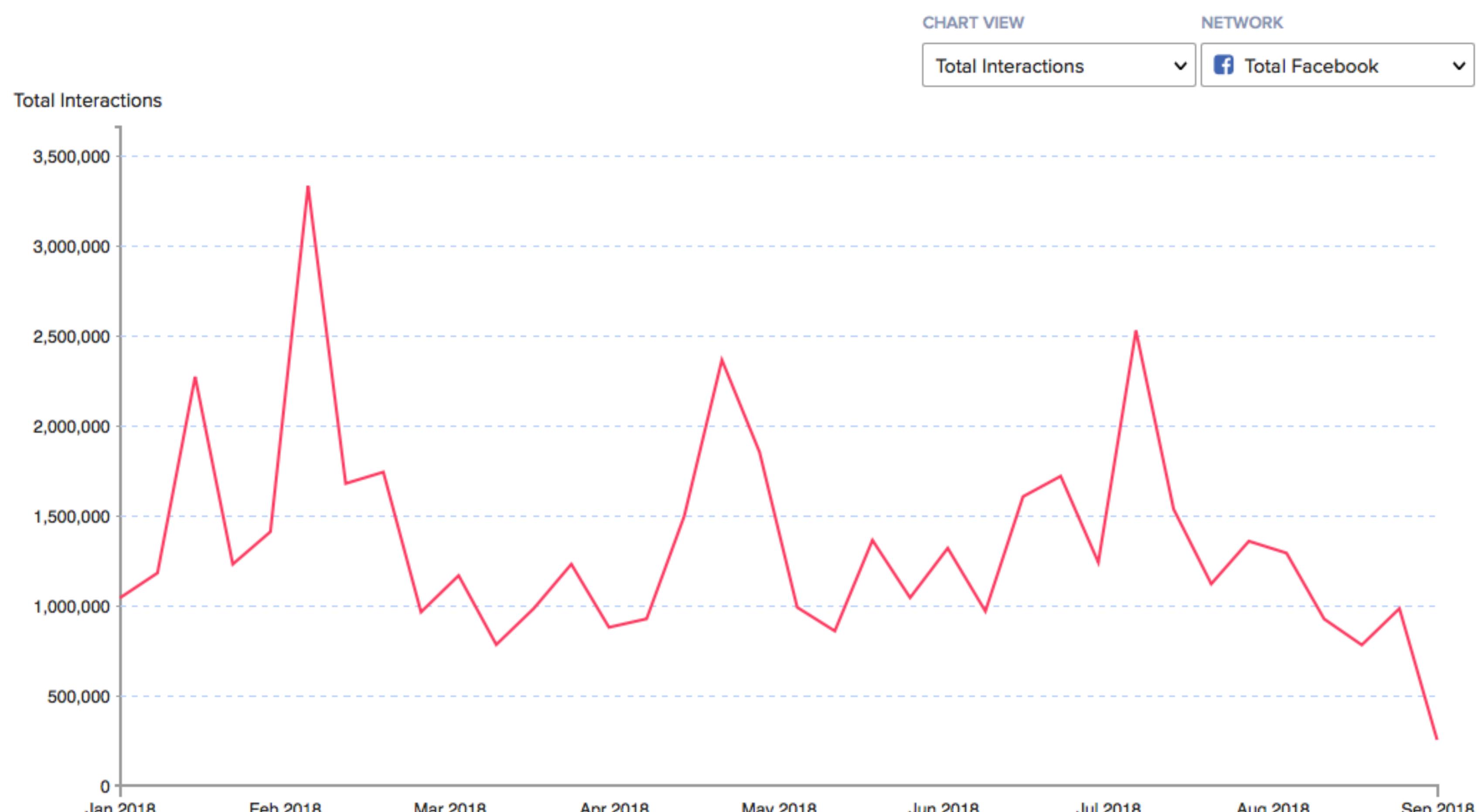
There is more to fake news than just InfoWars, of course, and we include a high-level analysis here.

To do this, we took Politifact's list of publishers it has identified that publish fake or misleading content, aggregated them, and looked at their engagements over time. It's worth noting that a number of the publishers on the list are no longer active, but the ones that are still drive a significant number of engagements.

Even after the algorithm change in January of this year that deprioritized clickbait content in the News Feed, these publishers are still accruing millions of engagements per year between them, even well into the year.

The stories these publishers put out are not necessarily all political, but they often are, or at the very least have a political angle or slant, because that is some of the most engaging content of the current age.

Facebook Engagement to Politifact Fake News Sites



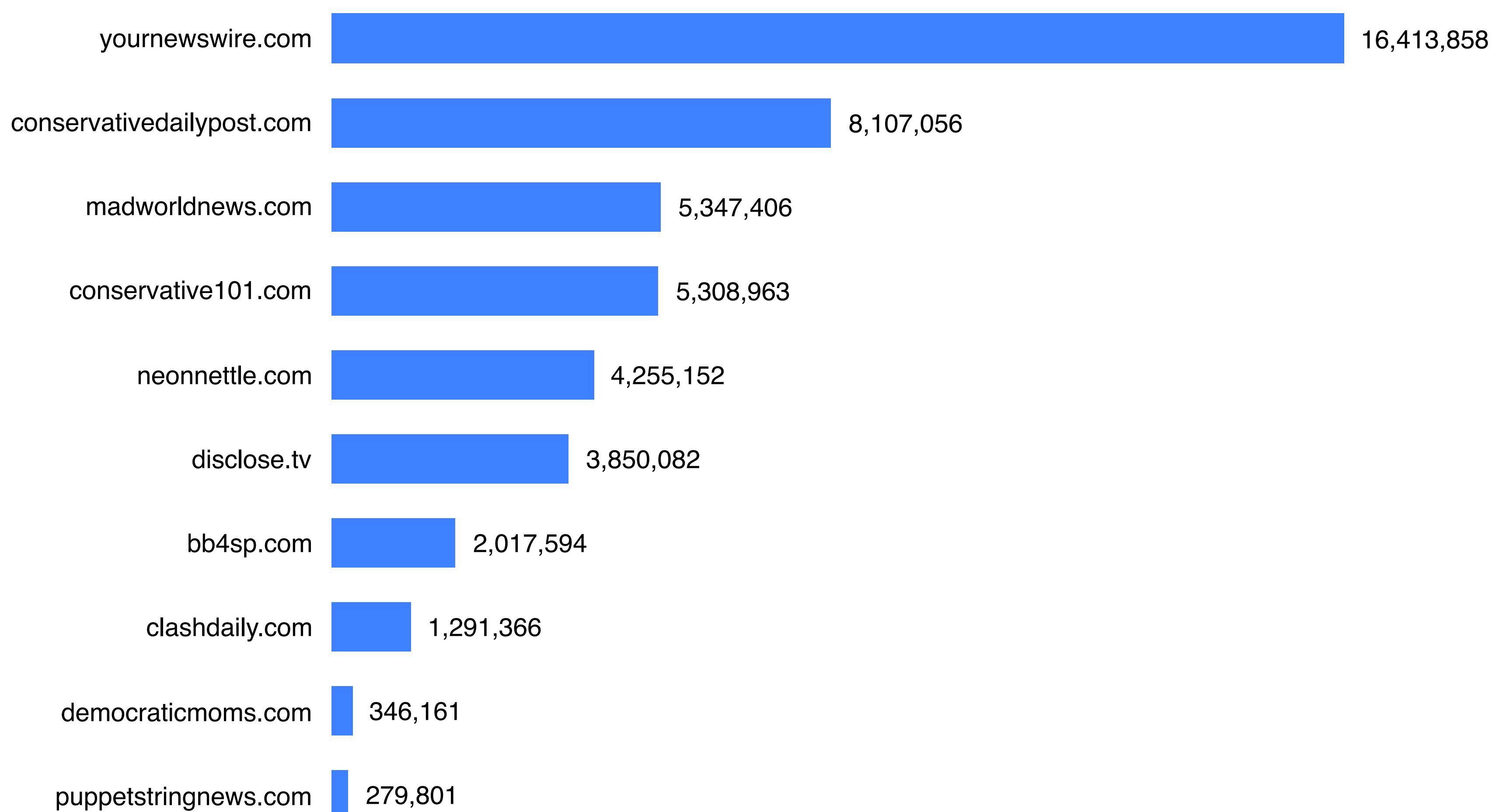
Top Fake/Biased News Publishers

Again, using Politifact's definition, we looked at which of these publishers that regularly post false, misleading, or biased information was the most engaging.

Your News Wire was well ahead of the "fake news competition", partly due to some extremely viral articles. It was also partly due to the sheer number of successful articles the publisher had, all of which helped its content drive more than 16 million Facebook engagements.

Conservative Daily Post was the next most engaged of these sites on Facebook, with more than 8 million engagements, while Mad World News and Conservative 101 drove some 5 million engagements each. There was a quite dramatic drop off on the lower end of the list, potentially driven by the fact that a number of these publishers stopped being active at some point this year.

Top Publishers by Engagement in Politifact's Fake News Category



Most Engaging Fake or Biased News Articles

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the most viral stories came from Your News Wire. The top two articles, one by Your News Wire and one by Neon Nettle, both focused on a conspiracy around a flu shot being harmful to those injected, which garnered just under 850,000 engagements.

Beyond that, many of the top stories had a focus on religious scandals with four of the top stories touching on that in some way, or conspiracies about murders written with a political perspective, blaming either Hillary Clinton or illegal immigrants.

Almost all of the top stories could be read through a political lens, and are written to provoke fear or a strong emotional reaction in the reader, which has always been the modus operandi for Your News Wire and the like for some time.

Facebook Engagement to Politically Biased Fake News Stories

ACCOUNT	HEADLINE	FB ENGAGEMENTS
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	CDC Doctor: "Disastrous" Flu Shot Is Causing Deadly Flu Outbreak	849,011
NEONNETTLE.COM	Expert Confirms Flu Shot Behind Deadly Epidemic That's Killed Thousands	774,422
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	California Gov. Jerry Brown To Ban Sales Of The Bible	552,657
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	Catholic Archbishop Says Pedophilia Is Spiritual Encounter With God	551,472
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	Illegal Immigrant Beheads 13-Year-Old Girl in Alabama — Media Blackout	479,763
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	Pedophilia Included As ~Sexual Orientation On New LGBT Pride Flag	455,311
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	London Closes 500 Churches; Opens 423 New Mosques	398,564
NEONNETTLE.COM	Mom Catches Pedophile Trying to Rape Child, Blows His Head Off With Shotgun	392,770
YOURNEWSWIRE.COM	North Korea Agrees To Open Its Doors To Christianity	349,753
NEONNETTLE.COM	FBI Agent, Who Exposed Hillary Clinton's Cover-up, Found Dead	337,344

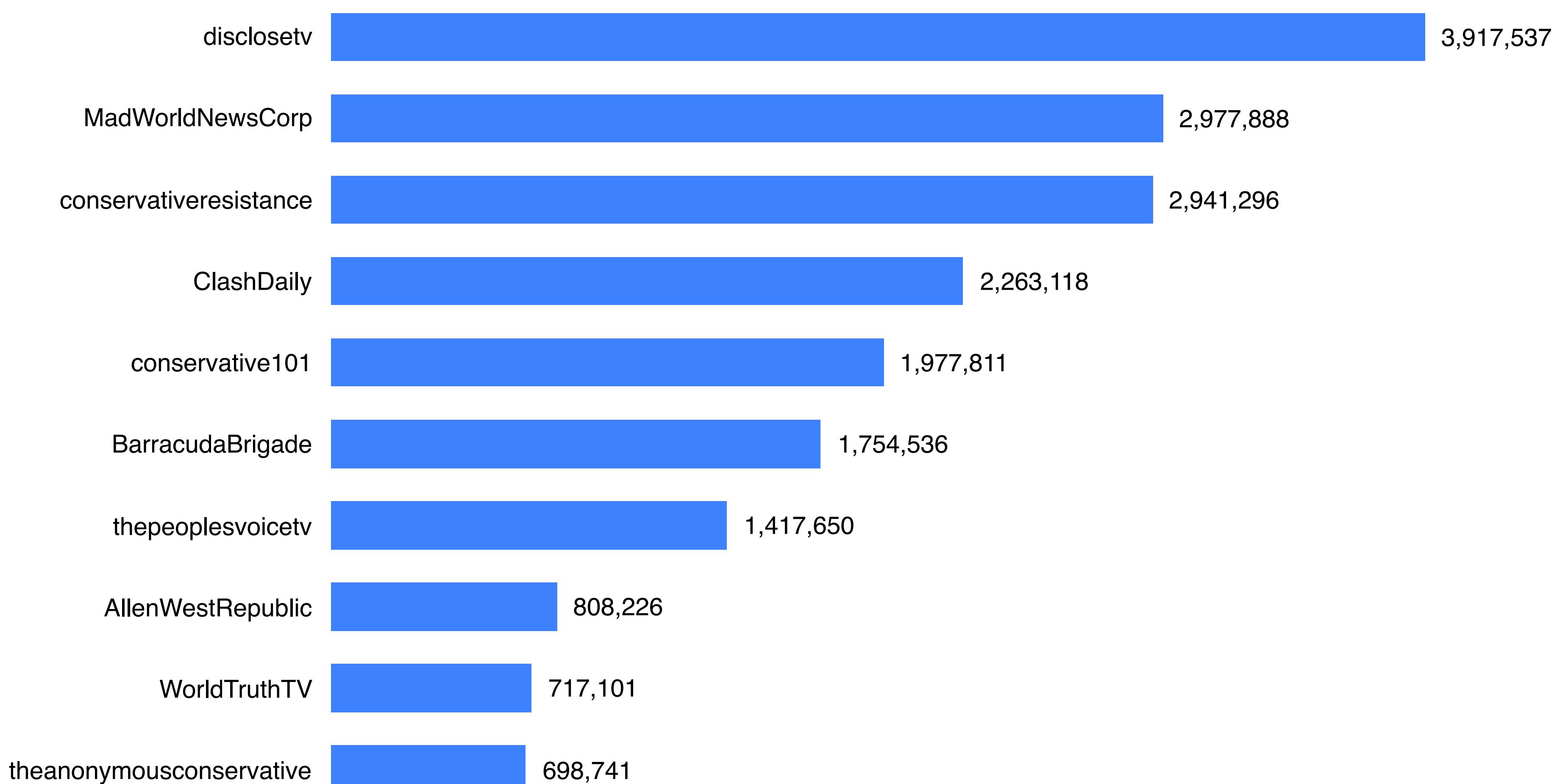
Facebook Pages Sharing Fake or Biased Content

There are, of course, reasons for the success of these sites on Facebook, and part of that is Facebook Pages sharing that content.

Below is a ranking of the Facebook Pages that shared the previously mentioned content, and the engagements those Facebook shares drove.

This shows that much of **the sharing of these** articles probably **came from individuals** rather than Facebook Pages, as these numbers are nowhere near the engagement numbers that we saw on the domain articles' Facebook engagements. This shows the power of dark social - the social shares that aren't on public pages - in driving engagement to a lot of these stories.

Facebook Pages Sharing Fake News Sites



Five Things We Learned

There are a number of things to come from this report, here are five of the key things we have learned:

- **Politics does very well among mainstream media**, driving millions of engagements for the year to date
- **The New York Times dominated the top political stories**, with 10 percent of the top 1,000 stories of the year so far coming from the website
- **Partisan media is very much still present**, with The Daily Wire dominating the field
- **Right-wing media generally drives more engagements** than left-wing media. This is partly due to the fact that there are more right-wing publishers out there
- **Fake news still gets engagements**, but it appears to be mainly driven by shares by individuals, as Facebook Pages that share this type of news don't get anywhere near the same level of engagement as the articles themselves do

Thank You!

Content intelligence predicting which stories will engage audience across social

Our content intelligence database contains the world's most complete set of stories and publishers tracked against every major media network.

NewsWhip is the world's most powerful content strategy platform, empowering the world's leading publishers and brands to predict and understand the stories that will engage audiences.

[Try it now!](#)

Associated Press Case Study

The AP grew to be globally recognized as a leading newswire service featured on front pages around the globe. Today, it faces the challenge of digital media. No longer are breaking news outlets competing only for newspaper real estate – to succeed, news publishers like the AP must be at the forefront of developing events around the globe.

Using Spike, the AP's newsrooms can track which stories are generating engagement and building momentum in one, syndicated place. Day by day, Spike helps to inform the stories that AP reporters cover.

The team then uses NewsWhip Analytics to examine which stories generate engagement. Looking at NewsWhip's breakdown of the top AP stories, the AP learned that U.S. politics, political debate, and partisan viewpoints are driving a high number of comments, shares and reactions across mainstream, right and left-leaning sites. These insights help the publication remain on the cutting edge of digital news.



"Sometimes Spike is our first signal of a story. At our largest newsrooms – in New York, London and Washington – AP runs much broader Spike searches. Political staff track the US presidential primaries with pages specific to each candidate."

– Mark Davies
Former Global News Editor
Associated Press



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