

UNCLASSIFIED
G7 RRM CANADA
Monday, October 18, 2021

On our radar

User engagement with French and English-language online media

- The majority of French and English-language stories shared on Facebook, Twitter and Reddit for September 10 to 12 originated from recognizable Canadian media outlets.

User engagement with Sinophone online media

- The most-viewed stories on WeChat for September 10 to 12 originated from a mix of recognizable Chinese-Canadian WeChat news accounts and CCP media outlets.
- Chinese Communist Party media outlets (including the *Global Times* and *Guancha Syndicate*) published a news story about the English-language leaders' debate and what each of the leader's said about China-Canada relations. The article was relatively neutral in tone, but highlighted one line in particular by CPC leader Erin O'Toole: "We may be smaller than China in terms of population and economic size, but we are a giant when it comes to our commitment to human rights, dignity and the rule of law."
- A *Global Times* WeChat article that suggested the CPC "almost wants to break diplomatic relations with China" is now being actively shared among Canadian WeChat news accounts.
 - WeChat news accounts *iToronto Life* (416K followers), *Vancouver Headlines* (203K followers), *GTALife* (134K followers) shared a story with the headline "Chinese are frightened! Mentioned China 31 times! Who would expect the CPC to be so tough on China!" The article received 1.5 to 3.5K page views each.
 - The Canadian versions resemble the *Global Times* article in format and tone
 - The *iToronto Life* and *GTALife* articles write that the CPC platform contains "many references that are unacceptable to most Chinese people" that "challenge the Chinese people's bottom lines!" The article ends with the line "My fellow countrymen, when you see such a situation, will you still support the CPC?"
- WeChat news accounts in Canada continued to post an apparently false claim that a Kenny Chiu-sponsored private member's bill (C-282 An Act to establish the Foreign Influence Registry) would require "all individuals or groups with ties to China would be required to register."
 - Canadian WeChat account *Canada123* [writes](#) that the bill "would become law if Chiu is re-elected" and that anyone with ties to China "would be considered spokespersons for the Chinese government."
 - The article received significant user engagement (4.4K views).
- Canadian commentators reacted to a *Global Times* English edition editorial that claims the CPC platform "caters to toxic atmosphere against Beijing" and is "unusually hostile."
 - The [editorial](#) is likely prompted by a *Hill Times* piece that analyzes the China-Canada relations policies of the LPC, CPC and NDP.

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- GT editors write that “hyping China” during an election is a “lip-service tactic” to attract voters, but if the CPC were to “put hawkish words into action, it will invite counterstrikes from China, and Ottawa is the one to suffer.”
- The article appears to bridge comments made by Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu that “some Canadian politicians [put] personal political interests above Canada-China relations” to the CPC leader.
- Li Haidong, a professor at a university administered by China’s MOFA, says the CPC has “very few cards to play, and lacks good policies to appeal to voters” and that they “dare not stand up so hostile against China after taking office.”
- Li adds that regardless of the election result, Canada will “continue to serve as the US’ toady to confront China.”
- Some users on Twitter and Reddit interpreted the editorial to mean that “the Chinese Communist Party wants the Trudeau Liberals to win”
- Chinese Communist Party media accounts on Douyin (the Chinese-version of Tiktok) have published videos that repeat a *Global Times* headline published on September 8 that suggest the CPC’s platform would lead China to break off relations with Canada
 - *Xinhua*’s Douyin account (26 million followers) shared a video that the CPC’s platform mentions China “31 times” and that an “expert” says the CPC “almost wants to break diplomatic relations with China.” The video received over 29K engagements. *Xinhua* is China’s official state-run press agency.
 - A number of Douyin accounts have posted similar videos about O’Toole and the CPC platform, but alter small details. For example, a Douyin video by *PLA DYJQ* (20 million followers) claims O’Toole “smeared” China 31 times.

User engagement with Russophone online media

- There were no high-engagement posts from Canadian Russian-language media outlets for the September 08 reporting period
- Topics of interest in global Russian-language media include:
 - Articles from Russian-state media (including *RIA News* and *TASS*) that claim the LPC leader is “splitting the country” for power
 - Russian mainstream media outlets (*RBC Group*) reported on remarks made by Ukrainian President Zelensky that there is a “likelihood” of war with Russia
 - *RBC Group* reported on a recent meeting between Presidents of Russia and Belarus to discuss integration between the two countries
 - *RBC Group* reported on the mayor of Moscow’s comments to public accusations connecting the easing of COVID restrictions with upcoming Parliamentary elections

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RRM CANADA DAILY BRIEF

Key findings:

- RRM Canada did not observe any significant evidence of foreign state-sponsored information manipulation in its monitoring of the broader Canadian digital information ecosystem during the period of September 15. However, Chinese state media continue to take interest in GE44 and the Conservative Party of Canada's proposed China policies.
- A *Postmedia* editorial as well as MacDonald-Laurier Institute's DisinfoWatch commented on what they characterised as examples of Chinese foreign interference during GE44, including: a campaign event for the LPC Vancouver-East candidate that promised a free lunch hosted by a pro-Beijing individual with connections to China; a perceived campaign on WeChat accusing Conservative MP Kenny Chiu of seeking to "suppress the Chinese community" through his private members bill to create a foreign agents registry; recent Chinese Communist Party media outlet Global Times (GT) articles claiming the Conservative Party caters to Canada's "toxic anti-China atmosphere" and a perceived warning of "counterstrikes" should the Conservative Party win. No reaction yet from Chinese media and government officials.
- Provincial media outlets in China continue to publish headlines that the Conservative Party of Canada and leader Erin O'Toole "almost wants to break diplomatic relations with China." The articles appear on popular Chinese news aggregators from Baidu and Tencent. Because of the closed nature of these aggregators, RRM Canada is unable to verify for coordinated inauthentic behaviour.

Scan performed at: 8:00PM, September 15, 2021

Scan covers: 9:00AM September 15, 2021 – 8:00PM September 15, 2021.

Platform used: Buzzsumo, Crowdtangle, Tweetdeck, WeChat, Douyin

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RRM CANADA DAILY BRIEF

Key findings:

- RRM Canada did not observe any significant indicators of foreign state-sponsored information manipulation in its monitoring of the broader Canadian digital information ecosystem during the period of September 16. However, Chinese State media continues to take interest in GE44 and the Conservative Party of Canada's proposed China policies.
- A headline in the Chinese press that the Conservative Party "almost wants to break diplomatic relations with China" appears to have finally ended circulation. Articles with the headline in question appeared continuously between September 8 and 15, and received considerable user attention. As of September 16, RRM Canada could not locate any new publishers sharing the headline.
- In a *Vancouver Sun* article, Conservative Party of Canada candidate Kenny Chiu says the false messages and personal attacks his campaign has received were "beyond [his] expectation." The article did not generate any comment from Chinese media or Chinese officials.
- The *Global Times* reacted to a Toronto Sun story that claims Canada had been intentionally excluded from a new partnership between the U.K., the U.S., and Australia, and also reacted to CPC leader Erin O'Toole's response to being left out of the partnership. The GT author suggests O'Toole "just wants Canada to spend more on the military" and quotes a Twitter user "Why do you want to go to war with China? Did we not lose enough lives in Afghanistan?" The article was not published in English, and did not receive any attention on U.S. social media platforms.

Scan performed at: 8:00PM, September 16, 2021

Scan covers: 9:00AM September 16, 2021 – 8:00PM September 16, 2021.

Platform used: Buzzsumo, Crowdtangle, Tweetdeck, WeChat

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On our radar

User engagement with French and English-language online media

- The majority of French and English-language stories shared on Facebook, Twitter and Reddit for September 16 originated from recognizable Canadian media outlets.

User engagement with Sinophone online media

- The most-viewed stories on WeChat for September 16 originated from a mix of recognizable Chinese-Canadian WeChat news accounts and Chinese Communist Party media outlets.
- A headline in the Chinese press that the Conservative Party “almost wants to break diplomatic relations with China” appears to have finally ended circulation.
 - Articles with the headline in question appeared continuously between September 8 and 15, and received considerable user attention. As of September 16, RRM Canada could not locate any new publishers sharing the headline.
- In a *Vancouver Sun* [article](#), Conservative Party of Canada candidate Kenny Chiu says the false messages and personal attacks his campaign has received was “beyond [his] expectation.” The article received some attention from registered GE44 third parties like Canada Proud and prominent China scholars like Charles Burton (900 overall engagements). The article did not solicit any comment from Chinese media or Chinese officials.
 - The article’s author notes three incidents that RRM Canada had documented last week – an editorial from the Global Times that called the Conservatives “unusually hostile” and the party’s platform “hostile” to China, an article from the Chinese-language Today Commercial News that claims Chiu’s private member bill (C-282) would require all Canadians of Chinese heritage who have attended a Chinese consulate event to register for a foreign agent registry, and private WeChat and Whatsapp messages circulating in Chiu’s electoral district that make false claims about the candidate and C-282.
 - Chiu adds that he does not want to speculate “whether the Chinese government or its agents are behind” the false messages and that “China and its agents are the most experienced infiltrators. They have done it for so many years. They’re not going to get caught.”
 - Chiu discusses a number of narratives that RRM Canada has not encountered, including: referring to O’Toole as “vomit” because his surname sounds similar to the Mandarin word for it; false claims that Conservatives would not only ban WeChat, but all Chinese social media apps like QQ, Weibo, Xiaohongshu and Alipay; and suggesting it is “ridiculous for Chinese to vote for an anti-China party.”
- The *Global Times* [reacted](#) to a Toronto Sun story that claims Canada had been intentionally excluded from a new partnership between the U.K., the U.S., and Australia, and also reacted to CPC leader Erin O’Toole’s response to being left out of the partnership.

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- The GT author suggests O'Toole “just wants Canada to spend more on the military” and quotes a Twitter user “Why do you want to go to war with China? Did we not lose enough lives in Afghanistan?”
- The article received some engagement (less than 30K views).
- The article was not published in English, and did not receive any attention on U.S. social media platforms.
- A *Globe and Mail* report that discovered Justin Trudeau’s memoir was re-published by a Chinese state-owned publishing house has not been reported by Chinese Communist Party media. However, some WeChat accounts that service Canadian users reported on the event.
 - *Canada News Today* provided a relatively direct translation of the *Globe and Mail* article, but did not add any additional commentary on the piece. The article received some engagement (1.5K views).

User engagement with Russophone online media

- There were no high-engagement posts from Canadian Russian-language media outlets for the September 16 reporting period
- Topics of interest in global Russian-language media include:
 - Russian state-media *TASS* and *RIA News* reported on Canada’s possible inclusion in the newly announced security alliance between the U.S., the U.K., and Australia.
 - Russian mainstream media outlet *RBC Daily* reported on French reactions to the announced defence partnership between AU, UK and the US.
 - *RBC Daily* reported on Putin’s self-imposed quarantine and inability to personally attend the CSTO Summit.
 - Ukrainian mainstream media outlet *Obozrevatel* published an interview with former Ukrainian Deputy Minister who suggested Putin wants to cut off Ukraine from the seas and produce “republics.”

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RRM CANADA DAILY BRIEF

Key findings:

- RRM Canada did not observe any significant indicators of foreign state-sponsored information manipulation in its monitoring of the broader Canadian digital information ecosystem during the period of September 17 to 19.
- Chinese Communist Party media outlets have not published further stories about GE44. Canadian WeChat news accounts have not published further editorials urging Canadians of Chinese heritage to vote for a specific candidate or party.
- Russian state-media outlet RT published a podcast hosted by George Galloway that discussed GE44 with strong anti-LPC sentiments. Galloway and an *RT* journalist claimed Canada has changed from a “popular, gentle country” to one that is “playing a controversial role in the world,” citing Canada’s role in Afghanistan and mass graves at Canadian residential schools. Galloway is one of RT’s most popular hosts on social media; however, he has not shared this episode of his podcast on his social media feeds, and it is not clear what level of engagement it is receiving.

Scan performed at: 9:00PM, September 19, 2021

Scan covers: 9:00AM September 17, 2021 – 9:00PM September 19, 2021.

Platform used: Buzzsumo, Crowdtangle, Tweetdeck, WeChat

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On our radar

User engagement with French and English-language online media

- The majority of French and English-language stories shared on Facebook, Twitter and Reddit for September 17 to 19 originated from recognizable Canadian media outlets.
- However, the most shared story on Facebook for the time period was a two-month old Conservative Party video from an anonymous Vimeo account.
 - The video features CPC leader Erin O'Toole discussing two scientists in a Winnipeg government laboratory who allegedly shared virus research information with the Chinese military. The video received 77.8K views.
 - The video was shared in Facebook groups that share similar political leanings, including "Hold Trudeau Accountable (14K followers), Ontarians for a Recall Election to Replace Trudeau Liberal (9.1K followers), and Millions of Canadians Despise Justin Trudeau (8.5K). According to Facebook's ad transparency analytics tools, all of these pages are administered by a Facebook user in Canada.

User engagement with Sinophone online media

- The most-viewed stories on WeChat for September 17 to 19 were a mix of stories from recognizable Chinese-Canadian WeChat news accounts and CCP media accounts.
- On the eve of Election Day, Chinese Communist Party media outlets have not published any stories about GE44. Canadian WeChat accounts have also not published any editorials urging Canadians of Chinese heritage to vote for a specific candidate or party.
- Topics of interest on WeChat include:
 - The *People's Daily Overseas* edition covered two Canadian politics related stories, a report on the newly established AUKUS trilateral security pact, and a report claiming that a Canadian LTC facility "faked" the deaths of elderly residents who actually died of neglect. Neither story mentioned GE44.
 - Canada WeChat accounts, such as *BCBay* and *Vansky*, published stories about a Chinese citizen with a Canada permanent resident card who asked to cancel their "hukou" (household registration in China) by Chinese immigration authorities. The articles do not mention GE44.
 - Canadian WeChat accounts, such as *51.ca* and *Lahoo*, published on Justin Trudeau's attempt to say "Happy Mid-Autumn Festival" in Mandarin Chinese. The accounts take a neutral political stance, and do not criticize the LPC leader for flubbing the line.

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User engagement with Russophone online media

- There were no high-engagement posts from Canadian Russian-language media outlets for the September 17 to 19 reporting period
- Topics of interest in global Russian-language media include:
 - In an *RT* podcast, presenter George Galloway discussed GE44 and claimed LPC leader Justin Trudeau has “triggered an unnecessary election” and has in recent years, changed from a “popular gentle country” to one that is “playing a controversial role in the world.” The guests’ on the podcast mentioned a number of events or incidents that occurred under the LPC government, and carried strong anti-LPC sentiment. The podcast did not rank on Chartable, and it is not clear what level of engagement the podcast received. Although Galloway is one of RT’s most visible personalities on social media (369K Twitter followers), he did not share the podcast on his social media accounts.
 - *RIAFAN*, a website that amplifies Russian state-media, reports that Justin Trudeau may lose the PM seat if the LPC campaign does not garner a majority of seats.
 - *Rossaprimavera* reports that Justin Trudeau was booed outside Quebec City hall during a campaign event. *Rossaprimavera* is a site belonging to the conservative ‘Essence of Time’ movement led by S. Kurginyan.

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Key findings:

- RRM Canada did not observe any significant indicators of foreign state-sponsored information manipulation in its monitoring of the broader Canadian digital information ecosystem during the period of September 20.
- Chinese Communist Party media outlets did not comment on the LPC minority government projection. Canadian WeChat accounts carried neutral commentary pieces on the results of GE44.
- Russian state media outlet Russia Today commented on the CBC's decision to call the election for the LPC while "incredulous" electors were still waiting in line to cast their ballot. The article received little attention from social media users.

Scan performed at: 11:00PM, September 20, 2021

Scan covers: 9:00AM September 20, 2021 – 11:00PM September 20, 2021.

Platform used: Buzzsumo, Crowdtangle, Tweetdeck, WeChat