

Liberal Billionaire Apologizes For "Russian Bot" Disinfo Campaign Tied To Hamilton 68

By Tyler Durden – Zero Hedge

LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman apologized Wednesday for funding an organization that was involved in an effort to spread disinformation targeting Republican Roy Moore in last year's Alabama special election, while helping his Democratic opponent Doug Jones who narrowly won the race, according to the [Washington Post](#).

Hoffman contributed \$750,000 American Engagement Technologies (AET), of which \$100,000 went towards cybersecurity firm New Knowledge, **which created over 1,000 Russian-language Twitter accounts that followed Roy Moore overnight** in order to link the embattled Republican candidate to Russian influence campaigns, according to a report last Wednesday in the [New York Times](#).

Of note, **New Knowledge CEO Jonathon Morgan - who was behind the Alabama election "Russian bot" scheme, ["largely developed"](#) the methods used by the "Hamilton 68" website which purports to track Russian bot activity.**



Jonathon Morgan, Roy Moore, Reid Hoffman

*Each of the above networks consisted of thousands of accounts. In order to identify the most relevant accounts for each, we employed social network analytical techniques **largely developed by J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan.*** -[Securing Democracy](#)

Hamilton 68 has been widely cited by the MSM to support claims of Russian influence in US politics - and reports on conservative websites purported to be Kremlin favourites.

One **Project Birmingham** tactic was to create false online evidence that a network of Russian automated accounts, called bots, were supporting Moore. In his statement, Hoffman called this “the most disturbing aspect” of the disinformation effort. This and some other key details were first reported in the *New York Times*.

Hoffman’s statement said AET had provided funding for New Knowledge, a Texas-based research firm, whose chief executive, **Jonathon Morgan, has acknowledged using disinformation tactics on a small scale in the Alabama election for a research project**. Morgan has repeatedly denied involvement in the broader effort described in news reports.

Morgan said Wednesday that he wasn’t aware that the funding for the work in Alabama, which he portrayed as for research purposes, came from Hoffman. **“I can’t object strongly enough to the characterization that we were trying to influence an election in any way,”** Morgan said. [-Washington Post](#)

Facebook suspended Morgan and others on Saturday for violating its policies against "coordinated inauthentic" behaviour in the 2017 Alabama election, and has launched an ongoing internal investigation.

Disturbingly, **New Knowledge wrote a comprehensive [new report](#) on Russian disinformation released by the Senate Intelligence Committee last week.**

Hoffman's apology is his first acknowledgement of his involvement in the disinformation campaign through AET.

"I find the tactics that have been recently reported highly disturbing. For that reason, I am embarrassed by my failure to track AET — the organization I did support — more diligently as it made its own decisions to perhaps fund projects that I would reject," said Hoffman in a statement.

The statement left key facts unaddressed, including a full accounting of everyone who crafted and executed the campaign. The effort was the subject of a presentation in September to a group of liberal-leaning technology experts who met in downtown Washington to discuss electoral tactics, according to one of the attendees and documents from the meeting obtained by The Washington Post. This person spoke on the condition of anonymity because those at the gathering were required to sign nondisclosure agreements. -Washington Post

The billionaire LinkedIn co-founder was one of the **most active backers of Democrats during the 2016 US election** - spending millions of dollars between party candidates and "dozens of organizations," including start-ups aimed at using "disruptive" methods to influence the election.

"I proudly support aggressive campaigning – both on the ground and digitally – and that is why we’ve funded organizations that help expand civic engagement," said Hoffman in his statement. "But I want to be unequivocal: there is absolutely

no place in our democracy for manipulating facts or using falsehoods to gain political advantage."

Hoffman said Wednesday that he initially invested in American Engagement Technologies because they "sought to develop technical solutions to counteract fake news, bot armies, and other kinds of digital manipulation and disinformation," while improving "civic engagement." While he said he had "no knowledge" that it played a role in testing those tactics in Alabama, Hoffman said the lack of visibility "does not absolve me of my ethical responsibility to exercise adequate diligence in monitoring my investments." -Washington Post

"I would not have knowingly funded a project planning to use such tactics, and would have refused to invest in any organization that I knew might conduct such a project," he added.