Five Generations of Online Manipulators

Evolution of Advanced Persistent Manipulators (APM)

**Generation 1  "DISRUPT THE SYSTEM"**

**ACTORS:** Hacktivists

**Advancement:**
- Hacking in pursuit of influence to shape public perceptions

**Generation 2  "EXPLOIT THE SYSTEM"**

**ACTORS:** Extremists (AQ, AQ-Iraq, ISI, ISIS, IS)

**Advancement:**
- Full spectrum, multi-platform social media influence
- Attempt at app creation

**Generation 3  "DISTORT THE SYSTEM"**

**ACTORS:** Russia

**Advancement:**
- Widespread, strategic hacking for influence
- Full spectrum social media influence
- Disinformation Fusion Center - False personas, Fringe News Outlets, Integration of in-person influence

**Generation 4  "DOMINATE THE SYSTEM"**

**ACTORS:** “Trolling-As-A-Service”

**Advancement:**
- Employment Artificial Intelligence
- Advanced Social Bots
- Creation False Audio/Digital
- In-person Provocations
- Migration App Influence

**Generation 5  "OWN THE SYSTEM"**

**ACTORS:** China (now) & Multi-National Corporations (future)

**Advancement:**
- Balkanization of the Internet Driving Users to Apps
- Incentivize Human Behavior Create Preferred Reality

Source: Clint Watts, Foreign Policy Research Institute