

# thedonald.win

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A platform geared toward supporters of President Trump that is an offshoot of a Reddit forum that was sanctioned by Reddit. Posts often false claims, including about COVID-19.



This website is a platform that publishes content from its users that it does not vet. Information from this source may not be reliable.

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## Ownership and Financing

The site, which does not disclose its ownership, is registered to a domain privacy service that allows the owner to remain anonymous. The site appears to be run by some of the same moderators who previously ran a Reddit forum of the same name.

In a May 2019 post, a site moderator whose username is Shadowman3001 stated that “We invite community members to advertise, but we don’t see any kind of donation drive happening. Expansion likely.”

NewsGuard did not find advertising on the site during an April 2020 review.

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## Content

Anyone with an account on TheDonald.win can post text, images, videos, and links to external websites. TheDonald.win describes itself as “a high-energy Trump rally” that “is for serious supporters of President Trump” and that is “not politically correct.” Users — who go by names that they create on The Donald.win — often use acronyms popular on the internet in their posts, such as TL;DR (too long; didn’t read) and SMH (shaking my head).

The site strongly resembles a forum on the website Reddit, called /r/The\_Donald. In June 2019, Reddit “quarantined” /r/The\_Donald for posts that violated the site’s content policy, including its ban on posts that incite violence, according to a post by moderator “Shadowman3001.” Quarantined subreddits face restrictions on Reddit, including not appearing in search results.

It appears that TheDonald.win was created to replace the subreddit, after it was “quarantined.”

The subreddit still exists, but posts on that forum were at least a month old in April 2020.

TheDonald.win users can file their own posts or comment directly on others posts and comments. The original posts can be “upvoted,” meaning users can indicate their approval, while comments can be “upvoted” or “downvoted.” Also, original posts can be marked by users with labels such as “very fake news,” “drain the swamp,” or “choose greatness.” Users can also tag posts as containing “memes,” “news,” “videos,” and “tweets,” or as “nsfw” (not safe for work).

Posts on TheDonald.win can be viewed in four dedicated sections — Hot, New, Rising, and Top. It is unclear how a post’s rank is determined. However, it appears that the site may use a system similar to that of Reddit, which ranks posts using an algorithm it does not describe. Comments on each post can be sorted by “top,” “new,” “old”, and “controversial.”

Original posts can be shared on social media, including Reddit. Users can hide posts that they no longer want to view, and can also report posts and comments. Original posts can be pinned (“stickied”) to the top of the homepage, although it appears that only moderators have this ability.

TheDonald.win prominently features links to U.S. President Donald Trump’s campaign website. It also links to websites with information about voting, such as Vote.gov, a U.S. government website about voter registration, and FVAP.gov, the website of a U.S. government program that provides voting assistance for members of the military and other U.S. citizens who are overseas. The site also links to the website of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

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#### Credibility

Content on TheDonald.win is overseen by 28 moderators, according to eight site rules that appear prominently on each page. These rules prohibit content that violates U.S. law or includes “general unfounded bigotry,” non-factual information, or self-promotion. The

site also prohibits doxxing (publishing private or identifying information about an individual on the internet) and encourages users to “be respectful” of others. The “Don’t be Dumb” rule states: “Remember, you represent the movement against Globalism, Communism and Progressive Insanity. Your comments and posts may become news.”

NewsGuard reviewed the site’s publishing process by publishing a test post and comment, and found that posts are not reviewed before they are published. Any user can create and comment on posts as soon as they register for the site. Users can report original posts and comments for possible violations of the site’s rules, using a button labeled “deport.”) A “block” button appears below all original posts and comments, although clicking it does not appear to actually block anything. Moderators can ban users from posting on the site, according to a form provided by the site to report possible violations

TheDonald.win’s rules do not prevent debunked conspiracy theories and other false information from proliferating on the site, including content about the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, an April 2020 post falsely claimed that the virus is a bioweapon. The post stated: “Yup, it’s a bioweapon. At least eight strains of the pathogen have been identified, indicating that it has amended itself several times since ‘patient zero’ was presumably infected at a wet market in Wuhan, China, last last year.” The post linked to an article on FoxNews.com that explains how the virus is naturally mutating, but that article said nothing about the virus being a bioweapon.

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 is a bioweapon. A March 2020 study in the journal Nature Medicine concluded that the COVID-19 virus “is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19’s similarities to other coronaviruses suggest “a likely single, recent

emergence of this virus from an animal reservoir.” A February 2020 study published in the journal nature found that the COVID-19 virus is “96% identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus.”

A March 2020 post, titled, “Is Pizzagate still a forbidden topic?,” contained many comments asserting that the “Pizzagate” conspiracy theory is real. The conspiracy theory claims that a pedophilia ring run by Hillary Clinton and her aide, John Podesta, was operating out of a Washington pizzeria. “Pizzagate is 100% real and John Podesta unquestionably a pedophile,” one comment read, adding, “Satanist pedophiles are some of the most powerful people on the planet.” Another post stated: “pizzagate is real.... [accused pedophile Jeffrey] Epstein was part of the same network.”

The Pizzagate conspiracy theory has been debunked and dismissed by law enforcement authorities and multiple media outlets.

Another March 2020 post promoted the claim that Democratic National Committee staffer Seth Rich was “murdered by the DNC.” The theory alleges that Rich was killed in 2016 because he allegedly leaked DNC emails to WikiLeaks.

In fact, law enforcement authorities said that Rich was killed during an unsolved robbery. In July 2018, Special Counsel Robert Mueller indicted 12 Russian intelligence officers in relation to the hack of the DNC and subsequent leak of the organization’s emails. There is no credible evidence linking the leak to Seth Rich.

NewsGuard sent two messages to the moderators of TheDonald.win through the site’s general feedback form, inquiring about its editorial policies, but did not receive a response. Two emails sent to an address listed on the site’s Facebook page also did not draw a response.

usernames, which they choose when they sign up for an account. Contact or biographical information is not provided. Users are not required to provide an email address when they register.

A list of the site's 28 moderators (usernames only) is available on the side of each page. Registered users can contact the moderators through a general feedback form.

The author of each post is identified with an "[S]" label next to their username, which stands for "Submitted this post." Moderators are sometimes identified with an "[M]" next to their username, which stands for "Moderator, speaking officially." New users are identified with an image of hands shaking.

TheDonald.win does not disclose information about its ownership.

Advertising did not appear on TheDonald.win in April 2020.

NewsGuard sent two messages to the moderators of TheDonald.win inquiring about the site's transparency practices, but did not receive a response. Two emails sent to an address listed on the site's Facebook page also drew no response.

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## History

TheDonald.win was created in July 2019. A month earlier, the subreddit [/r/The\\_Donald](#) was quarantined by Reddit for violating the site's content policy. Reddit had taken steps in June 2016 and February 2017 to limit the reach of [/r/The\\_Donald](#) by adjusting its ranking algorithm.

[/r/The\\_Donald](#) subreddit was created in June 2015, soon after Donald Trump announced his presidential campaign. The subreddit is known for promoting conspiracy theories and for the use of derogatory language. It was called a "hate speech forum" by the liberal website Slate in July 2016 and a "notoriously fetid troll swap" in January 2017 by The Verge, a website that covers technology.

The subreddit has hosted many AMAs, a popular series on Reddit that stands for “Ask Me Anything.” The conservative and right-wing figures who have participated in the series included Trump himself, Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson, and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

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Ownership and Financing

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