Evidence of abuse of YouTube for Chinese government propaganda
22 September 2014

Free Tibet has documented the following:

1. The establishment of bogus personal accounts use to disseminate propaganda favourable to the Chinese government.
2. The establishment of multiple bogus personal accounts solely for the purpose of distributing or commenting on content from a single account.
3. The posting of repetitive content (in the form of comments) originating from a single source through the establishment of multiple bogus personal accounts.
4. The use of copyrighted material, apparently without permission, as profile photographs for the above accounts.

Free Tibet has identified four bogus personal accounts used specifically to promote China’s messaging on Tibet but others may exist. We have identified a larger number of bogus personal accounts used to promote content favourable to the Chinese government on other issues but it is likely that others exist. Please see Appendix for a full list of accounts identified by Free Tibet.

All accounts and urls were accessed between 20 July 2014 and 18 September 2014. Screen grabs of selected accounts and content are available here https://www.flickr.com/photos/freetibetorg/15283217851/in/set-72157647766431441 and from Free Tibet on request.

1. The establishment of bogus personal accounts use to disseminate propaganda favourable to the Chinese government

   a. Accounts posting or commenting on Tibet-related material

      Hugo Tom:
      https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvxReEGC9CItcvcOnx5e68A/channels
      Peters Ken: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdS64zpZbwTphNSLrNsJiw
      Lewis Johnson:
      https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBXPrlif_kkl3BX6dQQxr2w
      Lewis Davidson:
      https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7H3lvNHP5mcRxJUV6LJRNQ

      Evidence of fake status:

         - Hugo Tom, Peters Ken and Lewis Johnson were names given to fake Twitter accounts posting or commenting on Tibet content (now suspended).
• The accounts publish solely Tibet-related material.
• The content and nature of the videos they post are very similar, suggesting the same source.
• The subscribers and commenters for these accounts almost all appear fake (see below).
• The subscribers and commenters of these accounts follow similar, apparently fake, accounts linked to the China/Tibet propaganda, forming a circle of followers. For example, Noyes Jasper https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3kT0mccbsrNfbNusmLwNXw likes Peter Ken's videos (Tibet content), Peter Ken is subscribed to Noyes, Noyes Jasper likes Review China (see below).

b. Examples of China-related accounts

Alice Vivian: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChD03eocWR_t1qS5bt5lkag
Robyn Wyld: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF5ILZcbfeydbUo163aDjHw
April Ben: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoZuSutaCgoHoy9V0q65k3Q
Lydia May: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUh1zJmlKtjlRqts0JYaFcQ
Daniel Carter: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkIDz89EfjHTIVT-xoed5g

Evidence of fake status

• A significant number of the accounts (for example, Alice Vivian and Lydia May) also had Twitter accounts exposed as fake and now suspended.
• The accounts which have been evaluated by Free Tibet use fake names and their profile pictures have been sourced from the internet (see Point 4 for copyright material; see appendix for other sources). The other accounts have similar profiles, strongly suggesting the same process.
• The accounts exclusively post pro-China content and nothing else.
• Accounts solely like or subscribe to Review China (see below) and/or the accounts identified above.
• The names mostly follow the same format, being Anglo-Saxon and usually being two first names.
• These accounts have the same or very similar subscribers and commenters, linked to the Tibet/China propaganda, forming a circle of accounts.
• The subscribers and commenters on these accounts almost all appear fake using the criteria identified in this document.

2. The establishment of multiple bogus personal accounts solely for the purpose of distributing or commenting on content from a single account.

The China-related accounts identified above only like or comment on videos from the Review China account https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfWVMEx4-kfluFjxa8rdZsw. Review China videos are professionally produced and its content is exclusively positive about China. Almost all activity related to this account is highly suspicious:

• Each video posted by Review China has several thousand views according to the viewing statistic but most show no signs of authentic viewer activity.
• Each video is posted in both Chinese and English and most pairings have nearly identical viewing statistics.
Those posted in Chinese have almost no viewer activity (no likes/dislikes/comments) despite the viewing statistics.
The only videos with comments and likes are the videos in English and all by users with apparently Western profiles/accounts.
Nearly all of the videos which do show viewer activity have 23/24 likes
Nearly all of the videos which have likes have an almost identical number of comments, all of which are positive, suggesting that each account systematically likes then comments.
The videos have almost no dislikes, with 500,000 apparent views in total.
Although the accounts have Western names, their activity relates solely to Tibet/China videos.
All of the accounts related to Review China make video posts and comments which are favourable to the Chinese government, even though they have Western identities.
The same comments are made by different accounts and/or single accounts post the same comment on different videos (see Point 3, below)

3. The posting of repetitive content (comments) originating from a single source through the establishment of multiple accounts.

Individual accounts repeatedly post the same comments on different videos in the circle:
Oliver Nina  “China is a country with 5000 years civilization, and its size decided China will always has a important role in the world.  China will rise again, just a matter of time.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlRlFOAlCFs and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD9iOayXaFo

Identical comments are posted by different accounts:
“ I think China is fortunate and lucky to have a very forward-looking leadership”
Selma Rex:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rzs4d4ZhZxTo
Lewis Hubbard:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWh8a_UWx54
Solomon Milly:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlRlFOAlCFs

Comments may be both repeated by the same account on different videos and by different accounts in the circle:
“Excellent presentation I have to say”
Hellen Darcy:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWxEVBZ7sjU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD9iOayXaFo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlRlFOAlCFs
Garfield Erica:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IXypZ32Y5g

4. The use of copyrighted material, apparently without permission, as profile photographs

Lydia May http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUh1zJmlKtjLrgts0JYaFcQ  Photograph obtained from professional photographers’ website:
http://ddkportraits.com/2013/09/time-to-make-your-senior-page-unforgettable/ NB This name and photograph was also used for a Twitter account. When contacted by the New York Times, the photographer confirmed that permission had not been given for use of the image.

- Rebecca Philomena http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTv9pJWBZ3WzUia5y1zllyA Photograph obtained from professional photographers’ website http://bryantaltizer.blogspot.co.uk/2009/10/senior-portrait-session-hannah.html http://ddkportraits.com/2013/09/time-to-make-your-senior-page-unforgettable/
- Hugo Tom https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvxReEGC9CltcycOnx5e68A Photograph of a model http://www.malemodelscene.net/editorial/felipe-berto-rick-day/

Please see the Appendix below for more examples.

Appendix: suspicious accounts identified by Free Tibet

Note: Red highlights are likely copyright infringements

1. Andrew Bertie, Twitter suspended http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qq_k5hBsXenhgDKYc_gA
2. Alice Viviан, Twitter suspended https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHD03eocWR_t1qS5bt5lakag Profile image of the account is from a guest blogger of street style blog that was written by a travel blogger. http://anonmagazine.com/spotted-european-street-style/ http://mygreatescapades.tumblr.com/
3. Alice Lillian https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSF_TjWUhbiRncFPNj3ddRw/videos
4. Anthony Dutt, Twitter suspended https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuivhrvp4F8CqPRm6pbALHg/channels
5. April Ben https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoZuSutaCqoHoy9V0q65k3Q Profile image of the account is from Down Syndrome Association in Texas. http://dsact.com/2012-holiday-party/
6. Alisa R https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdjhid8SECnQMDdZeNK3y5A Profile image of the account is from a stock image http://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/beautiful-girl-near-yacht.html
8. Bonnie Casper  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRsNmU09Bez8kfSrht3LR5Q/videos

9. Cassie Mandy, Twitter suspended  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5_0g0vc9nWthg8G4svmZ9Q

10. Carter Daniel  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkldzj89EffHTtvT-xoed5g  
Profile image of the account is from an animal nutrition products website  
http://tecnologiaagricolahn.com/

11. Congreve Neil, Twitter suspended  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwAbO6XwvxuzWfhCZcbgBqQ  
Profile image of the account is from UK Anthropology site  
http://ukvisualanthropology.com/blog/

12. Derek Jamie  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCo66LBQKqCRF9GD5txzJYw  
Profile image of the account of this person  
https://www.flickr.com/photos/ramseymohsen/5256985504/in/photostream/

13. Donna Alina, Twitter suspended  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvV1YH53LWl63PGkk60lwA

14. Emily Becky  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_fVn8uKNJLajGXBt2waCg

15. Eric Lynn  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt8PL4EU4rOp3tEtSW9MK6Q

16. Francis Jones  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd31qTlomboLASm8SgV-wPPr  
Profile image of the account from a family travel blog  
http://www.stylehioclub.com/europe/italy/a-road-trip-around-sicily/

17. Felix James, Twitter suspended  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwlsoHixoULPLIAkWM4y7Rmg

18. Gallup Irving, Twitter suspended  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbmqfjne9PCZp8rB3w7zODQ

19. Gresham Dunbar  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG74EEvVATEyKa2xlcf2XwQ/feed

20. Garfield Erica, Twitter suspended  
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNG2zO4K2N3W583hhce4kg  
Profile image of the account from Cranfield University website  
http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/study/studying-at-cranfield/life-at-cranfield/
21. Hamlet Cook, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOVdlzKtFcWXImFCALjvwOg

22. Hellen Darcy, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY9fE4weLiQPaqIKKwuFoQ
   Profile image of the account from an Agricultural College website
   http://www.vidalquevedo.com/web-dev
   http://www.cals.wisc.edu/

23. Irene Randy, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV1WNyJel7uDdqNcX7RnyYw
   Same as Alice Vivian - profile image of the account is from a guest blogger of street style blog that
   was written by a travel blogger.
   http://anonmagazine.com/spotted-european-street-style/
   http://mygreatescapades.tumblr.com/

24. Jack Martin
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGKFjtx0yMBLmntP2QZiIA

25. Jessica Oy
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzjvJF7ufu8ZsrnYBOnvfXQ

26. Lloyd Henley, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7ZQDunn9sZRrgD0-gpvVWw
   Profile image of the account from this fashion site
   https://rebelxmindz.wordpress.com/tag/supreme/
   Sepreme is also the logo of a fashion brand
   http://www.supremenewyork.com/about

27. Lucia Josh, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPoXidSoVjo_45lG9rKomvg

28. Lewis Hubbard, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjnVHZWfa_NV1ZYQWdpdBA
   Profile image of the account is of Johnny Dickerson, pastor of FBC Mansfield from an interview on
   this website.

29. Lewis Davidson
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7H3ivNHP5mcRxJUV6LRNQ

30. Lewis Johnson
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBXPrif_kkl3sX6dOQxr2w

31. Lydia May, Twitter suspended
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUhlzJmlKtLrqt50JYaFcQ
    We've contacted the people for this picture for twitter.
32. Micheal Wright
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkAV1xJrfawJylHymmvxRA/videos
   Above image from IT site http://www.slegend.com/

33. Michael Peter
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuZ2VgNhlUcqTJMtVThh_Q
   Profile image of the account is of actor/ rapper Kane Robinson in Channel 4 drama Toy Boy.
   http://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-previews/top-boy-series-two-meet-2192773

34. Meredith Glen
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh6v1N7lboM_Xcu7nhsfuA

35. Malthu Snowl, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoqSGDahe5U6nhsfuA

36. Maggie Liz
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXA6PCcATmidM8scDaLuKtQ
   Profile image of the account is from this photo painting website.
   http://photoartpainting.blogspot.co.uk/p/portrait.html

37. Nell Raleigh, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaHF7uL00Y1wtEAYZAP_97A

38. Nicholas Field
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuqcivM3h00BN9ZEWKhNvA

39. Noyes Jasper, Twitter account suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkT0mccbsrNfbNusmLwNXw
   Profile image of the account is from this blog

40. Oliver Nina, Twitter suspended
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVz9qEyo4yi3NpWZeyJw8qA/channels

41. Peters Ken/Ken Peters, Twitter suspended
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdS64zpfZbwTphNSLrNsJiw
    Twitter suspended https://twitter.com/Kenpeters91

42. Pauline Oliver
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW3Dko-d-8rfUE-82G6opsw
    Profile image of the account is from Darota Coy artist

43. Philomena Rebecca, Twitter suspended
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTv9pJWBZ3WzUia5y1zIvA/videos

44. Robin Wyld, Twitter suspended
    https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF5ILZcbfeydbUo163aDjHw
45. Robeson Young, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD8y5hwMNgrTm2RhqlT_s_w

46. Selina Laura
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCg3qL22MHEuwL6hquAKFmYw

47. Selma Rex
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCleamdIlkcKcMyu1pPzX6UDw/feed
   Profile image of the account is of Gregg from this website
   http://catalyst.pearson.com/our-team/gregg-alpert

48. Sarah Yvett
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2kDQRmDP-VLFfHeuLtxvXQ/videos

49. Solomon Milly
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc9BYFbuA4di7cltceQlbNA

50. Stacy Jennifer
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdkcXjxx7iaTuN6PTdukK7g

51. Hugo Tom/Tom Hugo, Twitter suspended
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvxReEGC9CtvcOnx5e68A/channels

52. Timothy Wendy
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqt_JWwqT7je5viH-y5J9Gw
   Stock photo
   http://www.123rf.com/stock-photo/drinking_beer.html

53. Thomas Yule
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_uNp62_b6BEiINLt86XR6A/videos

54. Truman Marcus
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4DjrkVGVSuHOrcDu7w1E-Q
   Stock photo
   http://www.masterfile.com/stock-photography/search/graduation%20throwing%20cap

55. Vanessa Eva
   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsJ4uV7cIXQYHmryh5MWahA
   Profile image of the account is Paris Hilton
   http://celebrity-sneakers.blogspot.co.uk/

56. Dole Valtey
   http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC34EQRXEtL25lvDlvriokMTg/channels
For further information and screen grabs of selected accounts, contact Alistair Currie, Free Tibet campaigns and media manager:

E: Alistair@freetibet.org
T: +44 (0)207 324 4605

Free Tibet is a London-based international campaigning organisation, working for the Tibetan people's right to determine their own future, an end to China's occupation and for the fundamental human rights of Tibetans to be respected.

Free Tibet
28 Charles Square
London
UK
N1 6HT

www.freetibet.org
www.facebook.com/FreeTibetOrg