

Response to Written Questions Submitted by Hon.  
Jerry Moran  
Written Questions for the Record to  
Clinton Watts

*Question 1.* What is the benefit to social media companies employing human verification systems? How prevalent are the use of “social bots” by extremists?

*Response.* Social bots allow the replication of anonymous accounts to promote and distribute falsehoods or manipulated truths at such high volumes that they alter the perceptions of reality and blur the line between fact and fiction. Human verification systems will prevent the computer generation of bots by ensuring real people, not computer programs that replicate accounts, are behind the communications on their platforms. This will limit the creation of social bots and increase real human communication on social media platforms. Social media companies should also want to implement these controls as it improves the integrity of their systems and ensures the authenticity of accounts on the platform.

As for extremist use of bots, I am less familiar. The Islamic State did try to construct its own applications, but I’m not aware of any terrorist group employing social bots on a large scale. I’d recommend contacting J.M. Berger, co-author of *ISIS: The State of Terror* who may have greater insight into terrorists’ use of social bots.