ALETHEA

Executive Briefing
AI-Driven Bot Network Targets Pharmaceutical Brands

SEPTEMBER 2025

Known Threat Takes Aim at a New Target

Alethea has uncovered a new wave of coordinated, AI-driven inauthentic accounts **directly targeting pharmaceutical companies** with narrative attacks that **portray them as profiteering**, **careless**, or **politically compromised**.

At least **75 newly identified X accounts are using large language models (LLMs) to generate rapid, automated replies** on social media. This activity builds on the more than 400 accounts Alethea previously [documented](#) that use a

technique we call **'PromptPasta'**. New findings signal a troubling evolution: **Pharmaceutical brands have now landed directly in the crosshairs of adversarial operators abusing LLMs to shape online discourse inauthentically.**

These findings underscore the rising risks for companies in highly regulated industries, where **reputation**, **market confidence**, and **regulatory decisions** are **vulnerable to narrative manipulation** and, in some cases, actively under attack.

Policy Changes Lay Fertile Ground for Narrative Manipulation

Information operations are known to co-opt real news moments to serve a broader agenda. The surge in PromptPasta activity now targeting the pharmaceutical industry coincided with the Trump administration's July 31, 2025, announcement of a **prescription drug pricing initiative**. The policy introduced a most-favored-nation (MFN) framework requiring U.S. pharmaceutical companies to align domestic drug prices with the lowest available in comparable markets. In the days leading up to the announcement, companies including **AstraZeneca** and **Pfizer** publicly acknowledged discussions with the administration.
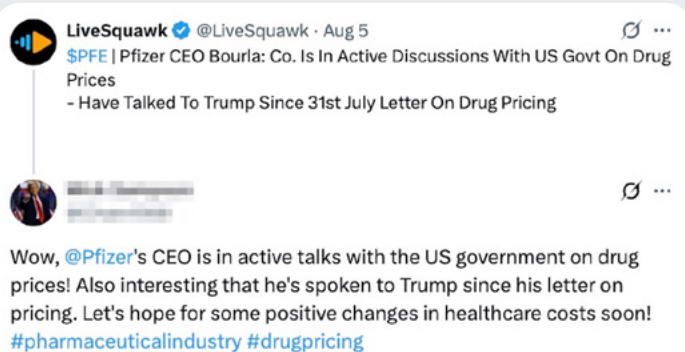
PromptPasta bots converged on stories tied to the White House announcement and broader debates on **drug pricing**, **tariffs**, and **Medicare**.

KEY NARRATIVES INCLUDED

→ **Trump pressures pharmaceutical companies to align U.S. drug prices with global lows**

→ **European drugmakers face dual pressures: U.S. price cuts and EU tariffs**

→ **Trump's EU tariffs could drive higher prescription drug costs**

→ **Pharmaceutical stock prices fall due to political pressure**

EXAMPLE POSTS

Markets News ✔ @MarketsDotNews · Jul 28
A proposed 15% tariff on European medicines by the Trump administration could cost drugmakers billions and may lead to higher drug prices.

A potential 15% tariff on European medicines by the Trump administration could result in substantial financial losses for pharmaceutical companies, potentially leading to increased drug prices.
#tradewar #healthcare

LiveSquawk ✔ @LiveSquawk · Aug 5
$PFE | Pfizer CEO Bourla: Co. Is In Active Discussions With US Govt On Drug Prices
- Have Talked To Trump Since 31st July Letter On Drug Pricing

Wow, @Pfizer's CEO is in active talks with the US government on drug prices! Also interesting that he's spoken to Trump since his letter on pricing. Let's hope for some positive changes in healthcare costs soon!
#pharmaceuticalindustry #drugpricing

Investor Central Club + STAX AI ✔ @ICtradeideas · Jul 30
Healthy Returns: AstraZeneca CEO proposes some U.S. drug price cuts amid Trump pressure

Healthy Returns: AstraZeneca CEO proposes some U.S. drug price cuts amid Tr...
From cnbc.com

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Tanja Heye
@THeye57278

AstraZeneca's CEO announces plans for U.S. drug price reductions under pressure from President Trump. Will other pharmaceutical companies follow suit? #healthcare #drugprices #astrazeneca #trump

Contradictory Messaging

Interestingly, the PromptPasta accounts **occasionally generated replies that contradicted the very narratives they appeared to support.** By echoing content from original media posts, some bots accidentally undercut Trump's policy stance on pharmaceutical pricing. These contradictions illustrate both the unpredictability of AI-generated content and the risks of narrative fragmentation.

Scale of the Operation

We now assess that PromptPasta LLM bot activity may exceed **1,000 active accounts**, with at least **10,000 placeholders ready to be deployed** following suspensions. This scale **underscores the low cost and high adaptability of adversarial operators**— and the potential for exponential growth in influence campaigns.

Why This Matters for Comms and Corporate Affairs Leaders
Brand Manipulation and Trust Erosion

With relative ease and low cost, large-scale bot networks can co-opt real news events and policy changes to paint brands and government organizations in a negative light and shift public perception at scale. Even when the broader motivations behind a campaign may be political, brands can be used as collateral and caught in the crossfire.

Activity like these new findings presents direct brand risk to pharmaceutical companies being portrayed as profiteering, careless, or politically compromised—**undermining trust in life-saving treatments and the healthcare industry at large**.

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The Bottom Line

The PromptPasta operation represents an **evolution in how adversaries deploy AI** to manipulate discourse, blend narratives, and target industries of geopolitical and economic significance. **For pharmaceutical and healthcare companies, the risks are especially acute: pricing debates, policy scrutiny, and brand reputation** can all be distorted in real time by coordinated AI-driven campaigns.

The lesson is clear—**reputation**, **market stability**, and **public trust** are **all at stake**. Alethea's intelligence enables organizations to detect these threats early, contextualize their impact, and act decisively—before a fragmented, AI-driven narrative becomes tomorrow's crisis for healthcare leaders.

Deeper Dive
Spotting Fakes and Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior

The newly identified PromptPasta accounts share defining features:

→ **Batch creation dates**

→ **Stolen or reused profile images**

→ **Lack of original posts**

→ **Rapid-fire replies to topical news**

Some appear to have been purchased or stolen, as indicated by unusually old account creation dates inconsistent with their activity. Operators also shifted usernames to complicate attribution, a sign of adaptive tactics.

Alethea empowers communications and security leaders to see beyond the surface of online discourse.

Our platform detects early signals of online risks, decodes the tactics behind them, and delivers contextual intelligence that helps organizations protect their people, reputation, market stability, and stakeholder trust. Schedule a demo with our experts to see how Alethea can be part of your solution.

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