



LIZARDS & LIES

**Playtest Scenario:
Short Election**

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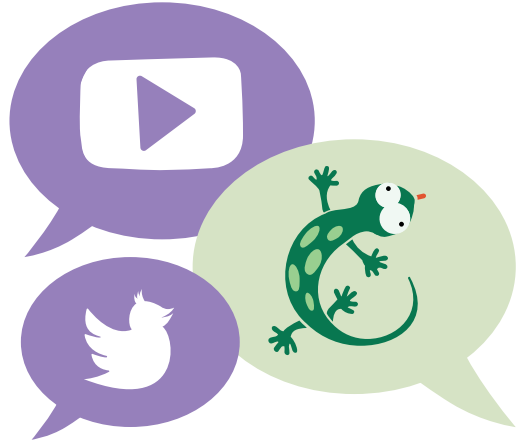
Short Election

Intro text

The national election is three weeks away. This year's race has been disrupted by two conspiracy theories, which each party and leader has addressed differently. The Party for Legit Truth (PLT), led by Alex Drew, has entertained many conspiracists through the videos and memes shared on their social networks. Meanwhile the incumbent Party for Politics (PfP) and their leader Oriel Marumpt have sought to correct the wild accusations coming from these groups. The two theories? The first argues that the PfP, alongside other world leaders, are alien lizards bent on world domination posing as humans. The second argues that 90% of the birds within our nation have been replaced by government drones surveilling the public's every move. With these plots gripping national attention, we will track their influence on this election cycle. Stay tuned for more.

We start mid-campaign.

Week 1



This morning each party released their official platforms. Social media was already abuzz with conversation, with one popular MeTube user responding, “I don’t like none of what that PfP [Party for Politics] group is saying. They says that they were going to make positive change but all I see are them little lizard lies trying to suppress my voice.” Their comments were echoed by others causing the hashtag #SkinSuitMarumt to trend across platforms. As the week goes on, we will have to see how this rhetoric changes.

1. One Spreader adds 1 Lizard Conspiracy token to one empty node within the MeTube network. One Spreader adds 1 Lizard Conspiracy token to an empty node within the Chrpr network.
2. Each Stopper does one of the following: a Moderator adds one flag to a node within the Chrpr or MeTube network. A Digital Literacy Educator adds one blue token to a node within the Chrpr or MeTube network.

Week 1

Week End: count the number of tokens on the board representing each conspiracy; follow the corresponding scenario below.

More Lizard Conspiracy Tokens:

Thousands gathered this weekend at Parliament Hill driven by the belief that Alex Drew (leader of the PLT) would expose the PfP as lizard people. Signs read “Unveil the Scales” and “Lizard Lies cost me my business”; Drew met the crowds to roaring applause. While Drew made no specific mention of the lizard conspiracy, he was quoted stating, “I promise to expose these lying politicians for the fake faces and grand narratives they tout.”—a claim that many said indicates his support for these theories.

More Bird Conspiracy Tokens:

A supposed email leak was shared this week showing high-level correspondence between the PfP’s staff. While we have yet to confirm the validity of these files, thousands have considered it proof enough to call for an official response on the role that birds play in our society. The birdwatching message board Bird Bingo for the Bored Birder was overwhelmed with a digital attack spreading hate posts and memes calling them state patsies for arguing that birds are in fact real.

Week 2



Even with debates coming up next week, the media and public have been inundated with viral Tik Tak videos gaining prominence for seemingly no reason. A 30-second film discussing the validity of the theory was recommended across user feeds leading some experts to say, “the algorithm has gone haywire.” In response, the CEO of Tik Tak issued a statement: “At Tik Tak we are committed to the safe and truthful sharing of information. Sometimes our algorithms get it wrong, but we will work hard to fix them when that happens.” Those who felt this response was lackluster were quickly proven right when a new set of videos showing robotic parts coming out of a bird went viral.

1. Algorithmic Amplification: Determine which conspiracy theory is more prominent on the board. Together, conspiracy players fill and Buy In one node in Tik Tak.
2. Each Stopper can draw a card. The Platform Moderator can then add one Moderator and flag to any node. The Digital Literacy Educators can add 1 blue token to two different empty nodes.

Week 2

Week End: count the number of tokens on the board representing each conspiracy; follow the corresponding scenario below.

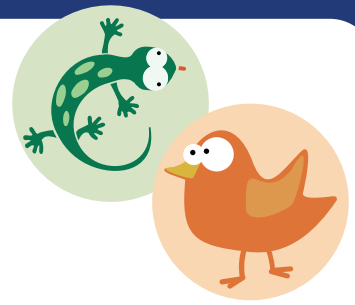
More Lizard Conspiracy Tokens:

A number of PfP leaders have been attacked while on the campaign trail. After a viral video showed that a mixture of water, hot sauce, vinegar, and spices would dissolve the skin suits and expose the lizards, conspiracists filled up balloons and threw them at candidates. Three different candidates are being treated for burn wounds, but none are in critical condition. Despite medical staff confirming that they will be fine, conspiracists have seen this as proof that their “human shell” nearly dissolved.

More Bird Conspiracy Tokens:

Vigils were held across the nation to mourn the countless birds that have been slaughtered by conspiracists. After a viral video titled “how to stop the drones” showed an individual dissecting a bird and pulling out wires, there has been an increase in the capture and murder of birds across the nation. Piles of birds were left on city hall steps in the capital and other major cities, leaving the public to mourn the loss of these creatures. Despite none of the murdered birds showing these mechanical features, conspiracists responded by stating modern technology has become so sophisticated it looks lifelike.

Week 3



With the debates airing tonight, many fear that mounting conspiracy will overshadow the real issues. The algorithmic chaos of last week lingered across networks and witnessed in comments sections as one Thoughtbook user wrote, “I just can’t believe that these lizard theorists are wasting our time asking the PfP if they got tails, when the real questions are being ignored. Just yesterday, I was able to get, like, super close to a pigeon without it flying away and I swear I could hear the little gears turning.” We reached out to political scientist Dr. Kevin McWitvey to share his thoughts on the conspiracies dominating the election and he stated, “You know, it is a real shame that these ridiculous ideas are getting so much airtime. We are only bolstering their public reception, and the social media companies aren’t helping us here. Their algorithms don’t seem to be able to classify conspiracy well. If we really want to solve this, we need to increase the funding for those fighting this conspiracy, and put pressure on these companies to fix their platforms.”

1. Algorithmic Amplification: Determine which network contains the most conspiracy tokens. Add 2 conspiracy tokens to each node in that network. This cannot cause Buy Ins. In the network with the fewest conspiracy tokens (at least 1), spreaders can remove up to 4 tokens from nodes in that network.
2. All players draw a card of their choice from their deck or discard pile.

Spreaders win:

The Party for Legit Truth has successfully won the hearts and minds of the nation. In the final days before voting, still unproven images and videos came out that showed the previous leader taking off a skin suit. This was followed by an unconfirmed “email leak” that laid out a plot to turn all birds into drones. Our experts have proven these images were doctored, but they sparked public outrage towards the PfP. As we transition power to the new leaders, protesters have attempted civilian arrests on sitting members of the PfP, arguing that they will not leave during the transition. The public has never felt so divided, with family members arguing with each other and alternative social media becoming a prominent source of public news.

Stoppers win:

To everyone’s surprise the conspiracy theories began to fall flat near the end of the race. Neither seemed very believable in the end. Maybe the fun was over. Government funding for fact checking and public education initiatives, helped stymie the conspiracies’ hold on public attention while platforms also engaged more with trying to report and coordinate with these public education campaigns. While many true-believers endure, the public seems more aware about the risks of these conspiracies. After the election, PLT leader Alex Drew stepped down but soon after a new candidate, one even more committed to the conspiracy, step into the leadership race.