

Resisting Disinformation: How Not to Misinform

LWV OF MICHIGAN



Misinformation vs. Disinformation

--False or otherwise misleading information--

Disinformation:

Created and shared on purpose for:

- Politics
- Pranks
- Money

Misinformation

Shared unwittingly to:

- Affirm one's affiliation ("tribe")
- Affirm one's identity



7 TYPES OF MIS- & DISINFORMATION



Satire or parody

No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool.



Misleading content

Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual.



Imposter content

When genuine sources are impersonated.



Fabricated content

New content that is 100% false, made to deceive and do harm.



False connection

When headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content.



False context

When genuine content is shared with false contextual information.



Manipulated content

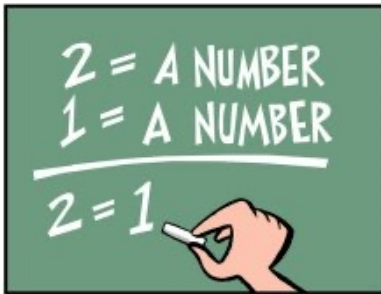
When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive.

LOW



HIGH

Disinformation Tactics



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Half-truths

Biased narratives

Misleading argument

Logical fallacy

Lack of context

Conspiracies

Appeals to hatred or stereotypes

Outdated information

WARNING

**The following images contain:
disinformation, conspiracies, and
other forms of problematic
content.**



Tactics

Missing Context

When images, quotes, statistics, or ideas are shared without important contextual information, their significance can be manipulated.



Follow



Illegal aliens are FAR more likely to commit Federal Crimes based on statistics. They are 7% of the population, yet they commit:

- 72% of DRUG POSSESSION
- 33% of MONEY LAUNDERING
- 29% of DRUG TRAFFICKING
- 22% of MURDERS
- 18% of FRAUD



4:28 AM - 6 Aug 2018

653 Retweets 703 Likes



Tactics

Faulty Logic

Logical fallacies come in many forms:

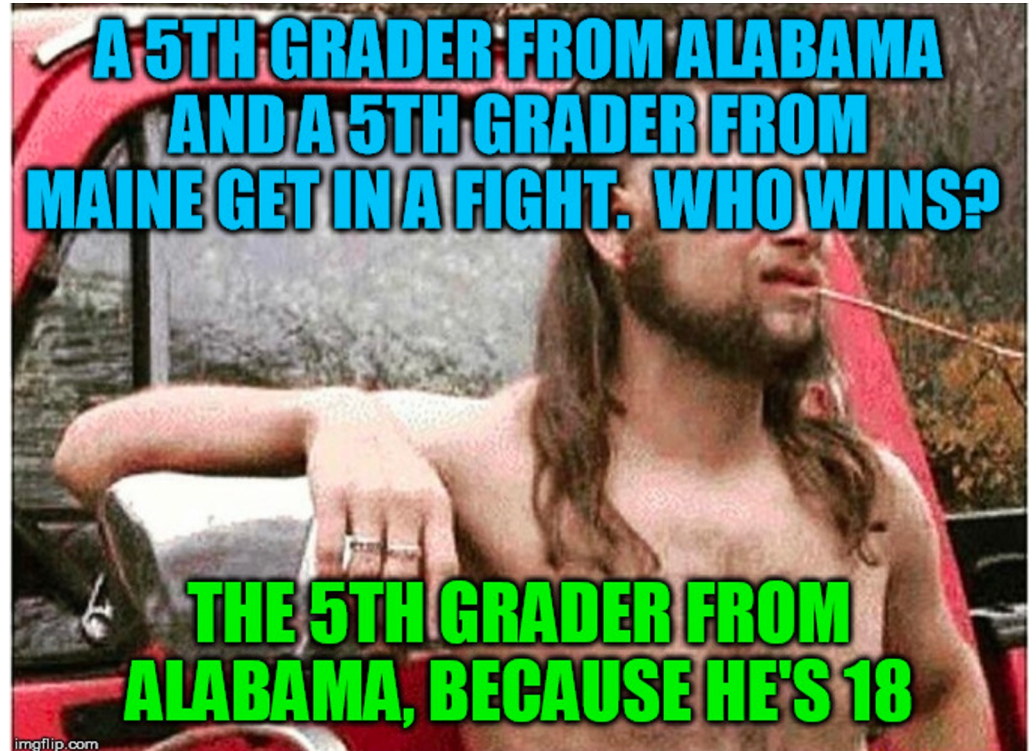
- False equivalence
- Red herring
- Straw man
- Slippery slope
- Appeal to authority



Tactics

Hate and Dog Whistles

Attacks based on identity and stereotypes can often be subtle and coded.

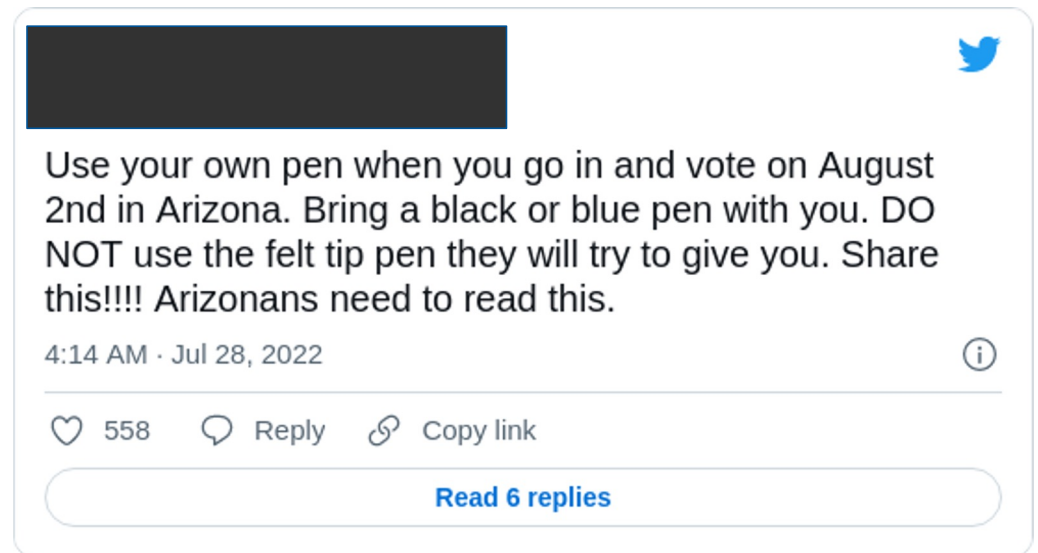



Tactics

Conspiracy Theories


Innuendo is a powerful vehicle for amplifying paranoia and fear.




Conspiracy theories often deliver or imply extraordinary explanations for mundane situations.

A screenshot of a tweet from a user whose profile picture is obscured by a black rectangle. The tweet text reads: "Use your own pen when you go in and vote on August 2nd in Arizona. Bring a black or blue pen with you. DO NOT use the felt tip pen they will try to give you. Share this!!!! Arizonans need to read this." The tweet is timestamped "4:14 AM · Jul 28, 2022" and has 558 likes. Below the tweet are icons for "Reply" and "Copy link", and a button that says "Read 6 replies".



Use your own pen when you go in and vote on August 2nd in Arizona. Bring a black or blue pen with you. DO NOT use the felt tip pen they will try to give you. Share this!!!! Arizonans need to read this.

4:14 AM · Jul 28, 2022 

 558  Reply  Copy link

[Read 6 replies](#)

What Makes Disinformation Stick?

- Matches Our Biases/Fears
- Appeals to Emotions
- Offers Easy Answers
- Repeats—Again & Again



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What Makes Disinformation Stick

Motivated Reasoning

Content that reinforces our existing bias is easier to believe and accept as true.



What Makes Disinformation Stick

Emotional Appeals

Content that appeals to our emotions rather than reason triggers our reflexes and we can jump to conclusions not supported by facts



What Makes Disinformation Stick

Easy Answers

Big and confusing problems that are explained with easy answers offer us a shortcut that bypasses our critical thinking skills.

Strategies for Action

When in doubt: DO NOT ENGAGE!

If you engage:

--Structured Conversations

--Counter Messaging





Don't amplify

Commenting, sharing, or hitting dislike online only serves to further promote the misleading content.

Don't argue

Creating a defensive posture pushes someone deeper into their corner and makes it harder to communicate



Don't repeat the language of the falsehood

Language has power, and we shouldn't cede that power by using the terminology created by disinformers.





Don't embarrass

Ridiculing someone, especially with derogatory language won't result in a positive or receptive response.

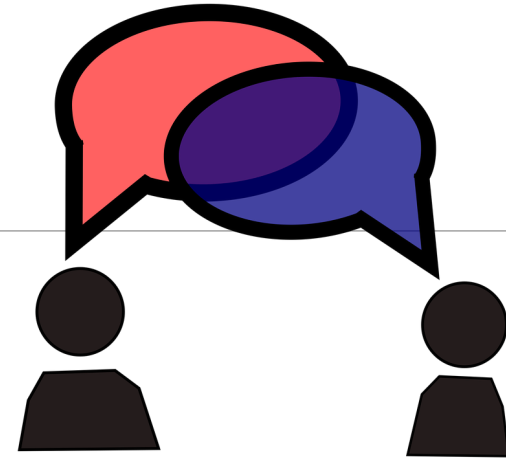
Don't contradict with **ONLY** a fact- check

Fact-checks are important, but when you share them without context or more discussion, they can reinforce distrust in the source.



Structured Conversations

1. Listen to understand beliefs
2. Affirm common values
3. Explain motives--politics, pranks, profit
4. Share how you got to your conclusions
5. Provide “Truth Sandwich”
6. Affirm relationship



Counter Messaging



[@Georgelakoff](#)

<http://bit.ly/2LXk8jI>

Resources & Thanks

- League of Women Voters: [Misinformation Guide](#)

- Office of the US Surgeon General: [Misinformation Toolkit](#)
- Union of Concerned Scientists: [Countering Disinformation in Your Community](#)
- George Mason University: [Debunking Handbook 2020](#)
- [News Literacy Project](#)
- Progress Michigan trainings: request at www.progressmichigan.org



Ready to Resist Disinformation?
