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Various actors, including state and non-state entities, attempt to spread disinformation in order to sow discord within New Jersey and elsewhere. Disinformation has the potential to exhaust resources, incite panic, create distrust between the government and people, increase polarization in groups, influence governmental actions or law enforcement responses, or cause undue harm, among other concerns.

WHAT IS DISINFORMATION?

Disinformation: manufactured information that is deliberately created or disseminated with the intent to cause harm, obscure the truth or influence public opinion

dis·in·for·ma·tion
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- Consider the Source**
Who created the account or article or captured the original piece of content?
- Check the Author's Motivations**
Why was the account established, website created, or piece of content captured?
- Check the Date**
When was it created? Content, including pictures and videos, is often recycled and may not relate directly to the article.
- Check Your Biases**
What are your preconceived notions of the topic? Consider if your own beliefs may affect your view of the information.
- Read Beyond**
What is the whole story? Headlines can be misleading.
- Supporting Sources**
Where is the information from? Are you looking at the original account, article, or piece of content?

For more information on disinformation and other related topics, visit njohsp.gov/disinformation.

DISINFORMATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What distinguishes disinformation and misinformation on social media?

Both disinformation and misinformation contain false or inaccurate information, but the difference is in the intent behind its distribution. Disinformation is spread with the intent to deceive, knowing the information is incorrect. Misinformation is spread with the mistaken belief that the information is accurate/correct.

What groups employ disinformation campaigns?

Various actors, including foreign adversaries such as China, Russia, and Iran, as well as extremist groups, leverage international crises and high-profile incidents to spread disinformation and misinformation to sow discord in the United States.

What are the consequences of various groups spreading disinformation and misinformation?

The circulation of misinformation and disinformation has the potential to reach a broad audience, incite fear, create distrust between governments and their people, increase polarization in groups and influence governmental actions or law enforcement responses. Several known disinformation campaigns have spurred incidents that were ultimately reported to the New Jersey Suspicious Activity System, as they motivated individuals to act against government officials, law enforcement, critical infrastructure and the general public. This is not an exhaustive list but does help give an idea as to what types of havoc the spreading of inaccurate information can cause.

How is disinformation identified?

NJOHSP strongly urges the public to reference legitimate and credible organizations for accurate information and fact check claims from competing sources. Several indicators to identify misleading postings include accounts that:

- Lack personal information and or a username that contains numbers, hashtags or emojis
- Include a high level of postings (more than 100 per day)
- Post messages throughout the day and night
- Use more than one language
- Follow suspicious accounts
- Use a default profile picture
- Contain misspellings, recently created accounts, and unfamiliar website links

It is highly recommended that the public reports any posts containing threats, calls to action or potential violence to local law enforcement as soon as possible. Suspicious activity with a possible nexus to terrorism should be reported immediately to NJOHSP's Counterterrorism Watch at 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ or tips@njohsp.gov (mailto:tips@njohsp.gov).

What is a deepfake?

Deepfakes are synthetic media generated with artificial intelligence (AI) technology to create believable and realistic videos, pictures, audio and text of events that never happened.

How can I identify an altered video?

An individual can spot an altered video by identifying any unnatural eye movements, facial expressions, body movement, coloring or posture of the subject. Slowing down a video is also a good method to identify if there are inconsistencies such as misalignment of images or poor lip-syncing.

INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS ON DISINFORMATION



(/analysis/domestic-extremists-promote-violence-to-oppose-elections)

Domestic Extremists Promote Violence To Oppose Elections (/Analysis/Domestic-Extremists-Promote-Violence-To-Oppose-Elections)

Domestic extremists, predominately white racially motivated extremists (WRMEs), will likely criticize the electoral process in an attempt to incite supporters to conduct attacks, threaten election officials, and target racial and ethnic minorities who they believe are causing the genocide of the white race. Since 2020, domestic extremists have posted threats online claiming poll workers and election officials have stolen votes and conducted election fraud during gubernatorial and primary elections.

Nov 4, 2022 ·

Anti-Government Extremist (/analysis?tag=Anti-Government+Extremist), White Racially Motivated Extremist (/analysis?tag=White+Racially+Motivated+Extremist), Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)



(/analysis/anti-government-extremist-disinformation-targets-law-enforcement)

Anti-Government Extremist Disinformation Targets Law Enforcement (/Analysis/Anti-Government-Extremist-Disinformation-Targets-Law-Enforcement)

Anti-government extremists will likely spread online disinformation that fabricates law enforcement capabilities and government legislation as well as falsifies attacks against federal law enforcement officers. On August 12, federal law enforcement agencies warned of an increase in threats to law enforcement and government officials by anti-government extremists eager to exploit the FBI's search of former President Donald Trump's home.

Aug 26, 2022 ·

Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation), Anti-Government Extremist (/analysis?tag=Anti-Government+Extremist)

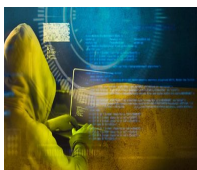


(/analysis/disinformation-hampers-efforts-to-curb-spread-of-monkeypox-hmpxv)

Disinformation Hampers Efforts To Curb Spread Of Monkeypox (HMPXV) (/Analysis/Disinformation-Hampers-Efforts-To-Curb-Spread-Of-Monkeypox-Hmpxv)

Monkeypox (hMPXV) disinformation has spread online through misleading videos, falsely attributed information, and recycling of conspiracies from COVID-19, causing confusion among the public. On August 4, President Joe Biden issued a public health emergency declaration on monkeypox (hMPXV) to allow for improved government resource allocations. As of August 11, the total confirmed cases of monkeypox (hMPXV) stood at 11,177 nationwide, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Aug 16, 2022 · Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)



Domestic Extremists Exploit War In Ukraine (/Analysis/Domestic-Extremists-Exploit-War-In-Ukraine)

Domestic extremists will likely continue to spread disinformation online regarding the war in Ukraine to disparage Jewish people and minority refugees, support racially motivated extremist groups, and sow distrust of US government officials and institutions. Extremists regularly alter online propaganda to capitalize on global events and spread disinformation that perpetuates their violent ideologies.

Apr 14, 2022 · Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation), Foreign Threat Actors (/analysis?tag=Foreign+Threat+Actors)

(/analysis/domestic-extremists-exploit-war-in-ukraine)



Disinformation Spread Via Deepfake Technology (/Analysis/Disinformation-Spread-Via-Deepfake-Technology)

Nefarious actors will likely exploit deepfake technology to spread misleading news from politicians, impersonate established institutions, and commit crimes. Deepfakes are synthetic media generated with artificial intelligence (AI) technology to create believable and realistic videos, pictures, audio, and text of events that never happened. According to an Italian-based research organization, deepfake videos identified online doubled in six months since January 2020, with the United States being the most targeted country of this content (50.1%).

(/analysis/disinformation-spread-via-deepfake-technology)

Mar 31, 2022 · Foreign Threat Actors (/analysis?tag=Foreign+Threat+Actors), Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)



Social Media Used As A Vehicle For Disinformation (/Analysis/Social-Media-Used-As-A-Vehicle-For-Disinformation)

State and non-state actors will likely continue to circulate disinformation and misinformation on social media to alter public perspectives, influence global affairs, and spread falsehoods. In January 2021, a U.S.-based think tank released a report that found social media engagements with deceptive sites reached record highs in 2020. In the fourth quarter of 2020, this content received 1.2 billion interactions on Facebook and 47 million retweets from verified accounts on Twitter.

(/analysis/social-media-used-as-a-vehicle-for-disinformation)

Mar 30, 2022 · Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)

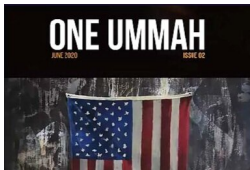


Foreign Disinformation Prevalent Amid War In Ukraine (/Analysis/Foreign-Disinformation-Prevalent-Amid-War-In-Ukraine)

Foreign actors are conducting disinformation campaigns, creating false narratives, and recycling existing media to mislead the public and other targeted audiences amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In March, a Western research institution found that Russia's war in Ukraine saw closer coordination between China and Russia in their respective disinformation campaigns against the West. In January, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated, "We see a significant effort to push propaganda against Ukraine, NATO, and the United States... [including] malign social media operations."

(/analysis/foreign-disinformation-prevalent-amid-war-in-ukraine)

Mar 30, 2022 · Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation), Foreign Threat Actors (/analysis?tag=Foreign+Threat+Actors)



FTO Propaganda Exaggerates US Domestic Issues (/Analysis/Fto-Propaganda-Exaggerates-US-Domestic-Issues)

Foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) will attempt to capitalize on the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, exploit domestic unrest and anti-government sentiments, and rely on disinformation and conspiracy theories to garner support and motivate homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) to conduct attacks. In April, al-Qa'ida published the fifth issue of its One Ummah magazine, which emphasized societal division and portrayed the United States as vulnerable.

(/analysis/fto-propaganda-exaggerates-us-domestic-issues)

Jun 28, 2021 ·

Homegrown Violent Extremist (/analysis?tag=Homegrown+Violent+Extremist), Al-Qa'ida (/analysis?tag=Al-Qa%E2%80%99ida), ISIS (/analysis?tag=ISIS), Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)



Non-Kinetic Warfare Challenging US Global Stance (/Analysis/Non-Kinetic-Warfare-Challenging-US-Global-Stance)

Nation-state adversaries are leveraging non-kinetic warfare strategies that include disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks, and economic espionage against federal, state, and local governments to gain strategic and economic advantages over the United States. These tactics, particularly from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia, will challenge the United States' global bearing as it manages its post-pandemic recovery and addresses political tensions and domestic unrest.

(/analysis/non-kinetic-warfare-challenging-us-global-stance)

Jun 25, 2021 · Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)



US Interest In Virus Origins Unlikely To Halt Disinformation (/Analysis/US-Interest-In-Virus-Origins-Unlikely-To-Halt-Disinformation)

(/analysis/us-interest-in-virus-origins-unlikely-to-halt-disinformation)

The US government's renewed focus on the origins of COVID-19 will likely not alter the behavior of actors leveraging the pandemic to discredit the United States, including nation-states and various extremist groups. China will likely challenge US motives and credibility and spread disinformation, while domestic extremists and foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) will use the investigation and its conclusion to justify calls for violent action against the government and citizens of the United States. Speculation since the start of the pandemic over the origins of the coronavirus has fueled conspiracy theories, helped spread disinformation, and been leveraged to justify violence, such as the US Capitol riots on January 6.

Jun 7, 2021 · Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)



(/analysis/changes-in-extremist-operating-environment-due-to-covid-19)

Changes In Extremist Operating Environment Due To COVID-19 (/Analysis/Changes-In-Extremist-Operating-Environment-Due-To-Covid-19)

COVID-19 altered the operational landscape of domestic and international violent extremists who viewed the global pandemic as an opportunity for expansion and revival. While attacks and resulting deaths decreased across the globe, violent extremists increased online recruitment activities, spread disinformation and conspiracy theories, and modified strategies for attack. The lifting of COVID-19 restrictions on populations in the United States and elsewhere will likely cause a reemergence of attacks and other violent extremist activity.

Jun 1, 2021 ·

White Racially Motivated Extremist (/analysis?tag=White+Racially+Motivated+Extremist), Anti-Government Extremist (/analysis?tag=Anti-Government+Extremist), Disinformation (/analysis?tag=Disinformation)

EXTERNAL DISINFORMATION RESOURCES

- U.S. State Department - Fact vs. Fiction: Russian Disinformation on Ukraine (<https://www.state.gov/fact-vs-fiction-russian-disinformation-on-ukraine/>)
- Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency - Rumor Control (<https://www.cisa.gov/rumorcontrol>)
- FBI - Combating Foreign Influence (<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/foreign-influence>)

DISCLAIMER

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