

OUR ELECTIONS ARE A TARGET:

AMERICA NEEDS ITS VETERANS NOW MORE THAN EVER.

HELP US COMBAT DISINFORMATION.

#PROTECT2020



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This poster was created by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), an agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), for the purpose of sharing information related to election security and should not be considered an endorsement of the VVA. See CISA.gov/protect2020 for more information.

Stopping the Spread of Disinformation: PROTECT2020

In social media and comments, in emails and texts, false information surrounds us every day. Misinformation is false information, but it is not created or shared with the intention of causing harm. **However, disinformation is false information that is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate us.** Disinformation, often created by foreign adversaries, is especially harmful during an election year because it is made to divide us and take away confidence in our elections processes. No matter who we are, the spread of disinformation surrounding our elections impacts all of us.

The good news is that each of us can help stop the spread of disinformation. We can learn how to spot disinformation. We can share facts instead of disinformation. We can also talk about disinformation with our communities and the people we care about. People are more likely to change their behavior when their fellow citizens reach out to them using positive messaging, without scolding or belittling.

We all have a part to play in protecting American elections from disinformation. We are all in this together.



The spread of disinformation hurts our democracy because it causes distrust and erodes the public's trust in the elections process.

Foreign interference in our elections affects all Americans. Foreign adversaries hope to disrupt our democracy by creating distrust among Americans in our elections process. We can help stop them by understanding their tactics. They use multiple fake accounts and social media “bots,” which are automated programs that simulate human behavior. Often, foreign influence campaigns build their audiences on social media platforms by joining groups and sharing non-controversial content. However, they will eventually start sharing disinformation, elevating extreme and controversial opinions. Their aim is to create division and pit users against each other. They may also amplify a debate to stoke hostility and make us seem more divided than we really are. They seek to undermine our trust in each other, our democratic society, and democracy itself.



Foreign adversaries want to deceive Americans and create chaos.

Foreign adversaries use social media tactics to deceive Americans and stir up chaos through disinformation. They also try to deceive Americans by making disinformation look like legitimate news sites. They may have their own web pages, blogs, or other platforms, sometimes spending large amounts of money to appear like a professional organization. But their only goal is to spread propaganda intended to further their own goals. Foreign actors engaged in political activities are required to disclose their relationship to foreign governments, but disinformation websites may not have that disclosure. Think about the motivation behind the content before accepting it as truth or sharing it online.

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We are performing a civic duty when we investigate content before sharing it.

Think before you share. If you read something on the internet or social media that seems questionable, take time to understand it and verify it. Search for other reliable sources to verify information before sharing content, especially if it is a controversial or emotionally charged article, Facebook post, Tweet, or meme. If the information does not appear to come from a credible source and you cannot find another credible source to verify it, do not share it.



Foreign adversaries try to divide us by playing on our emotions.

Take a few moments before sharing a link, email, or other message. Why are you sharing this? Disinformation is created to make you upset or shocked! Instead, make sure you are sharing information that improve or advance the discussion. You can also simply choose not to share. Sometimes, the best way to stop disinformation is to decide not to take any action.



A unified effort to confront disinformation can build bridges and serve all of us. Together, we can help stop disinformation.

Talk with your friends and family about the risks of disinformation. By sharing the facts, verifying trusted sources, and learning how to spot disinformation, you can help your community stop the spread. You should not engage with every piece of disinformation, but if you are really concerned, you might decide to speak out. Sharing what you know about confronting disinformation with your friends and family can help stop the spread. Using a little bit of humor to talk about the facts, without scolding or shaming, can sometimes be the most effective way to communicate.