

OUR ELECTIONS ARE A TARGET:

AMERICA NEEDS ITS VETERANS NOW MORE THAN EVER.

HELP US COMBAT DISINFORMATION.

#PROTECT2020



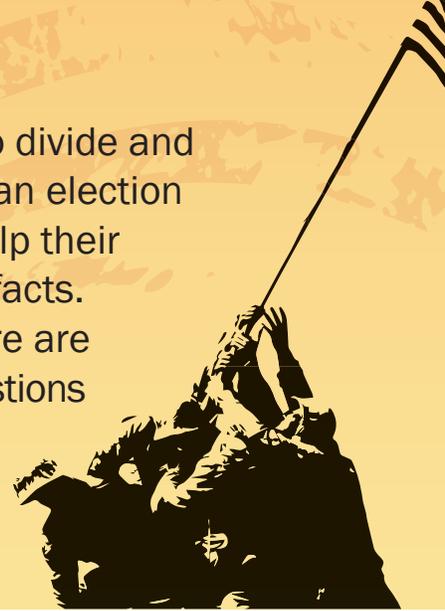
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FAQs:

Disinformation and Election Security: PROTECT2020

Disinformation threatens to divide and confuse Americans during an election year, but Americans can help their fellow citizens find out the facts. We are in this together. Here are some frequently asked questions about disinformation, how to recognize it, and election security.



What is foreign interference?

Foreign interference is defined as actions taken by foreign governments to include the dissemination of disinformation to manipulate the public, create chaos and ill will, discredit the electoral process, disrupt markets, or undermine American interests. It often takes the form of disinformation.



Why should I be concerned about foreign interference?

Securing election infrastructure is a national priority because the electoral process has historically been targeted by foreign adversaries. Due to constantly evolving threats, defending these systems requires constant determination, innovation and adaptability. Foreign interference seeks to undermine our values, our strategic interests, and the core of our democracy: our elections. Foreign adversaries use interference in our elections, markets, and society in order to weaken trust in political processes and divide Americans so they can advance their own goals.

But foreign interference only works if each of us lets it. Each of us, as Americans, have the ability to stop this constantly evolving threat from harming America by staying determined and unified.



What is the difference between disinformation and other kinds of false information?

You may have heard different terms and wondered about the difference. False information falls into three broad categories:

- **Misinformation:** Information that is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.
- **Disinformation:** False information that is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.
- **Malinformation:** Information that is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm or manipulate a person, organization, or country.

All are harmful, but disinformation poses a special threat.



What methods do foreign adversaries use to spread disinformation online and how do I spot it?

Disinformation is commonly spread through social media accounts, and often through links to disinformation websites. Pretending to be Americans, foreign actors use state media, official accounts, fake accounts, and social media bots to disseminate false information, innuendo, and rumor that push their narratives. These activities are coordinated to reach large audiences. Foreign interference through disinformation usually take these steps:

- **Targeting divisive issues:** They don't want to win an argument—they just want to see division.
- **Manipulating accounts:** Accounts are renamed and reused, with one user controlling many accounts. You can often find out if an account is fake by looking at its history—genuine accounts have multiple interests and post content from multiple sources.
- **Raising tensions:** Foreign influencers with fake accounts often pick fights or troll other users, making positions grow more extreme.
- **Going mainstream:** Sometimes the controversy caused by foreign influencers and disinformation is shared in the mainstream media—which means success for them.



What are social media bots?

Many of the accounts used for disinformation don't have a real person behind them. They are operated by social media bots, which are programs that mimic human behavior. Through big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and a variety of programs and databases, these bots imitate legitimate social media users posting content.



Is disinformation being spread now?

Disinformation is an ongoing threat. However, it will increase as Election Day grows closer and foreign adversaries try to influence American voters.



Does disinformation only come from foreign influencers?

No. While foreign interference is a special concern, remember that disinformation can be domestic as well. Disinformation is a tool for anyone who wants to create confusion and division.



How can I report disinformation?

You can report disinformation to the social media platform where you found it. Most social media companies have policies in place to help stop the flow of disinformation. You can also help your friends, family, and community members recognize disinformation.



What steps are being taken to improve the security of the 2020 election?

State and local governments are working with the U.S. federal government to install more resilient systems and processes. All 50 states and the District of Columbia now have intrusion detection sensors on their election infrastructure. A team of federal agencies are mobilized and working with states to identify cybersecurity threats to their own systems and to campaigns, and are better able to warn them about threats today than ever before. Finally, Americans are more alert than ever about foreign interference and disinformation.



How can I help?

You can learn about foreign interference and disinformation and take steps to stop it. This can be as simple as deciding not to share, or you can do more research to see whether sources are credible. You can talk to friends, family, and community members. Don't fall prey to disinformation about your election — such as when, where or how to vote — from untrusted sources. State and local government websites are the authoritative sources for this information.



How do I find out where I can vote, or how to vote by mail?

You can visit your state or local election office website to find out where you vote and how to get an absentee ballot. If you don't know the website, you can visit www.usa.gov/election-office to find it.



How do I register to vote?

People should visit their state election website to register. If you don't know the website, you can visit www.vote.gov to register to vote. Each state has its own voter registration rules. Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia allow people to register to vote online. More general information about registering to vote is found at www.usa.gov/election-office.



What are the voter registration deadlines?

Registration deadlines vary by state, and they can be as much as a month before the election. For more information, visit your state election office website or the U.S. Vote Foundation to obtain your state's registration deadline.