

Misinformation and Disinformation during the 2024 Presidential Election

**Living Grace Alliance Church's Seminar
2024.10.31**

Chong Ho Yu



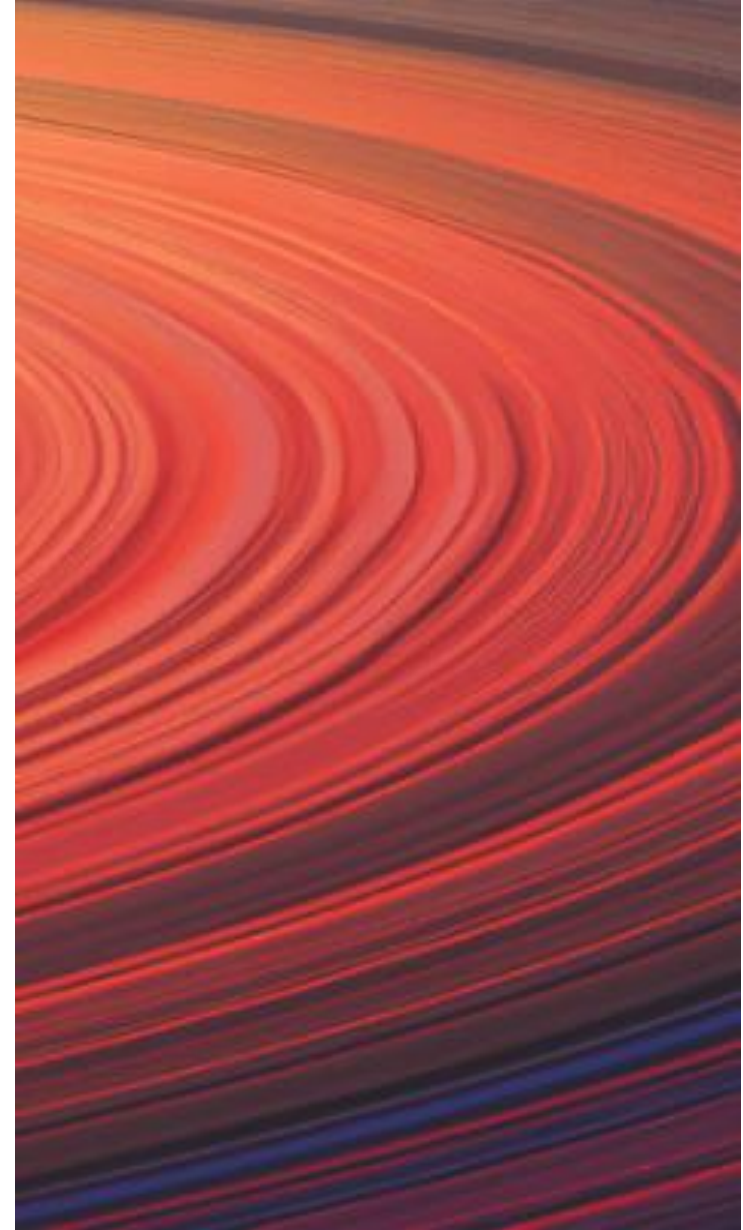
Content

1. Understanding Misinformation and Disinformation

2. Examples of Misinformation/Disinformation in the 2024 Election

3. Psychological and Sociological Factors

4. Strategies to Combat Misinformation and Disinformation

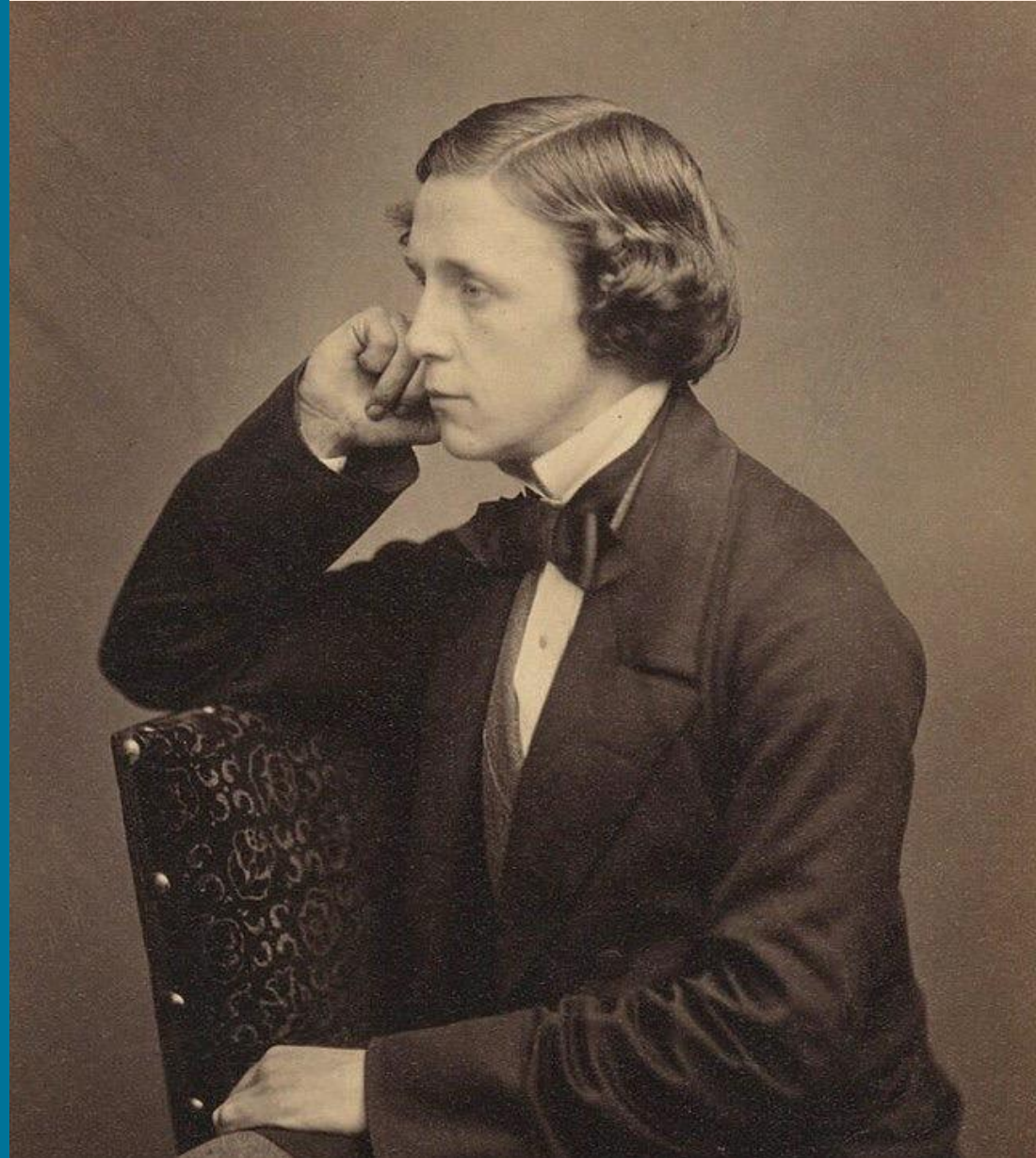


Section 1

Understanding Misinformation and Disinformation

Lewis Carroll (from Alice in
Wonderland)

"I am not crazy; my
reality is just different
from yours."

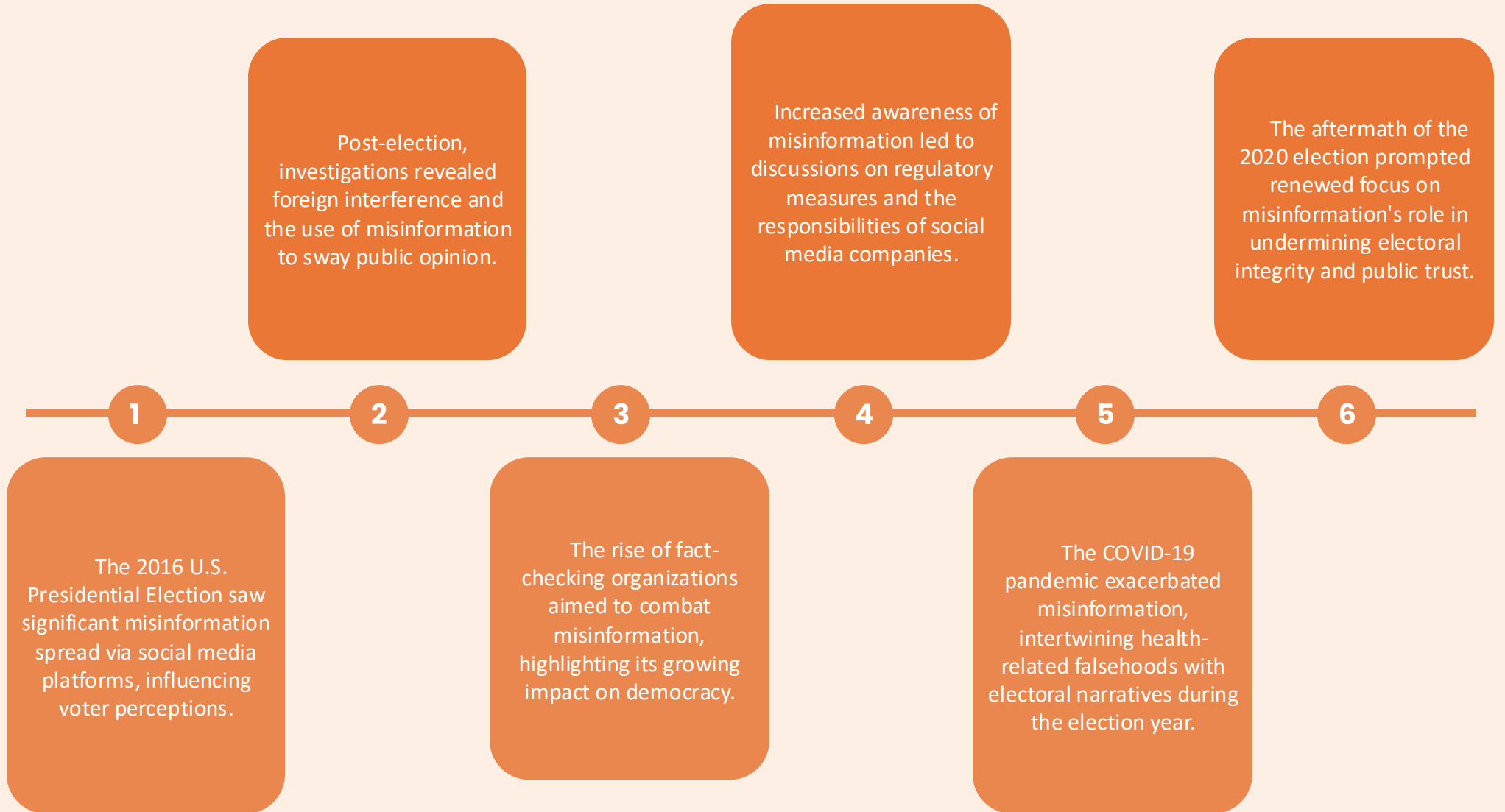


Historical roots

- "Misinformation" has been in use since the late 16th century, but its usage has evolved over time.
- The term "disinformation" originated in the 1920s, derived from the Russian word "dezinformatsiya".
- These terms became more popular since the dawn of social media era.



Historical Context of Misinformation in Elections



Blurring Misinformation and Disinformation

- Misinformation is spread without the intent to deceive while disinformation is spread with malicious intent.
- Due to its intent, dissemination of disinformation is **manipulation**, not persuasion.
- The two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, because it is difficult to determine the intent behind the spread of false information.
- Typically, once misinformation is posted, individuals with malicious intent may seize the opportunity to amplify it, deliberately spreading the falsehood. In this way, misinformation evolves into disinformation.

Definition of Misinformation



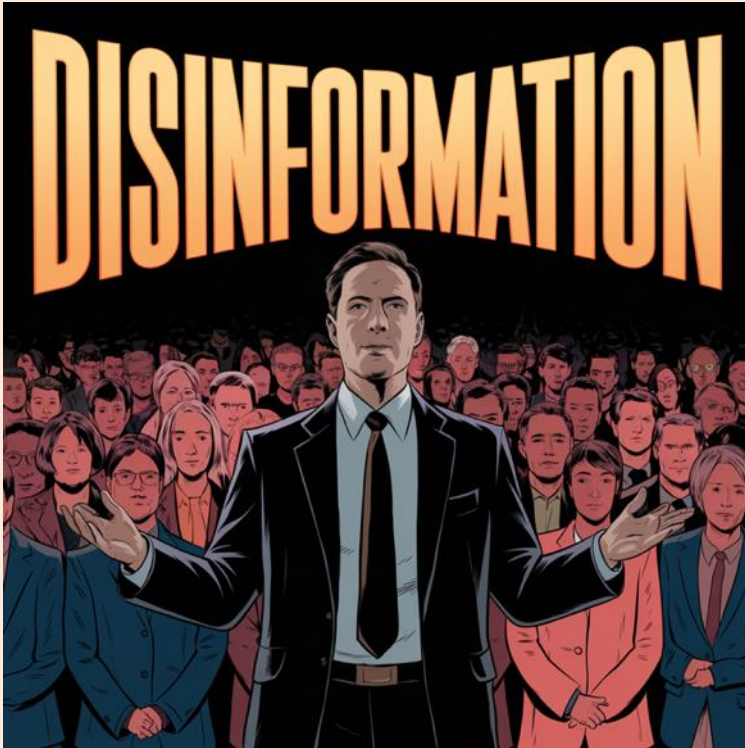
- **Misinformation** refers to false or inaccurate information that is spread without the intent to deceive.
- People sharing misinformation often believe the information to be true or are unaware of its inaccuracy.
- The phenomenon of people sharing information without fact-checking is often referred to as "**viral misinformation.**" During a disease outbreak, it is known as "**infodemic.**"

Example of Misinformation

- **Example:** During the COVID19 pandemic, Dr. Stella Immanuel, claimed that hydroxychloroquine (a drug typically used to treat malaria) was a cure for COVID-19 even though empirical support was absent. Dr. Immanuel and her followers genuinely believed in the efficacy of the treatment. It appeared that there was no malicious intent behind it, and probably her intent was good.

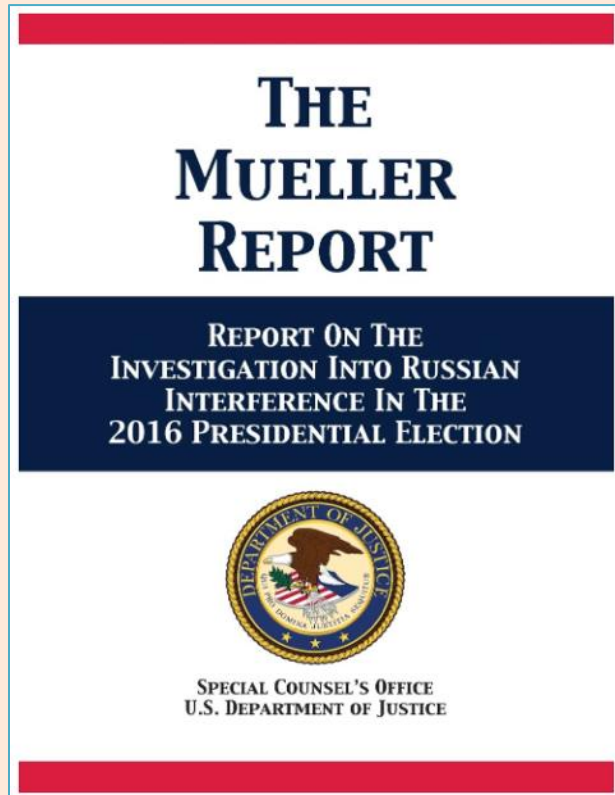


Definition of Disinformation



- **Disinformation** involves the deliberate creation and dissemination of false information with the intent to mislead or manipulate others.
- Disinformation is often used for strategic purposes, such as influencing public opinion, sowing discord, or achieving political or economic objectives.

Russian Interference in 2016 U.S. Election



- According to the Mueller Report, in 2016 the Internet Research Agency (IRA), a Russian troll farm, was accused of creating thousands of fake social media accounts to spread divisive content and disinformation.
- These accounts used sophisticated targeting algorithms to reach specific demographics and amplify certain narratives, aiming to intensify polarities.

Russian Interference in 2016 U.S. Election

- In 2018, the US government charged 12 Russian military intelligence officers for their alleged roles in interfering with the 2016 elections.
- If you have any information about these people, please contact FBI or the US Consulate/Embassy. But please do not approach them on your own unless you know martial arts.



WANTED BY THE FBI

CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT AN OFFENSE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES; FALSE REGISTRATION OF A DOMAIN NAME; AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT; CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT MONEY LAUNDERING

RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN 2016 U.S. ELECTIONS

 Boris Alekseyevich Antonov	 Dmitry Sergeyeovich Badin	 Anatoliy Sergeyeich Kovalev	 Nikolay Yuryevich Kozachek	 Aleksey Viktorovich Lukashev	 Artem Andreyevich Malyshev
 Sergey Aleksandrovich Morgachev	 Aleksandr Vladimirovich Osadchuk	 Aleksey Aleksandrovich Potemkin	 Ivan Sergeyeovich Yermakov	 Pavel Vyacheslavovich Yershov	

Overview of the 2024 Presidential Election Landscape

Impact of Misinformation

The 2024 Presidential Election landscape is significantly shaped by the pervasive spread of misinformation and disinformation, which poses challenges to informed voter decision-making and threatens the integrity of the electoral process, necessitating robust strategies for detection and mitigation.





Importance of Addressing Misinformation

Preserving Democratic Integrity

Addressing misinformation is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, as it ensures that voters have access to accurate information, thereby fostering informed decision-making and enhancing public trust in democratic institutions during the 2024 Presidential Election.

Section 2

Examples of Misinformation in the 2024 Election



Misleading Statements about Candidates

Distortion of Candidate Positions

Misleading statements often misrepresent candidates' policies or positions, creating confusion among voters and potentially swaying public opinion based on inaccuracies rather than factual information.

Character Attacks and Fabrications

Candidates may face unfounded character attacks that distort their personal history or integrity, undermining their credibility and affecting voter perceptions without basis in truth.

Accused Harris Hates Israel and being a communist

The image is a screenshot of a live broadcast from NBC News. At the top, a black navigation bar contains the NBC News logo and menu items: 2024 ELECTION, WORLD SERIES, POLITICS, U.S. NEWS, WORLD, BUSINESS, HEALTH, and CULTURE & TRENDS. The main content area is split into two panels. The left panel shows Donald Trump from the chest up, wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. He has a serious expression. The right panel shows Kamala Harris from the chest up, wearing a dark blazer over a white blouse with a large bow. She is speaking into a microphone. A horizontal banner across the bottom of the panels reads "LIVE | abc NEWS ★ 2024 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ★" with the NBC News logo on the right. Below the panels, a black bar contains the text "NBC NEWS NOW" on the left, a headline "Trump says Harris 'hates Israel' during debate" in the center, and a sub-headline "Former President Donald Trump said Vice President Harris 'hates Israel' when going talking during the presidential debate." on the right.

NBC NEWS 2024 ELECTION WORLD SERIES POLITICS U.S. NEWS WORLD BUSINESS HEALTH CULTURE & TRENDS

LIVE | abc NEWS ★ 2024 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ★ NBC NEWS

NBC NEWS NOW

Trump says Harris 'hates Israel' during debate

Former President Donald Trump said Vice President Harris "hates Israel" when going talking during the presidential debate.

Fact check: Trump falsely claims Harris met with Putin before Ukraine invasion

By Daniel Dale, CNN

2 minute read · Published 7:13 PM EDT, Wed August 21, 2024



Follow: War in Ukraine + See your latest updates



Former President Donald Trump speaks at the North Carolina Aviation Museum in Asheboro, North Carolina, on August 21, 2024. Julia Nikhinson/AP

Ukraine

- Trump said that Harris met with Putin just days before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.
- Harris attended the Munich Security Conference.

Trump accuses Taiwan of taking away America's semiconductor business

Judy Lin and Bryan Chuang, Taipei | Tuesday 18 July 2023 | 0 | Like 109



Credit: AFP

Taiwan

Taiwan accomplished the supremacy in semiconducting by innovation and hard work.

Trump already spreading false claims about voter fraud in Pennsylvania

Former president's recent social media post exaggerates and mischaracterizes election investigations in state

Josh Marcus San Francisco • 1 hour ago • [Comments](#)



**ILLEGAL
IMMIGRATION
ROSE BY
ALL-TIME RECORD
NUMBERS**

Voter Fraud

“Wow! York County, Pennsylvania, received THOUSANDS of potentially FRAUDULENT Voter Registration Forms and Mail-In Ballot Applications from a third party group. This is on top of Lancaster County being caught with 2600 Fake Ballots and Forms, all written by the same person. Really bad “stuff.” WHAT IS GOING ON IN PENNSYLVANIA???

Law Enforcement must do their job, immediately!!! WOW!!!”

The New York Times

98

completed

14

in progress

112

total rollbacks

The Trump Administration Rolled Back More Than 100 Environmental Rules. Here's the Full List.

By NADJA POPOVICH, LIVIA ALBECK-RIPKA and KENDRA PIERRE-LOUIS **UPDATED** Jan. 20, 2021

Over four years, the Trump administration dismantled major climate policies and rolled back many more rules governing clean air, water, wildlife and toxic chemicals.

In all, a New York Times analysis, based on research from [Harvard Law School](#), [Columbia Law School](#) and other sources, counts nearly 100 environmental rules officially reversed, revoked or otherwise rolled back under Mr. Trump. More than a dozen other potential rollbacks remained in progress by the end but were not finalized by the end of the administration's term.

Environmental policy

- During an interview with the podcast host Joe Rogan, Trump said “During our four years, we had the cleanest air and the cleanest water.”
- Karoline Leavitt, a Trump campaign spokeswoman, said in a statement that, during his term, “President Trump advanced conservation and environmental stewardship while promoting economic growth for families across the country.”

Harris's false claims

- Harris claimed that Donald Trump's agenda includes cutting Social Security and Medicare, citing "Project 2025" as evidence. While Project 2025 is a conservative plan endorsed by groups aligned with Trump's base, Trump himself has publicly disavowed this plan, specifically denying any intentions to cut Social Security and Medicare.
- Harris tied Trump to Project 2025 due to the involvement of former Trump officials, but the plan does not explicitly include cuts to these programs, nor has Trump indicated he would implement it as a policy platform if re-elected.

Harris's false claims

- Harris repeated a popular talking point about Trump wanting to be a "dictator on Day 1" if re-elected, based on his comment that he would "use power for retribution on Day 1."
- This remark, made during a Fox News interview, was in response to a question about potential abuse of power. However, the context provided was that Trump would focus on measures like tightening the border rather than dictatorship per se. Harris's interpretation was thus a point of contention, as it did not align fully with Trump's own clarification

Section 3

Psychological and Sociological Factors

Psychological and sociological factors



Confirmation Bias

Voters often seek information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs, leading to selective exposure to misinformation during the 2024 Presidential Election, which can distort their understanding of candidates and issues.



Echo chamber/Filter bubble

Voters are trapped in an environment, such as social media, that feed them with what they like to hear, thus reinforcing preexisting bias. This creates neotribalism.



Anchoring Effect/Baby Duck Syndrome

Initial information encountered about candidates or policies can disproportionately influence voter perceptions, making them susceptible to misinformation that aligns with those first impressions.

Psychological and sociological factors



Role of Emotions

Emotional responses, such as fear, anger, and patriotism, can significantly enhance the acceptance of misinformation, as emotionally charged narratives are more likely to resonate with individuals. In some cases, scapegoating out of fear become a convenient excuse.



Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory suggests that group membership influences individuals' responses to misinformation; during the 2024 Presidential Election, this can lead to heightened defensiveness against opposing viewpoints.



Trust

Trust in sources of information plays a critical role in belief formation; individuals are more likely to accept misinformation from trusted figures or platforms. Once CNN commentator Anderson Cooper said that many people are anti-science, anti-authority, and anti-intellectual.



Dunning–Kruger effect

Dunning–Kruger effect describes the psychological phenomenon that individuals' inflated ego leads them to overestimate their knowledge level, thus resulting in embracing misinformation and disinformation.



Epistemic closure

It is the tendency to believe that one's knowledge or worldview is complete and definitive, leading to a sense of certainty about "absolute truth" that resists new information, alternative perspectives, or open dialogue. Both leftists and Christians have this problem.

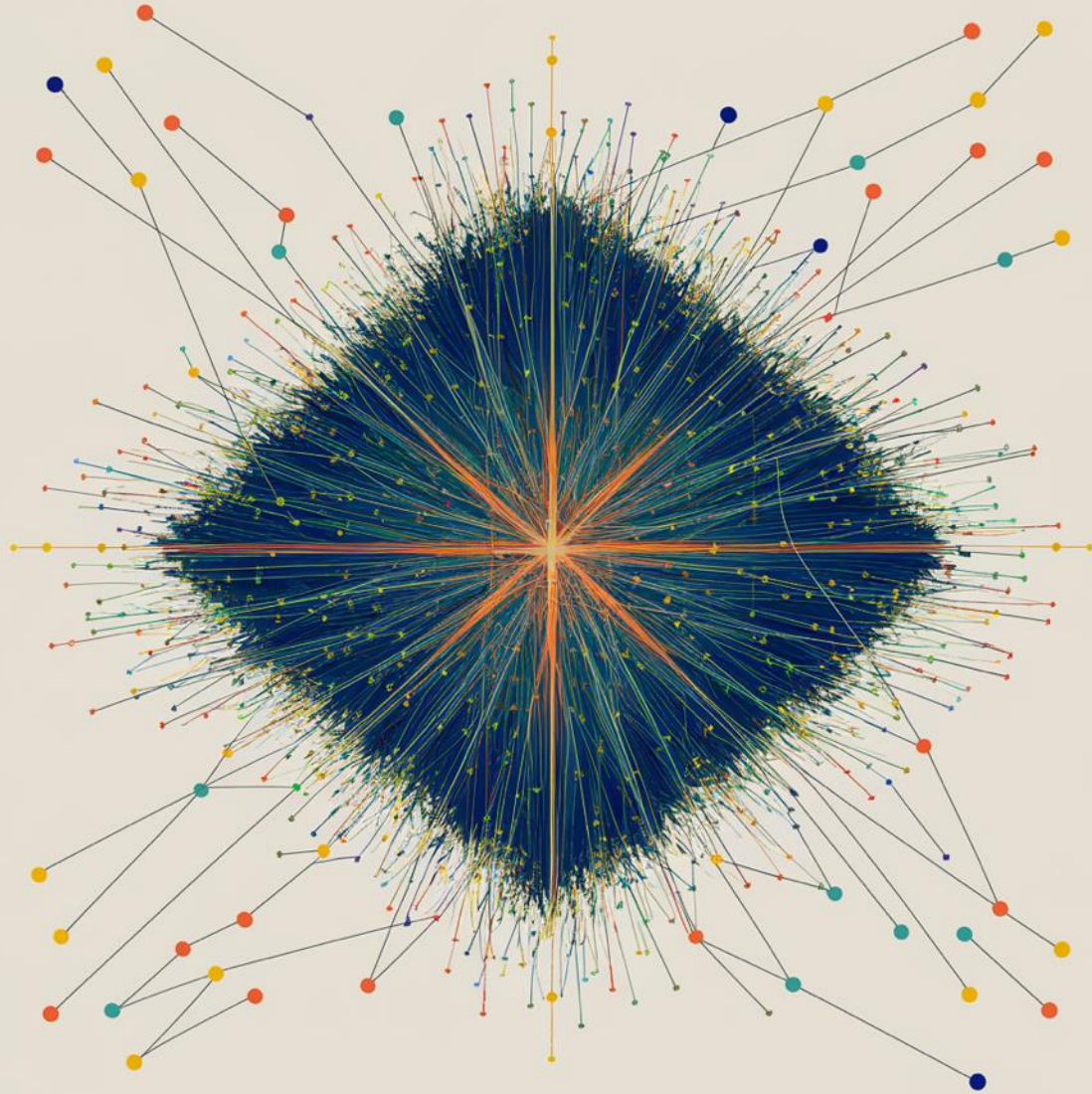


Availability Heuristic

This cognitive shortcut leads people to rely on immediate examples that come to mind. When misinformation is readily available (for instance, on social media), it feels more plausible simply because it's more accessible, leading people to judge it as more likely.

Section 4

Strategies to Combat Misinformation and Disinformation



What can we do?

Develop critical thinking, such as counterfactual reasoning

Counterfactual thinking is to think the otherwise. For instance, given the same situation, if the label or the identity is changed, will I draw the same conclusion (e.g. disinviting Ann Coutler).

What can we do?

Admit cognitive bias

Admit our intellectual and cognitive limitations, watch out the cognitive bias and logical fallacies discussed earlier. Accept uncertainty and the inconclusive nature on certain issues. You always have a choice!

Pause and Fact-Checking

When in doubt, leave it out. Do not accept and forward incoming information just because it fits my view. The development of fact-checking tools leverages artificial intelligence can quickly analyze claims made during the 2024 Presidential Election, helping to combat the rapid spread of misinformation across various platforms.





Thank you!

Contact:
Chonghoyu@gmail.com