Housekeeping

- This call will be recorded and shared.

- There will be time for questions at the end of the presentation

- Please stay muted, unless you are speaking.

Today's Presenters

- Chelsey Cartwright, Democracy Truth Project Manager

- Jeanette Senecal, Senior Director, Mission Impact

What Sustains Democracy

- "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education." – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

- "Civic participation over a lifetime, working in neighborhoods and communities and service of all kinds- military and civilian, full-time and part-time, national and international- will strengthen America's civic purpose." U.S. Senator John McCain

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Share Your Perspective

- What concern motivates you MOST to help your community address mis-, dis- and mal-information?

- People won't vote

- The outcome of the election will be compromised

- People won't trust the outcome

- There could be violence

- All of the Above

Understanding the Landscape

- Mis-, dis- & mal-information spreading on social media has become a fact of life
- It drives cycles of fear and polarization
- There is no silver bullet

What is Mis/Dis/ Mal-information?

- Mis-information is defined as false or inaccurate information

- Dis-information is false information which is intended to mislead; malicious- intent

- Mal-information is based on fact but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate

- Pervasive disinformation aims to deliberately disrupt and amplify mistrust, often exaggerated or misleading, layered with distortions, sows doubt and confusion

- Presents a significant threat to the security and well-being of U.S. citizens, as people are spending more time online than ever before

Understanding Tactics: Key forms of problematic content

- **Missing Context:** images, statistics and information lacking important details

- **Faulty Logic:** logical fallacies like false-equivalence or a straw man argument

- **Hate and Dog Whistles:** terms or themes that divide based on identity

- **Conspiracies:** blaming boogeymen for things that are hard to understand

- **Old:** something that was once relevant may not be today

It does not have to be <u>false</u> to be a problem!

Why is Dis and Mal-info Spread

- Political, ideological or financial motivators

- Amusement, revenge, extortion, and harassment are other reasons

- Producers hope to benefit from a poorly informed population and manipulate them to their advantage

Why Do People Believe Dis- and Mal-info?

- It plays upon emotional and cognitive manipulation

- As a way to calm fears, anxieties, and anger

- It's often based in a kernel of truth, which makes it believable

- People's tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting info that is consistent with their beliefs- confirmation bias

- The most effective misleading campaigns combine these strategies!

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Encountering Mis, Dis, & Mal-information

- How have you encountered it?

- Where did you find it?

- What was your reaction?

- Did you push back or report the findings?

The Rise of AI

- Artificial intelligence adds a heightened element of risk to the flood of dis- and mal-info

- A report from NewsGuard (an organization that measures the credibility of news online) identified 49 websites producing news content that was completely AI-generated

- Generative AI is advanced at pushing out dis-info, in fact some studies show that it's even more persuasive than human-generated content

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Theory of Change

- Lived experience is a key disruptor to the spread of mis-, dis- and mal-information

- Building community resilience through trainings, puts the power directly in the hands of the impacted communities

- Folks who are anchored in their communities know them the best. They are connected to local election officials, local news outlets, and community events and activities

- Trusted messengers in the community, build trust, foster conversation, and encourage their networks to push back

Strategies to Employ

- We must tackle mis/dis/mal-info as a collective

- There isn't a one sized fits all approach, but understanding the nuance and complexities is important

- Everyone is susceptible to mis/dis/mal-info, yet many communities of color are direct targets

- Understanding how communities of color and underrepresented communities are affected is key in unraveling mis/dis/mal-info

- The more that we are aware of mis/dis/mal-info, the better prepared we are to call it out and share with others how to do so

Building Societal Resilience

- Cultivate meaningful conversations that anchor the truth

- Collaborate with organizations who work to renew public trust in our democracy

- Elevate awareness around polarization and mis/dis/mal-information

- Lean into community connections that foster empowerment and reduce harm

- Build up trusted messengers in your networks and community

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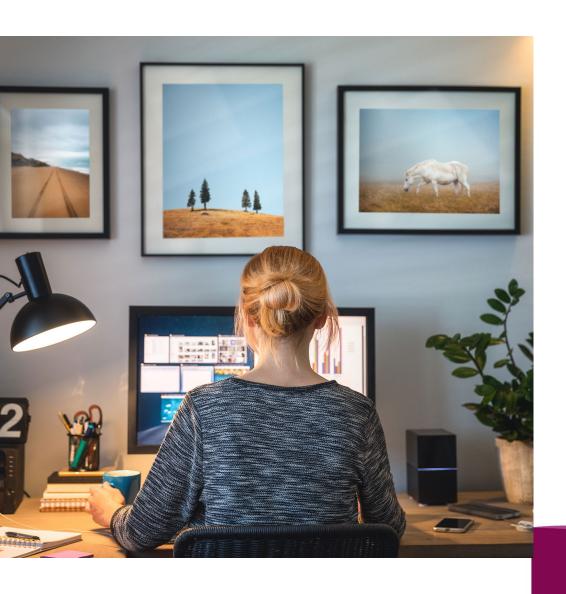2024 national convention
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Foundational Do's & Don'ts

- Verify before you share- ensure your message is accurate, actionable and aspirational

- Pause and reflect before crafting a response, reflect, and don't react immediately

- Focus on solution-building, no need to be defensive or respond angrily

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Foundational Do's & Don'ts

- Read beyond the headline
- Conduct a speedy fact check
- Can the facts be verified
- Double check the source
- Consider the source and the source's source
- Analyze information critically

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Cultivate Awareness on Social Media

- **SIFT**: Stop, Investigate the source, find better coverage, and trace claims to the original source

- Develop situational awareness or informational awareness

- Be aware of algorithms leading into echo chambers or down rabbit holes

- Have a healthy skepticism of content

- Trolls and bots exists prevalently, social media platforms are backing off on enforcement

- Dis-info online is both top-down and bottom-up, and participatory

Activate: Share Info to Disrupt

- Activate your network to amplify impact
- Stay connected to local news sources
- Ask questions and stay curious
- Host discussion groups and reading circles
- Foster civic education and civic integrity

Activate: Share Info to Disrupt

- Train your base on how to spot dis-info and what to do when you encounter it online

- Utilize VOTE411

- Join partner groups that counter dis/mal info

- Share resources from your local board of election + election officials

Strategies to push back on Dis- and Mal-information

- **Inoculation**

- -Prime your audience to recognize dis/mal-info as false

- **Create Balance with Trusted Messengers**

- -Utilize trusted messengers to push back on false info to minimize and prevent amplification, lean on those your audience trusts most

- **Debunk**

- -Shut down mis/dis-info to limit the spread

Inoculation

- Step One: Discredit the falsehood by naming the motivations driving the dis-info

- Step Two: State the falsehood you intend to inoculate against, WITHOUT repeating it.

- Step Three: Deliver the factual information to combat the falsehood

- Similar to how a vaccine builds immunity to a pathogen by exposing our bodies to a weakened form of the pathogen, we too can build immunity to misinformation- by exposing our minds to a weakened form of misinformation

- Inoculation trains our mental immune system to be aware and alert of misinformation, once we identify it, we build the techniques to counter it

Inoculation in an Infodemic

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- Inoculation trains our mental immune system to be aware and alert of misinformation, once we identify it, we build the techniques to counter it

- The more you know about how misinformation is created, the better you get at detecting

- Prevention from spreading misinfo at all is an effective tool at ending it

Debunking

- **Step 1:** State the truth and name the fact
- **Step 2:** State the falsehood and why it's false.
- **Step 3:** Restate the truth and point to a trusted resource

- The goal is to diffuse confusion and point directly to highlighting the falsehood

Elements of Debunking

- Emphasize what is true over what is wrong. Always introduce the core fact before presenting the false information that needs correcting

- Before speaking on the untruth, offer a warning that the upcoming information is untrue or don't directly repeat the falsehood

- At the close of debunking, fill the information gap that has been created. To do this, replace the incorrect information with a clear explanation that will fill the info gap. Clarity is key

- Visuals and Graphics will help to visualize facts more clearly.

Workshop Feedback

- Please dedicate a few moments to complete the feedback form for this workshop

- Let us know what you think about this workshop

- On Sunday you'll receive a link in your email about your overall convention experience

- Thank you!