Reporting Online Protest Disinformation [Comment01]

What Disinformation is (and isn't):

Disinformation is information that is used in deliberate attempts to deceive. It may take the form of fake information or it may be otherwise-true information that has been spread by fake users/groups/events, doctored, or mislabelled. The intent of using disinformation is to inflame emotions and create divisions across society. Some good free resources on disinformation include:

- 1-pager: The War on Pineapple: Understanding Foreign Interference in 5 Steps
- 10-minute video: The Dark(er) Side of Media: Crash Course Media Literacy #10
- Short game: The Bad News Game
- Reference book: Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers – Simple Book Production

Remember, disinformation is purposeful. It isn't differences of opinion or genuine mistakes: it's about attempts to make people confused, angry, and divided in their opinions on the people and events around them [comment02] [comment03] [comment04] [comment05]

> "So, disinformation is knowingly spreading misinformation. Our first definition of this word gives one major reason why a person or group might want to spread wrong information, but there many other nefarious motivations lurking behind the creation of disinformation."

> "Misinformation is "false information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead." Put a flag in the second half of this definition; it will be important later."

Things to look for: [comment06]

Disinformation may be spread through text, pictures, video, voice, etc. Examples of disinformation include: [comment07]

- Materials and statements that contain false, toxic, and divisive narratives.
- Accounts on social media that claim to represent an existing group but are run by someone unaffiliated with that group.
- Separate notices for multiple events that direct ideologically-opposed groups to the same place at the same time.
- New accounts with high volumes of messages in a short amount of time.

Things to look for include: [comment08]

- Is this the original account, article, or piece of content?
- Who shared this or created it?
- When was this created?
- What account is sharing this? When was the account created? Do they share things from all over the world at all times during the day and night? Could this be a bot?

- Why was this shared?

What to do when you find disinformation:
Capture Evidence:
Online information and materials can disappear quickly so be sure to capture any evidence by:
- Taking a screenshot or a photograph of the information that you find.
- Saving information to an archive.

Give evidence to someone who can use it effectively: [comment09]
- If someone posts something or does something on a social media platform that breaks the rules of that platform, report it.

Links for reporting disinformation:
- Facebook: How to Report Things on Facebook
- Twitter: report-twitter-impersonation and twitter-rules
- Reddit: redditsecurity
- Instagram: https://help.instagram.com/1735798276553028
- Pinterest: report-something-on-pinterest
- YouTube: Report inappropriate content
- TikTok: https://support.tiktok.com/en/privacy-safety/report-inappropriate-content-default

How to report things other than disinformation:
When you are on social media platforms it is likely that you will come across content that is violent, disturbing, or shows harm to others. While this type of content is not necessarily disinformation, it can still be reported to groups such as the following: [comment10]
- ACLU app,
- SPLC #reporthate https://www.splcenter.org/reporthate,
- Police brutality videos
- reporting phonelines

If you're on the ground, then these are available:
- ACLU Apps to Record Police Conduct
- National Lawyers Guild

Rough Notes

Words from [Name Redacted]; going to purloin some of these:

- **"Friends: I have volunteered to help spot and counter information that may lead to violence or harm in our community. If you see posts, flyers, or content that seems to promote violence, advance false, toxic and divisive narratives, or may otherwise lead to people being harmed, please take a screenshot (or photo) and send it to me along with a link, if possible. I am working with a team of qualified disinformation experts who are cataloging and tracking this activity as it happens, and who can help minimize harm. I will pass it forward to them. Thanks."**
- We are looking for narratives that inflame tensions, promote violence, or potentially pit competing groups against each other at the same time/space (i.e. right wing militia rallies at the same time as a protest). Peaceful protests are of course not of any concern, but tracking activity that may harm, mislead, or otherwise exacerbate tensions at such protests (anything calling for weapons, chemicals, firearms, etc) is of immediate and urgent concern.
- It is difficult to know how the next several days will go, and fingers-crossed, most cities will remain peaceful. If you see this kind of material, try to get a screenshot, a link, and post it into **#disinfo-watch** in the COVID-19 Activation Network Slack. The hope is that we can help keep borderline situations from escalating, and maybe save some lives.
- Gathering this information and cataloging it **NOW** is crucially important as it may disappear quickly, which hampers our ability to act on it and also confounds reporters and historians trying to make sense of current events.
- The priority should be to allow peaceful protesters to be heard in the way in which they want to be heard, without having to contend with anyone who might hamper their efforts or harm people.

We've also seen information about activities that may lead to harm. This may or may not be disinformation, and includes:

- Reports of people intending to do harm

2023-12 Comments on original document (moved to here to protect PII)

- [comment01] Do we want to make a distinction between Misinformation and Disinformation? If our intention is to get only the former, then it would help tease apart some of the latter for categorization and different ops track... https://www.dictionary.com/e/misinformation-vs-disinformation-get-informed-on-the-difference/ https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/misinformation-or-disinformation/4674697.html https://guides.lib.wayne.edu/c.php?g=401320&p=2729574 Even the Episcopal Church (is getting into the act) https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/misinformation-disinformation-fake-news-why-do-we-care
- [comment02] Please read sources above, make this sentence better!

- [comment03] What do you not like about the sentence?
- [comment04] Me writing it whilst fuzzy
- [comment05] Yes, I think that we can deal with this by outlining the distinctions between disinfo and misinfo, which get conflated easily into "fakenews"
- [comment06] Add more directly observable behaviours.
- [comment07] Add links to examples for each of these.
- [comment08] Can we word this differently?
- [comment09] Needs more people to give information to.
- [comment10] Links for each and what to report to each should be added.