# 1 Chapter 3: Disinformation

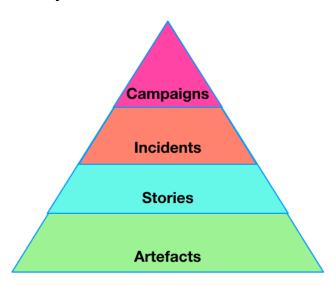
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## 1.1 Good introductions to disinformation

Things to show your mum

- The War on Pineapple: Understanding Foreign Interference in 5 Steps
- Bad News Game <a href="https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro">https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro</a>
- The Dark(er) Side of Media: Crash Course Media Literacy #10
- Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers Simple Book Production

# 1.2 Disinformation Layers



Disinformation pyramid

As we explore and analyze the information sphere, analysts have techniques that are employed to understand disinformation operations - and they're classified using similar frameworks to those we use to classify our understanding of other types of threats and incidents.

- Campaigns: are long-term disinformation operations. They're focussed around a theme, like specific geopolitics (e.g. "make everyone like china" or "Ukraine is really Russia"), and are often nation-state-funded, but might also be from interest groups (e.g. far-rightwing, antivaxxers etc).
- Incidents: these are the short term, cyclic things we track. They're coordinated sets of
  activities that happen over a defined timespan that usually indicates some form of team
  or individuals driving them. Incidents have things with defined parameters like TTPs that
  we can share, threat actors, and other objects that you'd recognise from TI, but also
  including context and narratives.
- Narratives: are the stories that we tell about ourselves and the world. They're stories
  about who we are, who we do and don't belong to, what's happening, what's true (e.g.
  Covid19 was caused by 5G masts). Tagging information with defined narratives make it
  easier for us as analysts to follow the flow of information across the internet and beyond.
- Artefacts: Incidents and Narratives show up online as artefacts: the text, images, videos, user accounts, groups, websites etc and links between them all that we collect and use to understand what's happening.

So what looks to outside observers like analysts simply hunting down a hashtag or a URL, describing a narrative, or trying to understand the things that link to it is so much more; it's really a part of creating an inventory of the discrete elements of each incident, or the objects used by a disinformation team or campaign, so we can a) share a summary of what we think is happening, and b) disrupt both those component parts, the TTPs behind them, and the incidents and campaigns they support.

This is a lot of text. And we're realising that there's a lot of stuff we haven't explained. So we're writing it down. And making stuff clearer and cleaner to use as we test and explain it. This document is those explanations.

## 1.3 Disinformation TTPs

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Strategic Planning	Objective Planning (2 items)	Develop People (3 items)	Develop Networks (6 items)	Microtargeting (3 items)	Develop Content (10 items)	Channel Selection (10 items)	Pump Priming (8 items)	Exposure (10 items)	Go Physical (2 items)	Persistence (3 items)	Measure Effectiveness
5Ds (dismiss, distort, distract, dismay, divide)	Center of Gravity Analysis	Create fake Social Media Profiles / Pages / Groups	Create hashtag	Clickbait	Conspiracy narratives	Twitter	Bait legitimate influencers	Use hashtag	Organise remote rallies and events	Continue to amplify	(b Itoms)
Competing Narratives	Create Master Narratives	Create fake experts	Cultivate useful idiots	Paid targeted ads	Adapt existing narratives	Backstop personas	Demand unsurmountable proof	Cheerleading domestic social media ops	Sell merchandising	Legacy web content	
Facilitate State Propaganda		Create fake or imposter news sites	Create fake websites	Promote online funding	Create competing narratives	Facebook	Deny involvement	Cow online opinion leaders		Play the long game	
Leverage Existing Narratives			Create funding campaigns		Create fake research	Instagram	Kernel of Truth	Dedicated channels disseminate information pollution			
			Hijack legitimate account		Create fake videos and images	LinkedIn	Search Engine Optimization	Fabricate social media comment			
			Use concealment		Distort facts	Manipulate online polls	Seed distortions	Flooding			
					Generate information pollution	Pinterest	Use SMS/ WhatsApp/ Chat apps	Muzzle social media as a political force			
					Leak altered documents	Reddit	Use fake experts	Tertiary sites amplify news			
					Memes	WhatsApp		Twitter bots amplify			
					Trial content	YouTube		Twitter trolls amplify and manipulate			

#### AMITT, as seen in MISP

We're using the AMITT framework to break each disinformation incident down into its component TTPs and TTP-level counters.

### 1.4 Covid19 Disinformation outside the USA

Who does this? I would put America and the UK at the top of my original masters list (both for their work from second world war onwards, but also for the internal propaganda work so successfully picked up later by e.g. China <a href="https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/how-hollywood-became-the-unofficial-propaganda-arm-of-the-u-s-military-1.5560575">https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/how-hollywood-became-the-unofficial-propaganda-arm-of-the-u-s-military-1.5560575</a>). Russia, China, Iran are all biggies right now in online disinfo aimed at other countries, but there are also countries whose internal (aimed at their own population) disinformation campaigns have been masterful (Venezuela) or unsubtle but effective (Philippines). There are other countries where the use of disinformation is just kinda background normal politics, but generally internal and local (e.g. Nigeria). My top 10 list? USA, China, Russia, Iran, UK, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, Venezuela, Philippines.

#### Things to think about: who

- How is a country involved?
  - o Disinformation customer / originator
  - Disinformation target
  - Disinformation producer / factory
- What type of disinformation?
  - Geopolitics / Nation State propaganda: country A to country B/C/etc
  - o Politics / propaganda: country A to own population
  - Grifting: individuals to population (usually for money)
  - Power: groups to population (recruiting, actions etc)

#### Things to think about: what

- Localisation:
  - Local tech use (including social media)
  - Local power structures
  - Local concerns
  - Languages
  - Communication style
  - Local idioms (e.g. "cockroaches")
- Globalisation
  - Common themes: politics, grifters, 5g, antivax etc

#### Places to look for non-USA disinformation:

Disinformation repositories

- https://euvsdisinfo.eu/disinformation-cases/ Russia disinfo on EU
- o https://medium.com/dfrlab world disinfo
- https://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/ nationstate actors
  - Specifically <u>The Global Disinformation Order</u> and <u>case studies</u>
    <a href="https://www.newsguardtech.com/covid-19-resources/">https://www.newsguardtech.com/covid-19-resources/</a> c19 domains for several countries
- Hive cases, MISP events etc
  - o E.g. reopen starting in Australia, moving to Canada etc

#### References

- India:
  - https://theasiadialogue.com/2020/04/06/india-covid-19-misinformation-and-the-downside-of-social-media/
     whatsapp, fake cures, SM responsible for curation, strong messaging from Modi
  - https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/indian-scientists-covid19-false-infomation-coronavirus/
- Italy:
  - https://medium.com/dfrlab/italian-mp-amplifies-debunked-covid-19-conspiracy-theories-on-the-floor-of-parliament-fa0a88999142
- China:
  - https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/china-coronavirus-propaganda-pushties-worsen-200325085419818.html hero story
- Africa:
  - https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51710617
  - https://africanarguments.org/2020/03/26/the-other-covid-19-pandemic-fake-news/
  - https://www.facebook.com/watch/NCDCgov/ countering
- Venezuela:
  - https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-coronavirus-infodemic-inlatin-america-will-cost-lives/
- Ecuador:
  - <a href="https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/andres-oppenheimer/article241929726.html">https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/andres-oppenheimer/article241929726.html</a> targetted by bot farms from neibouring countries
  - <a href="https://www.chequeado.com/latamcoronavirus/">https://www.chequeado.com/latamcoronavirus/</a> Latam countering (case lists, in Spanish)

### 1.5 Where to direct non-Covid19 disinformation

It's almost certain that in the course of looking for Covid-19 related disinformation, we're going to find disinformation on other topics. While our mandate is specifically Covid-19 related, there are other, area-specific organizations to which we can report disinformation.

 U.S. Election security: Open a Slack DM to anybody working at Department of Homeland Security, specifically Spencer Wood or Stacey Wright

- Right-wing extremism/hate speech: Southern Poverty Law Center, at <a href="https://www.splcenter.org/reporthate">https://www.splcenter.org/reporthate</a>
- Voter suppression attempts:
  - o On social media, report the post to the platform using their reporting mechanisms
  - You can also report the issue to the U.S. Department of Justice using https://civilrights.justice.gov/report/
- Anti-GLBTQ+: Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, at <a href="https://www.glaad.org/form/report-media-defamation">https://www.glaad.org/form/report-media-defamation</a>