

Hilaos & Plaza

Exercise 3

Enrichment Questions:

1. In the press release, Senator Pangilinan refers to disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and mass deception as (a) the COVID-19 variants of the digital world, (b) biggest man-made threats to modern Philippine society, and (c) digital wildfires. In what ways do you think these parallels hold true:
 - a. **the COVID-19 variants of the digital world**
 - Disinformation, like COVID-19, travels quickly and adapts to new situations, resulting in broad harm. It thrives on vulnerabilities like human psychology, biases, and unregulated digital platforms. Disinformation erodes public trust, causes confusion, and damages societal cohesion, necessitating collective effort to combat effectively.
 - b. **biggest man-made threats to modern Philippine society**
 - Disinformation and associated concerns are man-made problems that employ technology to convey divisive messages. In the Philippines, these dangers weaken democratic institutions, polarize the populace, and erode trust in the free press. Troll farms, fake news factories, and organized propaganda efforts are planned behaviors that cause society harm, making them significant challenges in the digital age.
 - c. **digital wildfires**
 - Like wildfires, disinformation can quickly consume public discourse, destroying trust, credibility, and confidence in institutions. It's tough to contain once misleading information spreads online because it's practically impossible to put out, with residual "embers" remaining even after debunking. This analogy highlights the difficulty of containment in online communication.
2. How do you think social media platforms and the rapid advance of technology threaten democratic institutions and the free press in the Philippines? Cite examples for each.
 - Social media platforms and advancing technology pose significant threats to democratic institutions and the free press in the Philippines by enabling the spread of disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech.

- **Disinformation and Misinformation:** Social media allows fake news to spread quickly, often influencing public opinion and elections. For example, during the 2016 Philippine elections, social media was used to promote misleading narratives that shaped voter behavior.
 - **Hate Speech:** Platforms amplify hate speech, creating division and violence. Online attacks on journalists and critics, such as those directed at reporters covering sensitive issues, undermine press freedom and the credibility of independent journalism.
 - **Polarization:** The rapid spread of partisan content on platforms like Facebook deepens political divides, weakening public trust in institutions like the judiciary and the media. This undermines democracy by fostering a climate of distrust and division.
3. What do you think are the repercussions of democratic institutions and free press weakened by disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and mass deception?
- Disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and mass deception undermine democratic institutions and the free press by causing people to lose trust in the government and the media, dividing society, halting open discussions, unfairly influencing elections, spreading false health information, harming people's mental health, damaging businesses, and making the country less safe, all of which harm democracy and social stability.
4. Should social media platforms be held legally accountable for the spread of disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and mass deception? Should the Philippines pass a law for this purpose? Why or why not?
- Yes, Social media platforms play a major role in spreading harmful content. Holding them legally accountable encourages them to take action against disinformation and hate speech, just as traditional media is held responsible for harmful content. Passing a law in the Philippines would ensure platforms take their responsibility seriously by moderating content properly, while also protecting users' freedom of speech. The law should promote responsible regulation without stifling legitimate debate.
5. Senator Pangilinan calls on all Filipinos, regardless of political beliefs, "to join in the fight against disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and mass deception via digital platforms." How have you personally done this in the past? How do you plan to do better at this in the future?
- In the past, I have actively verified information before sharing it online and reported false or harmful content. Moving forward, I plan to engage more in promoting accurate

information, educate others about the dangers of misinformation, and support reliable sources of news to help combat digital deception.