



Mis/Dis/Mal-information

A PRSA Strategic Advocacy Initiative

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Introduction

“

Disinformation is not a partisan problem; it's a democratic one, and it will take cooperation—cross-party, cross-sector, cross-government, and cross-border—to defeat.



**NINA
JANKOWICZ**

*Disinformation Fellow;
Former Fulbright-Clinton Public
Policy Fellow*

Session Objectives

- ID the Threat
- Combat
- Action

Mis-Information

- False information – but not created with negative intent

Dis-Information

- False information, specifically created to harm a person, social group

Mal-Information

- Information based on reality ... but used to inflict harm on a person, organization, or country.

Data – IPR 2020

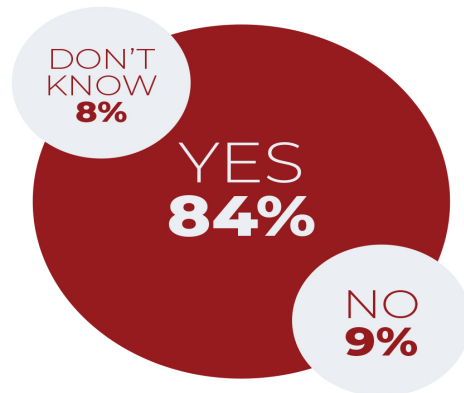
- Major concern by more than half of Americans
- Verifying information critical
- Top sources spreading disinformation
 - Facebook
 - Politicians
- More than 2/3 of Americans view disinformation as a threat to democracy

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ISSUES & PROBLEMS IN THE U.S.

**DO AMERICANS BELIEVE FALSE
NEWS OR DISINFORMATION
IS A PROBLEM IN THE U.S.?***



DISINFORMATION IS A THREAT TO OUR DEMOCRACY *

Agree: **72%**

Neither Agree Nor Disagree: **14%**

Disagree: **6%**

Don't know: **7%**

DISINFORMATION IS UNDERMINING OUR ELECTION PROCESS *

Agree: **69%**

Neither Agree Nor Disagree: **17%**

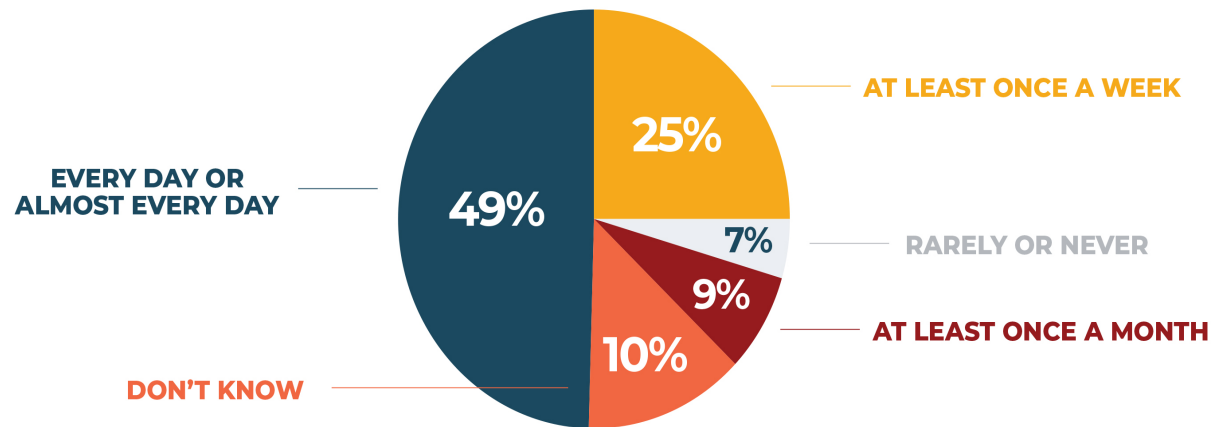
Disagree: **5%**

Don't know: **8%**

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EXPOSURE TO DISINFORMATION, NEWS, AND MEDIA

HOW OFTEN DO AMERICANS COME ACROSS NEWS OR INFORMATION
THAT MISREPRESENTS REALITY OR IS FALSE?



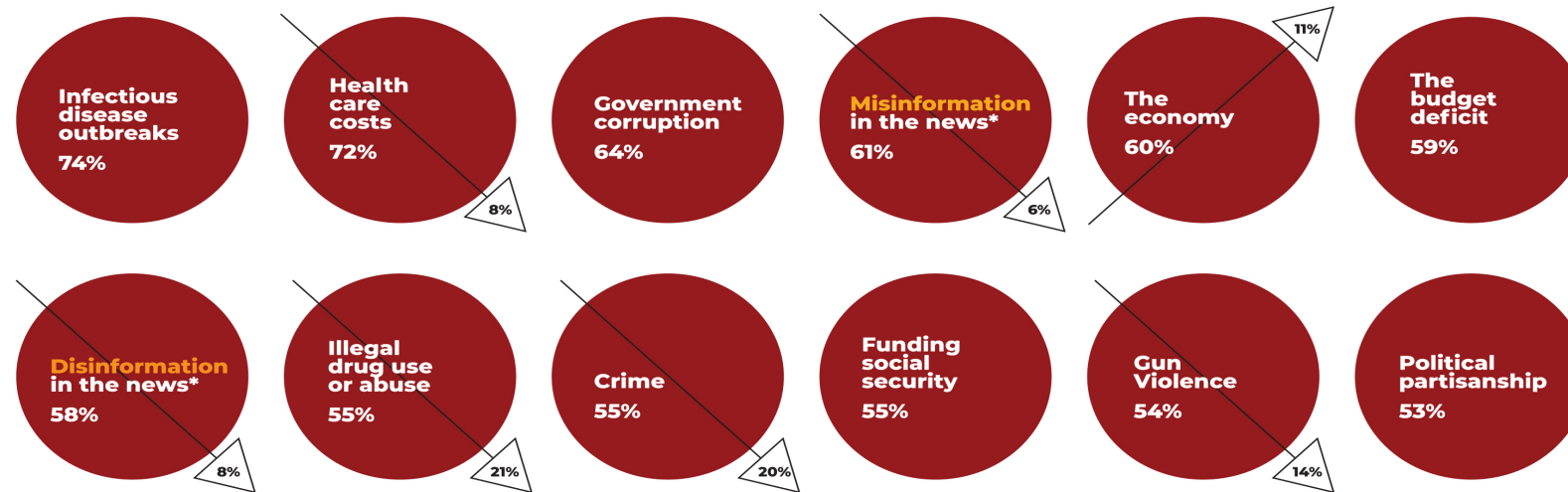
74% of respondents see
misinformation distorting
reality 1x per week

Nearly half report
misinformation daily

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TOP 12 ISSUES FACING AMERICANS

% WHO SAY THIS ISSUE IS A MAJOR PROBLEMS



Note: Arrows represent a decrease/increase from 2019. No arrow indicates new in 2020.

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MOST TRUSTWORTHY SOURCES FOR ACCURATE NEWS AND INFORMATION

Information Sources with the Highest Trust Scores



Family
(71%)



Local Broadcast News
(70%)



People Like Me
(64%)



Federal Agencies*
(e.g., CDC, FDA) (63%)



Friends
(62%)



Internet Search Engines
(e.g., Google, Bing) (61%)



Local Newspapers
(60%)



My Local Government
(59%)



U.S. Government
(51%)



NBC (TV)
(52%)



CBS (TV)
52%

* ADDED
IN 2020

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HOW WELL DO AMERICANS FEEL CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE NEWS OR INFORMATION THAT MISREPRESENTS REALITY OR IS FALSE?

Very confident: 28%

Somewhat confident: 49%

Not very confident: 12%

Not at all confident: 3%

Don't know: 7%

HOW OFTEN DO PEOPLE GO TO OTHER WEBSITES OR MEDIA SOURCES TO VERIFY INFORMATION?

Always: 13%

Often: 27%

Sometimes: 34%

Rarely: 14%

Never: 6%

Don't know/No opinion: 6%

PRSA Professional Values

Advocacy / education-based program

- PRSA Code of Ethics
 - Advocacy, Honesty, Expertise, Independence, Loyalty, Fairness
- Support informed decision making
- Advances the public good
- Cultivate community thought-leadership
- Facilitate important conversations

PRSA Strategic Plan

Formal integration with 8 strategic priorities

- Innovation and Change
- Governance and Culture
- Discipline Convergence
- Membership
- International Potential
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)
- Civility
- Advocacy

PRSA 2020 – 2022 Objectives

Goal #1

- Position PRSA as the leading source of professional development for communications professionals

Goal #2

- Redesign the membership model to maximize engagement with communications professionals

Goal #4

- Strengthen PRSA's role as the voice of the communications professional

Goal #5

- Increase organizational excellence

Pre-bunking vs. De-bunking

DISINFORMATION PANEL



Nina Jankowicz



Marianna Spring



Neil Brown



Dr. Sander van
der Linden, Ph.D

Strategy

- PRSA believes consumers of news and information are best served by developing cognitive “muscles” in emotional skepticism, activating accuracy motivation, and training to withstand the onslaught of content designed to trigger an emotional response
- While Fact Checking and debunking serve a crucial and important role, their effect is limited given the speed, pace and volume of disinformation and based on data that shows the psychological exposure to the disinformation has already taken effect.
- PRSA will engage in nonpartisan message intervention through [pre-bunking, attitude inoculation](#). Pre-bunking and attitude inoculation are shown to be effective at building immunity and reducing susceptibility to dis-information.

Goal

- Flatten Curve
- Slow spread
- Not focused on seeding, but spreading

Target

- Moderate voices
- Vulnerable Audiences
- Not most fervent voices

Primary: Pre-bunking



Pause/Nudge



Inoculate

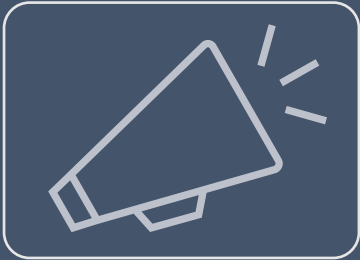


Media Literacy

Secondary: De-bunking



Fact-check



Media statements

Primary: Pre-bunking

Pause/Nudge

- Simple Pause slows spread

Inoculate

- Broad spectrum based on tactics
- Targeted based on issues
- Games

Media Literacy

- MediaWise
- FirstDraft

Take Action!

1

Expand your disinformation knowledge bank

- BBC Disinformation Watch
- DFR Labs, The Source
- Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review
- Debunking Handbook 2020 (<https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/debunking-handbook-2020/>)

2

Develop your cognitive muscles and encourage others

- <https://firstdraft.arist.co/courses>
- <https://www.goviralgame.com/>
- <https://spotthetroll.org/>
- <https://www.getbadnews.com/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/SkepticalScience/videos>

3

Activate and advocate

- Nudge/Pause
- Share pre-bunking tools
- Share Fact Checking
- Share statements

A robust PRSA effort Coming Soon.

Initial Partners

Poynter.



Building Knowledge Lab



Q&A

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