



Recognize the Risk

Understand how bad actors use false information to shape the conversation and manipulate behavior, eventually steering to more extreme positions that spread to bigger audiences—and cause even greater chaos and confusion.

Here's how they do it.

Build a Following

To attract followers, creators may start by posting entertaining, non-controversial content that appeals to their audience and builds trust.

Create a Divide

Controversial issues are used to polarize Americans and push us into groups that reinforce a particular point of view, further spreading false information and preventing healthy conversations.

Go Viral

False information is often disguised in fun memes that are highly engaging and easy to share on social media, like captioned photos and GIFs.

Amplify Malicious Messaging

Coordinated campaigns spread false information across social media platforms, state-funded communication channels, and sometimes even official accounts to reach far beyond the content creator's immediate followers.

Make it Mainstream

False information originally shared with a small audience can do big damage when it is amplified, sometimes gaining mainstream media coverage that may lend it further credibility and a broader audience.

Affect Real-World Behavior

Bad actors use false information shared online to affect our daily lives, like trying to influence how we vote, inciting physical confrontations, and disrupting healthy democratic discussions and participation.



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