TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS WEBINAR

2020 Election Messaging

Part 1
Hosts & Guest Speakers

Kayla Vix
Communications Manager
kvix@lwv.org

Sarah Courtney
Communications & Digital Strategy Senior Director
scourtney@lwv.org

Jenny Flannagan
Election Security Consultant
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency

Rob Schaul
Policy Lead (Elections Security & Countering Foreign Influence)
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency
Today’s presentation

- Tools in your toolkit
- Proactive messages
- 2020 Election Messaging Calendar
- Reactive messages
- Mis & disinformation
- Inoculation messaging
- Questions
Our purpose

• Speak with one voice about the election
• Provide Leagues with tools to support your messaging
Messaging tactics

• Social media: 2020 Election Season Social Media Materials

• Website: VOTE411 widget, blogs

• Press: Letters to editor, press releases, op-eds
  • LTE & op-ed guidance
  • Media interview tips

• Email: internal engagement, supporter engagement

• Public Service Announcements

LWV
Proactive messages

• Register to vote
  • National Voter Registration Day – Sept 22

• Poll worker recruitment
  • BLOG: We’re Facing a Historic Shortage of Poll Workers

• Make a voting plan

• Vote early
  • Vote Early Day – Oct 24

• BLOG: 100 Ways to Get Ready for Election Day

LWV
2020 Election Messaging Calendar

[LWV.org/ElectionMessagingCalendar](LWV.org/ElectionMessagingCalendar)

- National dates to message on
- Add your local dates!
  - Last day to register, early voting dates, last day to request/return ballot, local debates, COVID changes
- Pick and choose
Reactive messages

• USPS & Delayed Election Results

• Election Changes:
  • Mail-in & Absentee voting changes
  • Rule changes
  • Polling place changes
  • COVID impacts

• The Pivot: What voters really need to know is...
What Is Mis & Disinformation?

**MISINFORMATION**: Sharing false information without the intent of harm.

**DISINFORMATION**: Creating and sharing false information with the intent to harm.
How to Spot Disinformation Online

• **Consider the source.** Does the URL look strange? Check the ‘About’ page on the website.

• **Check the date.** Is the story old news? Sharing out-of-date information may not match current events.

• **Cross check information.** Are reputable news sources reporting the same story?

• **Read past the headline.** What’s the whole story? Sometimes a headline doesn’t match the content.

• **Question emotionally charged content.** Disinformation intends to sow division by getting us angry or sad through images or memes.
Dos & Don’ts of Disinformation on Social Media

• DON’T click or share. If you quote the bad information, you help spread it.

• DO share accurate information. Without mentioning the wrong info, set the record straight by sharing the correct messages.

• DON’T engage publicly. If someone you know is sharing bad info, message them privately & ask them to take it down.

• DO report & block. Report inaccurate info to social media platforms, group administrators & election officials. Block users you don’t know who share mis or disinformation.
Inoculation Messaging

• Inoculation messaging aims to combat disinformation by delivering the facts to an audience before they have encountered the false information.

• The objective is to proactively inoculate against anticipated problematic content before it spreads.
Inoculation Messaging: EXAMPLES

• Voters should choose the voting method that they feel most comfortable with, and they can check their options at VOTE411.org. States have rigorous processes to ensure that each eligible voter only casts one ballot.

• False robo calls are circulating in our community, making inaccurate claims about the vote by mail process. (Insert local trusted information & VOTE411).
Inoculation Messaging: EXAMPLES (last one)

• With the increase of absentee and mail-in voting in 2020, it is essential that every vote is counted and every voter’s voice is heard. We should all prepare for many election results to be announced after Election Day.

*Additional talking points on this topic on the League Management Site.
Hearing from our experts

Jenny Flannagan
Election Security Consultant
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency

Rob Schaul
Policy Lead (Elections Security & Countering Foreign Influence)
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency
COUNTERING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE TASK FORCE
What is Foreign Interference?

**FOREIGN INTERFERENCE TAXONOMY**

**FOREIGN INTERFERENCE**

Malicious actions taken by foreign governments or foreign actors designed to sow discord, manipulate public discourse, discredit the electoral system, bias the development of policy, or disrupt markets for the purpose of undermining the interests of the United States and its allies.

**INFORMATION ACTIVITIES**

Activities undertaken to shape public opinion or undermine trust in the authenticity of information. Use of new and traditional media to amplify ideas and foster unity in the homeland, sometimes coordinated with illicit cyber activities.

**NEW MEDIA ABUSE**

Manipulating content service providers (CSPs) to create and amplify false and distorted content for targeted individuals or groups.

**CYBER ACTIVITIES**

Using traditional media outlets to report false or misleading information, strategically哇！d to undermine the credibility of the press.

**WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION IS USED?**

Malicious actors, often hiding behind fake or automated accounts, use demonstrably false information, innuendo, and rumors to push or amplify their narratives. While many posts boil down to unconfirmable opinions, much of the information content falls into a few broad categories:

- Innocent reporting errors (real information)
- Satire and parody
- Content can be re-purposed and distributed maliciously with the intent to deceive
- Facts are also used maliciously, and out of context, to improperly influence audiences (real information)

**Key Stakeholders:**
- DOJ/FTC
- State: Intelligence Community, State, Local, Territorial, and Tribal Governments, Foreign Partners, Social Media Companies
- International Media Companies, Academia/Research, Think Tanks, and Philanthropy

---

Brian Scully  
September 11, 2020
Goals of Election Interference

**IMMEDIATE GOAL**
- Affect popularity of candidates
- Call into question legitimacy of election process
- Promote desired election outcome

**MID-TERM GOAL**
- Polarize political discourse
- Weaken confidence in leaders

**LONG-TERM GOAL**
- Promote foreign economic, ideological, military interests
- Reduce confidence in democracy
- Create divisions in international alliances

Source: “Cyber Threats to Canada’s Democratic Process,” Canada Centre for Cyber Security
Disinformation related to Election 2020

- Black Culture/Community Issues
- Police Brutality/Black Lives Matter
- Southern Culture/Confederate History
- Separatist Movements
- Conspiracy Theories (QAnon and beyond)
- Violence at Polling Places
- Gun Rights/2nd Amendment
- Religious Rights

- Veterans Issues
- Vote-by-Mail
- Covid-19

Source: EUvsDisinfo; EEAS Special Report
Trending Disinformation Tactics for 2020

- On Social Media:
  - Closed Groups
  - Amplification of Domestic Content
  - Sock Puppet Accounts
  - Use of AI for Profile Building
  - New Platforms

- Beyond Social Media:
  - Proxy Websites
  - Hack & Leak
  - Forged Documents
  - Impersonations
Addressing the Demand for Bad Information

- Focused on the nexus of foreign influence and resilience of Nation’s infrastructure, systems, and critical functions
- Partnering across government and with the private sector to share information and foster trusted voices over the long-term
- Public education about the risks of mis- and disinformation, foreign influence
- Engaging the academic and research communities on underlying challenges and new trends in mis- and disinformation
- Bridging election officials to social media platforms
Empowering Americans with positive strategies for dealing with bad information:
- Ignore it
- Think before you share or engage
- Giving more attention to bad information is like giving oxygen to a fire

Empowering Americans with information:
- Here’s how to identify bad information. How does it work? How does it manipulate you?
- Here’s how to find accurate information
- Here’s how to model good behavior

Bad information from foreign actors hurts our Nation:
- It spreads confusion
- It spreads mistrust
- Bad actors who spread bad information are not on anyone’s “side” and especially not yours – confusion and mistrust are their only goals
Messaging for 2020 and Beyond

- Recognize the Risk
- Secure Systems and Accounts
- Avoid Amplifying Disinformation
  - Question the source
  - Investigate the issue
  - Think before you link
  - Talk to your circle
- Seek Trusted Voices
- Prepare to Vote, Participate, and be Patient
Products to Fight Disinformation

- War on Pineapple
- Election-Specific Posters, FAQs, and Fact Sheets
- COVID-Specific Disinformation Products
- Additional Information and Reporting

https://www.cisa.gov/protect2020
To learn more about foreign influence and how you can make a difference, visit www.cisa.gov/protect2020
QUESTIONS?
October webinar

Thursday, October 8
at 4:30pm ET

2020 Election Messaging – Part 2