

Impacts Of Misinformation & Disinformation on Our Community Members & Us

In today's digital world, false and manipulated information is all around our community members and us. We all consume and share content without realizing it may be misleading. Even the AI-generated videos that seem harmless can have serious social and political impacts in our communities, which can affect them in real and lasting ways. By understanding the impacts, we can help prevent the spread of false content and protect the well-being of those around us. The chart below shows some of the impacts and their potential harmful outcomes in our communities.

Impact	Description / Process	Potential Outcome(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreads apathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling overwhelmed Believing your actions don't matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads to disengagement from important issues Reduces civic participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stokes fear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating panic/anxiety through false or exaggerated claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Causes irrational decisions Makes you easier to manipulate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as a red herring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distracting you from the main issue Wasting your energy elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures important problems go unaddressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignores facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dismissing or misleading evidence & verified information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undermines informed decision-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion, mistrust, & fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making it hard to know what's real when there is conflicting or overwhelming information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops trusting reliable sources Disengages entirely
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages rigid & narrow thinking Reinforces existing biases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being exposed to one-sided or false narratives Limiting exposure to diverse perspectives Receiving information that confirms what you already believe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces critical thinking Limits open-mindedness Makes it harder to challenge misinformation/disinformation & consider new ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalates discord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fueling arguments & hostility through misleading content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damages relationships & weakens social cohesion

Impact	Description / Process	Potential Outcome(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fabricates conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating division between groups through false narratives Targeting specific groups through disinformation campaigns Polluting conversations & debates with false information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases social division ("us vs. them") Increases polarization & social tension Weakens democratic dialogue and accountability Threatens trust & integrity in public discourse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alters voter behavior Disengages you from civic involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing voter turnout Lacking the accurate information needed to engage meaningfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distorts election outcomes & weakens democracy Prevents full participation in democratic processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces compliance with public safety measures Rejects scientific health advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distrusting or ignoring safety guidelines Dismissing credible expertise in favour of false claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worsens crises (e.g., pandemics or emergencies) Undermines health, safety, & evidence-based policy

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