



Navigating Mis- and
Disinformation at an Older Age

DISINFORMATION: HOW DOES IT WORK AND WHAT TO DO?



Nordplus



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Information for the lecturer :

To prepare for the lecture, it is recommended that you read:

- <https://cri.lt/publications/disinformation-tool-kit/>
- <https://cri.lt/publications/propagandos-amzius-kovos-su-dezinformacija-priemoniu-rinkinys-2/>



What is disinformation?



Disinformation is deliberately misleading or false information that is disseminated with the aim of deceiving, influencing opinion, behaviour, or political decisions.





What is disinformation?

Important features:



Intentionality – the person creating or distributing it knows that the information is false.



Distribution channels – social networks, media outlets, fake news websites, memes, videos, etc.



Manipulation – the aim is to influence the audience, reinforce a certain narrative, cause confusion or distrust.



Why does disinformation work?



Disinformation works because it affects our thinking, emotions, and the way we process information.





Why does disinformation work?

The most important reasons:

1. Cognitive biases. Our brains rely on quick decisions and mental shortcuts, which make us vulnerable to:



• Authority effect – if information is provided by a seemingly trustworthy source, it is easier to believe.

• Confirmation bias – we are more likely to believe what is consistent with our preconceived notions.

• Repetition effect – repeated information seems more true (illusory truth effect).



Why does disinformation work?

The most important reasons:

2. Exploitation of emotions



•Disinformation often causes: fear, anger, resentment, curiosity.

•Emotionally strong content spreads much faster because people share it impulsively. When we feel emotions of survival, we do not delve into the content and attack partially.

•Disinformation messages target our fears and emotions of anxiety.

•Those who create disinformation target our sense of insecurity, creating fears and feelings of anger.



Why does disinformation work?

The most important reasons:

3. Principles of social media



•The content created by the social media bubble we are in makes it easier to believe the message spread by disinformation (it is easier to believe because we see support), encourages sharing it, thus expressing ourselves as active and knowledgeable.

•Platforms prioritize content that causes a reaction, quick sharing, personalized content (algorithms filter what we see).

•This allows false information to quickly become popular and reach large audiences.



Why does disinformation work?

The most important reasons:



4. Social Pressure and Communities



•People tend to believe what their close group believes: family, friends,peers in internet bubbles.

•As a result, even lies can be given “community credibility.”



Why does disinformation work?



The most important reasons:

5. Information overload and low fact-checking habits in the modern information flow.



People do not take the time to fact-check, do not always understand how to identify reliable sources, it is difficult to distinguish professional journalism from manipulative content.



How to deal with disinformation?



Should we always check everything?:

Checking information is quite complicated and time-consuming. And if we start questioning all the information, it will be very difficult for us and create a feeling of insecurity that everything is not true.



How to deal with disinformation? Nordplus

Is it worth it to try to show the incorrectness or falsity of the statements in the comments when you see a disinformation message on social networks?

It is not worth it and even dangerous to get involved in the comments section – because we don't even know if we are confronting a real user, maybe it's a bunch of bots. The best thing we can do is block or report the inappropriate account to social networks.



How to deal with disinformation?



What to do with loved ones who have believed misinformation?



In this case, it is not worth arguing - the person becomes even more entrenched in his beliefs or views. It is worth asking and listening - a person often begins to understand illogical things while talking. Do not ridicule or humiliate a misled person.

AND THE END.....

The famous Italian semiotician and writer Umberto Eco (1932-2016) once said:

"Social media has given the right to speak to countless idiots who previously only spoke over a glass of wine in a bar and did no harm to the community. Then they were immediately silenced, but today they have the same right to speak as a Nobel Prize winner. A direct influx of idiots has begun."

