How Communicators Can Help Manage Election Disinformation in the Workplace

By Olivia K. Fajardo, M.A., Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D., APR, and the IPR Behavioral Insights Research Center

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Guidelines for Sharing Election Information:

☑ Identify inconsistencies or discrepancies.

☑ Check the date of the content to ensure it is not outdated.

☑ Determine if the information is consistent across other sources.

☑ Verify information through an online fact checker tool.

☑ Consider the context and purpose of the information.

☑ Verify the information is from a reliable source.

Explore the Full Report: bit.ly/ipr-disinfo24

Three Ways to Prebunk

- **Share clear and factual information before the election and continue throughout the election cycle.**

- **Understand the topics and techniques bad actors will use to spread disinformation about the election and prebunk them.**

- **Provide explicit details of the type of the attack and use non-pressuring language.**

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The Impact of Confirmation Bias and Selective Exposure

Research indicates that consuming news that reinforces existing beliefs, rather than challenging them, deepens political divides and increases perceived social distance between parties (Garrett et al., 2014).

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What is Prebunking?

Inoculation theory (also referred to as "prebunking") is a proactive strategy to prevent people from believing or spreading misinformation and/or disinformation. Inoculating people against disinformation before they hear about it helps them build resistance to false content, much like how a vaccine helps inoculate people against disease.

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"Disinformation is rampant in elections globally and research finds that 80% of employees want their organizations to help ensure a free and fair election without partisanship."

Tina McCorkindale, Ph.D., APR
IPR President & CEO

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"Companies that benefit from the policies and programs that society and lawmakers have created have an obligation to help ensure they contribute to a healthy society through the election process."

Adav Noti

Executive Director, Campaign Legal Center

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"Equipping leaders and employees with the knowledge and tools to identify disinformation will help them think critically about the information they receive during election season and beyond. This is crucial for the success of organizations overall."

Olivia K. Fajardo, M.A.

IPR Director of Research

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NEW IPR REPORT!

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"**We know that misinformation and disinformation preys on biases,** and what started as state actor propaganda has been **adopted by those seeking to gain financially or reputationally at the expense of organizations** by targeting their stakeholders. This includes both competitors targeting each other, and individuals seeking to grow their following and influence jumping on a bandwagon."

Lisa Kaplan
Founder & CEO, Alethea

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THINK BEFORE YOU LINK

A 10-POINT CHECKLIST:

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- Who is the Author or Source?
- How Current is the Source?
- Who Shared the Post?
- Does the Headline Match the Context?
- Does it Create Distrust or Sow Division?

- How Does it Make Me Feel?
- What is the Evidence?
- Could It Be a Joke?
- Have I Verified it?
- Do I Know Enough?

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Visit these IPR Resources for more information on disinformation, prebunking, and more:

➤ **IPR Disinformation Resource Library**

➤ **10 Ways to Identify Disinformation – A Guide and Checklist**

➤ **IPR Research Library – Mis/Disinformation Topic**

➤ **2023 IPR-Leger Disinformation in Society Report**

➤ **10 Ways to Combat Misinformation: A Behavioral Insights Approach**

➤ **A Communicator's Guide to COVID-19 Vaccination**

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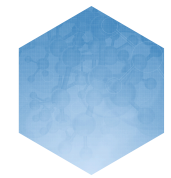
TOOLS TO HELP EMPLOYEES IDENTIFY DISINFORMATION:

There are several organizations and online tools to help identify or detect disinformation. Here are just a few examples from the IPR Disinformation Resource Library, which contains over 30 different resources:

- **News Literacy Project:** Nonprofit that focuses on educating the U.S. public on news literacy and how to detect mis-/disinformation. News Literacy Project

- **Bad News:** Online game that teaches users about the techniques involved in the dissemination of disinformation. Bad News

- **Association for Psychological Science:** Published "Countering Misinformation with Psychological Science," a paper that features a "misinformation prevention kit" for policymakers, the scientific community, the media, and members of the public.

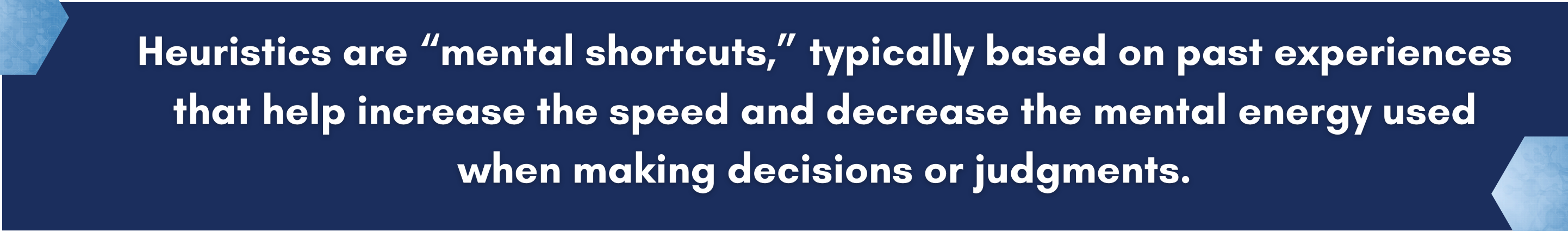**Explore the NEW IPR Report: bit.ly/ipr-disinfo24**

About the Bandwagon Effect

When people perceive public opinion to favor one side of the issue this may encourage people to avoid sharing their viewpoints if they are in the minority, as Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1974) outlined in her spiral of silence theory. One of the reasons why people may avoid sharing a contrary perspective is a fear of isolation, as people want to avoid "criticism, scorn, laughter, or other signs of disapproval" (Petersen, 2019, ¶ 7).

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About Availability Heuristics

Heuristics are "mental shortcuts," typically based on past experiences that help increase the speed and decrease the mental energy used when making decisions or judgments.

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About Motivated Reasoning

Motivated reasoning involves selectively processing information that supports one's prior beliefs or preferences while ignoring or discounting contradictory evidence (Kunda, 1990).

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