



DON'T BE A DISINFORMATION SUPERSREADER

Arizona courts recognize there are people, organizations, and foreign interests that intentionally or recklessly create or spread disinformation using social media, blogs, bots, multimedia platforms, and online discussions.¹

Disinformation is false, inaccurate, manipulated, confusing, or misleading information deliberately spread with the intent to deceive. Disinformation promotes disagreement, sows discord, creates distrust of government institutions or public officials, and undermines the democratic process.

Disinformation should not be confused with misinformation (information created or shared *without* the intent to deceive or manipulate), legitimate criticism, protest, or censure of government actions, institutions, or processes.

Unchecked, disinformation can harm the strength and credibility of our country's most valued institutions, including its government. In more extreme cases, disinformation incites violence and harms the values of our democracy.

It may be hard to question information on social media or in an email, especially from someone you know, like a relative or friend. Unfortunately, social media and email are common ways of sharing disinformation.

The tips below will help you recognize disinformation, identify the legitimacy or purpose of the post, statement, or account, and become a better-informed, more thoughtful, and more knowledgeable news consumer!

Before sharing or responding, think and verify.

Analyze the headline - Is it trying too hard to get your attention? Is it shocking, alarming, sensational, or scandalous? Does it make you uncomfortable? Is the author is trying to influence you?

Consider the information - Is it news, opinion, entertainment, or something else?

- **Investigate the original source** - Find, then review the information for yourself. Determine who the authors are. Are they qualified and respected in the topic? Were they paid to create this information? If so, by whom? Connect quotes, claims, and media information to their primary source.
- **Confirm the site** - Look at the website domain: is it a .gov, .com, .edu, .net, or .org? Government and educational sites tend to be more reliable, .org sites most often reflect the organization's perspective, and .com sites tend to be commercial. The material on the sites will reflect their host. If there is an "about us" link, follow it to learn more about the site's founders, purpose, and background.
- **Consider bias** - We all have beliefs, attitudes, and prejudices. Disinformation exploits these biases by presenting articles, ads, Tweets, and stories that appeal only to a single viewpoint and often exclude facts and context. **Disinformation plays on what divides us.** Look for balance.

Use fact-checking sites - Consider using non-profit, non-partisan fact-checking sites. Examples include (Aaron and Alicia to check on sites we may be able to use). Or ask a librarian. Avoid fact-checking sites that simply state the information is false without providing evidence. And don't rely on only one source. Do your own digging!

Arizona's courts provide this information to help you become a more careful consumer and sharer of news and information. To learn more, visit the [Resources](#) page of the Arizona Supreme Court's Task Force on Countering Disinformation at <https://www.azcourts.gov/cscommittees/Task-Force-on-Countering-Disinformation>.

¹ See the March 2020 U.S.A. Cyberspace Solarium Commission Report at page 68:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ryMCIL_dZ30QyJFgFkKf10MxIXJT4yv/view