



Concerns Over Election Interference: Truth or Misinformation?

By Dale Jodoin

As the United States gears up for its next presidential election, familiar concerns are once again bubbling to the surface. With campaigns in full swing, the media and government are issuing warnings about potential interference from foreign powers—particularly Russia. Similar fears are being echoed in other democratic nations like Canada. But are these warnings grounded in reality, or are they just part of a larger narrative pushed by certain groups? Let's take a closer look.

For several years now, accusations of Russian interference in U.S. elections have made headlines. These claims assert that Russian-backed groups are using social media, fake news, and cyber-attacks to influence how Americans vote. The goal, according to these claims, is to weaken Western democracies by sowing division and confusion among voters.

But not everyone buys into this narrative. Many conservative media outlets and their supporters argue that the mainstream media is exaggerating the threat of Russian interference. They claim that the accusations are being used as a convenient excuse to discredit conservative candidates—especially those who push back against liberal agendas.

"It's laughable," said one commentator on an independent news platform, dismissing the idea that Russia is the primary cause of division in the U.S. "Most of the media today are left-wing, and they're the ones pushing these stories. They don't like conservative voters or conservative candidates, and they're trying to blame their unpopularity on outside interference."

A key criticism coming from the right is that most of the mainstream media in the U.S. leans heavily to the left. This means that conservative voices are often underrepresented or dismissed. The claim that Russian interference is primarily aimed at supporting conservative candidates or stoking support for figures like Donald Trump is viewed with suspicion by many on the right.

"They're not concerned about Russian interference; they're concerned about conservative voters," one political analyst said. "The media are trying to make it look like any conservative victory is illegitimate. But the truth is, people are voting for conservative policies because they're tired of the direction the country is heading under left-wing leadership."

This perspective paints a different picture from the mainstream narrative. According to this view, the real problem isn't foreign interference but rather a media landscape that's hostile to conservative viewpoints.

One of the most polarizing figures in recent U.S. politics is Vice President Kamala Harris. Critics argue that the media has portrayed her in an overly positive light, despite what they see as her poor performance in office. Harris was given the task of managing the U.S.-Mexico border crisis, a responsibility that critics say she has failed at.

"The border has never been in worse shape," a conservative commentator noted. "Millions of people have crossed into the U.S. illegally, and yet the media is telling us that Harris is one of the greatest vice presidents in history. It's all spin—they're pushing her as the future because Biden isn't living up to the hype, but people can see through it."

Some conservative commentators argue that Harris is being promoted simply because she checks certain identity boxes, rather than because of her track record in office. They claim that the media is trying to build her up as a potential presidential candidate, despite her lack of significant accomplishments.

"The media has been lying about her performance from day one," one critic argued. "They're setting her up to replace Biden because he's not popular anymore. But the truth is, people aren't buying it. They don't want her because of her policies, not because she's a woman."

On the other side of the political spectrum, former President Donald Trump and his supporters have been labeled as the victims of misinformation campaigns. This has led to accusations that Trump voters are being misled by Russian-backed propaganda.

But many Trump supporters reject this claim outright, arguing that they are informed and capable of making their own decisions. "The idea that we're being tricked by Russian propaganda is insulting," said one supporter. "We vote for Trump because we believe in what he stands for—lower taxes, stronger borders, and America first. It has nothing to do with Russia."

Some conservative commentators go even further, accusing the left-wing media of using the "Russia" narrative to avoid addressing the real reasons for Trump's continued popularity. "They can't admit that people like Trump's policies, so they try to blame it on foreign interference," one analyst remarked. "But the truth is, people are tired of the left's agenda, and they want real change."

As the debate over election interference rages on, many people are turning away from mainstream media outlets in favor of smaller, independent news platforms. These outlets, which often lean more conservative, argue that they are the ones telling the real story.

"Our readers come to us because they're tired of the lies from the big corporations," said an editor of a small, independent newspaper. "We don't have a political agenda—we just report the facts. The truth is, the left has been manipulating the narrative for years, and people are finally waking up to it."

This shift toward independent media has created a divide in the information landscape. On one side, you have the mainstream outlets, which continue to warn about foreign interference and the dangers of disinformation. On the other side, you have smaller platforms that argue that the real problem lies with the media itself.

As the 2024 election approaches, the debate over election interference is unlikely to go away. On one side, you have those who believe that foreign powers like Russia are actively working to undermine democracy. On the other side, you have those who argue that the real interference is coming from within—specifically, from a biased media that's out of touch with the average voter.

At the end of the day, it will be up to voters to decide what they believe. But one thing is clear: the information landscape has never been more divided, and the stakes have never been higher.

In Canada and the U.S., where democratic values are central to the nation's identity, it's important for voters to sift through the noise and seek out the truth for themselves. Whether that truth comes from mainstream outlets or independent platforms, it's essential that citizens stay informed and engaged as they prepare to head to the polls.

For now, though, the debate continues—on social media, in newspapers, and on television screens across the world.



Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

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AJAX GOING IN FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ZONING BYLAW

The Town of Ajax has announced that it is completing a comprehensive review of its Zoning By-law to ensure that it aligns with the town's Official Plan and other best practices from across Ontario.

A zoning by-law controls the use of land and buildings.

The current, in-effect zoning by-law for the Town of Ajax is Zoning By-law No. 95-2003 as amended, which was adopted by Ajax Council on July 14, 2003.

Since 2003, the town has passed some 220 zoning by-law amendments stemming from development applications and town-initiated studies. During that same time, approximately 1,250 Minor Variance applications have been processed by the Committee of Adjustment, said a town notice.

A zoning by-law identifies: How land and buildings may or may not be used.

The size and location of buildings and structures.

Required lot sizes and dimensions.

Minimum or maximum parking space and loading space requirements.

Minimum and maximum building heights and densities.

A zoning By-law cannot regulate matters such as colour, architectural theme or aesthetics of a building.

Further, a zoning By-law cannot regulate the people who may occupy a building, nor the relationship between the occupants, said a town notice.

The Planning Act requires municipalities to bring their zoning by-laws into conformity with its Official Plan. Updating the Zoning By-law to align with the Official Plan can introduce 'as-of-right' land use permissions, while introducing associated standards to ensure that urban design policies are adhered to and the natural environment is protected, th tow said.

On June 17, 2024, council endorsed staff report PDS-2024-15 to mark the start of Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review. Phase 2 includes the release of eight technical reports, which provide an assessment that examines applicable policies, best practices, and options to address issues. The Technical Reports also recommend amendments to the zoning by-law.

A draft zoning by-law that illustrates all proposed amendments is also available for review. The public, agencies, and stakeholders are invited to review the technical reports and draft by-law, participate in open houses and activities, and provide comments and questions to staff. Deadline to provide comments is Monday, September 16, the town notice said.

It said the draft by-law will be considered by the Community Affairs and Planning Committee Meeting tentatively scheduled for October 7.

TAKE THE THREE SECOND TEST!!!

Turn to any page in this newspaper. Look at any ad for the count of three. Then turn page. Tell me what you remember of that ad or page?

Can you recall product?

Can you recall phone number?

Can you recall what was advertised?

Can you recall address?

Can you recall company name?

Can you recall any pictures?

Can you recall any logos?

If little or nothing. You just proven why **BUS ADVERTISING, BILL BOARDS, ELECTRONIC ROAD SIDE SIGNS do not work.**

WHY: - Normally when people are driving they are constantly looking around for all kind of safety reasons. Three seconds tends to be the rule for determining decision making. When looking at a bus. People look for safety first then what is actually on the bus. This compounded with the fragmented artwork due to windows and doors. The average person does not truly see the ad. They notice a bus in motion and maybe the color. Not the messages on it. Much like when you turned the page. You could retain some minute detail but not the whole message.

On a billboard. The key to advertising is simplicity. More than two points. The readers will not be able to retain any information. Therefore the sign will be rendered useless.

Electronic road side signs - Same principle. The high color and light affect in many cases even though appealing. It is also very confusing for the mind to retain any information.

Priority is the wow factor of the brightness, (one second). Then word recognition (two seconds). Finally, understanding of what the eye has just witnessed.

These form of advertising do not generally work and can be very costly. The key or purpose for these forms of media to have an impact. It relies on respecting the three second rule.

What this means is that the message has to be contained and clear as for bus advertising. Many try to put too much in a bus that has windows and moving doors. This making the ads look like a badly composed ransom note.

For Electronic road side signs and signs in general. Most advertisers again do not respect the three second rule.

Drivers, walkers do not sit there and read signs. They glance and move on. If a service or product is needed. It is highly speculated that they will not have a pen and paper ready to take down the advertisers information.

Online advertising/social media. Online/social media advertisement operates on a three click rule. If your viewer fails to go to the particular interest in three clicks. Viewer will just move on and or 'x' it off. Look at the number of 'Likes'.

Then what is the answer?

Newsprint advertising has gone through some major transformations in the past 15 years. Those, that failed to adjust have fallen, declared bankruptcy.

The bottom line is that newsprint advertising has decades of proven success.

WHY: People like to have information in their hands. Easy access and simple. Anyone can turn a page. Not everyone can find an online site and or afford internet.

Information in news print is reliable and comes from a source known in the community.

Social media has become nothing short of a public toilet. Everyone uses and abuses it. From entities pretending to be reputable companies to the many fraudsters.

Online information has become unreliable and manipulative as it plays on people's weaknesses.

There is no value in no cost. With news print. You pay for a subscription to be assured to have reliable information.

Advertisers, they get what they pay for.

VALUE. As newsprint may change but never go away.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO BUY OR SELL CALL ME TODAY!!!



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