Don’t Be A Disinformation Superspreader

Recommendation from the Task Force on Countering Disinformation

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.

Misinformation, which is created or shared without the intent to deceive or manipulate. This includes legitimate criticism, protest, or censure of government actions, institutions, or processes.

It can 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.

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?

Think about the information - Is it news, opinion, entertainment, education, or something else?

Investigate the original source - Find, then review the information for yourself. Who are the authors? 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 – Check the website domain: is it a .gov, .edu, .org, .com, or .net? Government and educational sites tend to be more reliable, .org sites often show an 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.

Check your facts - Consider using non-profit, non-partisan fact-checking sites, but avoid fact-checking sites that state the information is false without providing evidence. **Compare sources**. Search the term “fact check” on the internet to find different fact-checking websites. Or ask a librarian or law librarian for help. Do some digging!

**To learn more, visit the** [**Resources**](https://www.azcourts.gov/cscommittees/Task-Force-on-Countering-Disinformation/Resource) **page of the Arizona Supreme Court’s Task Force on Countering Disinformation at** [**https://www.azcourts.gov/cscommittees/Task-Force-on-Countering-Disinformation**](https://www.azcourts.gov/cscommittees/Task-Force-on-Countering-Disinformation)**.**