

## Summary, Disinformation Toolkit<sup>1</sup>

The **Responsible Reporting Toolkit**, written by Howard Hardee and supported by organizations like the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism, offers a comprehensive guide for journalists on how to cover misinformation and disinformation responsibly, especially around elections. It highlights key practices such as avoiding amplification of falsehoods, knowing when to report on misinformation (the "tipping point"), and using tools like "The Trumpet of Amplification" to monitor disinformation.

The document emphasizes the importance of journalists' responsibility in fact-checking, maintaining the integrity of reporting, and preventing misinformation from spreading. Reporters should exercise caution when deciding whether to give attention to misinformation by carefully considering the harm it may cause and whether it has reached a significant audience. If false information is isolated to a small online community, it may be better to avoid giving it attention, as reporting can sometimes amplify the misinformation by inadvertently increasing its visibility.

The toolkit offers practical strategies, such as "prebunking" (alerting people in advance about misinformation to mitigate its impact), which helps audiences become more skeptical before the misinformation takes hold. Journalists are encouraged to lead with facts rather than repeating myths, using headlines and content that affirm the truth without giving oxygen to false narratives.

The toolkit also discusses the psychological aspects of debunking misinformation, noting that people may continue to believe false information even after being presented with corrections, a phenomenon known as the "continued influence effect." Techniques like prebunking, avoiding sarcasm or mockery, and using narrative-based debunks (telling the full story behind misinformation rather than issuing short corrections) are recommended for more effective fact-checking.

Additionally, the toolkit provides journalists with tools and tactics for monitoring social media and identifying disinformation patterns. Journalists are encouraged to use digital tools like TweetDeck, CrowdTangle, and reverse-image searches to verify content and track the spread of misleading information.

Lastly, the toolkit stresses the importance of balancing rapid reporting with accuracy and context. Journalists are reminded to provide what they know and what they do not know, which can help mitigate confusion and prevent the spread of false information while maintaining public trust.

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<sup>1</sup> This summary was generated by ChatGPT.