DISINFORMATION & THE 2020 CENSUS
TOPICS

- Definitions
- Fill Data Voids
- Develop Inoculation Messages
- Identify Trusted Messengers
- Apply Threat Classification Model
MISINFORMATION

n. information whose inaccuracy is unintentional
DISINFORMATION

n. information that is deliberately false or misleading
DISINFORMATION PLAYBOOK

- **Preparation:** What can you do *now* to cultivate resilience to potential information threats?

- **Response:** In the moment, how can you act in a way that minimizes the impact of an information threat?
“Census” is a ‘data void.’
Just Say NO to the Census (and Government)
FreeKeene • 76K views • 8 years ago
If you want the government people to leave you alone you have to stop obeying them. This is a tough thing to do, and it's silly to...

The 2020 Census is at risk. Here are the major consequences
PBS NewsHour • 287K views • 10 months ago
Data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau every 10 years is used to draw voting districts and determine how much funding to give...
CC

The Census Is Getting Personal
minivanjack • 2M views • 8 years ago
Uninformed Census Workers who want to post "We don't ask those questions" will be omitted from comments. You have not done...
**FILL DATA VOIDS**

- **Put all of your content online:** If you’re producing a pamphlet for the local library, make a copy available on your website.

- **Optimize, optimize, optimize:** Google, YouTube, and other algorithmic systems don’t know that your online content is critical to the Census unless you tell them.

- **Create your own drumbeat:** Coordinate messaging with local partners and develop a communications calendar.
Philly Counts 2020
Ensuring that every Philadelphian is counted in the 2020 Census.

About
Philly Counts 2020 is the City’s effort to support the next United States Census. By working closely with community members and partners, this program aims to:

- Increase understanding about the importance of the census.
- Educate the public on how to participate.
- Ensure responses from the public for a fair and accurate count.

Connect
census@phila.gov
DEVELOP INOCULATION MESSAGES

**STEP ONE:** Preview the motivations driving the disinformation
- *e.g.* politically motivated groups are trying to deprive certain people of rights and services.

**STEP TWO:** State the falsehood you intend to inoculate against
- *e.g.* they’re urging people to boycott the census.

**STEP THREE:** Deliver factual information to combat the falsehood
- *e.g.* the government distributes billions of dollars in funding and provides accurate representation in Congress based on census data.

Credits: Spitfire Strategies
Politically-motivated groups are discouraging people in our city from participating in the census. Anyone who is urging you to not fill out the census is actually trying to suppress the count and deprive our community of rights and services. Census data helps distribute more than $800 billion in federal funding for services and resources, and provides accurate representation in Congress for everyone living in the US. Everyone should fill out the census as completely as they can.”
IDENTIFY TRUSTED MESSENGERS

When a problematic narrative or hashtag starts trending, trusted messengers play a crucial role in spreading inoculation or balance messages.

Credits: Ilana Panich-Linsman for The New York Times
APPLY THREAT CLASSIFICATION & DETERMINE RESPONSE

Questions to consider:
- Has problematic content jumped from one platform to another?
- Has it reached one of your community’s key amplifiers?
- Has it sparked offline action, e.g. rallies or marches?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THREAT LEVEL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Low          | Low spread (disinformation element is isolated to a single community or platform), low volume | - Ongoing monitoring & analysis  
- Do not engage with messaging |
| Medium       | Social media traction (spread to more than one platform), high volume, high velocity, reached an influencer within a specific community or an adversarial amplifier on the topic, has prompted media coverage, hyperpartisan media attention, members can confirm presence of disinfo spread within communities | - Respond within platform  
- Inoculation messages  
- Strategic engagement of specific, community journalists/trusted messengers |
| High         | Spread through multiple platforms, high engagement, members confirm spread of disinfo within communities, evidence of artificial amplification, evidence of foreign interference | - Networked response  
- Engage mainstream journalists, trusted community messengers and partisan journalists |
# Apply Threat Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat Level</th>
<th>Characteristic*</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Low          | Low spread (disinformation element is isolated to a single community or platform), low volume | • Ongoing monitoring and analysis  
• Do not engage |
# APPLY THREAT CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THREAT LEVEL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS*</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Medium       | Social media traction (spread to more than one platform), high volume**, high velocity, reached an influencer within a specific community or an adversarial amplifier on the topic, has prompted media coverage, hyperpartisan media attention, members can confirm presence of disinfo spread within communities | • Respond within platform  
• Inoculation messages  
• Strategic engagement of tech media platforms  
• Strategic engagement of specific, community journalists/ trusted messengers |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THREAT LEVEL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| High         | Spread through multiple platforms, high engagement, members confirm presence of disinfo spread within communities, evidence of artificial amplification, evidence of foreign interference | • Networked response  
• Engage mainstream journalists, trusted community messengers and partisan journalists  
• Engage social media platforms |
**APPLY THREAT CLASSIFICATION & DETERMINE RESPONSE**

Questions to consider:
- Has problematic content jumped from one platform to another?
- Has it reached one of your community’s key amplifiers?
- Has it sparked offline action, e.g. rallies or marches?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THREAT LEVEL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Low          | Low spread (disinformation element is isolated to a single community or platform), low volume | - Ongoing monitoring & analysis  
- Do not engage with messaging |
| Medium       | Social media traction (spread to more than one platform), high volume, high velocity, reached an influencer within a specific community or an adversarial amplifier on the topic, has prompted media coverage, hyperpartisan media attention, members can confirm presence of disinfo spread within communities | - Respond within platform  
- Inoculation messages  
- Strategic engagement of specific, community journalists/trusted messengers |
| High         | Spread through multiple platforms, high engagement, members confirm spread of disinfo within communities, evidence of artificial amplification, evidence of foreign interference | - Networked response  
- Engage mainstream journalists, trusted community messengers and partisan journalists |
ACTIONS

- Put your Census content online so disinformation can’t fill the data void
- Develop inoculation messages to protect your constituents from disinformation
- Implement the threat classification model to determine what kind of response is warranted
THANK YOU

Emma Margolin - emma@datasociety.net