

# The Foundations of Disinformation and Misinformation

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The term **Information disorder** was coined by researcher Dr. Claire Wardle to describe the broad societal challenges associated with misinformation and disinformation, generally on the digital landscape, that contribute to the pollution of our evolving information ecosystem. *Misinformation* is the unintentional spread of false or misleading information, shared by mistake, or under a presumption of truth. *Disinformation*—false or misleading information that is deliberately spread with an intent to cause harm or damage—is neither new nor unique to the modern day.

From Octavian’s propaganda campaign against Antony in Ancient Rome to ‘[The Great Moon Hoax](#)’ of 1835, disinformation has been a favored weapon of politicians, civic leaders and mischief makers around the world. Yet the rise of the internet and the exponential growth of social media use across cultures and communities has dramatically increased the speed and impact of false narratives. The tactics behind disinformation vary widely and further complicates our understanding around source motivation and intention. Knowing how it’s done is just as important when trying to understand why.

## Reading Resources:

[Information Disorder: Toward An Interdisciplinary Framework For Research And Policy Making](#)  
(First Draft)

[A short guide to the history of ‘fake news’ and disinformation](#)  
(International Center for Journalists)

Video: [A Brief History Of Disinformation, And What To Do About It](#)  
(Matt Tait, University of Texas)

[The Long and Brutal History of Fake News](#)  
(Jacob Soll, Politico)

Podcast: [Thomas Rid on active measures and digital disinformation](#)  
(Brookings)

[The Future of Truth and Misinformation Online](#)  
(Janna Anderson And Lee Rainie, Pew Research Center)

[The Misinformation Campaign Was Distinctly One-Sided](#)  
(Renee DiResta, The Atlantic)

[The long fuse: Misinformation and the 2020 election](#)  
(Election Integrity Partnership report)

[20/20 Vision: Lessons learned about the challenges of disrupting misinformation in 2020](#)  
(First Draft article series)

[Combatting Digital Disinformation An Evaluation Of The William And Flora Hewlett Foundation’s Disinformation Strategy](#)  
(Hewlett)

[Digital Democracy: Accelerating A New Field Of Knowledge](#)  
(Knight Foundation)

[Facebook: From Election to Insurrection](#)  
(Avaaz report)

[Tackling misinformation: What researchers could do with social media data](#) (HKS Misinformation Review)

[Addressing false information during the 2020 election and lessons for the future](#)  
(American Press Institute)