

Disinformation: an existential threat to democratic ideals | MinnPost

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According to the Washington Post, Donald Trump made 30, 573 “false or misleading claims” as president. During Trump’s four years in office, lying became normalized as an integral part of a larger political dilemma: the creation and spread of disinformation as a political strategy. As access to social media platforms become ubiquitous, a preponderance of disinformation is being generated and spread by Facebook, Twitter, and You Tube.

In his book “Information Wars,” Richard Stengel defines disinformation as the “deliberate creation and distribution of information that is false and deceptive in order to mislead an audience.” Disinformation takes a variety of forms: propaganda, oppositional research, fake news, prophecy, deep fakes and conspiracy theories. It thrives under circumstances of intense societal trauma and complexity. The current COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has upended people’s sense of agency, threatened societal well-being, and deepened political polarization.

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