

Disinformation, Democracy, and Conflict Prevention | SSRC Essay Series

By MediaWell Staff

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The SSRC has launched a new essay series on *Items*, its digital forum for insights from the social sciences. The essays in this series on “[Disinformation, Democracy, and Conflict Prevention](#)” are based on presentations at a research workshop on “Disinformation, Democratic Processes, and Conflict Prevention,” convened by the SSRC’s [Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum \(CPPF\)](#) and [MediaWell disinformation research mapping initiative](#) for the SSRC’s [Academic Network on Peace, Security, and the United Nations](#). Scholars and researchers from regions around the world examined the frameworks, findings, and debates in emerging research on information disorder and the linkages between disinformation, elections, hate speech, and identity-based violence. The workshop also explored the ways in which disinformation affects the UN prevention agenda, and how the UN system can better identify, track, and respond to the negative impacts of disinformation where the UN is engaged.

While the threats that hate speech, violence, and disinformation—all often amplified through social media and other technologies—are global phenomena, they are also unique in their geographic, political, and technical implementations. This essay series and the workshop that informed it are modest contributions to respond to a growing need for more examinations of these issues both within global frameworks and specific to local contexts. The essays reflect the geopolitical realities of Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States, and with a comparative lens offer analysis of current conditions and recommendations for future steps.

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[Nigeria’s Disinformation Landscape](#)

The increasing threat to democratic institutions posed by disinformation is a global phenomenon. Yet, as **Idayat Hasan** and **Jamie Hitchen** reveal in this case study of Nigeria, the local effects of disinformation are shaped as much by offline conventions and institutions as by online interactions.

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[Converging Technologies in Africa: Geostrategic Positioning and Multipolar Competition](#)

Recognizing that in the absence of adequate regulations and oversight the most intimate data we share can be used to undermine democratic processes and hurt citizens, **Eleonore Pauwels** offers suggestions for how UN member states, particularly across Africa, might prevent rising forms of data collection and manipulation that lead to information disorders and electoral disruptions.

Additional Resources and Background Information:

[Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum \(CPPF\)](#)

- [CPPF-commissioned literature review on hate speech](#)
- [Academic Network on Peace, Security, and the UN](#)

[MediaWell](#) live research reviews and essays

- [Hate Speech, Information Disorder, and Conflict Prevention](#)
- [Defining “Disinformation”](#)
- [Disinformation and Election Interference](#)
- [Producers of Disinformation](#)
- [Disinformation, Democracy, and the Social Costs of Identity-Based Attacks Online](#)