News Item

Misinformation Swirls in Non-English Languages Ahead of Midterms | The New York Times

By Tiffany Hsu

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> Unsubstantiated rumors and outright falsehoods spread widely in immigrant communities ahead of the presidential election in 2020. That is happening again in the run-up to this year's midterm elections, researchers say, but with an insidious twist: The social media accounts pushing misinformation are now targeting audiences in more languages on more topics and across more digital platforms, with scant resistance from social media companies.
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> In recent weeks, posts exaggerating the fallout from inflation have been aimed at Americans from Latin American countries that have been crippled by poor economic management. Conspiracy theories that spread in August about the Internal Revenue Service's plans for a "shadow army" led mentions of "Ejército IRS" to surge alongside "IRS army," its equivalent in English, according to the research group Zignal.
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> Misinformation swirling in Chinese on Twitter, YouTube and WeChat about mail-in ballots, school curriculums and hate crimes "has dangerous implications" this year for Asian American voters, who are growing as a political force, according to the advocacy group Asian Americans Advancing Justice.
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> "There's definitely a hyper-targeting of messaging," said Nick Nguyen, a co-founder of Viet Fact Check, a group that offers explanations about misinformation circulating among Vietnamese Americans. "This is where a lack of English-language fluency can make populations vulnerable."
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