

PEN America's Guide for Combating Protest Disinformation | PEN America

By PEN America

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Amid mass demonstrations against police violence, misinformation and disinformation about the protests are spreading fast online. False, misleading, and misattributed stories and images can polarize communities, unfairly damage reputations, and obscure the truth. By sharing and amplifying this content we often further the goals of those who aim to discredit and divide.

PEN America offers three simple tips to minimize the spread of misleading information:

1. Verify images and videos. Photos and videos might be distorted or taken out of context.

Not all videos and images that are shared on social media platforms as depicting the current protests are legitimate. Some are miscaptioned, misidentified, Photoshopped, or drawn from different protests elsewhere in the world and even years prior. Before sharing or validating these images, consider the source, run a Google image search to learn more about the image's origin, or see if the image or video is available from someone who was an eyewitness or can confirm it has been misattributed.

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