

The battle against disinformation is global | The Conversation

By Scott Shackelford

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Disinformation-spewing online bots and trolls from halfway around the world are continuing to [shape local and national debates](#) by spreading lies online on a massive scale. In 2019, Russia [used Facebook to intervene](#) in the internal politics of eight African nations.

Russia has a long [history](#) of using disinformation campaigns to undermine opponents – even [hoodwinking CBS News anchor Dan Rather](#) back in 1987 into saying that U.S. biological warfare experiments [sparked the AIDS epidemic](#).

One group of researchers identified [Russian interference in 27 elections](#) around the world, from 1991 to 2017. It [interfered](#) in the 2016 U.S. elections, [reaching more than 126 million Americans](#) on Facebook alone. Russia is [almost certainly already doing so](#) again in 2020.

But Russia is not alone: From the end of World War II to the year 2000, scholars have documented [116 attempts to influence elections](#) – 80 of them by the United States.

Nations around the world, including the United States, have to decide how to [react](#). There is no shortage of experimentation, with new laws and codes of conduct, and even efforts to cut off internet access entirely – and that was before misinformation regarding the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

[...]

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