

# The disinformation threat to diaspora communities in encrypted chat apps | Brookings Institute

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Amid the deluge of misinformation surrounding last year's presidential election in the United States, voters across the country encountered persistent false claims online that ballots had been inappropriately "thrown out." Aimed at undermining confidence in the vote, the "discarded ballot" hoax spread widely across digital media, including in encrypted group chat applications used in diaspora communities.

The spread of disinformation on encrypted messaging applications poses a threat to diaspora communities, who have turned to WhatsApp and other messaging apps for the trust and intimacy they afford. Yet due to their encrypted and closed nature, conventional fact-checking and content moderation regimes are harder to implement. As a result, these platforms have become a promising new avenue for the spread of disinformation, particularly among diaspora communities. Last year in North Carolina, for instance, encrypted messaging applications were used to spread misleading information in a get-out-the-vote campaign targeting South Asian Americans.

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