

There Is No Getting Ahead of Disinformation Without Moving Past It | Lawfare

By Alicia Wanless

May 9, 2023

I don't believe in disinformation. And it's time for democracies to stop focusing on it.

I'm not saying there's no such thing or that it's not bad. I'm saying something a little subtler: that the public focus on disinformation is not useful and causes democratic societies to miss larger problems and challenges.

Let's start with the fundamental problem: There is no generally accepted definition of the term. What exactly is disinformation? Ask five different people, and you'll likely get five different answers. Some will say it is false information, some will say it's misleading, and others will say it's both. Most will agree that it's spread intentionally, as opposed to its unintentional cousin, misinformation.

Distinguishing between the two can be tricky. What if someone believes disinformation to be true and shares it? Is that still intentional? Is it still disinformation? There's a solution for that! Just mash the two terms together as mis-disinformation to cover it all! But what is it really? Lies? Deception? Rumor? Exaggeration? Propaganda? All of the above? Does one just know it when they see it?

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