

INSIDER THREAT (InTh)



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Critical Thinking As An Antidote To Misinformation And Influence Efforts

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The amount of information individuals are exposed to today can feel overwhelming. Portable electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets, mp3 players, etc.) carry vast amounts of data while simultaneously acting as a conduit to social media sites, news platforms, weather and sports channels, and more.

The nature and speed of the information we digest on a daily basis can make us susceptible to inaccurate beliefs, conspiracy theories, and falsehoods, resulting in anger, resentment, and intolerance. When these behaviors carry over into the workplace, it may increase insider risk. It is important for organizations to help employees see through manipulation and malign influence efforts for the benefit of both the individual employee and for the whole organization.

There are two key questions everyone should ask themselves when reading or watching online content, especially when you find yourself having an emotional reaction to the content:

- What is the writer or poster's motivation?
 - Is it likely they are omitting or tailoring facts to fit a narrative- even if it is one you tend to agree with?
- What is/are the alternative position(s)?
 - How valid are alternative points of view? Be honest with yourself when answering this question.

If a statement or piece of information is important enough to influence your view of the world, it is important enough to apply the rules of critical thinking, regardless of the source. The following are a few tools and tactics to use when watching news and reading or listening to opinions online:

- Be wary of statistics, graphs, and charts. Learn how they can be manipulated or misrepresented.
- Force yourself to challenge your own biases and perceptions.
- Read the article or post in its entirety. This is very important as headlines and banners often misrepresent the facts that are in the body of the article.
- Use fact-checkers *carefully*. The fact checking industry has blossomed, but unfortunately, many "fact" checking organizations espouse political points of view. Do your homework to find a fact checking group you can trust.
- Focus on the language being used. A straight news article shouldn't contain adjectives or descriptions which carry preconceived notions or which might sway the perception of a fact, and will not contain opinions.

For more information on National Insider Threat Month: [National Insider Threat Awareness Month 2022 \(cdse.edu\)](https://cdse.edu), or the Insider Threat Mission: [National Insider Threat Task Force \(NITTF\) \(dni.gov\)](https://dni.gov)