

INSIDER THREAT (InTh)



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Critical Thinking As An Antidote to Election Season Misinformation and Influence Efforts

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The theme of National Insider Threat Awareness Month (NITAM) 2022 is “critical thinking”, and critical thinking skills are essential to spot and respond to potential misinformation and influence efforts during the U.S. election process. In today’s politically polarized times, election season can be particularly stressful and emotional. Hyperbole seems to pervade every news report, opinion piece, and social media post. It is easy to be consumed by extreme characterizations of candidates, political parties, and policy positions. America’s adversaries realize that leveraging anger, fear, and panic are effective ways to sow discord and distrust among citizens and against our institutions. This discord and distrust can carry over into the workplace, inflaming emotions and potentially increasing insider risk.

Foreign intelligence entities, domestic and international terrorists, and subversive groups which hold beliefs antithetical to the U.S. Constitution all do their best to interfere in our elections, while internet denizens, including politicians themselves, spread mis/disinformation through the whole election cycle. As citizens and individuals in whom our government, academic institutions, or businesses have entrusted with access, we have a responsibility to act and think responsibly. To learn how to become better at spotting influence campaigns, conspiracy theories, and efforts to demoralize and undercut us, please visit the following links, which are endorsed by the Election Threat Executive of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence:

U.S. Department of State - Global Engagement Center:

<https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/global-engagement-center/>

Office of the Director of National Intelligence – Election Security:

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/who-we-are/organizations/mission-integration/es/what-we-do>

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency – Election Security:

<https://www.cisa.gov/rumorcontrol>

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency – Mis/Dis/Malinformation

<https://www.cisa.gov/mdm>

Clemson University Media Forensics Hub – Spot the Troll

<https://spotthetroll.org/>