




Controlling the Narrative:

How local government can disarm the rumor mill, correct misinformation



I HEARD THAT THE CITY IS GOING
TO TEAR DOWN ALL THE HOMES
TO BUILD APARTMENTS...

DiAngelea Millar, Communications Manager, **City of Sammamish**
Jenna Smith, Systems & Performance Lead, **City of Seattle**
Laura Parsons, P.E., Civil Engineer III, **City of Port Townsend**
Lindsey Vaughn, Finance Director, **City of Lake Forest Park**
Samantha Loyuk, Development Services Director, **City of Kenmore**

The public can have a lot to say...



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What are some examples of misinformation you've seen/heard by members of the public?

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What is it?

Misinformation: False...but the person spreading it believes it is true

Disinformation: False...and the person spreading it knows it is false

Malinformation: True information used to inflict harm



#facts

80 percent of local government officials said misinformation has negatively affected their organization.

68 percent of U.S. adults say made-up news/information greatly impacts Americans confidence in government institutions.

66 percent of Americans trust their local government to handle problems, which is higher than their trust in the federal government.



Pew Research Center
Gallop poll

Best practices

- Anticipate & address misinformation up front
- Use multiple channels to repeat accurate, factual, open messaging
- Counter calmly with facts & adapt to new information
- Enlist trusted messengers
- Build trust in times of non-crisis



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Have you seen or experienced the impacts of misinformation on local government policy, programs, or projects?

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It happened to me



Lessons learned

- This is leadership
- Facing misinformation head on
- Responsibility
- Expectations from the public
- Keep it professional
- Temporarily unpopular



I'm speaking

Discuss at Your Table...

- What are the pros and cons to actively communicating with the public?



Public meetings strategies

- Know your community
- Utilize advocates & champions in the room and in the audience
- Implement realistic rules of engagement
(*Ex. 3-minute speaking period*)
- Provide information well in advance
- Make sure anticipated questions are answered in the presentation and all public materials so people are prepared



when people yell, they care loudly

Misinformation and Social Media

Misinformation seems to creep around every corner of social media. Public comments and vitriol can make some organizations wary of meeting the public here. But social media can be a great equalizer and a powerful tool if used properly.



They're called internet trolls...



Social Media examples



Fairfax County Government
@fairfaxcounty

Follow

For those retweeting @FCPSinformation, it is a FAKE account. Follow @fcpsnews for official school status. #ffxstorm

6:40 PM - 21 Jan 2014

25 Retweets 10 Likes



Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency - OHFA
1d · 🌐

As we mentioned yesterday, there can only be one [Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency - OHFA](#). Like other housing agencies around the country, there is a group trying to impersonate us. They've created a brand new page with false information about Housing Choice Vouchers and Section 8.

If this page comes across your feed, please report it as fake.

Oklahoma Housing Development Aut... Q



Oklahoma Housing Development Authority

0 likes · 0 followers

OHFA offers programs including rental assistance, homeownership, and housing development in Oklahoma.

Like

Posts About Photos Mentions

Details

Page · Housing Assistance Service

tinyurl.com/OKHDA-Program

No posts yet

Featured

FAKE
X

Oklahoma Housing Development Aut... Q

Posts About Photos Mentions

Oklahoma Housing Development Authority

1h · 🌐

If you are looking for affordable accommodation then this is your chance, apply before 30 June 2024.

We wish you luck.

The link here: <https://tinyurl.com/OKHDA-Program>

Waiting List to Open for Public Housing and Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program

Oklahoma Housing Authority will open their waiting list and accept preliminary applications for Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program and Public Housing.

Housing to Open:

- Parkview Manor (4 story low-rise) - One Bedroom Units
- Public housing - Two (2) Three (3) and Four (4) bedroom Scattered site units
- Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher program

Dates: June 20th - 30th

Locations to apply: tinyurl.com/apply-now
1000 N. Lynn Street Oklahoma City, OK 73116

Time: 24 hours a day starting at 8:00 am on June 26
Closing at 5:00 pm on June 30.

Walk-in: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

SCAM ALERT!

Trending

 **Mumbai Traffic Police** @MTPHereToHelp · Jun 18
Dearest Gentle Reader,

We need our most distinguished members of the ton to be vigilant, lest you face a traffic tangle!


If a commotion arises, rest assured, we shall uncover every detail.

Yours in Devoted Service,
Mumbai Traffic Police

[Show more](#)



2 2 25 4K

 **Seattle-Tacoma International Airport** ·
Published by Abbey Lampert · 4h ·

Surely you did not think you could arrive late and still make your voyage on time. You must make haste and arrive two hours before your flight.




[See insights and ads](#)

[Boost post](#)

53

11 comments 4 shares

 **Missouri Department of Health a...** ·
1d ·

Heed this advisement, dear reader, lest we celebrate you before you are acquainted with your newfound suitor's last name.



[#Bridgerton](#) [#LadyWhistledown](#)
[#DearestGentleReader](#) [#HappyFathersDay](#)
[#Condoms](#) [#Polin](#)



Lady Artificialdown's
DEPARTMENT PAPERS

Dearest Gentle Reader,

The social season is upon us, and as you well know, if anyone is to divulge the details of society's soirees, it is I. Of note, it has come to this author's attention that a certain holiday to honor each family's patriarch is approaching with haste. I do hope each budding romance in this season should be graced with heirs of their own - should they choose to continue their name.

It is quite apparent, however, that some members of the ton never truly grasped the ways in which one comes to be with child. As an expert in the art of our ton's relations, I can reveal the solution to prevent your own Father's Day fête is rather rudimentary, dear reader. Protect not only your heart as you secure your suitor, but the rest of you, as well. After all, the Queen's crown jewels are never without a guard, are they not?

Invest your dowry in condoms, or I shall be forced to wish you a joyous holiday.

Yours Truly,
Lady Artificialdown

30

4 comments

Personality is everything...



National Park Service ✓
@NatlParkService

Spiders: Unsuccessfully trapping hikers since,
like, forever.



National Park Service ✓
@NatlParkService

Hot springs are so hot right now.

Well, all the time.



Humor can educate...

- People will remember content that is creative or funny
- Make them LOL (actually)



Washington State Department of Natural Resources

May 4 · 🌐

Wildfire Awareness Month 🍌 May the 4th Be With You

A long time ago in a galaxy far away...wait no...that can't be right. Wildfires are something we face now, right here in Washington. Let's take a look at the Jedi texts and see what advice they have for us:

-If you have a campfire, be sure to put it out completely with water. Remember; down it, stir it, feel it (with your hands not the force).



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Do you have a full-time person dedicated to social media or communications?

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Discuss at Your Table...

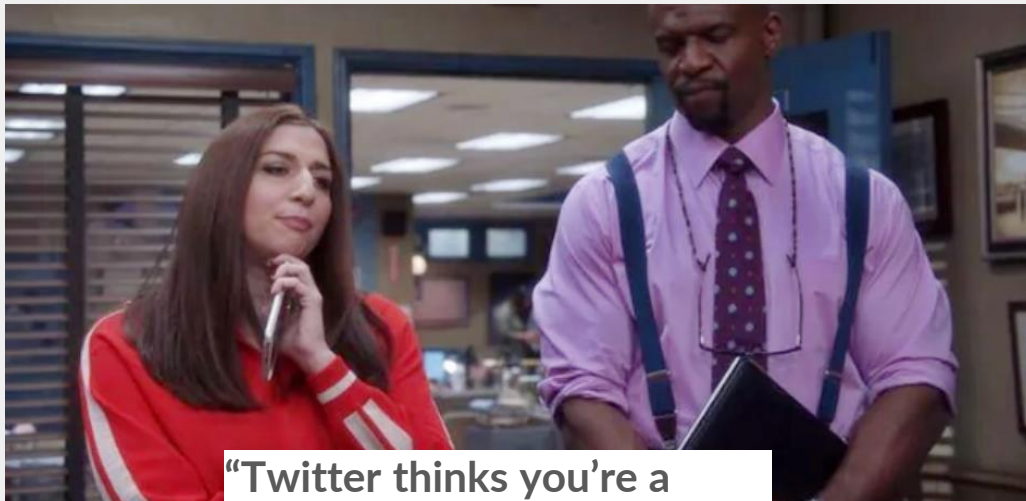


- Does your organization proactively address misinformation when you see it? Why or why not?
- Discuss your social media policy? Do you have one?

The only constant is change...



Artificial Intelligence



“Twitter thinks you’re a hot”

@FEMESTELLA



“Why? I am a human. A human male.”

Artificial Intelligence is here

NESS LABS

The Artificial Creativity Landscape

ALL-in-one Tools

The image displays a grid of AI tool icons categorized into several domains:

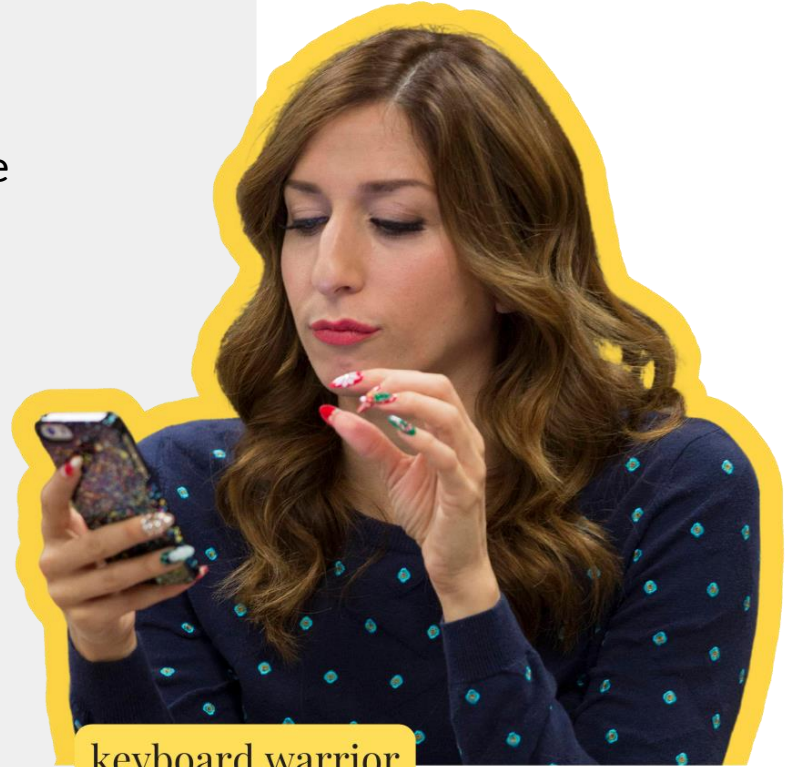
- Linguistic Creativity**
 - ALL-Purpose Text Generation: Ryttr, OpenAI, InK, etc.
 - Marketing & Sales Copy: Copy.ai, Jasper, etc.
 - Text Optimization: Grammarly, etc.
 - Coding & Web Development: GitHub Copilot, etc.
- Musical Creativity**
 - Sound & Music Generation: Soundraw, etc.
 - Voice Synthesis: ElevenLabs, etc.
- Visual & Artistic Creativity**
 - Image Generation: Midjourney, DALL-E, etc.
 - Video Generation: Pictory, etc.
 - Design: Canva AI, etc.
- Scientific Creativity**
 - IRIS.AI, etc.
- Other**
 - Knowledge Management & Search: Notion AI, etc.
 - Customer Support & Automation: Ada, etc.
 - Characters: Character.AI, etc.
 - Gaming: AI Dungeon, etc.
 - Erotica: AI-generated content, etc.
 - Market Intelligence: AI tools for market analysis, etc.

Deep fakes



Social Media Strategies

- Use humor when appropriate to make things memorable
- Use multimedia (photos, video) to increase chances of being seen
- Repeat important and actionable messages
- Hop into comments if people start asking questions, filling in gaps helps build trust
- Lead and prove with facts –this is why websites and articles can be important
- Call out AI fakes



keyboard warrior

How to utilize your comms person

- Space and time are needed to try new things
- Use data from platforms and other tools to create a meaningful strategy that will engage the community
- Make sure other departments are providing information to your communications person well in advance



If you don't have a communications specialist

- Set some ground rules for your organization (create a policy) and get management and elected officials on board
- Decide who will take the lead in crafting your messaging and running social media channels—make sure they have the training and resources they need
- Countering misinformation is everyone's responsibility (even if you do have a dedicated comms person)



Internal misinformation



Who?

- City staff
- Mayor & City Council
- Commissions & boards
- Volunteers



I'm the Mayor, I'm always right

Internal strategies

- Predict the misinformation
- Get electeds and staff **facts & talking points**
- Explain the importance & value
- Be transparent and visible
- Welcome questions
- Repeat important messages



Use what you learn...



You heard that during the last “Coffee with Council,” one of your councilmembers was concerned that a proposed zoning code amendment will make it impossible to park downtown. You are working on the new zoning code and know that’s not true.

Consider: How would you address this internal misinformation?

What other misinformation can you anticipate regarding the new zoning code?

Action: Discuss three actions you’d take with others at your table. Be prepared to share takeaways on slide.com.

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How would you address this scenario?

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Electronic handouts

- Social Media
Links, strategies, examples, and accounts to follow
- Resources
Links to SMEs, info sheets, webinars, articles, and professional organizations

Use the conference app to gain access.





“

Preserving **truth and transparency**– the pillars of good government–requires **COURAGE** and the willingness to, at times, be unpopular... consider this ***‘other duties as assigned.’***

”

– Us

Ask us anything!

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Lindsey Lvaughn@cityofflp.gov

Sam Sloyuk@kenmorewa.gov



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Audience Q&A Session