

Disinformation InfoGuide

For Black Social Media Users

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NATIONAL BLACK
CULTURAL
INFORMATION TRUST

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INFOGUIDE SUMMARY

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This twelve-page InfoGuide contains definitions, examples, information, resources, and action steps to help Black communities combat disinformation on social media. This InfoGuide predominantly focuses on Twitter. However, much of the same information applies to various social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. It includes ten steps that Black social media users can take to help stop the spread of disinformation targeting our communities. It also provides educational resources and recommended organizations concerning voting rights, civil rights, activism, and cultural awareness.

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DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS ARE TARGETING BLACK SOCIAL MEDIA USERS



BAD ACTORS USE CULTURAL ISSUES TO CAUSE CONFUSION ONLINE

We're being influenced.

Researchers say Black communities have been specifically targeted online by bad actors who post false information about cultural issues, attempting to increase divisions in Black communities, influence how we vote, and influence public opinions. They use cultural and racial topics like civil rights, reparations, slavery, economic agendas, and immigration to spread disinformation.

WHAT IS CULTURAL DISINFORMATION?



FALSE INFORMATION

Some things are not what they seem.

Cultural disinformation is false and inaccurate information surrounding cultural issues or topics spread by bad actors with intentions of deceiving, coercing, or shaping public opinions. Cultural disinformation is entirely intentional.

Disinformation is often shared by trolls, fake accounts, or bots but is also distributed by real people.

- **Trolls are often anonymous accounts that intentionally provoke others.**
- **Fake accounts are created with false identities and images. Some are referred to as sock puppets often used to deceive and influence.**
- **Bots are also a form of fake accounts on social media. They are automated accounts frequently designed to engage with and or influence others.**

BEWARE OF DIGITAL BLACK FACE



DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?

Fake and troll accounts are on Twitter and Facebook.

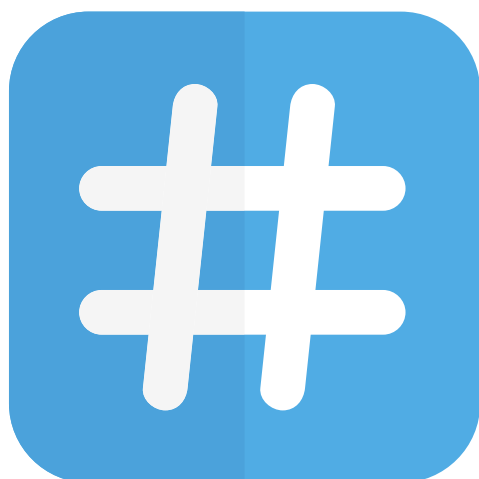
Digital Black Face is when someone that is not Black pretends to be Black online. They often use stock photos, cartoons, Black historical images, and celebrity photos as profile pictures. These accounts often profess to be Black. They may even say, "as a Black man/woman, I believe...." Digital Black face is usually detected by abnormal behavior and incorrect usage of African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: REAL EXAMPLES OF DIGITAL BLACK FACE

Twitter account @DarnellMAGA pretended to be a Black man supporting Donald Trump for president. The @CopJrCliff Twitter account pretended to be a Black police officer supporting Trump. It had over 11,000 followers. Twitter recently suspended both accounts in a round-up of suspensions concerning fake Black pro-Trump accounts. These accounts used #BlacksForTrump.

The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter post and a profile page. The top part shows a tweet from the account 'Darnell #BlacksForTrump' (@DarnellMAGA). The tweet text reads: 'YES IM BLACK AND IM VOTING FOR TRUMP. Can I get some retweets and follows Patriots?!? The people need's FOUR MORE YEARS! #TRUMP2020'. Below the text, it says 'RT RT RT I follow all back, love yall fr.' followed by three yellow prayer hands emoji. The tweet is dated '11:40 - 7. Okt. 2020'. The profile page below shows the account 'J.R Cliff #Trump2020' (@CopJrCliff) with a bio: 'Husband, Father, and Vet #Trump2020'. The profile picture is a Black man in a police uniform. The main content area shows a tweet from 'Darnell #BlacksForTrump' retweeted by 'J.R Cliff #Trump2020'. The tweet text is identical to the one above. The profile page also shows 'New to Twitter?' and 'Worldwide trends' sections.

CO-OPTED HASHTAGS USED BY BAD ACTORS TO INFLUENCE BLACK COMMUNITIES



- **WalkAway**
- **Blexit**
- **MAGA**
- **BlackVoicesForTrump**
- **BlacksForTrump**
- **ADOS**
- **Tangibles2020**
- **NoReparationsNoVote**

ARE THEY REAL PEOPLE OR BOTS?

The answer is not so simple.

REAL people use these hashtags. Unfortunately, the hashtags have also been **CO-OPTED** by bad actors in the form of bots, trolls, and sock puppet accounts. They use hashtags to influence the Black population concerning voting and other issues. They use cultural conversations as an entry point. The accounts often use digital Black face to appear as a Black person speaking on Black issues.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: REAL EXAMPLE OF A CO-OPTED HASHTAG POST

 **Bill Dixon**
@BillDix15525176

Follow

STFU biotch. You and ur dead husband are collaborators with rws to do nothing for us [#ADOS](#)

Blacks: Don't be fooled by this "anti Trump" rhetoric. Where are the [#Tangibles2020](#)?
Elijah Cummings' wife gives tribute that brings crowd to their feet - CNN Video



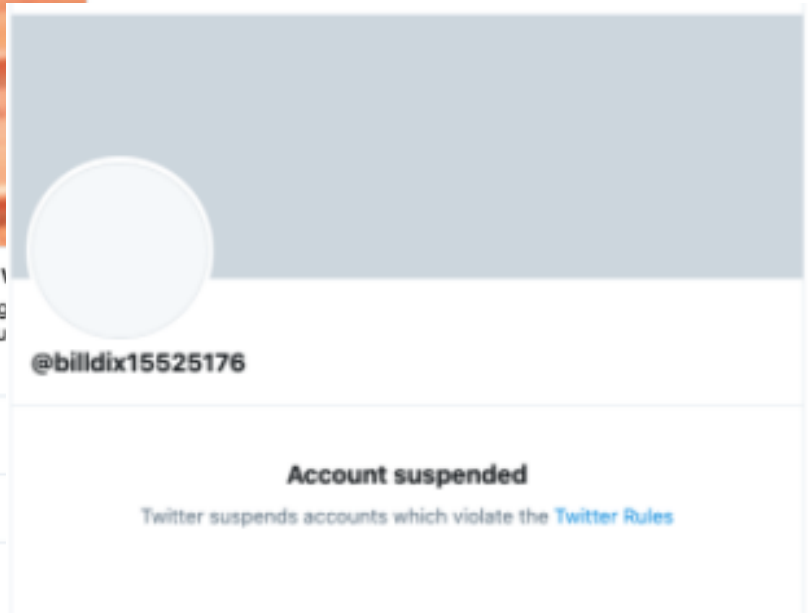
Elijah Cummings' wife gives tribute that brings crowd to their feet - CNN
Dr. Maya Rockey Moore Cummings, the widow of the late Rep. Elijah Cummings appeared to respond to President Trump's previous attacks of her husband du
cnn.com

3:06 PM - 25 Oct 2019

7 Retweets 19 Likes



The account @BillDix15525176 used [#ADOS](#) and [#Tangibles2020](#) to disparage the late Rep. Elijah Cummings and his wife and encouraged Black Americans to vote for Trump. The account exhibited a prime feature of fake accounts; abnormal Twitter handles with long numbers. Twitter suspended the account, but many more exist and are created every day on the platform.



SUPPRESSING BLACK VOTES



VOTES UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Trolls are trying to influence how we think about voting.

Black voters continue to face enormous hurdles in the U.S. electoral process. Voter disenfranchisement and suppression are at an all-time high. This includes poll taxes, polling station closures in Black neighborhoods, voters abruptly removed from the rolls, gerrymandering, strict voter-id and registration laws, deceptive robocalls giving false information about when or where to vote, and more.

Cultural disinformation online is another voter suppression tactic that includes troll accounts trying to influence how Black Americans think and act concerning elections. We must protect Black communities and our votes by staying informed of the various sophisticated techniques used to suppress, deter, and stop Black communities from voting.



This fake account had over 16,000 followers. It used the real photo of a deceased Black soldier. Twitter recently suspended it.

SUPPRESSING BLACK COLLECTIVE ACTIVISM



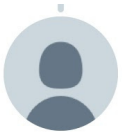
UNITY UNDER ATTACK

Fake and troll accounts try to drive wedges between Black communities.

Another aspect of cultural disinformation includes fake or troll accounts attempting to drive wedges between Black American and Black immigrant communities. They post false information and data used out of context to promote anti-Black immigrant agendas. They often use the talking points of white supremacist and xenophobic groups.

Bad actors fan the flames of cultural disagreements within Black communities to create divisions and prevent the growth of Black collective and political activism. It is imperative not to fall into the trap of divisive rhetoric. We must promote Black historical awareness and work with cross-cultural coalitions among Black communities of various ethnic backgrounds.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: REAL EXAMPLE OF A TROLL ACCOUNT'S ANTI-BLACK IMMIGRANT POST



Intellectual Recon
@ReconIntell

Replying to [@wishbumpycoulda](#) and [@indignantTX](#)

Look at the Sneaky African/Caribbean immigrant masquerading as a Native born Black American

Congressmember [@JacksonLeeTX18](#) passing out nasty unhealthy turkeys.

Jackson-Lee District is worse now compared to when she arrived.

[@TheBlackCaucus](#)

5:51 AM · 11/28/19 · [Twitter Web App](#)

5 Retweets 14 Likes



@ReconIntell

Account suspended

Twitter suspends accounts which violate the [Twitter Rules](#)

✓ On Thanksgiving Day of 2019, account @ReconIntell attacked Congresswoman Sheila Jackson with hateful and xenophobic rhetoric. The Twitter anonymous account, with no profile picture, accused Jackson Lee of being a “Sneaky African/Caribbean immigrant masquerading as a Native born Black American.” Twitter has suspended the account.

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO STOP THE SPREAD OF CULTURAL DISINFORMATION

- Remember that fake and troll accounts exist. Beware of abnormal social media handles, accounts with no profile photos, or strange images and vernacular.
- Pause before you share. If a story seems suspicious don't share it with your followers.
- Get information from reliable and reputable sources like experts, researchers, or organizations. Share this information with your followers or network.
- Look up information or quotes to make sure you're not misled by information shared out of context.
- Do reverse Google Searches on memes or images to locate their sources.
- Check the account. Was it just recently created, has zero followers, or a very small following? It may be a bot or troll.
- Beware of accounts with an abnormal usage of hashtags: #WalkAway, #Blexit, #MAGA, #BlackVoicesForTrump, #Tangibles2020, #ADOS, #NoReparationsNoVote, and #BlacksForTrump.
- Report accounts on social media platforms if you believe them to be fake or harmful.
- Beware of election emails or robocalls from spoof accounts pretending to be government officials. Verify voter information on your local government websites ending in .gov or with trustworthy community organizations.
- Educate your community. Share this informational guide with your networks.

SELECT ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNING CULTURAL ISSUES

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Black Cultural Issues and History

- African American Intellectual History Society
- Institute of the Black World 21st Century
- Racism.org
- BlackPast.org

Black Voting and Civil and Human Rights

- Black Voters Matter
- FairFight.com
- WinBlack.org
- National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
- Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
- NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
- Color of Change
- NAACP

Reparations for Descendants of African Enslaved in the United States

- National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America
- National African American Reparations Commission
- DAEUS.org

Disinformation Targeting Black Communities:

- National Black Cultural Information Trust
- Stop Online Violence Against Women
- WinBlack.org
- The Center for Critical Race & Digital Studies



RESEARCH ARTICLES AND REPORTS ABOUT MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION TARGETING BLACK COMMUNITIES

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES:

[Black Trolls Matter: Racial and Ideological Asymmetries in Social Media Disinformation](#)

[Twitter Suspends Fake Accounts Posing As Black Trump Supporters](#)

[CANARIES IN THE COAL MINE: COVID-19 MISINFORMATION AND BLACK COMMUNITIES](#)

[Stop Online Violence Against Women: A threat to an American Democracy: Digital Voter Suppression](#)

[‘Blacktivist’ account linked to Russia raised suspicion among Baltimore activists](#)

[What to know about ADOS, a group targeting Black progressives](#)

[Anti-vaccine leaders targeting minority becomes growing concern at NYC forum](#)

[After Russian trolls target black Americans, one city fights back](#)

