YALINETWORK
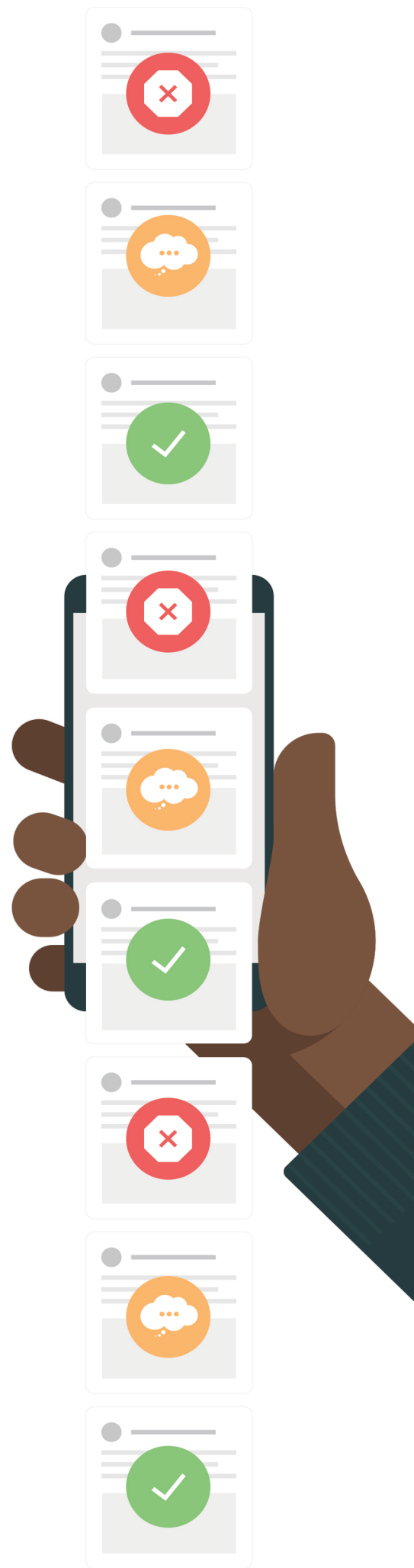
YALICHECKS

DISINFORMATION

TOOLKIT

What is Disinformation?

Disinformation is the deliberate dissemination of false and misleading information that serves to influence public opinion, undermine civil society, weaken democratic institutions, erode faith in government, and create confusion about an issue. Disinformation can take hold of many aspects of life, from health to climate change to politics.

What is Misinformation?

Misinformation is false, misleading, or out-of-context content shared without an intent to deceive.

Disinformation and misinformation are two forms of false information you might encounter. Both disinformation and misinformation share some of the same characteristics. What makes disinformation particularly dangerous is that those creating and spreading it are clearly aiming to sow chaos, gain power, or promote violence and extremism. Understanding the subtle differences between them will help you to be a savvier media consumer and an asset to your community. Below, you will find a helpful table to guide you in understanding the differences between disinformation and misinformation.

Disinformation	Misinformation
Purposefully false or misleading content shared with an intent to deceive and cause harm	False, misleading, or out-of-context content shared without intent to deceive
Motivated by political power or influence, profit, or the desire to sow chaos	Motivated by the idea that they're helping by sharing the information
Often includes polarizing views, inciting anger and other strong emotions	Can result from content created as satire or humor, but understood as genuine information
Widespread online; coordinated with multiple stakeholders	Spread online, but more isolated
Shifts people away from established sources and steers them toward online and unverified content	Prevents people from making informed decisions by providing inaccurate information
Spreads fast and far	Spreads fast and far
Fake information that does not include room for compromise	Includes a kernel of truth, but can be outdated

Source: Readers Digest, Business Insider, UNHCR Innovation Service

Types of Disinformation and Misinformation

Match the forms of information with the type, either disinformation or misinformation, by marking 'X' in the corresponding box. You can mark one box or both boxes. Once you've completed this section, check your answers in the answer key section.

TYPES OF DISINFORMATION & MISINFORMATION

TYPE	DISINFORMATION	MISINFORMATION
• Fabricated content		
• Manipulated content		
• Imposter content		
• Misleading content		
• Satire and parody understood as truth		
• Sponsored content		
• Factual errors		

Revised from UNHCR: Using Social Media in Community Based Protection: A Guide

What's at stake?

Digital disinformation has become increasingly sophisticated. The tactics used by both external and internal actors in Africa have helped create an environment that makes it easier for conspiracy theories and fabricated content to take hold among consumers of information and their communities. This deteriorates trust both online and off, stifles informed opinions, sows fear, and encourages confusion in consumers, all of which benefits bad actors.

Disinformation can have far-reaching effects on the public and make it difficult for consumers to distinguish between facts and disinformation. This makes it harder for people to know the truth about certain political, social, and security developments around the world, across the continent, and in their local communities.

False and deliberately deceptive information can be life-threatening or endanger democracy.

Why does fake news and disinformation matter?

It matters because disinformation:
* Erodes trust
* Builds and feeds community divisions
* Threatens the notion of truth
* Increases distrust in legitimate media and journalism
* Hinders the public's ability to make decisions and understanding of facts
* Contaminates the public discourse
* Harms people's physical health and safety
* Fuels hate speech, and can even lead to violence and death
* Distorts democratic processes
* Weaponizes information

Test your knowledge and match the term
Draw a line to match the term with the correct definition. Then, check the answer key at the end of the toolkit to see how many terms you've matched with the correct definition!

Term	Definition
Misinformation	Deceptive. It is false information that is intentionally crafted and spread to deceive.
Clickbait	Sabotages. It is factual information that is taken out of context and presented to cause harm.
Astroturfing	Fake, but very believable, audio clips and videos crafted and spread to deceive. They are meant to convince audiences of events that have not occurred.
Disinformation	Something (like a headline) designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink, especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest.
Maliformation	Real audio clips and videos that have been sped up, slowed down, or shown out of context to mislead.
Deepfakes	Organized activity that is intended to create a false impression of a widespread, grassroots movement in support of or opposition to something, but that is actually initiated and controlled by a concealed group.
Cheapfakes	Misleading. It is false information that is communicated and spread, regardless of intent to deceive.

Source: CISA and Merriam -Webster

For more ways to spot disinformation, read the YALI Network blog, "How to Spot Disinformation" or read Africa Check's article on "How to Avoid Disinformation Traps on Twitter".

If you need more practice evaluating your media consumer habits, you can use our YALIChecks media self-assessment toolkit to test your knowledge.

What's next?
Now that you've completed the YALIChecks Toolkit on disinformation, read on for more ways that you can stop disinformation and help others to understand the harmful effects of disinformation.

Watch the YALI Network course, Understanding and Countering Disinformation
Test your knowledge on the ways that disinformation manifests by taking the YALI Network Knowledge Check.
Read. Once you've completed the course and mastered the quiz, make sure to read the YALI Network blogs featuring other young leaders that are countering disinformation.

For more videos, blog posts, and other resources, visit our YALIChecks page.

Answer Keys

Answer Key for disinformation and misinformation exercise
1. Disinformation - False content intentionally created to manipulate people or a group.
2. Misinformation - Genuine information or imagery that has been distorted, e.g. a sensational headline or populist 'clickbait'.
3. Disinformation - Impersonation of genuine sources, e.g. using the branding of an established agency.
4. Misinformation - Misleading information, e.g. comment presented as fact.
5. Misinformation - Untrue content created allegedly for humor or entertainment that is understood to be true or accurate by some. There is no intention to harm but readers may perceive the content differently.
6. Misinformation - Advertising or public relations content presented in a manner that looks like news or editorial content without proper labels.
7. Misinformation or disinformation - A factual error made by mistake without intent to manipulate the reader could be misinformation. It would be disinformation if the writer intentionally misreported information to push readers to a certain conclusion.

Answer Key for "Match the Term"
• Misinformation - Misleading. It is false information that is communicated and spread, regardless of intent to deceive.
• Clickbait - Something (like a headline) designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink, especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest.
• Astroturfing - Organized activity that is intended to create a false impression of a widespread, grassroots movement in support of or opposition to something, but that is actually initiated and controlled by a concealed group.
• Disinformation - Deceptive. It is false information that is intentionally crafted and spread to deceive.
• Malinformation - Sabotages. It is factual information that is taken out of context and presented to cause harm.
• Deepfakes - Fake, but very believable, audio clips and videos crafted and spread to deceive. They are meant to convince audiences of events that have not occurred.
• Cheapfakes - Real audio clips and videos that have been sped up, slowed down, or shown out of context to mislead.