Protecting Democracy Unit

Monthly Dashboard – October XX, 2023

Refocused research and analysis to better inform policy.	Framework to combat MIDI and protect democracy is in place.	Public service better equipped to mitigate threats.	Civil society and private sector are engaged in joint effort.
SEPTEMBER ACCOMPLISMENTS			
• Drafted briefing material on AI for DMNS retreat. • Added PDU research questions to PCO IIU survey. • Created GCxChange site to share GC research, priorities w OGDs. • Met CSE regarding draft updated cyber threats to DI report. • Exchanged best practices at Counter-Disinformation event at Hybrid CoE in Finland. • Confirmed potential topics, leads for academic research contracts.	• Finalized development of materials to brief Panel. • Continued engagement with SITE members on its future. • Coordinated GC response to OECD Dis/Mis Hub questionnaire and to Center of Excellence (CoE) Hybrid Threats survey. • Input into POEC 6 Month Progress Report Response. s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence	• Tthe "Counter Disinformation Guidebook" to be shared with comms for plain language review and design • Secure contract for the CSPS self-pace course content • Schedule second meeting of interdepartmental PD Expanded Directors group *(carry over)* • Confirm preferred course for DM-level engagement *(carry over)*	• Revised draft of toolkits and web update were shared with MinO. • Met with Canadian Urban Libraries Council to explore potential collaborations . • Met with Democracy Xchange for potential collaboration in 2024 event. • Met with Public Policy Forum regarding next steps on its polarization initiative.
OCTOBER PRIORITIES			
• **Finalize deck on AI risks and opportunities.** • **Complete draft Research Strategy.** • **Launch GCxChange site, obtain, share GC research, priorities.** • **Hold meetings with France and Sweden regarding their approaches to monitoring MIDI.** • **Publish weekly summaries of research reports alongside Trending Headlines product.**	• Support for parliamentary studies and public inquiry • Advice for Canada's role in OECD Dis/Mis Hub Steering Committee • Schedule and prepare briefings for Panel members *(carry over)* s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence Submit response to CoE survey and attend Countering Disinfo mtg in Helsinki.	• Revised draft of the "Counter Disinformation Guidebook" to be shared with comms for plain language review and design • Secure contract for the CSPS self-pace course content • Schedule second meeting of interdepartmental PD Expanded Directors group *(carry over)* • Confirm preferred course for DM-level engagement *(carry over)*	• Explore options for a potential environmental scan of activities by public libraries that could inform future projects. • Seek proposal for an event during the DemocracyXchange 2024 conference. • Work with Comms to develop communication and engagement strategy to promote products.
Tracking towards longer term priorities:			
• Continue to deepen knowledge and understanding of the state of MIDI in Canada (focusing on impact) –ongoing • **Strengthen interdepartmental leadership and coordination.** • **Increase research collaboration with external partners via contracts, events, and CDMRN.**	s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence	• Establish interdepartmental governance for more effective coordination – Ongoing • Develop tools for comms community on MIDI – Summer / Fall 2023 • Roll-out training – Fall 2023 • Hold FPT officials meeting- TBD	• Develop strategy to effectively engage with civil society and private sector – Spring 2023 • Support international engagement – ongoing • Re-engage with social media platforms – TBD

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SAMPLE OF RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Bots, Fake News and Election Conspiracies: Disinformation During the Republican Primary Debate and the Trump Interview (2023) *Queensland University of Technology, Digital Media Research Centre*

The Twitter account of Canadian Conservative news outlet, The Post Millennial, received more impressions related to the Trump interview than any other Twitter account. The analysis provides evidence that "[X] has moved away from being a space of political deliberation and into one of predominant exposure to conservative content."

Disinformation and Episodes of Regime Transformation — Yuko Sato, Felix Wiebrecht, and Staffan I. Lindberg (2023) *University of Gothenburg*

The presence of disinformation, and especially the government's use of disinformation increases the probability of a democracy experiencing an episode of autocratization (shifting more towards autocracy) from 0% to 8%. For autocracies, the government's use of disinformation helps to entrench autocrats and maintain control over their citizens, decreasing the probability of a democratization episode from 12% to 0%.

How the People's Republic of China Seeks to Reshape the Global Information Environment — Global Engagement Center (2023) *U.S. Department of State*

Tactics and strategies used by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to reshape the global information environment in favor of the PRC include but are not limited to: distribution of false or biased pro-PRC content through state-owned media; purchase of foreign media outlets; publishing PRC-made content in foreign media outlets; sponsorship of online influencers; advances global infrastructure for surveillance and censorship; exploits intelligence collection to shape messaging.

Freedom on the Net 2023: The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence — Freedom House (2023) *Freedom House*

Generative AI tools were utilized in at least 16 countries to distort information on political or social issues, and political actors in Nigeria, Venezuela, and the US deployed AI-manipulated content in electoral periods and moments of political crisis. Overall, global internet freedom declined for the 13th consecutive year.

AI generated deepfakes is contributing to a decaying information space and is undermining public trust. Government regulation of AI should aim to improve transparency and minimize the data they collect; provide effective mechanisms of public oversight and prioritize the protection of human rights; and strengthening information literacy and platform responsibility.

THE CALENDAR

September 13 (online)
The Trust Series: The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer for Canada (TRN1-E13)
- Organized by the Canada School of Public Service
- This event will present the most recent findings of the Edelman Trust Barometer for Canada with a focus on how Canadians' levels of trust have changed while navigating through a polarized world

September 18-19 (hybrid)
Conference: Democracy and Foreign Policy in an Era of Uncertainty
- Organized by Global Affairs Canada, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), iAffairs and Carleton University
- Two-day conference where speakers from across Canada and the Global South will examine the intricate interplay between democracy, international affairs, and the challenges faced in the defence and promotion of democracy at home and abroad

September 27 (online)
Read Me In: Demystifying Security and Intelligence Series — Why We Keep Secrets (FON1-E15)
- Organized by the Canada School of Public Service
- This second event in the series examines the circumstances in which governments must keep secrets and the critical importance of preventing information leaks. It also explores some of Canada's security and intelligence practices and the topic of intelligence-to-evidence.