

Rumor Risk Assessment for Crisis Communicators. Election Integrity Partnership, 2022.

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Informational Conditions	Uncertainty	Is this rumor taking place during a period of high uncertainty (while we await voting results or an official announcement)? Is it related to a part of the voting process where it is inherently difficult to identify what the “truth” is? Is the core claim “unfalsifiable”?
	Diminished Trust	Are local and state election officials experiencing diminished trust, generally or among specific audiences? Have election officials (in this area) made previous errors that received public criticism? Have errors related to this part of the election process been made in the past?
Contextual Features	Significance / Impact	If this claim were true, would it affect a large number of votes? Would it shift results in a specific (local) race? Would it shift the results of several races? Would it make an impact on nationally-relevant races (U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, Presidential)?
	Familiarity / Repetition	Is the rumor familiar in some way? Is it based on a previous rumor or rumors about elections? Does it use a common election trope? Has a similar rumor spread successfully before? Perhaps the same claim has emerged in another location? Or the same location has experienced a different claim prior?
Engagement Potential	Compellingness of “Evidence”	Is there some form of “evidence” that provides the basis for the claims? Is that evidence compelling? Is there photo or video evidence? Is there data or statistical evidence? Is there a first person account? Is there a second person or “friend of a friend” account? Relatedly, is that evidence difficult to refute? Relatedly, is the evidence difficult to refute? (Alternatively, is there a clear factcheck?)
	Emotional Valence	Does this rumor (or posts spreading this rumor) make an explicit emotional appeal? Does it invoke anger, outrage, disgust, or self-righteousness? Does it villainize a particular individual or group? Do posts spreading this rumor make an explicit mention of an out-group political party or social/demographic group? Relatedly, is the rumor humorous?
	Novelty	Is the rumor novel — i.e., new, original, or unusual in a compelling way?
	Participatory Potential	Is this a rumor that people can easily participate in — e.g., by sharing their own voting experiences, taking photos of their mail-in voting materials, combing through publicly available data, or closely watching videos or election procedures? Is there already evidence of participation — e.g., many people sharing their own experiences or unique insights?
System Effects	Origins and Amplification within Social Network	Where did this rumor originate (a social media account, website, celebrity, or elected official)? Is the rumor currently limited to just a few posts or statements by its original source? Or is it moving beyond that original source to other social media accounts, websites, or other sources?

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		Has the rumor reached nano- or micro- influencers (social media all-stars with 5,000-50,000 followers) within specific social networks? Has it reached the megaphones of high-follower social media accounts or media outlets with substantial audiences? Has its spread been mostly limited to a specific community within one platform? Is it spreading widely across many communities within one platform? Is it spreading across multiple platforms and communities?
	Inauthentic Amplification / Algorithmic Manipulation	Is there evidence that this rumor is being spread by automated or inauthentic accounts? Is there a large spike in posts by very new or very similar accounts (in terms of creation date or follower count)? Is there evidence of “copypasta” — where many different accounts post very similar content? Are terms from the rumor showing up, perhaps unexpectedly, in trending topics or auto-filling in the search box?