

ABSTRACT - The Triad of Disruption framework defines the methodology used by authoritarian nation-states and terrorist networks to meld Social Media, Digital Social Engineering, and Propaganda/Disinformation/Fake News into a set of interlinked modules to conduct online attacks against liberal democracies and sow discord, chaos, and mistrust for the purpose of weakening, and ultimately defeating, free and open societies.

Triad of Disruption: Defeating Democracies Online

A Framework for Digital Information Manipulation and Warfare

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government funding and support of a national *Digital Citizenship* education program for all Americans starting in pre-school and continuing through adulthood.
2. A full efficacy review and update of laws and policies applicable to industry standards for social media, especially in regards to section 230.
3. Enhanced funding and support for public – private partnerships to develop solutions to identify and counter Deep Fakes and other emerging digital social engineering methods.
4. Committed investment in a national approach for detection, identification, and authentication of online information warfare. This cannot be done via technology alone - it requires cultural changes to understand and defend against this evolving weapon.
5. Develop awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the Triad of Disruption. This includes establishing a national awareness campaign similar in scope and breadth to the 1970s anti-smoking campaign.
6. Active federal government support for an international cybersecurity/information warfare treaty similar in concept to the US – Russia nuclear arms reduction treaties.
7. Endorsement and support for the creation of a United Nations Cybersecurity Agency with authority for independent monitoring, forensic investigation, and public identification of nation-states employing the Triad of Disruption weapon.

The United States' 2016 presidential election is the most successful representation of a nation-state (Russia) using this framework to influence, motivate, and mislead citizens through information deception and manipulation. The success of Russia's campaign inspired the application of the framework against other democracies by authoritarian governments. These Triad of Disruption information warfare campaigns continue to grow in scope, complexity, and effectiveness.

Information, regardless of its factualness, can be leveraged in a moment's notice across open societies without adhering to rules-based standards or authentication

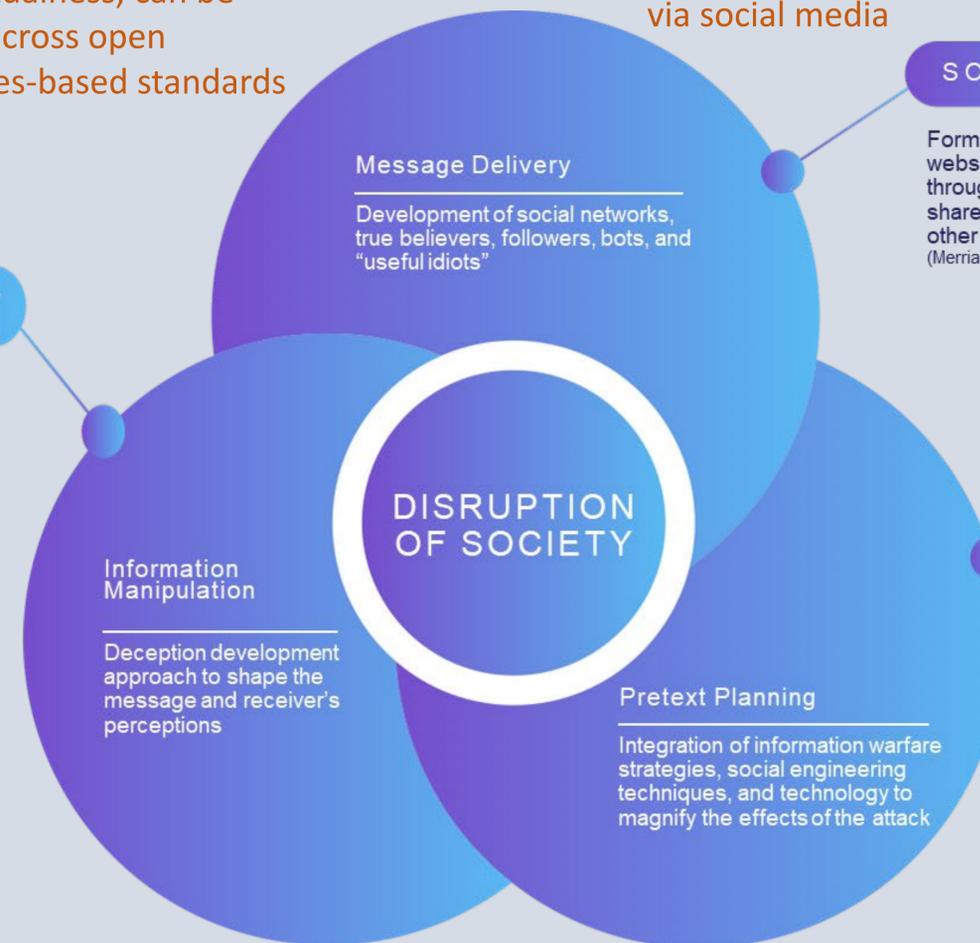
Increasing tribalism, parochialism, and distinct homophily tendencies within democracies, enabled through online networking, has greatly magnified the power of the 'message' via social media

PROPAGANDA, DISINFORMATION, AND FAKE NEWS

PROPAGANDA: The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person: ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause. (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

DISINFORMATION: False information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

FAKE NEWS: News that conveys or incorporates false, fabricated, or deliberately misleading information, or that is characterized as or accused of doing so. (Oxford English Dictionary)



SOCIAL MEDIA

Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

DIGITAL SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Combining online technology with the art of social engineering to persuade someone to provide information or act to the benefit of the attacker. (Curtis)

Evolution of new techniques, such as Deep Fakes, present grave national security threats

TRIAD OF DISRUPTION

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