

# USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative

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Executive Director

New England Newspaper & Press Assn.

August 25, 2020

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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How it all began...

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

2015: “Why are we talking about mobile phones?”



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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2015: “You are thinking too narrowly”



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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2017: Pivot from federal to states



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

2017: Focus on election cybersecurity



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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## States get assistance on Election Cybersecurity

...a partnership with the University of Southern California and supported by the National Association of State Election Directors and the National Association of Secretaries of State, with financial support from the Democracy Fund.

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

2019: State workshops begin with Virginia





# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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2019: State workshop in Minnesota



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

“With support from Google, USC Annenberg is working with five other USC schools to train election and campaign officials nationwide to protect elections from digital...”



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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“We are a 50-state campaign  
but without a candidate.”

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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“We are a 50-state campaign  
but without a candidate.”

“You’re wrong.”

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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“We are a 50-state campaign  
but without a candidate.”

“You’re wrong.  
**Your candidate is democracy.”**

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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“Do three things well.”

“Share best practices.”

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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“Do three things well”

“Share best practices”

Basic cybersecurity, led by VSoE

Disinformation, led by ASCJ

Crisis communication, led by PR

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

January: pre-launch final planning meeting





# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

January: 2020 workshops launch in Maryland



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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## February workshop in Ohio State Capitol



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## February workshop in Ohio State Capitol



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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## February workshop in California



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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## February workshop in Kentucky



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

## February workshop in Kentucky



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

## February workshop in Nevada



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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## February workshop in Nevada





# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

## March workshop in Pennsylvania



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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## March workshop in Pennsylvania



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Response around the country



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

Response around the country



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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March 10: USC cancels all travel

March 11: Team back from Atlanta

March 12: Washington office closed

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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March 10: USC cancels all travel

March 11: Team back from Atlanta

March 12: Washington office closed

March 31: 1st online workshop in GA

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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April-August: 33 in-state workshops  
August 13: State #40 New Jersey

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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April-August: 33 in-state workshops

August 13: State #40 New Jersey

>3,000 participants (versus hundreds)



# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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April-August: 33 in-state workshops

August 13: State #40 New Jersey

>200 VIP speakers and panelists –  
U.S. Senators, Governors, Secretaries  
of State, Election Directors

# USC Election Cybersecurity Project

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April-August: 33 in-state workshops

September 17: New York

October 6: State #50

# Agenda

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- Cyber safety and Cybersecurity
- Disinformation and Misinformation
- Crisis Communication

# U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

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- Campaign Checklist:
- Securing Your Cyber Infrastructure
- [https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/dhs\\_campaign\\_checklist\\_final\\_october.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/dhs_campaign_checklist_final_october.pdf)

# Telework Best Practices

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- New from DHS, NSA and CISA:
- “Securing Your Cyber Infrastructure”
- What to do and what not to do
- <https://www.nsa.gov/Portals/70/documents/what-we-do/cybersecurity/NSA-DHS-Telework-Guide-29-April-2020.pdf>

# Defending Digital Campaigns

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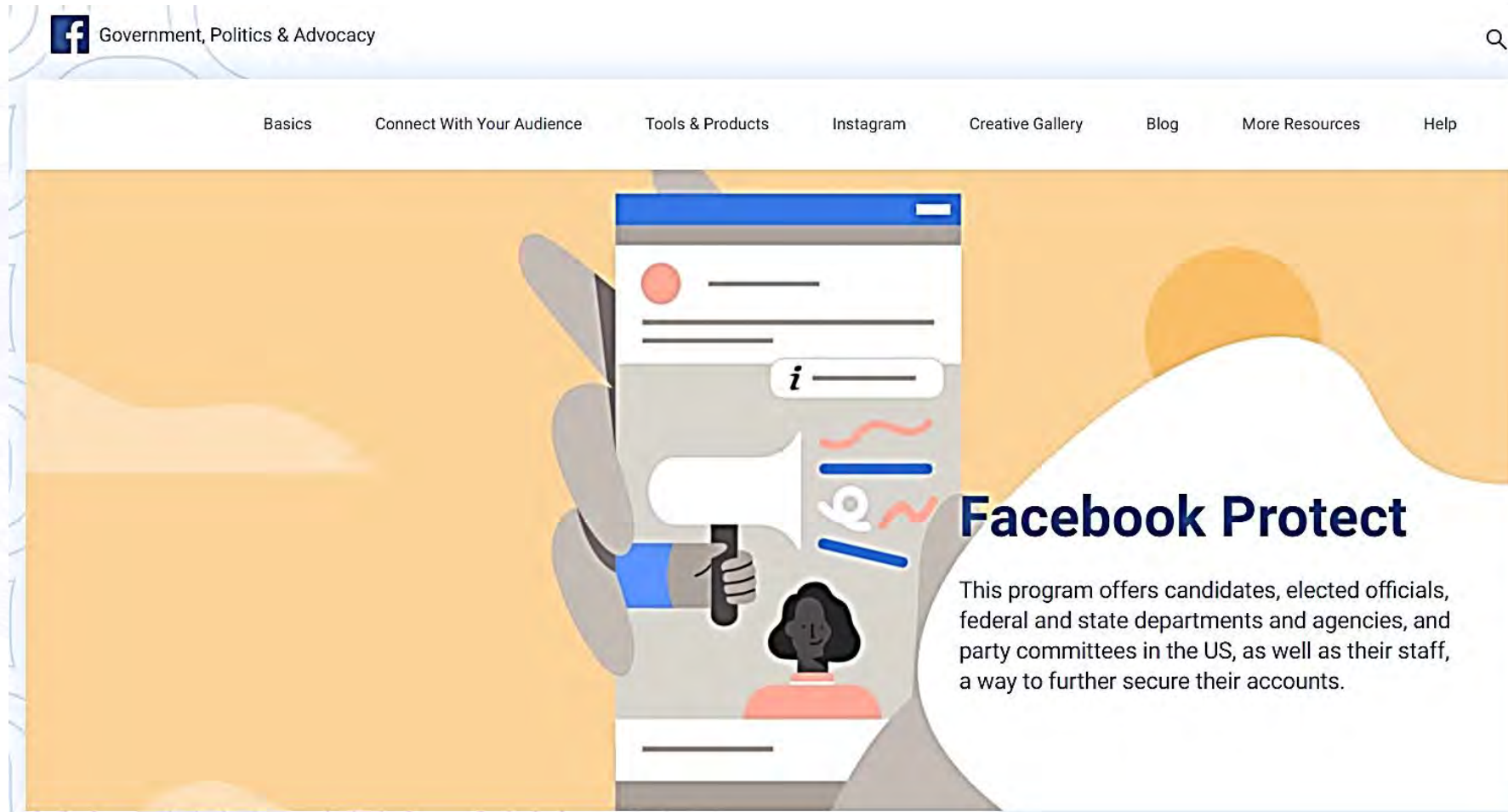
- Free cybersecurity assistance for House, Senate campaigns
- Nonpartisan, independent
- Free or reduced price products
- FEC: not treated as in-kind donations
- <http://www.defendcampaigns.org/>

# Cyber safety and Cybersecurity

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- Clifford Neuman
- Director, USC Center for Computer Systems Security
- Information Sciences Institute / Computer Science
- USC Viterbi School of Engineering
- <https://viterbi.usc.edu/directory/faculty/Neuman/B>

# Facebook Protect



The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook Protect page. At the top left, there is a Facebook logo and the text "Government, Politics & Advocacy". To the right is a search icon. Below this is a navigation menu with the following items: "Basics", "Connect With Your Audience", "Tools & Products", "Instagram", "Creative Gallery", "Blog", "More Resources", and "Help". The main content area features a large illustration of a hand holding a smartphone. The phone screen displays a notification with a red circle and a speech bubble containing an information icon. Below the phone, there is a stylized person with dark hair and a red top. To the right of the illustration, the text "Facebook Protect" is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below this, a paragraph of text reads: "This program offers candidates, elected officials, federal and state departments and agencies, and party committees in the US, as well as their staff, a way to further secure their accounts."



# Advanced Protection Program (APP)



APP is Google's strongest security offering, designed to protect users who face an elevated risk of sophisticated and highly-targeted online attacks.

Activists



Politicians &  
Campaign teams



Journalists



Business  
executives



GSuite & Cloud  
Identity



# Added Security for the Election Season

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To request additional protection from Google by letting them know your accounts are election-related: use the form you can find at

**[Goo.gle/enhanced-security](https://services.google.com/fb/forms/enhanced-security/)**

# Microsoft Defending Democracy



## Microsoft AccountGuard

Microsoft AccountGuard is a new security service offered at no additional cost to customers in the political space. The service is designed to help these highly targeted customers protect themselves from cybersecurity threats.

# Today's Agenda

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- Defining disinformation and misinformation
- Offline Impact
- 2020 Presidential Election: Both parties share concerns
- Why misinformation spreads
- Tips and resources

# Disinformation and Misinformation

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- Sarah Mojarad
- USC Viterbi School of Engineering
- [https://viterbi.usc.edu/directory/faculty/Mojarad/  
Sarah](https://viterbi.usc.edu/directory/faculty/Mojarad/Sarah)

# Today's Agenda

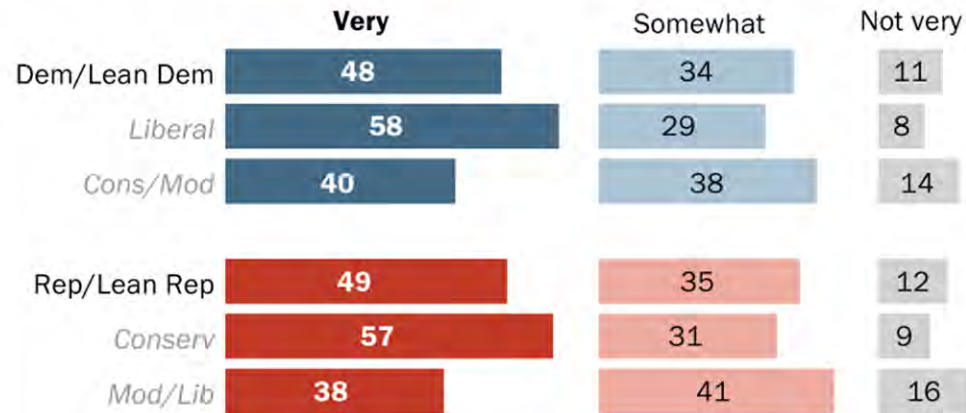
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- Defining disinformation and misinformation
- Offline Impact
- 2020 Presidential Election: Both parties share concerns
- Why misinformation spreads
- Tips and resources

# Made-up News: Both Parties Share Concern

## About half of Democrats, Republicans 'very concerned' about made-up news influencing the 2020 election

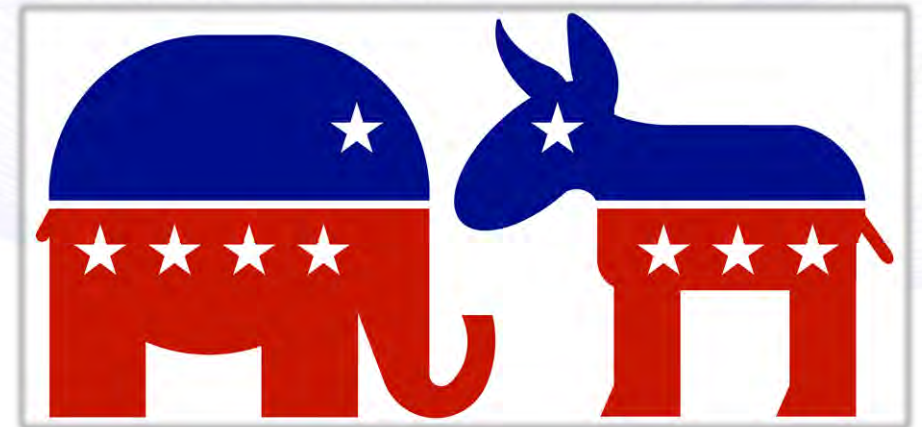
% who say they are \_\_\_ concerned about the influence made-up news could have during the 2020 presidential election



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 29-Nov. 11, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

% of concern is almost identical for each political party



# Resources – Screenshot this slide

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- <https://images.google.com/>
- <https://www.get-metadata.com/>
- <https://29a.ch/photo-forensics/#level-sweep>



# Resources – Screenshot this slide

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- <https://hoaxy.iuni.iu.edu/>
- <https://botsentinel.com/>
- <https://www.invid-project.eu>

# Resources – Screenshot this slide

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- <https://www.verificationhandbook.com>
- <https://bellingcat.com>
- For **Facebook** and **Twitter** insider contact information, email: `truevote@usc.edu`

# Crisis Communication

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- Tom Lange
- Advisory Board Member
- USC Center for Public Relations
- <https://annenberg.usc.edu/research/center-public-relations/board-of-advisors/tom-lange>

# Elements of a Crisis Comm Plan

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1. Signed Endorsement from Leadership
2. Staff Roles & Responsibilities
3. Information Verification, Clearance and Release
4. Media Relations Process
5. Crisis Management Center

# Elements of a Crisis Comm Plan

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6. Designated Spokespeople
7. Crisis Team Contact information
8. Predetermined Communication Channels
9. Media Monitoring Service
10. Crisis Simulation

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