



Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Misinformation & Disinformation Subcommittee Meeting May 24, 2022

Purpose of Meeting

- The purpose of the CISA Cybersecurity Advisory Committee (CSAC) Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Misinformation & Disinformation (MDM) Subcommittee meeting was for Subcommittee members to review and discuss the draft recommendations to present during the CSAC June Quarterly Meeting as well as the DHS Disinformation Governance Board.

Discussion

- Mr. James Nash, Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO) for the MDM Subcommittee, brought the meeting to order and introduced the newly appointed ADFO for the MDM Subcommittee, Ms. Kirsten Heidelberg, CISA.
- Dr. Kate Starbird, Associate Professor, Human Centered Design & Engineering, University of Washington, MDM Subcommittee Chair, discussed the Subcommittee's recommendations to present during the CSAC June Quarterly Meeting and the path forward to strategically approach MDM in the government during the current discourse. Dr. Starbird restated the Subcommittee's commitment to transparency but expressed concern for the Subcommittee's efforts and cautioned the group on how to communicate their ongoing work.
 - Ms. Vijaya Gadde, Legal, Public Policy, and Trust and Safety Lead, Twitter, affirmed this caution and shared her recent communication cautioning Director Easterly about her own involvement in the Subcommittee's work given the fraught time, especially in advance of the election season.
 - Ms. Suzanne Spaulding, Senior Advisor for Homeland Security and Director of the Defending Democratic Institutions Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), suggested that the group recruit subject matter experts (SMEs) to support the Subcommittee's efforts, solicit different perspectives, and apply credibility to the Subcommittee's work with a broader audience. Ms. Spaulding offered an additional suggestion of asking Director Easterly for her perspective of socializing this Subcommittee's work with Congress to prevent outside parties from being blindsided by their efforts. She further suggested the Subcommittee re-read and refine the recommendations and stressed that the safest ground in election is the recommendation for CISA to 1) point individuals to an authoritative source and 2) utilize their convening power. She stressed that CISA should examine MDM beyond elections, but suggested including in the recommendations that the Subcommittee is scoping their work around elections given the approaching election cycle. Ms. Spaulding offered an additional recommendation for CISA to scope their mission space to MDM that poses significant risk to national critical functions (NCFs).
 - Ms. Gadde suggested revisiting each recommendation to ensure each is scoped to the scale of building societal resilience. Ms. Gadde noted that the group can frame pre-bunking efforts differently to target the perspective of clarifying election procedures. She suggested removing mention of MDM and framing the recommendations more targeted to directing people to clear information about elections procedures. Dr. Starbird suggested editing the recommendations to change MDM to "informational threats to critical infrastructure."



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- Ms. Spaulding expressed that she was uncomfortable with the term “informational threats” and posing information as a threat.
 - Mr. Geoff Hale, CISA, offered that there is not a practical solution from removing the language of MDM, but suggested the Subcommittee think to frame of the divesting activities— such as tactical education in the form of tactics of foreign influence activities—to root understanding in the power dichotomy of well-resourced nation states against individual social media users or election officials. He stressed the importance of CISA's role performing risk analysis and understanding where information manipulation exists, then extending this information forward as a type of FAQ model across CISA's authorities, rather than thinking of this work as countering MDM. Ms. Spaulding noted that this is consistent with the Subcommittee's recommendation to build public resilience.
 - Ms. Spaulding stressed the recommendation for CISA to educate the public about the tactics, techniques, and procedures used by foreign adversaries to spread MDM. She emphasized that the spread of false information is a technique used by our adversaries. She affirmed the need for CISA to conduct voter risk analysis and risk identification in the context of tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Ms. Spaulding reemphasized the recommendation for CISA to direct the public to authoritative sources of information and suggested defining authoritative sources as first-hand sources of information, most notably from elections officials themselves. She noted the concerns in this context to include MDM regarding how election procedures operate and recommended that CISA point people towards when, where, and how elections are run. Following this, CISA must publish elections procedures and audits that reinforce the credibility. This recommendation fits under the pre-bunking work while not restricting CISA to calling out false information, but instead releasing authoritative information ahead of an event so individuals can recognize attacks.
 - Subcommittee members discussed potential briefers and brainstormed ways to socialize the Subcommittee's work.
 - Ms. Spaulding recommended Mr. Jameel Jaffer, Columbia Law, as a potential briefier.
 - Ms. Spaulding recommended that the Subcommittee meet with Director Easterly about socializing their work.
 - Dr. Starbird, Ms. Gadde, and Ms. Spaulding took for action to identify a point of contact from a progressive civil rights and civil liberties angle to recruit as a SME.
 - Ms. Gadde noted a challenge for the subcommittee to lay the groundwork to socialize their work with key parties in advance. She recommended that CISA point to more state officials and state laws to make the authoritative source of information less controversial.
 - Ms. Gadde restated her offer to remove herself from the Subcommittee when the recommendations are released. Mr. Hale offered that Director Easterly would not support removing Ms. Gadde due to her respect of Ms. Gadde's work.
 - Ms. Spaulding resurfaced the suggestion to solicit additional SME to supplement the Subcommittee's efforts.
 - Subcommittee members discussed the importance of scoping their recommendations around the First Amendment.



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- Ms. Gadde suggested the group begin their introduction by highlighting the First Amendment and framing their work purely around exercising speech rights of elections officials so as not to infringe upon the rights of voters.
 - Ms. Spaulding said this is an opportunity to remind the public of CISA's scope, as the First Amendment applies to CISA as a government agency in a way that it does not apply to the private sector.
 - Ms. Kim Wyman, Senior Election Security Lead, CISA, reflected on her time as the Secretary of State for the state of Washington. She noted that the adversaries, such as Russia, use the First Amendment against Americans very effectively. She commented that CISA's education efforts and resilience building efforts are about helping people see our adversaries use these tools in ways they couldn't 20 years earlier to effectively spread MDM for malicious ends. She realized our adversaries utilize this part of our Constitution effectively.
 - Ms. Spaulding noted the recommendation to remind individuals of our strengths and playing to these strengths rather than allowing them to be used against us by our adversaries.
- Ms. Spaulding reiterated the Subcommittee's recommendation for CISA to work to discern the truth and point to authoritative sources with firsthand knowledge when they are notified of harmful MDM. She recommended that CISA should not determine what qualifies as truth, but instead empower the public with the skills and tools while pointing to information so that they can discern for themselves. This recommendation would empower individuals to make their own decisions about information.
 - Dr. Starbird asked the group to revisit the recommendations document this week. Dr. Starbird asked the members to identify any resources that could be put in place to communicate the work of the subcommittee when their work becomes public.
 - Ms. Spaulding suggested contacting Director Easterly in preparation for the rollout during the CSAC June Quarterly Meeting to solicit her feedback on how to pre-socialize the existence of the subcommittee with key members of Congress or outside validators.
 - Mr. Hale confirmed that the DHS Secretary, Alejandro Mayorkas, has been briefed on the CISA CSAC and the subcommittees. Mr. Nash shared the [publicly available information on the CSAC and the Subcommittees](#).
 - Dr. Starbird noted this group is different from the DHS Disinformation Governance Board since it is an external advisory group to direct CISA to define their mission and scope in this work in a transparent way.
 - Ms. Spaulding suggested soliciting feedback from Mr. Tom Fanning, Southern Company and CSAC Chair, to notify him of their ongoing work.
 - Dr. Starbird noted the path forward of continuing to refine the recommendations and asked the group to brainstorm potential briefers or SMEs.
 - Ms. Gadde suggested recruiting past briefers to review their draft recommendations.
 - Dr. Starbird noted that the DHS Disinformation Governance Board raised the risk of potential criticisms for the Subcommittee and asked Mr. Hale to share any strategic communication regarding their work for awareness or input to assist in pre-staging messaging.
 - Mr. Nash thanked the Subcommittee for their input, noted that he will flag the initial recommendations as a draft in revision, and adjourned the meeting.



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Action Items

- A1: Subcommittee members will refine the list of recommendations to present for Committee vote during the CSAC June Quarterly Meeting.
- A2: Dr. Starbird and Ms. Spaulding will contact Mr. Jameel Jaffer for input on their initial recommendations.
- A3: Ms. Gadde will brainstorm additional SMEs to recruit to aid the Subcommittee's efforts, particularly progressive civil rights and civil liberties advocates.
- A4: Mr. Nash will notify CSAC Support that the Subcommittee's initial recommendations are under current revision.
- A5: Subcommittee members will discuss recommendations to socialize their efforts with Director Easterly.



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Attendees*

Participants

Name	Organization
Dr. Kate Starbird, Chair	University of Washington
Ms. Vijaya Gadde	Twitter
Mr. Geoff Hale	CISA
Ms. Suzanne Spaulding	CSIS
Ms. Kim Wyman	CISA

Other Meeting Attendees

Name	Organization
Ms. Gwen Hess	CISA
Ms. Devi Nair	CSIS
Ms. Claire Teitelman	JP Morgan Chase

Government and Contractor Support

Name	Organization
Ms. Megan Tsuyi, DFO	CISA
Mr. James Nash, ADFO	CISA
Ms. Kirsten Heidelberg	CISA
Ms. Mariefred Evans	TekSynap

**Meeting was held via Teams/teleconference*