



U.S. AIR FORCE

United States Air Force Reserve

Integrity - Service - Excellence

Digital Force Protection



Lt Col Megan Kell
717th Information Operations Squadron

OVERALL CLASSIFICATION:

CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION



Digital Force Protection: What is it?

Social media manipulation poses a significant threat to readiness.

- Currently: 85% of US population is online. **Military relies on social media for distant communications.**
- Foreign targeting of U.S. military forces: Avenue of influence to sow distrust in our government & each other, spread disinformation, identity theft & **promote behavior that threatens our country.**

Digital Force Protection =

Influence Resistance + Social Media Hygiene

Task: Harden Airmen against sophisticated digital threats that challenge force readiness.



Red Threat

DAF resiliency and member identities are at significant risk in the information environment. Adversary influence operations are targeting DoD personnel to spread disinformation & sow discord in order to...

**UNDERMINE CONFIDENCE IN OUR
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES**



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Red Threat

“Authentic” Voices on Both Sides of a Polarized Online Discourse”

BlackMattersUS
Twitter

"Blacktivist"
Facebook

Bleepthepolice
Twitter

"Being Patriotic"
Facebook

"march_for_trump"
Twitter

Heart of Texas
Facebook

@TEN_GOP
Twitter

Enduring Strategy:

- Confuse, not convince
- Whack a Mole while failing forward
- Information First/Frame the Environment (Crimea and '22 invasion)

Latest Tactics:

- Miasma of Disinformation
- RT, Sputnik, etc.
- Re-brand as required
- “Sleepers sites”
- Diplomats and Oligarchs
- Appeal to emotion and conspiracy



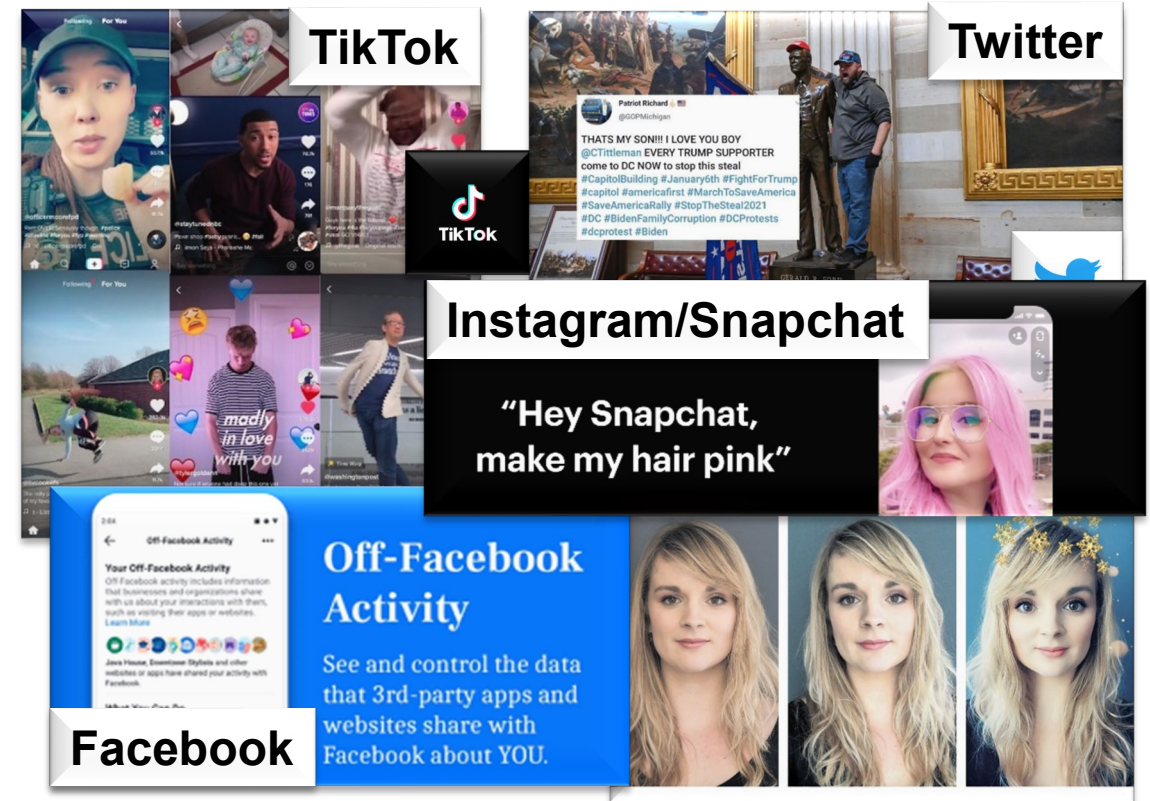
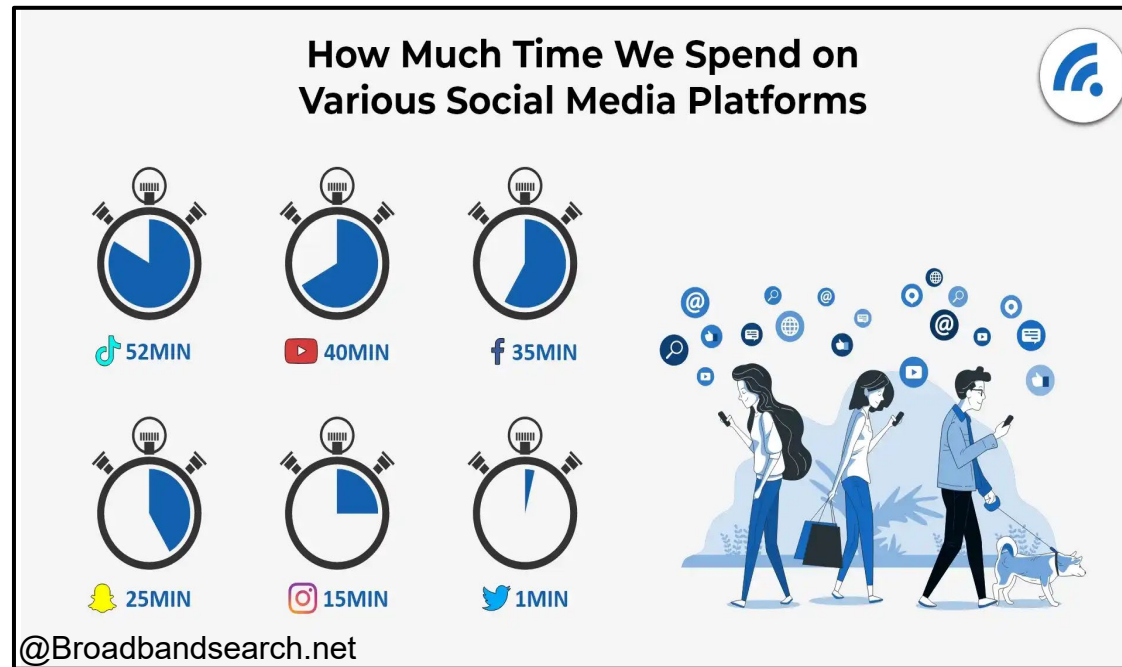
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A WARFIGHTING IMPERATIVE

Video (in powerpoint)

Balance Pros and Cons of Social Media

Social Connectedness is the #1 reason people are on social media



Remain vigilant. Ask Questions. Educate yourself.



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Tik Tok / Douyin

Permission Granted:

Cameras, contacts, keystroke patterns, microphones, GPS

Data Mining/Selling:

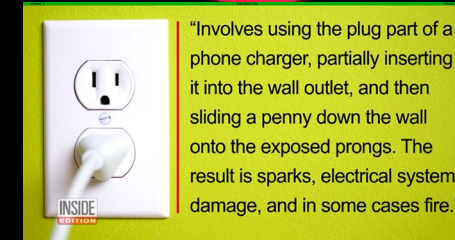
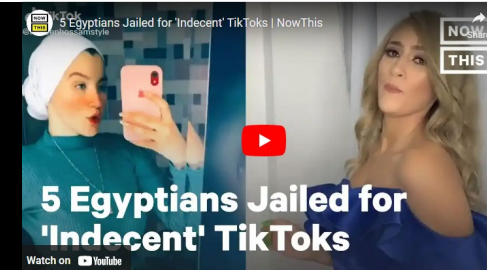
They own your data and use/sell it

National Security:

Influence platform

Cyber security

Surveillance/dossiers



CCP has legal authority to access Chinese owned tech/IT data

[Jonathan] There has been
a gigantic increase

ATHAN HAIDT, PhD

Stern School of Busi

clideo.com

So. What now?



Influence Resistance – Critical Thinking

Recognize Disinformation, Take Inventory

- ☐ What is the author trying to achieve and why?
- ☐ Who is the primary/secondary audience?
- ☐ Communication technique and credibility:
 - ☐ Are they using strong, passionate rhetoric?
 - ☐ Are they leveraging symbolism?
 - ☐ Is there a call to act or change thinking?
- ☐ Who benefits and who suffers with this message?
- ☐ Could it affect national security or an operation?
- ☐ Does it make you overly emotional?

Go or No-Go

Talk offline
Walk away
Weigh risks

Like
Share
Comment

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.

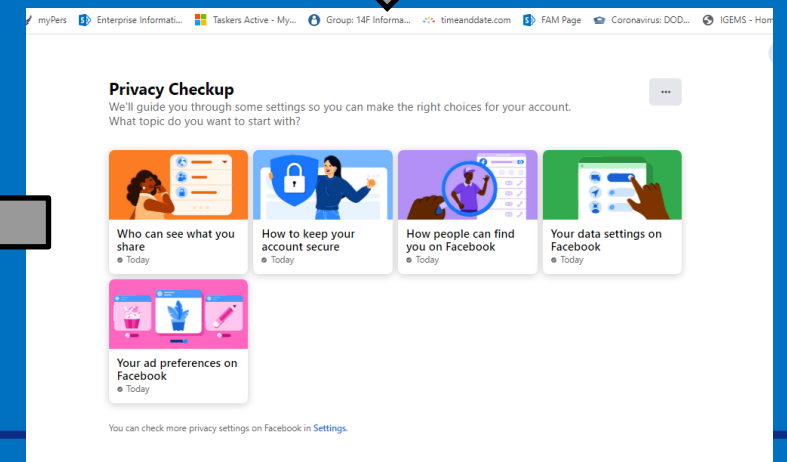
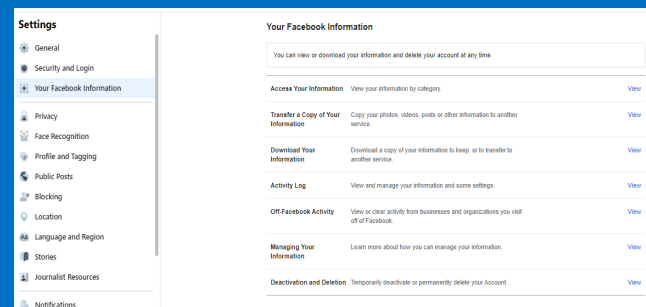
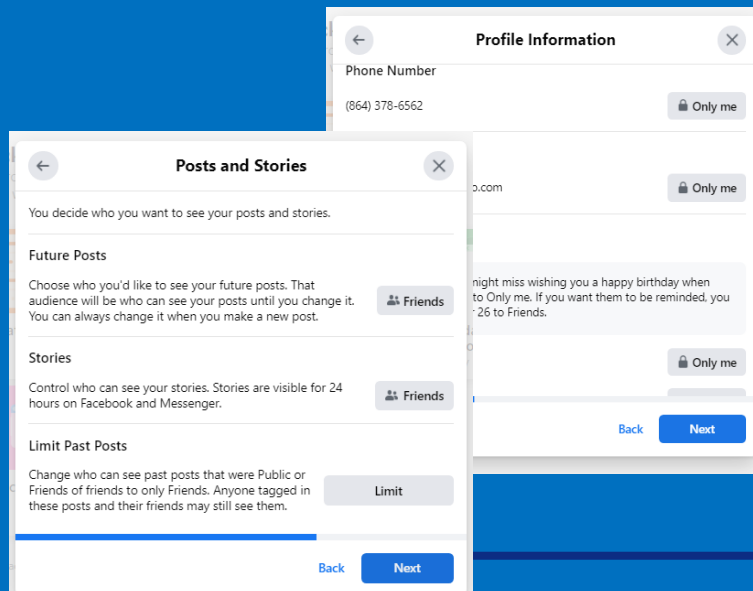
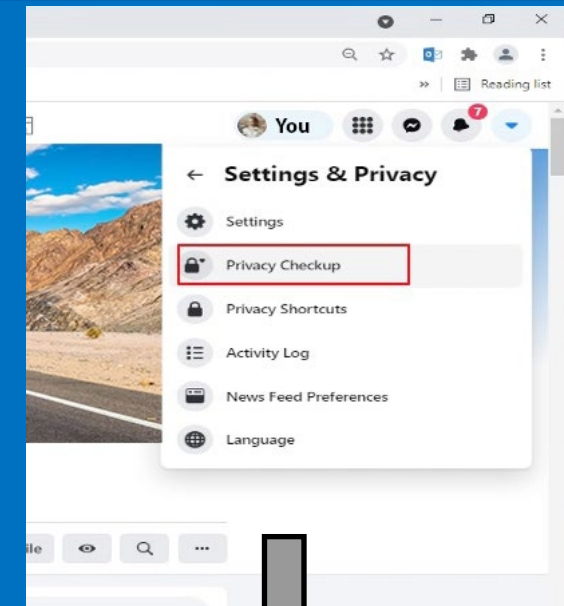
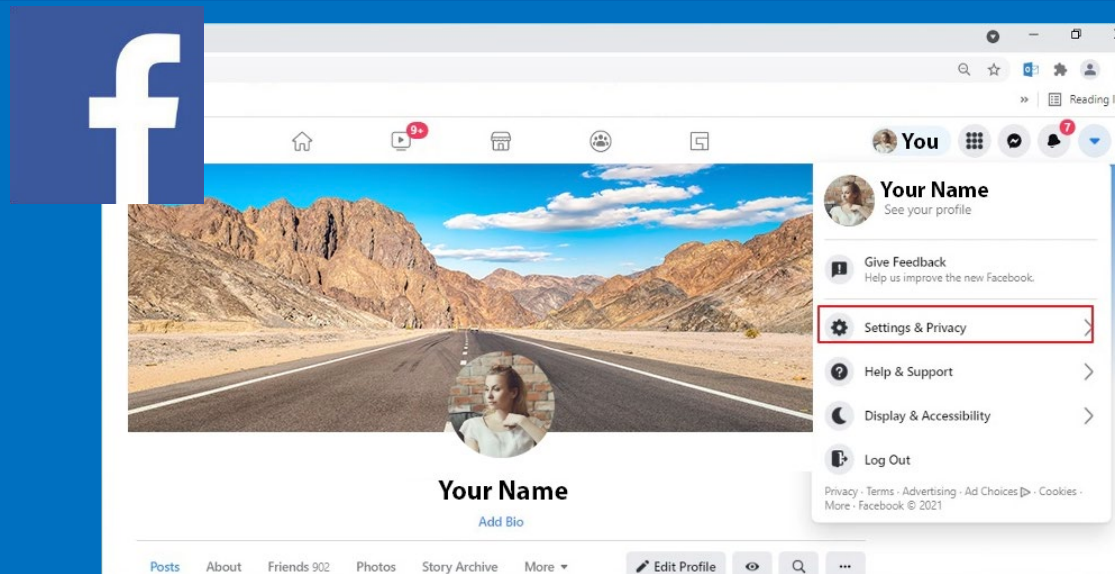


ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.



Social Media Hygiene



Continuum of Digital Literacy



Do Nothing

- Low Energy/Worry
- High Risk of influence and/or identity compromise



Find YOUR Balance



Do all the Things!

- High Energy/Concern
- Lower Risk of influence and/or identity compromise

Countermeasures:

- Educate yourself
- Change your middle name to find sale of your data
- Use a VPN
- Fact Check
- Look at sources
- Find a different point of view-on purpose
- Conduct personal inventories
- Check your screen time
- Check the “tone” of your feeds
- Write your congressman
- Set phone to gray scale
- Privacy Protected Browser Extension (ublock origin)

Continuum of Digital Literacy



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Be A Harder Target

DFP is Not:

-  Telling Airmen what to think
-  Stop using social media
-  Policing online behavior

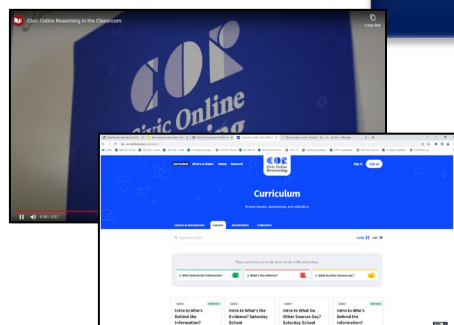
DFP is:

-  Recommending how to think
-  Critical thinking skills
-  Influence and Threat Education
Provisioning of skills

Resources

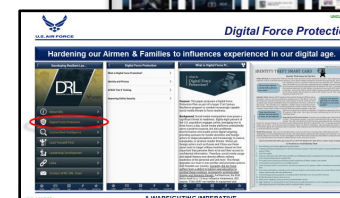
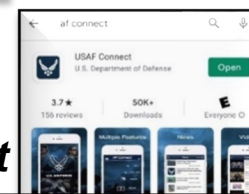


Documentaries and podcasts that educate users on social media addictions and how our information is used/sold.



Free online education (Stanford's Civic Online Reasoning Course)

USAF Connect:
location for DFP
products/content



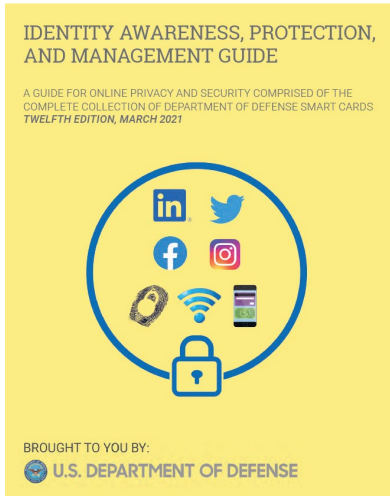
The DoD and SOCOM guides inform digital hygiene practices



A WARFIGHTING IMPERATIVE



Resources cont.



Video: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/826025/afrc-digital-force-protection>

Podcasts:

- 960th CW: <https://www.dvidshub.net/audio/73492/sword-and-shield-podcast-ep-103-digital-force-protection>
- Undivided Attention

Books:

- LikeWar
- Amusing Ourselves to Death
- Active Measures
- Information Wars
- How to Lose the Information War
- Nothing is True and Everything is Possible



DISCUSSION / QUESTIONS

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