

China's AI-Powered Disinformation: Implications of Generative Artificial Intelligence for China's Disinformation Capabilities

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China's Disinformation Strategy

The CCP views propaganda as a necessary and beneficial practice of governance.

- Domestically: Shape public discourse and suppress dissent through censorship and disinformation.
- Internationally: Promote a CCP-controlled narrative of China and weaken adversaries' "will to fight" through division and distrust.

Common Disinformation Tactics

- Astroturfing
- Fake online personas
- Deepfakes
- Targeted content

GenAI-Powered Disinformation

- High quality, realistic content is cheaper to produce
- Campaigns are easier to scale
- Personas appear more credible
- Attribution to state actors is more difficult

Case Studies

Spamouflage: PRC-aligned disinformation campaign that spreads fake content to influence U.S. public opinion. In 2022, it released deepfake videos featuring AI-generated news anchors criticizing U.S. policies and praising China.

2024 Taiwan Presidential Election: AI-powered disinformation campaigns aimed to influence political outcomes in favor of pro-Beijing candidates. Deepfake videos falsely showed Democratic Progress Party candidate Lai Ching-Te praising pro-Beijing opponents.

Biased Large Language Models: LLMs trained on data including pro-China content can reflect CCP-aligned biases. Tests show U.S. and Chinese chatbots, including ChatGPT and DeepSeek-R1, avoided or censored responses to prompts like "Hong Kong freedom," especially in Chinese.



Fake X post generated by ChatGPT prompt

Policy Implications

Social media platforms and users are vulnerable to AI-powered disinformation.

- Require watermarks for AI-generated content on social media.

Diplomatic responses are limited by attribution challenges, fueling distrust within the "gray zone" below armed conflict.

- Increase dialogue with the PRC government about GenAI and social media.

GenAI removes traditional barriers, enabling low-cost and high quality disinformation by both state and non-state actors.

- Fund media literacy to help the public spot AI content, verify sources, and resist disinformation.