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March 4, 2025

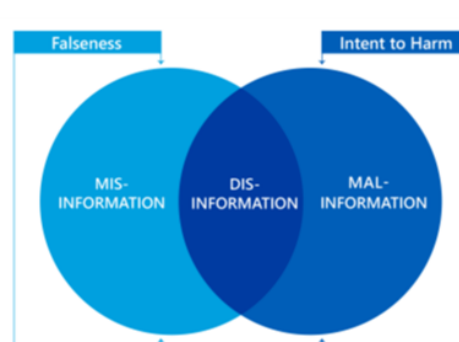
The Blue Book Project: Understanding and Countering MDM in Crises

In today's interconnected world, Nation State actors are increasingly targeting cyber vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure across the country. Their goal? To disrupt community lifelines and compromise the ability of the United States to defend the homeland and project power globally. A cyberattack on critical infrastructure, such as water, energy, telecommunications, transportation, or financial systems, may result in severe physical damage potentially disrupting critical services for several months.

Many of these malicious actors are leveraging mis-, dis-, and mal-information (MDM) to erode public trust, manipulate narratives, and create confusion. Malicious actors employ this tactic both opportunistically—capitalizing on real-world events—and as a deliberate follow-up to intentional disruptions. To help thwart this threat and halt these malicious efforts, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has launched the **Blue Book Project**. This initiative is designed to 1) develop a coordinated operational process to support local, state, federal, and private sector operational priorities; 2) support Virginia residents; 3) ensure continuity of government while under a coordinated cyberattack on critical infrastructure systems resulting in a national emergency; and 4) support the Department of Defense's mission to protect the homeland and project forces globally.

Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-Information (MDM) and Emergency Management

The threat of MDM continues to grow and will likely remain a challenge throughout all phases of emergency management. MDM may severely affect emergency management efforts before, during, and after an event. Understanding MDM and its impacts is increasingly critical for emergency managers.



MDM can decrease public trust in government, complicate disaster response and recovery, create confusion, and generate fear among the public. Working together to combat such threats is critical- The Blue Book Project understands this charge and aims to answer its call.

How the Blue Book Project is taking on MDM and Public Information



The communications challenges of a long-term critical infrastructure disruption will be multidimensional. The Blue Book Project initiated the Public Information Mission Area to explore solutions to challenges across the communications spectrum.

These solutions include coordination across government, external messaging during telecommunications outages, strategies for communicating sensitive public safety directives, such as rationing or curfews, and anticipating and countering MDM. This effort aims to anticipate, detect, and respond to MDM following a major cyberattack. Taking a more proactive approach will enhance public trust and ensure a more coordinated and resilient response to future crises.

Combating MDM: Tools and Resources from the Blue Book Project

The Blue Book Project aims to strengthen the VDEM collective ability to navigate the complexities of information in times of crisis. They also plan to share the findings with the broader emergency management community to increase knowledge and preparedness across the industry. With this in mind, several resources have been developed. Through the Blue Book Project, a series of [whitepapers](#) were written to help emergency managers understand and respond to MDM. In addition, the Blue Book [Reading Corner](#) includes several publications relevant to MDM, including *Counter-MDM Interventions*, *Facts not Fakes-Tackling Disinformation*, *Strengthening Information Integrity*, and more! Finally, in 2024, the recurring presenter series – Blue Book TV was launched. These are scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month from 12:00-1:30 pm (EST). The first episode features a presentation from Dr. Megan K. McBride on what makes people vulnerable to MDM and how to protect against it.

For more information, please contact the project team at BlueBookProject@vdem.virginia.gov.

If you have a state practice you'd like to highlight as part of this series, please contact [NEMA](#).

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