CENTRUL PENTRU
COMUNICARE STRATEGICĂ
ŞI COMBATERE A DEZINFORMĂRII

# **MALIGN TACTICS** IN THE INFORMATION SPACE



## Conscious User Pocket Guide

**Chisinau**
2025

# 1.COORDINATED INAUTHENTIC BEHAVIOUR

A network of accounts that appear different but are controlled by the same source. They post the same meanings, content, messages at the same time to create the illusion of a majority and increased interest.

## What is the danger?

It artificially changes public discussions and creates social pressure, as if there were a spontaneous majority.



- In February 2019, Meta deleted over 160 accounts and 28 pages that were conducting covert political campaigning in the Moldovan information space. In October 2024, another network with 7 accounts, 23 pages, a group, and 20 Instagram accounts was blocked for false content.
- In Romania, in early 2025, Meta shut down 658 accounts and 14 pages that posed as locals and spent over $170,000 on hidden political ads.

## How do you protect yourself?

- Notice if identical messages appear at the same time, on unknown accounts.
- Check who manages the page and who pays for the ads.
- Don't share impulsively. Report suspicious accounts.

# 2. NETWORK OF INAUTHENTIC ACCOUNTS

Inauthentic account networks are sets of fake or centrally controlled profiles that publish and amplify the same content to create the impression of popularity.

## What is the danger?

They create trends and manipulate social media algorithms to artificially promote political content or conspiracies to the public. They manipulate public perception of the topic’s importance.



- In Romania, in 2024-2025 alone, platforms eliminated over 59,000 fake accounts, blocked 1.3 million fake followers and 1.5 million artificial likes.

## How do you protect yourself?

- Check the age of the account and post history.
- Look for the original source.
- Compare the claims with reliable sources.
- Report suspicious accounts as "scam/spam".

# 3. IMPERSONATION OF REAL INSTITUTIONS OR PERSONS

Accounts or pages that present themselves as well-known institutions or people, without having any real connection to them. Some hide under the "parody" label but aim to disinform and manipulate.

## What is the danger?

Distributing false information, collecting data, and weakening trust in real pages of institutions.



**How do you recognise them?**

- Almost identical name to the official page.
- Cloned photos.
- Lack of authenticity check.
- Recent creation with no regular activity.

## How do you protect yourself?

- Check for a verified badge.
- Check for connections to other official pages.
- Report the account as "fake identity".

# 4.CONTENT MADE WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Digitally generated content using artificial intelligence: texts, images or videos created to imitate real statements and events, with the aim of manipulating public perception.

## What is the danger?

The production of credible fakes and the spread of distrust in state institutions, the press, and reliable sources.



**How do you recognise them?**

- Unnatural movement of lips and voice, fixed gaze.
- Distorted lights or shadows.
- New accounts created.

## How do you protect yourself?

- Check if the material also appears in other reliable sources.
- Look for visual errors and the mention "digitally created."
- Don't share until you're sure it's an authentic product.

# 5. FAKE AND FABRICATED DOCUMENTS

"Orders", "notes", "circulars" or "communications" that imitate the institutional format. They are not issued by institutions but circulate and are presented as official.

## What is the danger?

Distributing false information, collecting data, and weakening trust in real pages of institutions.



**How do you recognise them?**

- Almost identical name to that of the official entity.
- Wrong contact details.
- Typos, incorrect dating, old logos, inconsistent wording, names of people who are no longer in office.

## How do you protect yourself?

- Check on the official website or at the issuing institution if this document exists.
- Check the source/channel through which you received the document.