Week 6: misinformation

Sept 21-27

~Objectives~

1) Identify + define psychological concepts that that describe why we are vulnerable to misinformation
2) Explain why it is hard to correct misinformation
3) Explain, identify + describe ways to prevent falling for misinformation

*misinformation → false information that is spread regardless of intent to mislead
*disinformation → deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda

(Vulnerability)

- Cognitive miserliness - humans prefer to use simpler, easier ways of solving problems than ones requiring more thought and effort
  *psychological factor that makes us the most vulnerable to misinformation

- Dual Process Theory - idea of two basic ways of thinking; 1) an automatic process that requires little effort, 2) an analytical process that requires more effort
  - automatic process risk:
  1) the easier something is to process, the more likely we think it's true
  2) efficiency can miss detail

- the backfire effect - correction can strengthen the belief in misinformation
  - overkill → misinformation is more believable than overly complicated correction
  - worldview → rejects correction because it is incompatible with their worldview
  - familiarity → corrections repeat falsehoods so it makes the falsehood more familiar

(prevention)

- skepticism - awareness of the potential manipulation and a desire to accurately understand the truth
  - emotional → manipulation through emotions
- alertness - heightened awareness of the effects of misinformation
- analytical thinking - deliberation; a cognitive process that involves thoughtful evaluation (rather than quick, intuitive judgement)
- Friction - when something is difficult to process or preform, through technical obstacle like a confirmation button
  - "why do you think x"
- Inoculation - "prebunking" are techniques that build pre-emptive resistance to misinfo.
  - reduce belief in conspiracy theories
- Nudges - small prompts that subtly suggest behaviors
  - make people think about accuracy before sharing enforces discernment

Artifact: notes from Public Opinion and Persuassion (Fall'20) - ways to prevent misinformation