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The Role of Digital Storytelling and Visual Rhetoric in National Security Communication: Strengthening Public Resilience against Misinformation in the United States

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Abstract
This review is especially critical because adversaries of the United States like China, Russia, and Iran, continue to make the United States the target of their information campaigns. Analyzing peer-reviewed publications and other government and institutional literature, the review examines research across communication, psychology, political science, and security studies. Narrative-based approaches and visual communication strategies are found to be effective in heightening people's awareness against manipulation. These approaches and strategies are critical tools in national security communication as they help to spread accurate information while building public trust in institutions. This review highlights the need for improved interagency approaches among federal institutions of the United States, whole-of-society approaches, and public-private sector collaboration. In addition, media literacy education is found to be another critical policy for enhancing public resilience against misinformation. These policy suggestions were drawn from positive lessons of other jurisdictions including the European Union and Finland. The successful adaptation and implementation of these policy suggestions will not only enhance public communication the United States, but will also ensure the protection of First Amendment rights. The study encourages further research to examine the effectiveness of media literacy programs, comparative studies of different intervention strategies, and specialized demographics-centered research. Contemporary information security threats have risen to the level of military threats. As such, it is important to strengthen public resilience against these threats. Digital storytelling and visual rhetoric possess the persuasive mechanisms to aid strategic communications frameworks in the United States and safeguard the information environment.

Keywords: visual rhetoric, digital storytelling, public resilience, national security communication, media literacy

1.0 Introduction

The rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation across digital platforms is a threat to democracy, social harmony, and public discourse (Aïmeur et al., 2023; Sharma & Singh, 2024). These threats have led to efforts to find innovative communication solutions that enhance public trust. Studies show that false information has a higher rate of spread on social media platforms than factual information. This rapid spread is aided by the deployment of algorithms and messaging that target people's emotions (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). Considering the pace of technological innovation and the speed with which false information spreads, and its implications across virtually every segment of society, there is an urgent need to develop strategies to deal with the different manifestations of information manipulation.

China, Russia, and Iran are the main foreign adversaries of the U.S. that deploy information operations as tools in their strategy towards other nations. They are also, according to U.S. intelligence, the most effective users of disinformation against the U.S. (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2024). According to the Department of Justice (2024), these state actors use deepfakes, coordinated inauthentic behavior, hack-and-leak operations, and take advantage of polarizing national issues to undermine public trust in democratic institutions. According to Nabila and Thompson (2025a), disinformation campaigns by enemies like China, Russia, and Iran use digital platforms as part of information and cognitive warfare. These adversaries systematically target how the public thinks to weaken national security decision making. These operations deepen social divisions, damage trust in institutions, and need balanced responses that address both foreign and domestic threats (Nabila & Thompson,2025a).

Research has shown that digital storytelling supports people's ability to retain knowledge, partake in social activities, and adopt new behaviors (Ginting et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2024). What differentiates fact-checking from narrative approaches is the latter's ability to appeal to the minds and emotions of the audience. These make narrative approaches effective as countermeasures (Bateman & Jackson, 2024).

Long, Minervini, and Gladd (2020, para. 3) define visual rhetoric as "the means by which visual imagery can be used to achieve a communication *goal* such as to influence people's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs." Dhanesh, Duthler, and Li (2022) underscore social media's critical role when their research found that visual content engages users and drives their views more than just text. According to Brennen, Simon, and Nielsen (2021), scholarship on misinformation has acknowledged the significance of visual content on the outcome of misinformation campaigns. These false visuals exploit human cognitive biases as people tend to give more credibility to photographic evidence and analyze these images faster than text (Shen et al., 2019).

The need to strengthen public resilience is urgent and important. This is because misinformation campaigns are not only complex, but they can originate from both state and non-state actors seeking to undermine democracy, public health, and national unity (Jones, 2024).

This literature review examines peer-reviewed and policy-related studies from 2015. These studies explore how digital storytelling and visual rhetoric are used in national security communication to strengthen public resistance to misinformation. The review will bring together theoretical foundations and research findings to provide useful insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars.

The structure of the review is as follows: Section two creates the conceptual framework, defining important terms and theoretical foundations. Section three examines existing research in four domains: digital storytelling as a communication tool, visual rhetoric in the information environment, misinformation threats to national security, and methods for building public resilience. Section four combines the findings and identifies key gaps. Section five explores implications for U.S. national security policy and practice. Section six ends with the way forward for strengthening democratic resilience using narrative and visual communication strategies.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

This section provides the theoretical background and defines key terms essential for understanding the relationship between digital storytelling, visual rhetoric, and national security communication.

Robin (2011) describes digital storytelling as "the art of telling stories with a variety of digital multimedia, such as images, audio and video" (p.1). Digital stories are typically short. They are deliberately made to serve educational purposes and frequently use personal narratives or other perspectives. These perspectives can include instructional or historical viewpoints (Robin, 2011). This approach not only enhances emotional resonance but also supports cognitive processing by presenting information in multiple reinforcing formats (García & Cruz-González, 2022).

According to Miles (2023, p.3), visual rhetoric in political communication can be defined as "the analysis of how visual elements are employed strategically for political effect- or rather more broadly, how the visual can move people politically." Visual rhetoric provides the tools to analyze how images, layout, color, and multimodal design persuade people and prompt emotional reactions that shape judgements about credibility (Kjeldsen, 2021). Garcia (2018) noted that images alone do not provide meaning. However, meaning is a combination of the images and the interpretation that the audience gives to them. Visual rhetoric uses tools from semiotics and rhetorical analysis to examine how images function as arguments. It looks at their form, content, and persuasive influence on audiences (Foss, 2005). As a result, leveraging visual rhetoric allows for an effective evaluation of how mis/disinformation take shape and the potential impact they can have on American and global audiences.

The U.S. National Intelligence Council defines misinformation as "false, inaccurate, or misleading information that is spread regardless of the intent to deceive. An adversary's intent can change misinformation to disinformation." They also define disinformation as "false or misleading information deliberately created or spread with the intent to deceive or mislead" (GAO, 2024, p.9). These definitions demonstrate that while there are distinctions between misinformation and disinformation, in terms of security, they are related concepts. Disinformation originated from the Cold War as a psychological warfare tactic. It is now deployed through social media manipulation, deepfakes, and organized false behavior (Chosky & Yu, 2025).

Combining digital storytelling and visual rhetoric creates a clear analytical framework. Multimedia narratives serve to engage and educate the public, while visual elements enhance clarity, attention, and emotional impact. This integration is the basis for effective public communication strategies meant to counter misinformation and strengthen democracy and national security.

3.0 Literature Review

This section combines research from different fields to examine the persuasive and corrective capacity of digital storytelling. It explores how visuals influence attention, emotion, and memory. Finally, the section also delves into the features of modern misinformation systems that determine the success or failure of storytelling and visual strategies.

3.1 Digital Storytelling as a Persuasive Communication Tool

Digital storytelling has become a powerful tool of communication and instruction. It combines traditional story structures with multimedia to create enhanced audience experiences. Research shows that digital storytelling leads to significant improvements in the abilities of students to remember information (Yang & Wu, 2012). Yang and Wu (2012) also found that digital storytelling delivered better academic performance, critical thinking, and motivation compared to traditional teaching methods. According to

Smeda et al. (2014), digital storytelling works because it blends teaching content with learning activities, creating more engaging settings that enable students to perform deeper cognitive processing.

The value of digital storytelling is reflected not only in the classroom but also in civic engagement. As Lisdiono et al. (2024) pointed out in their study, digital storytelling improves digital well-being, motivation, and engagement across diverse groups. When paired with peer assessments, digital storytelling enables collaborative learning that builds digital skills like writing, research, technology use, and synthesis (Çetin, 2021).

Prebunking and narrative-based strategies have emerged as approaches to minimize the impact of misinformation. Sangalang, Ophir, and Capella (2019) discovered that attitudinal change and a reduction in misinformed intentions are achieved when narrative-based corrections with emotionally charged conclusions are used instead of corrections based on facts. This approach is effective for health-related issues. This highlights the importance of story/narrative design. Generally, story-based interventions like inoculation games are effective when they teach manipulation techniques or demonstrate fact-checking behaviors. These techniques help to strengthen the cognitive capacity of people to resist misinformation (Roozenbeek & van der Linden, 2019; Basol, Roozenbeek & van der Linden, 2020). Story-based interventions using strategic narratives and narrative policy frameworks work especially well by putting facts into emotionally compelling stories that counter identity-based disinformation. These approaches build democratic resilience by matching counter-messages with audience values, working better than isolated fact-checks in divided environments (Nabila & Djokoto, 2025). According to Weeks (2015), however, people's mental interaction with the message, their prior beliefs, and their emotions limit the effectiveness of narrative approaches. Organizations, associations, and groups that are deeply rooted in their ideological beliefs will be hard to convince by narratives unless these stories align with their ideologies or are channeled through mediums they trust (Guess, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2018).

3.2 Visual Rhetoric

Visual communication has become integral to modern information warfare, with images and videos serving as main tools for manipulation and persuasion. Birrer and Just (2024) point out that the rapid growth of deepfake technology, which uses AI to create fake media that looks real and impersonates actual people, poses a serious threat to information integrity.

Advanced computers are used to create high-quality deepfakes. These algorithms learn from massive amounts of data how to alter, mix, and produce videos showing people doing or saying things they never actually did (Momeni, 2024). For example, an experimental study conducted by Ahmed et al (2025) showed that watching deepfakes of infrastructural failures significantly raises political distrust, with effects varying by educational levels. These findings show that visual misinformation can quickly damage institutional trust and social harmony.

Visuals significantly affect what people notice and remember. Multimodal content that combines images, text, and video is key to the spread of disinformation. Detecting deepfakes is very difficult. Studies show people are only 51% accurate (in certain experimental conditions, without authenticity prompts) at telling fake political speeches from real ones (Groh et al., 2024). When people see and hear content instead of just reading it, accuracy improves. This suggests that people rely more on the manner in which something is said than the actual content (Groh, 2024).

In a large study by Livernoche et al., (2025) visual misinformation goes beyond fake faces to include fabricated signs, banners, and altered images of important events like protests, elections, or natural disasters. The study shows these visuals persuade not just through looking realistic but through seeming believable in context and fitting logically with familiar social or political stories. These images are often paired with carefully written text that guides interpretation and strengthens misleading messages, making them more persuasive. This combination of visuals and text target multiple thinking processes at once, as people judge credibility through both visual cues and the explanations given. Visual misinformation works by coordinating manipulation of appearance, context, and story, not just by altering images.

Chesney and Citron (2019) warn that deepfakes, realistic fake videos and audio, seriously threaten national security, democracy, and public trust. These tools can impersonate political leaders or officials in ways that could trigger violence, create diplomatic crises, disrupt elections, or make real communications seem fake. The authors note that manipulated videos spread so fast that journalists, platforms, and government agencies may rush to respond, accidentally spreading false content. To address these problems, they stress the need for better detection technology, stronger authentication systems, and coordinated communication strategies. These would help institutions to provide proper responses and secure public trust.

3.3 National Security Threats Posed by Misinformation

Foreign adversaries have identified information operations as inexpensive, effective ways to advance their goals while weakening democratic institutions. U.S. intelligence agencies name Russia, China, and Iran as the main countries undertaking complex influence campaigns against Americans (Office of the Director of National Intelligence [ODNI], 2024). These operations employ various tactics, including coordinated fake accounts, hack-and-leak operations, fake media networks, voice cloning of public figures, and creating false evidence of cyber incidents (ODNI, 2024).

Platform features like algorithms, coordinated fake accounts (bots and trolls), and selective exposure shape how stories and visuals spread. Himelein-Wachowiak (2021) and McPhedran et al. (2023) found that misinformation is heightened by small groups and is shaped by platform features like referrals and “likes”, which makes large-scale narrative campaigns difficult. The absence of critical thinking and analysis explains why people believe false headlines (Pennycook & Rand, 2019). This knowledge supports interventions like accuracy nudges that encourage verification instead of just providing corrections to false information (Pennycook et al., 2021).

Generative AI has made it much easier to create convincing fake content. Intelligence officials warn that foreign actors are getting better at hiding their involvement and using Americans to spread their messages. Such actors with nefarious intent buy services from legitimate marketing and communications companies that unknowingly help spread harmful narratives (ODNI, 2024; Kelley, 2024). Unfortunately, the rapid pace of technological advancement is making traditional methods for detecting fake media outdated. There is therefore a need to focus on systemic resilience instead of just checking individual pieces of content (Colman, 2025).

The impact of foreign influence operations is a matter of debate. Research by Eady et al. (2023) shows a limited direct impact on how people vote despite major influence campaigns. A 2024 analysis found Russia-backed media got moderate YouTube views, Iranian hack-and-leak attempts failed to gain attention, and Chinese campaigns failed to reach a wide audience (Collier, 2024; Nelson & West, 2024).

3.4 Enhancing Public Resilience

Media literacy interventions have proven effective at helping to resist misinformation. A comprehensive meta-analysis found that media literacy programs significantly improve people’s ability to spot false information. Results varied based on program design, participants, and which manipulation techniques were taught (Huang et al., 2024). Critical thinking skills and media literacy together influence people’s detection abilities of misinformation on social media (Orhan, 2023).

Psychological inoculation is a promising way to build resilience. Inoculation videos expose people to ways in which they could become victims of misinformation. They are made to experience examples of inoculation techniques adopted to misinform. This exercise equips them with the skills to recognize instances of manipulation. They are also corrected, which provides them with resistance to future manipulation (Roozenbeek et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of inoculation lasts over time and works across different contexts. Longitudinal experiments show that inoculation effects stay strong weeks after initial exposure, with people keeping their improved ability to spot manipulation (Maertens et al., 2021). Technique-based inoculation offers "cross-protection". This means vulnerability to misinformation is reduced not just for specific techniques taught, but also to new manipulation strategies not taught in training (Roozenbeek et al., 2022).

Community-based and peer-to-peer approaches offer additional ways to build resilience. Research shows that displaying fact-checks from people outside a person's immediate ideological circle but not too far removed can effectively counter partisan misinformation (Pretus et al., 2024). Conversations after inoculation training strengthen effects and spread resistance to more people, as individuals share what they learned and new arguments in discussions (Zhou & Shen, 2024).

4.0 Synthesis

The utilization of digital storytelling and visual rhetoric within national security communication is an underdeveloped but promising area for enhancing public resilience to misinformation. Combining research from different fields reveals both opportunities and major challenges that must be addressed to turn theory into practical, large-scale interventions.

4.1 Potential and Practice Gaps

Evidence shows that truthful communication strategies that connect with audiences emotionally and psychologically work better than just presenting facts (Bateman & Jackson, 2024). Counter-messaging has the potential to reach difficult audiences by addressing the deeper feelings and ideas that make false claims attractive. The success of this, however, depends on many complicated factors, which are also difficult to understand. These factors include careful audience research to select the best messengers, mediums, themes, and styles. This is an expensive process that is difficult to measure (Bateman & Jackson, 2024). This creates a fundamental tension between the proven effectiveness of narrative approaches and the practical difficulty of employing them within the context of national security.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Counter Disinformation Toolkit offers a complete framework for strategic communication against misinformation. It emphasizes that public officials must recognize false information, check for early warnings, analyze threats, develop communication strategies, and measure effectiveness (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2023). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) approach similarly emphasizes coordinated responses based on an understanding of the information environment. Additionally, NATO's approach also underscores preventing successful threat execution, containing and reducing specific incidents, and using lessons as the basis to make strong recoveries (North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], 2024). These frameworks recognize that one approach is not enough. Multiple complementary strategies across prevention, containment, and recovery are required.

Despite these comprehensive frameworks, major implementation gaps remain. Romanishyn et al., (2025) examine the weaknesses of current governance systems and call for urgent policy changes that include AI-specific oversight in democratic governments. This includes accountability from multiple stakeholders, enforceable coordinated regulations, and ongoing civic education to strengthen institutions against harmful information influences.

4.2 Methodological Approaches and Research Limitations

Research on influence operations and countermeasures faces major methodological challenges. Research on how influence operations affect people, changing their societal beliefs, voting behavior, or inspiring violence, is limited and scattered (Bateman et al., 2021). They also noted that research currently cannot answer many urgent questions about how well various tactics work, what role specific platforms play, how long effects last, and how countries differ.

Determining what content is misinformation is a fundamental challenge for designing and measuring how well interventions work (Green et al., 2023). They stress that Since facts can change as new evidence appears, content labeled misinformation at one time may need to be reassessed later, making measurement and evaluation complicated. This makes it hard for researchers to observe how people interact with disputed content and measure how well interventions work, shown by pandemic platform moderation decisions that were later changed as scientific knowledge improved. Determining what counts as misinformation is a basic challenge for research measurement. Inconsistent labeling makes it hard to observe how people perceive and interact with disputed information, especially when agreement about facts changes over time (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023).

4.3 Cross-Disciplinary Insights

Research on digital storytelling, visual rhetoric, and misinformation uses broad, interdisciplinary methods. Scholars combine qualitative analysis of narratives and visuals with computational tracking of how content spreads, plus experiments that test intervention effects.

An important early approach is content and context analysis. Bode and Vraga (2015) showed how researchers can study corrections using platform features like “related stories” and systematic coding of social media posts to see how corrections appear and spread. Building on this, modern multimodal studies analyze text along with images, videos, and layout. Wilson et al. (2023) review research on multimodal disinformation across different fields and point out the need for approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative methods and study multiple communication systems together. They suggest future work should create frameworks that show how visuals, text, and other formats work together to create and spread misleading messages.

In computing, machine learning and network analysis are widely used to find, classify, and track misinformation campaigns. For example, Xue et al. (2021) introduce a Multimodal Consistency Neural Network that analyzes both text and images together to spot mismatches between pictures and words in social media posts. Their research shows that finding these inconsistencies detects fake news better than analyzing just one format alone.

4.4 The Integration Challenge

Effective responses to information threats need coordination between government agencies, civil society groups, technology platforms, and academic researchers.

A persistent challenge is the spread of disinformation research across many fields and professions. From psychology to journalism, each field has its own perspectives and methods (Kruger et al., 2024). While recent research shows that experts agree on many aspects of misinformation, they still disagree about the best interventions. Surveys show experts generally think most interventions work to some degree, but they disagree on which strategies to prioritize (Kruger et al., 2024).

5.0 Implications for National Security Policy and Practice in the U.S.

The convergence of digital storytelling, visual communication, and national security requires comprehensive policy responses that address security needs without endangering democratic freedoms and values. Domestic and international experiences provide several strategic recommendations for strengthening U.S. resilience towards misinformation without compromising fundamental principles of free speech and open society.

5.1 Strategic Communication and Interagency Coordination

Efforts to counter misinformation need strong coordination between agencies, which is currently lacking. Under the 2017 National Defense Act, the (now-defunct) Global Engagement Center (GEC) led federal efforts to counter information operations from adversarial actors amidst coordination challenges (Goldenziel & Grant, 2023). A 2022 State Department Inspector General report found the GEC's role was constrained to providing assistance to federal agencies rather than leading comprehensive responses (Goldenziel & Grant, 2023). This lack of coordination is inimical to the development of proactive, long-term information campaigns that systematically use narrative and visual strategies. Fragmented responses worsen problems as demonstrated in studies of isolated agencies where disinformation continues. This is because agencies do not work well together and struggle to identify sources of disinformation (Nabila & Thompson, 2025b). When strategic communications frameworks are centralized, they enable early detection and government-wide resilience against these changing threats (Nabila & Thompson, 2025b).

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2024) found that agencies like the State Department, Department of Defense, and Homeland Security use many sources to detect foreign disinformation, from social media monitoring to intelligence gathering. However, coordination systems are inadequate for turning detection into effective responses. Creating a senior-level advisor position focused on new security challenges, including information resilience, could help agencies work together strategically. This position would coordinate strategies, identify resources, and propose organizational changes to treat these information campaigns as a national security priority equal to traditional military threats (U.S. Department of State, 2024).

5.2 Whole-of-Society Approaches

National security in 2024 requires including civil society and businesses in security frameworks (Hiebert, 2024). NATO's resilience approach recognizes that maintaining government operations, essential services, and civil support requires coordination between government, businesses, and civil society (Hiebert, 2024). The Canadian government's 2024 planning report identified people's inability to tell fact from fiction as the top major disruption expected within three to five years (Hiebert, 2024). This shows that cognitive security is not just an information problem but a basic national security challenge.

Ukraine's response to Russian disinformation offers valuable lessons. Ukrainian officials used crowdsourced threat information from digitally connected citizens, demonstrating how involving the whole society can improve awareness and quick responses (Helmus & Holynska, 2024). A 2024 Research and Development (RAND) Corporation study identifies several useful lessons, including setting up trusted communication channels beforehand, staying flexible in responses, and using community networks to reach beyond government messages (Helmus & Holynska, 2024). These findings suggest U.S. policy should focus on strengthening local resilience networks along with national-level efforts.

5.3 Critical Investments

Congress should establish a Civic Education Task Force to enable greater access to civic education resources and raise public awareness about foreign disinformation (U.S. Cyberspace Solarium

Commission, 2022). Finland's experience shows the potential impact. Comprehensive media literacy programs integrated across educational institutions have positioned Finland as leading the European media literacy index rankings, measuring resistance to disinformation (U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission, 2022). The Finnish model involves collaboration among all sectors of society. These include media education professionals, the National Audiovisual Institute, and the Ministry of Education and Culture to develop specialized curricula that build critical evaluation skills from early education forward.

Financial support for independent disinformation researchers is another crucial investment area. The U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission (2022) recommends Congress fund the Department of Justice to give grants to nonprofit centers that identify, expose, and explain harmful foreign influence campaigns. This support would maintain research capacity to understand changing tactics while keeping proper separation between government and academic work. Recent attacks on disinformation researchers have created fear that threatens critical knowledge systems (Zadronzy, 2024). Policy frameworks must protect researchers' ability to conduct unbiased analysis while ensuring transparency about any government connections.

The OECD's 2023 Good Practice Principles for responding to misinformation and disinformation stress the importance of making public communication more professional, building institutional capacity, and using evidence to customize messages for different audiences. These principles recommend that governments invest in continuous training for communicators across sectors, support partnerships with outside groups, and give communication professionals the tools to anticipate, analyze, and respond to changing misinformation challenges in timely and culturally appropriate ways (OECD, 2023).

5.4 Partnerships and Platform Accountability

The relationship between government agencies and technology platforms needs careful balance. Digital platforms support public-private governance arrangements instead of government regulation and participate in partnerships at local to international levels (Popiel, 2022). The EU's Digital Services Act requires very large online platforms to conduct annual risk assessments, maintain strong content moderation, give researchers data access, and be transparent about algorithms (European Commission, 2024). Platforms that do not comply can be fined up to 6% of their global annual revenue, creating real enforcement power.

U.S. policy could adopt similar transparency rules while respecting free speech (First Amendment) protections. The Platform Accountability and Transparency Act is one legislative approach, though constitutional concerns about forced speech need careful attention (Harvard Law Review, 2024). Instead of broad transparency rules that may limit editorial choices, Congress should support public-private partnerships that let companies create self-regulated, industry-wide standards for user safety, transparency, and accountability (Harvard Law Review, 2024). The 2022 Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation offers a European model where 34 companies voluntarily commit to actions like stopping funding for disinformation, improving ad transparency, letting users report false content, and increasing fact-checking (European Parliament, 2022).

5.5 Future Research Directions

Several research gaps need ongoing attention. First, long-term studies on how well media literacy programs work in real-world settings would help with decisions on whether to expand these programs. Second, research comparing different intervention types like inoculation, debunking, and alternative narratives would guide evidence-based funding choices. Third, research on tailoring approaches to specific groups based on demographics, psychology, and culture could make interventions more effective. Fourth, ethical guidelines on the boundaries between counter-messaging and propaganda need input from legal experts, ethics experts, communication specialists, and security professionals. Finally, most multimodal inoculation research is still experimental and small, with limited evidence about how long effects last, whether they work across cultures, and how to use them during crises.

6.0 Conclusion

This review shows digital storytelling and visual communication are vital for helping the public resist misinformation and protecting national security. Combining communication theory, psychology, and visual analysis reveals that stories and images together create systems that build trust and critical thinking. As enemies use multimodal misinformation, national security communication must also use multiple formats, not to manipulate people, but to empower them.

Combining digital storytelling's narrative strength with visual communication's persuasive power offers promising ways to create proactive, audience-focused communications that build mental resilience before people encounter manipulation.

Strengthening public resilience to misinformation requires combined approaches including educational investments, agency coordination, public-private partnerships, and community programs. Information resilience must be a top priority for the United States. When effective strategic communications frameworks are combined with digital storytelling and visual communication, policymakers can help people to effectively handle the complex information sphere. This integration would also ensure that people's rights to free speech are not endangered.

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