What questions should you ask before you share information about elections online?

Have you read, listened, or watched this media content before sharing?
Taking the time to review information about elections before you share it is really important. It allows you to assess whether the information truly reflects what you want to be sharing and can prevent you from sharing false information inadvertently. Remember, much of what we see online about elections is taken out of context or not shared in its entirety, so we often don’t get the whole story. If you don’t have time to dig deeper, skip the share.

Have you checked to see if this is a credible source of information about elections?
Reliable sources are transparent about who creates their content, provide background details about their creators, and are clear about how they gather their information. Election officials are the most reliable source of information about elections, so look for them in reporting to feel more confident in the source.

Do you know where this election content originated?
Information about elections spreads like wildfire online and sometimes we lose sight of where information originated. To assess the credibility of information, start with the original source. Once you find the origin of the information, assess the source’s reliability and intention. If you cannot find where the information originally came from, you should not assume it is credible nor should you share it.

How do you feel right now?
Before you share election information online, you should check in on your emotions. It’s easy to write, respond, and share when you are feeling angry, frustrated, or sad. Unfortunately, emotional shares can have some tricky consequences. Hold off on the share until you take a breath and reassess.

Why are you sharing this information about elections?
It is easy to share without thinking about your intent, but adding some context can help people understand your purpose. Reflecting on your intent can also allow you to pause and ask “will people understand why I am sharing this and will it have the intent I want it to have?”

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This tip sheet is created as part of a partnership between the National Association for Media Literacy Education (@MediaLiteracyEd) and the National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) to provide tools to assess information about elections.