DIGITAL THREATS TO CIVIC SPACE



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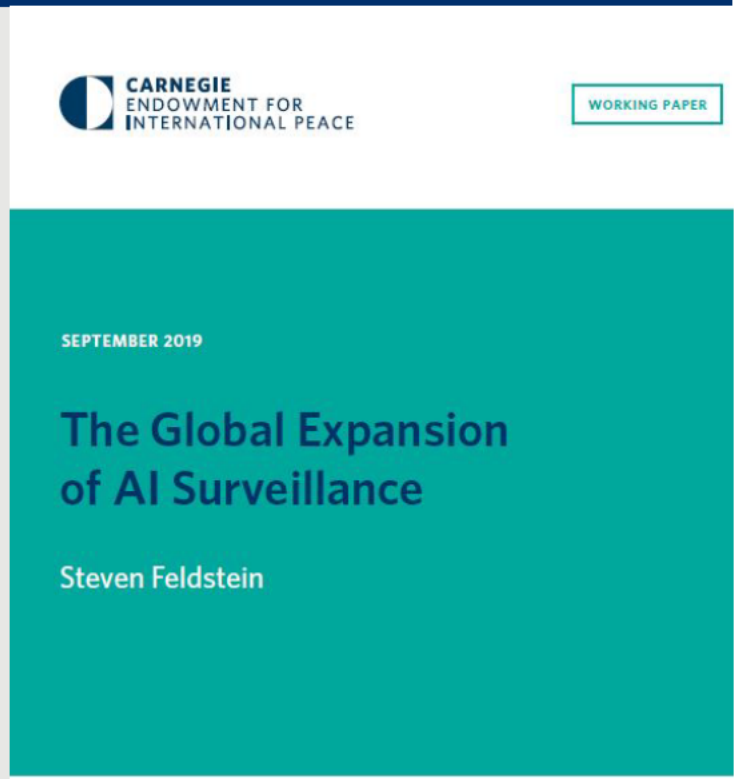
Accelerants of Shrinking Space: Illiberal Use of Technology

75 of 176 countries globally using AI for surveillance

- Smart/safe cities (56)
- Facial recognition (64)
- Smart policing (52)



Accelerants of Shrinking Space: Illiberal Use of Technology

Organized social media manipulation **more than doubled** since 2017

- **70 countries** used computational propaganda to manipulate opinion
- **26 authoritarian states** have used computational propaganda to suppress opinion and political dissent



Motivations for disseminating false information and...

INFORMATION DISORDER

...amplification of this content on the social media platforms (both between peers, and artificial amplification)

INFORMATION DISORDER *TRENDS*:

Misinformation

unintentional use of false information

Disinformation

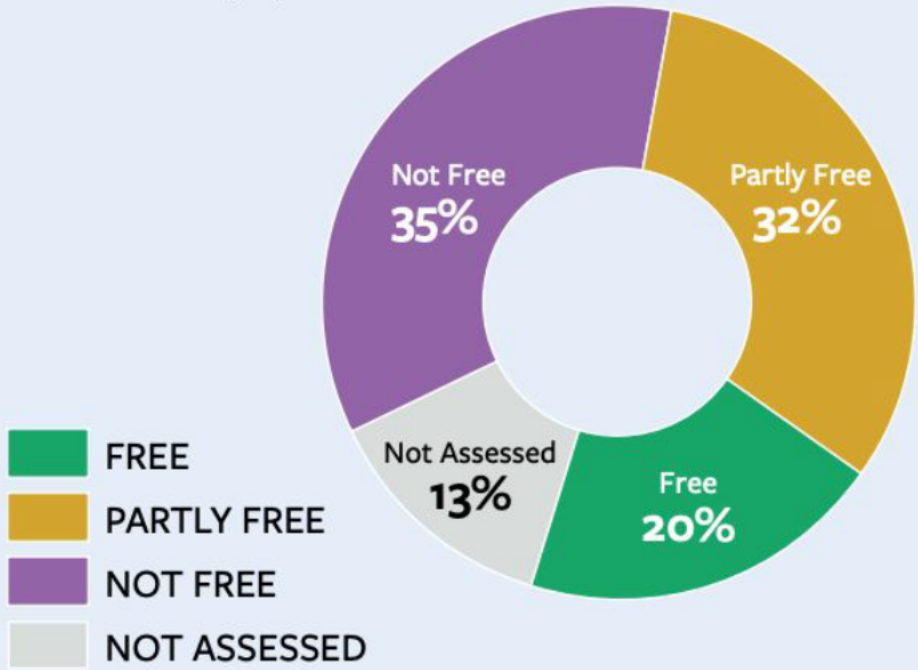
intentional use of false information to achieve certain agendas

Mal-information

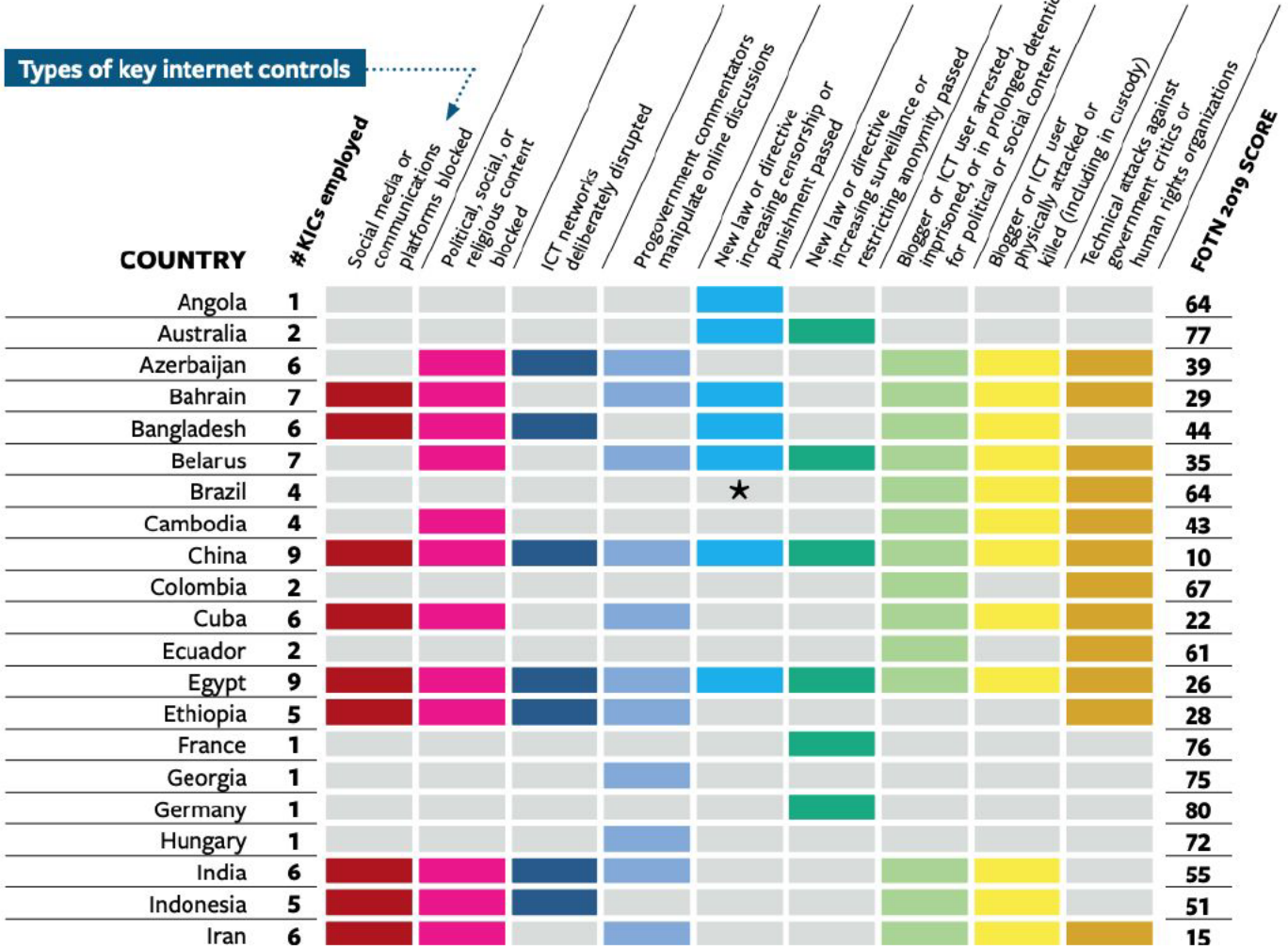
the use of true information to discredit someone

GLOBAL INTERNET POPULATION BY 2019 FOTN STATUS

Freedom on the Net assesses 87 percent of the world's internet user population.



Freedom House's
Freedom on the Net 2019



Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2019

Manipulation Armies, by the Numbers



$10

Amount a member of the Philippines' "keyboard army" can earn per day for praising President Rodrigo Duterte

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017



6,000

Trolls enlisted by Turkey's ruling AK Party to manipulate online discussions

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017



$400,000

Monthly budget of Russia's Internet Research Agency or "troll farm"

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017



30,000

Fake accounts removed from Facebook ahead of the 2017 French elections

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017



75,000

Automated accounts in Mexico, known colloquially as "Peñabots," employed to overwhelm political opposition on Twitter

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017



120,000

Thai students trained as "cyber scouts" to monitor and report online behavior deemed threatening to national security

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017

Disinformation Tactics

1. Paid pro-government commentators
2. Political bots
3. Hijacked accounts
4. Fake news around elections
5. Pro-government media and propaganda

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2017

Role Play

Political Campaign Communications Advisor

Role Play: Political Communications Advisor

1

Select a country context:

Democracy with free/open internet

Hybrid regime with partially free internet

Autocracy with not free/closed internet

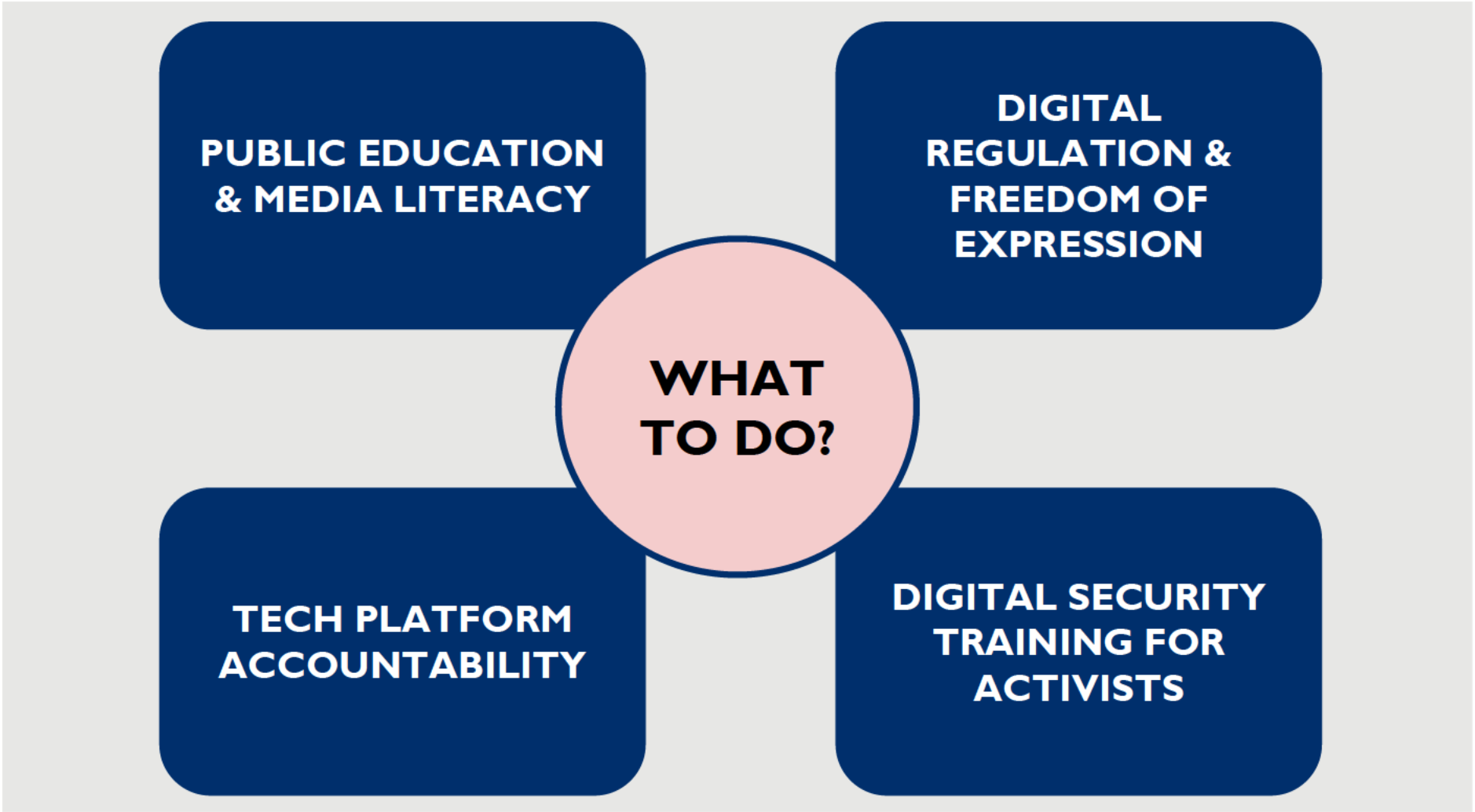
2

Select an objective:

- Shield client from corruption scandal
- Manipulate voter turnout to advantage ruling party
- Discredit political opponents
- Legitimate a rigged or non-competitive election
- Exploit identity cleavages for political advantage
- Silence critics in civil society and media

3

Select your information disorder tactics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