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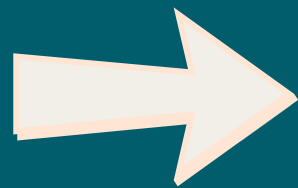
ENGAGING LATINO COMMUNITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Tips for Elected Officials and Policymakers

RESEARCH FINDINGS ➡ SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. ATTENTION & PLATFORMS

- Participants we spoke with actively pay attention to **the topic of posts, followed by framing and messenger behavior.**

- **Instagram and TikTok** are where many people come across information first.

- When actively searching, many people rely on **Google, YouTube, or ChatGPT, but also on the news**.

☐ Consider integrating day-to-day topics that are most relevant to your constituents (including hobbies, local connections) into your posts.

☐ Don't shy away from showing joy in your content, when appropriate.

☐ Assure your Instagram and TikTok accounts are active and updated.

☐ Assure your website/content is optimized so Google, YouTube, and AI tools can easily find it.

2. CONTENT PREFERENCES

- Latinos value **fun, light-hearted, and informative content** that is also **positive, and community-centered.**

- Content seen as "relevant" and "interesting" tied to **personal interests, hobbies, or culture.**

- People stop scrolling for content featuring **friends, celebrities, or influencers** they recognize.

- People value **clean, straightforward, well-produced** content with human-centric visuals.

☐ Create content that feels positive and constructive.

☐ Provide informative content that helps people improve and/or learn something new, with a clear call to action.

☐ Make it easy for your audience to see how the information you share connects to their lives.

☐ Reflect your audience's cultural interests, such as sports, fitness, self-improvement, music, family, health, food, local news, immigration, or home-country topics, in your content.

☐ Reference other familiar or recognizable faces as the subjects in the content you offer.

☐ Create short, straightforward videos, reels, or other quick, easy-to-consume visuals.

☐ Produce high-quality videos or graphics with good sound and clear resolution.

☐ Invest in good presentation, lighting, sound, framing.

☐ Pair clear headlines with attractive, relevant images to catch attention?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- **AI content felt 'annoying' and untrustworthy during passive scrolling,** but many trusted it for reliable, unbiased information when actively searching.

- Most participants believe **AI-generated content should be labeled.**

☐ Prioritize using real visuals and human voices over AI-generated ones in your communications.

☐ Clearly label AI-generated content so your audience knows it was created or assisted by AI.

☐ Have a policy for disclosing when AI tools are used in your communications or content production.

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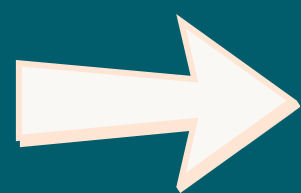
RESEARCH FINDINGS → SUGGESTED PRACTICES

3. TRUST & CREDIBILITY

- Most Latinos don't fully trust any individual or organizational social media account due to perceived bias, corruption, or self-interest.

- People trust sources more when they **show evidence or are on the ground** where events happen.

- **YouTube** emerged as the most trusted social media platform.

- Latinos rely on cues like **verification badges, popularity, intent to inform, comments, opt-ins, and past accuracy** to judge trustworthiness.

- **First-hand perspectives and contrasting views** make content more persuasive and shift opinions.

☐ Clearly show evidence or sources to back up your claims.

☐ Show you are present at events to build trust with your audience.

☐ Use platforms like YouTube for deeper dives or explanations.

☐ Have a verified account or badge on the platforms where you publish.

☐ Show regular activity and visible engagement through your account.

☐ Actively respond to comments.

☐ Create or participate in private or opt-in spaces (like Facebook or WhatsApp groups) where your audience feels safer to engage.

☐ Publicly correct mistakes

☐ Show real people's experiences and different viewpoints

4. MESSENGER

- Many Latinos prefer **engaging with individual** rather than organizational accounts during passive scrolling.

- They value a**uthenticity, proximity, and approachability** in these individual accounts.

- Latinos felt represented by messengers with **cultural ties, support for key issues,** and relatable communication styles.

☐ Speak directly and simply.

☐ Have an individual profile that shows your personal interests.

☐ Respond to comments and messages promptly, and with a personal touch.

☐ Talk to people (not at them). Avoid jargon. Avoid insulting your audience's intelligence.

☐ Share information in English and Spanish, using visuals, stories, and examples that feel authentic to Latino communities. Don't stereotype.

☐ Ensure that your policies and public communications address the key issues that matter most to Latino communities in a way that feels close to their day to day experiences. Rely on Latino-led research to gauge the nuances.
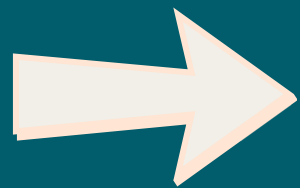
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SUPPORTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO ONLINE HARMS
Tips for Elected Officials and Policymakers

RESEARCH FINDINGS → QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

- **Latinos raised misinformation, disinformation, bullying, extremism, etc.**
- **Political use of power:** self-interest, overreach, polarization
- Racism, freedom of speech.

☐ Do you actively share accurate, verifiable information from trusted sources to counter misinformation that affects your audience?

☐ Do you back initiatives that combat misinformation, disinformation, and scams targeting Latino communities?

☐ Do you help your community recognize and avoid false or misleading content, for example, by sharing tips, guides, or connecting them to reliable fact-checkers?

2. FEAR OF SPEAKING OUT

Many avoid expressing opinions online due to fear of hate, backlash, or confrontation.

☐ Do you actively moderate your online spaces to reduce hate speech, harassment, and intimidation?

☐ Do you offer alternative ways for people to engage, such as private groups, or anonymous feedback, so they can participate without fear?

☐ Do you advocate for clear transparency and accountability standards from platforms regarding moderation?

☐ Do you support policies that strengthen protections against online harassment, hate speech, and intimidation?

3. POLARIZATION

Politics, elections, and immigration are perceived as the most polarizing topics.

☐ Do you present information about politics, elections, and immigration in a fact-based way that avoids inflaming hatred or fear?

☐ Do you provide context, evidence, or multiple perspectives when discussing sensitive topics like elections or immigration?

4. DRIVERS OF DISINFORMATION

People see likes, money, virality, political actors, and racism toward Latinos as key drivers of disinformation.

☐ Do you actively avoid stereotypes or racist framing toward Latinos or other groups?

☐ Do you make your information easy to share privately?

☐ Do you offer private channels where people can receive and pass along verified information?

☐ Do you collaborate with trusted messengers or community leaders to circulate fact-checks or reliable updates?

5. FACT-CHECKING BEHAVIOR

Most people share fact-checks privately with friends or family and rarely post them publicly.

☐ Do you partner with trusted messengers, local leaders, or other organizations to counter harmful narratives around immigration and other sensitive issues?

☐ Do you promote positive and inclusive stories about immigrants and Latino communities to counteract racist rhetoric?

☐ Do you support policies that hold platforms accountable for failing to act on hate speech, bullying, or false information?
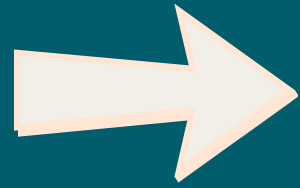
☐ Do you collaborate with civil society groups and experts to develop evidence-based strategies against harmful narratives?

6. COMMON TOPIC OF DISINFORMATION

Immigration disinformation (raids, restrictions, enforcement) and scams were most common.

From the study "Conversations with Latinos: What Makes Content Stick? How U.S. Latinos Navigate Today's Digital Information Ecosystem."

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NAVIGATING AI USE AND RISKS WITH LATINOS IN MIND

Tips for Elected Officials and Policymakers

RESEARCH FINDINGS → QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF AI

- **Latinos see AI tools as neutral,** dependent on who uses them and for what purpose.
- Many see the benefits of AI, but worry about its impact on jobs, privacy, and security.

2. DEGREE OF EXPOSURE

- People believe they are encountering AI-generated content far more often than in the past few years.

3. PERCEPTION ABOUT VULNERABILITY OF OTHERS

- Many Latinos we spoke with think older adults and children cannot tell AI-generated content from real content.

4. ABILITY TO DETECT AI

- Participants believe they can detect AI-generated content using visual or voice cues.

5. LABELING OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT

- Most participants believe AI-generated content should be labeled to prevent confusion.

☐ Do you advocate for public education about AI's presence and impact, especially in Latino communities?

☐ Do you support public campaigns that help communities understand when AI content is present and how to judge its reliability?

☐ Do you support policies or programs that fund AI literacy education for communities, including older adults and children?

☐ Do you collaborate with educators, community leaders, and tech platforms to develop safeguards against deceptive AI content?

☐ Do you encourage transparency measures that make AI-generated content easy to detect for all audiences?

☐ Do you advocate for clear, standardized labeling of AI-generated content across platforms to protect users from confusion?
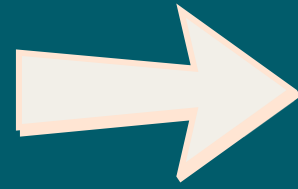
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ADDRESSING BIG TECH'S INFLUENCE IN OUR DEMOCRACY

Tips for Elected Officials and Policymakers

RESEARCH FINDINGS → QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. WHO DECIDES WHAT WE SEE

Latinos see platform algorithms driving what they see, often pushing high-engagement or harmful content; many believe phones "listen" and feed ads.

☐ Do you support policies requiring transparency about how platforms curate and recommend content (including algorithms and ad targeting)?

☐ Do you advocate for privacy protections that limit invasive data collection and "phones are listening to us" fears?

☐ Do you engage Latino community organizations in discussions about platform accountability and data privacy?

2. VULNERABILITY TO ONLINE RISKS

People feel able to detect harms but view children, older adults, and at times everyone as vulnerable.

☐ Do you support or fund digital literacy and online safety programs designed specifically for children, older adults, and other vulnerable populations?

☐ Do you advocate for stricter safeguards and social media reporting mechanisms to protect vulnerable groups from online harms?

3. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Participants put responsibility on tech companies to secure platforms but also on individuals and parents.

☐ Do you support policies that hold tech companies accountable for securing their platforms against online harms?

☐ Do you promote public education initiatives that empower individuals and parents to protect themselves and their children online?

☐ Do you advocate for resources and funding to support community-based digital safety programs?

4. TECH COMPANIES & DEMOCRACY

Tech companies are seen as influencing voters, pushing narratives, and affecting (positively and negatively) freedom of speech.

☐ Do you support policies that require transparency about how tech companies handle political content?

☐ Do you advocate for safeguards that protect both democratic participation and freedom of speech online?

☐ Do you push for independent oversight or audits of platform practices affecting elections and freedom of speech?

5. BROAD ONLINE RISKS

Main risks cited:
- misinformation,
- violence,
- privacy breaches,
- surveillance,
- hacks,
- scams,
- and harassment.

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