Digital Falsehoods and their Analogue Consequences

UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2018 Feature Conference
MIL Empowering Active Engaged Communities & Participation in City Elections
October 24, 2018 in Kaunas, Lithuania
“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

UNESCO, 1945
Why Do Some False Narratives Take Hold?
Increasing Access to Internet, but Media and Information Literacy Remains Lacking

International Telecommunication Union, “Individuals using the Internet 2005 to 2014,” Key ICT indicators for developed and developing countries and the world (totals and penetration rates.)

Percent of respondents who agree with the following statement

"Facebook is the internet"

- Nigeria: 65%
- Indonesia: 61%
- India: 58%
- Brazil: 55%
- USA: 5%

Data: Geopolis, Jana, SurveyMonkey
Emotional Narratives, MIL, and Elections

A Study of Recent Falsehoods
Use of technology, even crudely, can support false, emotionally-driven narratives.
Understanding the emotional drivers of different communities allows those communities to be unknowingly manipulated.
Traits common among the most readily influenced groups:

- Dissatisfaction with society
- Higher reactivity to threat
- High ICT use combined with low MIL
City Elections and Prospective Solutions

Next Steps for Using MIL to Engage the Disaffected
Cities as “Up-Close” Government
Next Steps

- Identify dissatisfied groups
- Meet them on their home turf (preferred digital platforms)
- Create digital spaces for citywide participation
- Replace negative, false narratives with positive, powerful ones
- Offer meaningful opportunities to engage
- Push back against voter dissuasion
Sir Tim Berners-Lee
Creator of the World Wide Web
London Olympics 2012