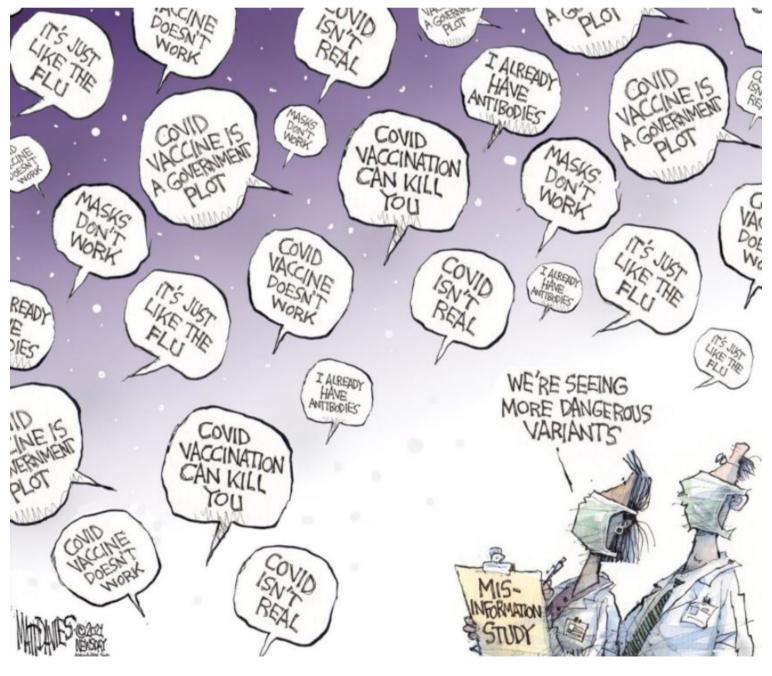# Infodemic Management News Flash

Feature Artwork

First of all, we're breaking our own best practices with this illustration.

You infodemic management gurus will know that repeating misinformation can often trigger its spread further. So we imagine that as a reader you might be wincing at the sight of all those falsehoods on display. But uh, anything for the sake of art, right?

However, Matt Davies makes a good point here: like the coronavirus itself, dangerous mutations of misinformation need to be studied, understood and addressed with an evidence-based approach.

The below activities and opportunities for involvement will offer you a chance to do just that. So read on and enjoy this week's issue of the flash.

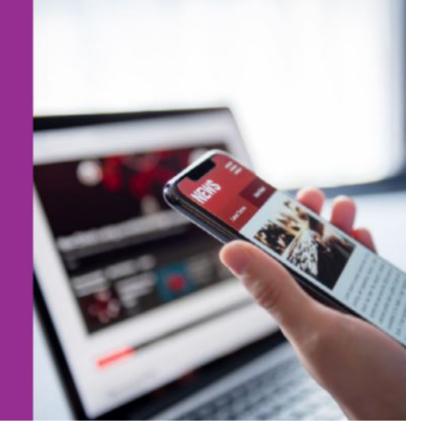© Newsday/[Matt Davies](#)

Feature Content

The Africa Infodemic Response Alliance

The Africa Infodemic Response Alliance (AIRA) launches its new website.

You may remember way back in issue #6 when we shared news that WHO's Regional Office in Africa joined forces with intergovernmental and governmental organisations, as well as non-state actors across the continent to launch AIRA, to respond to infodemic threats at regional and country levels. Regional activities are critically important for effective infodemic management, and AIRA is setting a great example.

Check out AIRA's new website, which is stacked with news, FAQs, videos, infographics and more, and follow them on all the social media channels.
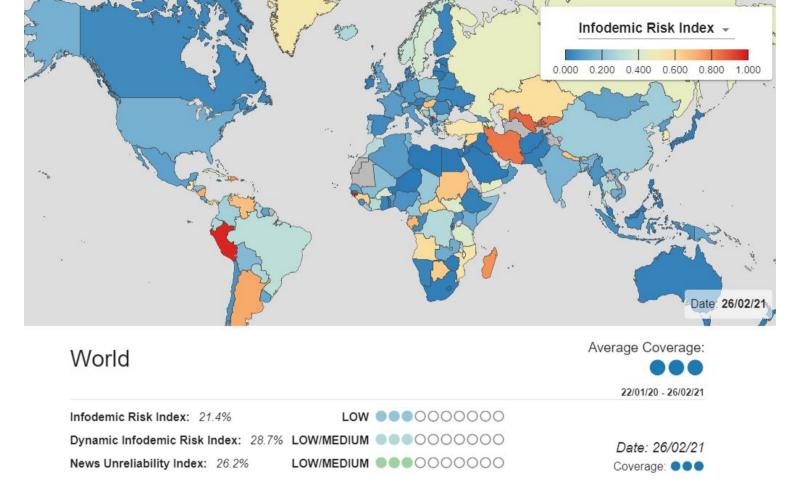
Cochrane signs WHO's Call for Action to manage the infodemic along with ~470 others.

[Cochrane](#) is an international network of researchers who perform systematic reviews of evidence to ensure that health decisions are based on quality literature and systematic research methods.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Cochrane has been working to meet information needs with high-quality information from trustworthy sources.

To reinforce their dedication to infodemic management, Cochrane has signed [WHO's Call for Action](#) to promote universal access to health information and to mitigate harm from health misinformation among online and offline communities. Join Cochrane and 470 other change-making institutions and individuals across the world by [signing your commitment](#) to infodemic management.

World

		Average Coverage:

Infodemic Risk Index: 21.4% — LOW ●●●○○○○○○○

Dynamic Infodemic Risk Index: 28.7% — LOW/MEDIUM ●●●○○○○○○○

News Unreliability Index: 26.2% — LOW/MEDIUM ●●●○○○○○○○

Average Coverage: ●●●

22/01/20 - 26/02/21

Date: 26/02/21

Coverage: ●●●

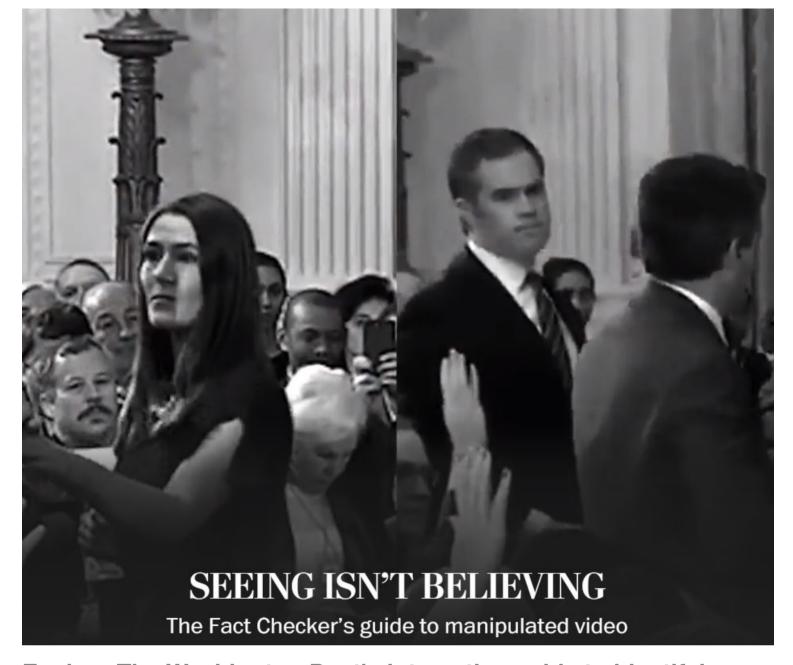**The Bruno Kessler Foundation (FBK) launches its new Infodemic Observatory for COVID-19.**

With collaboration from WHO, FBK has graduated its AI-powered COVID-19 Infodemic Observatory out of beta version so it can be used by the public to better understand one aspect of the infodemic on a global scale.

This is one more tool that will help health decision-makers understand where information voids exist so that reliable information can be developed to fill that space.

Though this tool remains a work in progress, its new features include indicators for analysing "infodemic risk" and allow for risk comparison among countries around the world.

Keep following progress on the Infodemic Observatory and other tools as our community continues to expand the infodemic management toolbox.

Opportunities for Action

SEEING ISN'T BELIEVING
The Fact Checker's guide to manipulated video

Explore The Washington Post's interactive guide to identifying misleading and manipulated videos.

The Washington Post has, as part of its fact-checking initiative, developed a guide to help people understand the information landscape and to see how easy it is for videos to mislead through missing context, deceptive editing and malicious transformation.

It's easy to be fooled when you don't have your guard up, so sharpen your digital literacy skills and remain alert.

Early AI-supported Response with Social Listening

COVID-19 online conversations in 20 pilot countries

Tell us how you are using this data.

What are you using this data for?

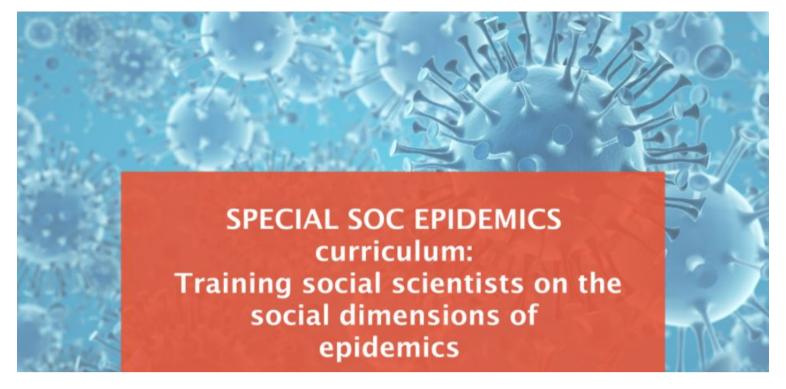We want to hear from you! How can we improve the project?

Feedback

Give WHO feedback on your experience using EARS.

You may remember us introducing you to WHO's Early AI-supported Response with Social Listening tool (EARS) back in Issue #9. Building out EARS is one way we're helping health authorities have a sophisticated platform that's dedicated to understanding public online conversations about COVID-19.

EARS is in pilot phase in 20 countries and four languages and aims to help health authorities keep a finger on the pulse of online public conversations that are happening in real time, so they can see what topics are trending, what's on the rise, and where there's a gap of credible information that needs to be filled.

Join us in making EARS an effective tool by providing feedback on how you are using the data and how we can improve the tool.

Use this curriculum to train the trainer.

Sonar Global has developed a training curriculum that consists of 13 modules and a total of five days of training. This resource is for trainers who aim to provide a high-level training on the relevance of social sciences in emerging epidemics related to infectious threats to scholars or professionals with a university level social science background.

For more information, visit the website.

Job Opportunities

- **WHO:** Technical Officer, Risk Communication and Community Engagement (Geneva, Switzerland)
- **WHO AFRO:** Emergency Infodemic Management Consultants (Multiple locations)
- **PAHO:** Advisor, Public Health Data Engineering (Washington, DC, USA)
- **UN World Food Programme:** Digital Analyst Consultant (Rome, Italy)
- **Stanford Cyber Policy Center:** Technology Policy Researcher

(EU/USA)

- **The George Institute for Global Health:** Project Manager – Health Innovations (New Delhi, India)
- **Gavi:** Consultant to Address Misinformation and Vaccine Hesitancy (Geneva, Switzerland/remote)
- **Reuters Institute:** Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Misinformation, Science and Media (Oxford, UK)
- **University of Adelaide:** ARC Grant-Funded Researcher A - School of Mathematical Sciences (Adelaide, Australia)
- **Harvard University:** Coordinator II (Digital Health Communications Specialist, PHACS) (Boston, MA, USA)
- **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA):** Social Scientist (Emilia-Romagna, Parma, Italy)
- **European Commission Joint Research Centre:** FG IV – Designer – Expert in Visual and User-Centered Information (Brussels, Belgium)

Upcoming Events
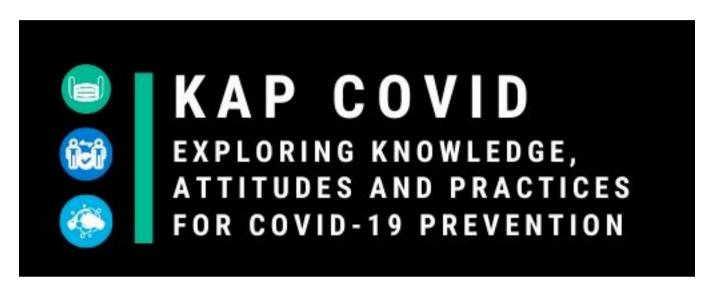
Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) will host a discussion on the consequences of mis- and disinformation during the pandemic, how the spread of false information impacts especially at-risk communities, and solutions for mitigating its spread.

Register to attend.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is hosting a webinar on "Utilizing Data from the KAP COVID Survey to Increase Vaccine Confidence and Reinforce Prevention Behaviors." This webinar will examine data from the recently updated KAP COVID dashboard (https://ccp.jhu.edu/kap-covid/), which provides a visual of survey data from 67 countries on knowledge, attitudes and practices around COVID-19.

Panelists will contextualize data from Egypt and Pakistan that reflect varying trends within one WHO region. This example can be adapted to any country with data on the dashboard. Participants will also learn how social norms contribute to the development of messages and interventions around prevention and vaccine uptake.

Register to attend.

Media Bounty, an ethical creative agency, will present new research developed with Pulsar on how misinformation spreads (with a focus on COVID and climate change), and will share a playbook to help you to spot disinformation, devise effective communications in response, and ensure brand safety.

Register to attend.

20-21 May 2021

The objective of this international conference is to observe and understand the practices and reactions of the public to the infodemic in the context of an international crisis, and to identify the conditions for creating and maintaining information trust. The work will be grouped around four themes:

1. The organizers and regulators of the system
2. The actors
3. The sources, forms and effects of fake news
4. Media and information literacy

Register to attend.

Recent Events

3 March 2021

Dr. Sylvie Briand, WHO's Director of the Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness hosted a webinar to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic one year later. The conversation focused on a high-level overview of emerging issues from each phase of the pandemic.

Watch the recording here.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF NURSES - FRONT LINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

STRONG NURSES FOR STRONG HEALTH SYSTEMS AND A HEALTHIER WORLD

25 February 2021

WHO participated in the South-Eastern Europe Health Network regional webinar on "What is currently known about countering misinformation and resilience against misinformation."

Read the recap and key takeaways from the event.

24 February 2021

#iamhere International is a global movement spanning more than 150,000 members and 150 countries, aimed to make social media a better place. Together with WHO, the two groups held a webinar focused on strategies for countering hate speech online, which often stems from misinformation.

Watch the recording here.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THE COVID VACCINE

Duke | GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

Join experts from DGHI and around the world as they explore the current state of vaccine access and equity. Panel moderated by Michael H. Merson, M.D.

Michael H. Merson, M.D — DUKE UNIVERSITY
Thomas N. Denny, M Phil, MSc. — DUKE UNIVERSITY
Kaitlin Christenson, MPH — SABIN VACCINE INSTITUTE
Lavanya Vasudevan, PhD — DUKE UNIVERSITY
Muhammad Pate, M.D. — WORLD BANK

Overcoming Vaccine Hesitancy

26 February 2021

The Duke Global Health Institute hosted a panel to share global perspectives on the history and drivers of vaccine hesitancy and to discuss strategies to overcome vaccine concerns including lessons learned from past disease eradication efforts.

Watch the recording here.

UC BERKELEY SOCIAL SCIENCE MATRIX

19 February 2021

The Social Science Research Council and the Social Science Matrix and the D-Lab at the University of California, Berkeley co-sponsored a lecture where Dr. Joan Donovan, Research Director of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy discussed "The True Cost of Misinformation: Producing a Moral Technical Order in a Time of Pandemonium."

Watch the recording here.

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC), the governments of Finland and the United Kingdom, and other member states in the FOC Advisory Network issued a joint statement to address the growing spread of disinformation online. This statement calls upon governments to refrain from conducting and sponsoring disinformation campaigns, and urges all stakeholders to take active steps to address the issue in a manner that respects human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Read the joint statement here.

Noteworthy Multimedia

Follow [@viralfacts](#) for catchy content to share.

[Viral Facts Africa](#) is developing shareable bite-size videos on the reg to reinforce infodemic management principles that can help people stay aware of healthy online info-sharing practices.
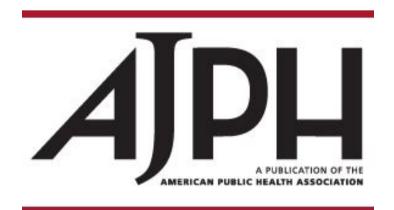
Follow, amplify and share.

Enter the MediaWise Sensory Experience.

[MediaWise](), an initiative from the [Poynter Institute](), is a digital media literacy project teaching people of all ages how to fact-check social media. Check out their first YouTube episode of ["MediaWise Tries"]() where they blend media literacy education with an #ASMR sensory experience to get you relaxed while thinking about how you can practice fact-checking yourself.

What We're Reading

[Crowdfunding Campaigns and COVID-19 Misinformation]()

18 February 2021

[International experiences with co-production and](
[people centredness offer lessons for covid-19]()

responses
15 February 2021

[Communicating Science in Times of COVID-19: A Selective Overview of Good Practices](#)
February 2021

[Social Listening in Eastern and Southern Africa, a UNICEF Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy to Address the COVID-19 Infodemic](#)
18 February 2021

[Does Science Literacy Guarantee Resistance to Health Rumors? The Moderating Effect of Self-Efficacy of Science Literacy in the Relationship between Science Literacy and Rumor Belief](#)
24 February 2021

[What Social Media Told Us in the Time of COVID-19: A Scoping Review](#)
28 January 2021

[Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression](#)

THE MEDIA MANIPULATION CASEBOOK

scientific reports

[Web of lies: a tool for determining the limits of verification in preventing the spread of false information on networks](#)
15 February 2021

Springer Link

[How does WeChat's active engagement with health information contribute to psychological well-being through social capital?](#)
18 February 2021

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE **Eastern Mediterranean**

[Infodemic, self-medication and stockpiling: a worrying combination](#)
3 February 2021

Fun With Numbers

46%

It's that time of year again—the [Hootsuite](#) and [We Are Social Digital Report for 2021](#) is live. It has insights to help you understand how people are using the internet, mobile, social media and e-commerce. And it's broken out by country.

So we took a look at what's happening with [Senegal](#) because... why not Senegal! According to the report, internet penetration there stood at 46% of the population in January of 2021.

Often infodemic management efforts are laser-focused online, but this clearly indicates that the internet is not penetrating the majority of the population and therefore we cannot neglect infodemic management efforts *offline*.

About the News Flash

An infodemic is an overabundance of information—some accurate, some not—that spreads alongside a disease outbreak. Infodemics are nothing new, but in the digital age, they spread in real time and create a breeding ground for uncertainty. Uncertainty fuels skepticism and distrust, which is perfect environment for fear, anxiety, finger-pointing, stigma, violent aggression and dismissal of proven public health measures. To manage an infodemic, we need to understand what contributes to it. So that's why we're sending you these updates. In each issue of the WHO's Infodemic Management News Flash we'll share the latest work happening at the global level, as well as highlight some of the challenges and solutions with infodemics in local contexts. We'll also provide you with a few takeaways to help you be an effective infodemic manager in your daily life.

If you have a tip on infodemic management or an idea for a future News Flash, email us at **infodemicmanagement@who.int.** Thanks for joining us on this journey.