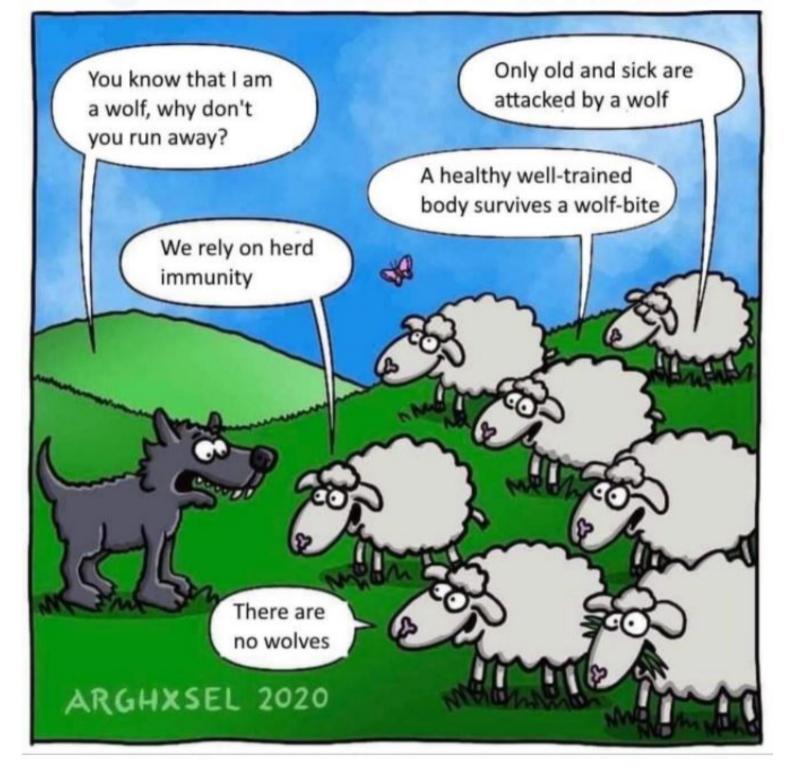
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## **Infodemic Management News Flash**

Friday, 13 November 2020 I Issue #4

### **Feature Artwork**

Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf? Apparently not these sheep. Which... that's concerning. Perhaps a dash of risk perception would save their hides.

What's risk perception, you ask? It's when an individual assesses the

possibility of harm to themselves or someone they care about. Risk perception is key to motivating healthy behaviors. But it also creates challenges that impact all of society.

With COVID-19, there's mass misalignment between scientists' and health authorities' perceptions of risk and the general public's perception of risk. A healthy balance of hope and worry is what infodemic managers are striving to achieve. And in your daily life, we hope you'll look for ways to encourage that healthy combo of concern and optimism among your networks.

For more on risk perception, <u>tune into this video</u> which is part of WHO's first-ever infodemic manager training that's going on as we speak!

Credit to Arghxsel Cartoons.

## **Upcoming Events**



### **20 October - 11 December 2020:**

WHO is hosting its 3<sup>rd</sup> Virtual Global Infodemic Management Conference where invited participants will hold dialogues, workshops and webinars to inform the outputs. On 11 December, the consultation will conclude with a LIVE public session that highlights the outputs developed over the six weeks. During the live event, partners and stakeholders from every corner of society will attend to affirm their commitment to necessary actions that will enable individuals and communities to mitigate the impact of and develop resilience to the COVID-19 infodemic. Register to attend the live



### 13 November 2020:

The COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by a swirl of disinformation and misinformation that is sowing confusion and mistrust about potentially life-saving personal and policy choices. This "disinfodemic" and efforts to counter it have raised challenges to the right to freedom of expression and access to information. WHO will speak on this panel to explore what role different actors play in countering disinformation, and how their work and actions can be strengthened.

# franceinfo Les Echos présentent Le 1" festival international des médias de demain Échanger, Imaginer, Avancer.

#### Paris, le 7 octobre 2020

## FESTIVAL « MÉDIAS EN SEINE » JEUDI 19 NOVEMBRE 2020

150 personnalités viendront débattre sur l'avenir des médias dans un contexte exceptionnel.

#### **DÉCOUVREZ LES PREMIERS SPEAKERS**

« Médias en Seine », le 1er festival international pour imaginer les médias de demain, revient le jeudi 19 novembre pour sa 3 time édition, soit deux semaines après l'élection américaine et dix mois après le début d'une pandémie mondiale qui a frappé la planète et mis à l'épreuve l'économie des médias.

Plus de 150 personnalités - journalistes, scientifiques, médecins, médias publics et privés, français et internationaux, auteurs, philosophes, photographes, producteurs, réalisateurs, intellectuels, artistes, startups, plateformes, régulateurs... - partageront leurs expériences et idées d'avenir.

#### PLUS DE 150 PERSONNALITÉS PARTICIPERONT AUX DÉBATS



#### 19 November 2020:

WHO will present at Les Echos' third edition of "Médias en Seine" where 150+ media sector professionals and stakeholders will discuss how COVID-19 has put the media economy to the test, and the role and challenges of the media to defend democracy, promote knowledge and build trust.

### 21 November 2020:

Google News Initiative is hosting the Misinformation in Medicine Summit which will bring together journalists, doctors,



technologists and policy-makers to discuss the proliferation of medical misinformation. The summit is designed to strengthen the dialogue on fighting misinformation in health and further consolidate and spread the collaborative networks across Asia. It will provide opportunities for participants to engage with a broad network of stakeholders to facilitate knowledge sharing, strategies and community building opportunities in fact-checking. Register to attend.

# Northwest Center FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

### 23 November 2020:

This is a one-hour webinar on "Managing Infodemics and Conspiracy Theories" which will identify key elements that nurture the rise of false and misleading information, like uncertainty and mistrust, understand the connections between COVID-19 and climate change conspiracy theories and messaging, and consider how to apply findings and strategies from the latest research on the psychology of misinformation to your communications work. Register and attend.



### 23 - 24 November 2020:

WHO is presenting at the Science in the Newsroom Global Summit 2020 where panelists will discuss how global health emergencies are forecasted to be part of our lives, what awaits us in 2021 and what lessons we can draw from COVID-19

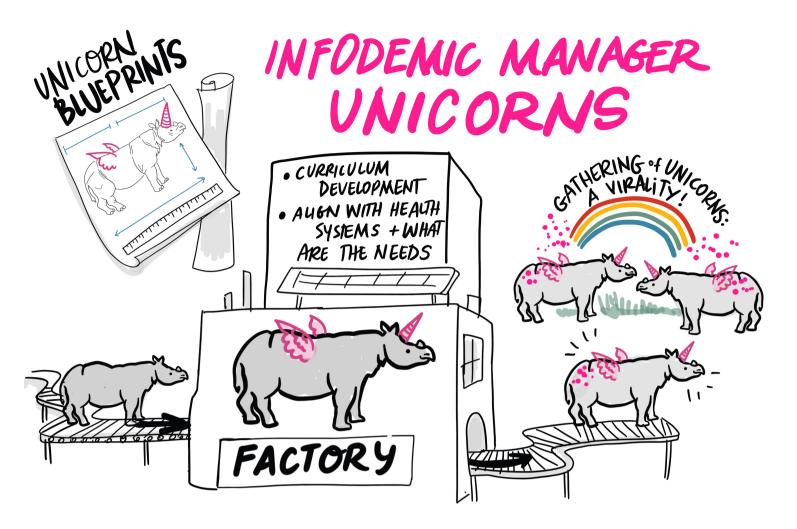
coverage. They'll discuss how to support newsrooms and journalists for more informed and impactful journalism about global scientific, technical and human challenges, and what role journalism plays in seeking solutions for a better world that is both healthy and sustainable. Register to attend.

## **Opportunities for Action**



# Complete this survey. Deadline for response is 24 November 2020.

WHO is surveying fact-checking organizations who are fact-checking COVID-19 and health-related claims. This survey aims to perform a landscape analysis of fact-checking of health information, as well as assess the needs and potential to engage other fact-checkers in the collaboration. The goal is to expand a system to track false COVID-19 claims online. This work is being done in partnership with an international network of fact-checkers. Complete the survey here.



### Take a self-guided training course on infodemic management.

WHO has partnered up with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and RCCE collective service, to prepare the first WHO training in infodemic management, supported by First Draft. And now you can watch the training videos too!

The training covers a spectrum of infodemic management skills and topics focused on skills needed to apply infodemic management interventions and practice to promote resilience of individuals and communities to the infodemic, including misinformation, and to promote self efficacy of individuals for self-protective health behaviors. The training encompasses both global and region-specific topics in the infodemic and health misinformation.

# Managing the COVID-19 infodemic

**CALL FOR ACTION** 







# Review the 50 actions developed in the 1st ever WHO Global Infodemic Management Conference.

Think of this as a pre-read ahead of the 3rd Infodemic Management Conference you're going to attend on 11 December. <u>Use this report</u> to brush up on the background and context behind WHO's newly established infodemic management response pillar and review the 50 key actions that were generated in the initial infodemic management

consultation in April 2020.



### Learn how to talk about health.

<u>Serious games</u> have proved to be great tools for capacity building in the field of public health. One's learning journey is never over, and the aim of serious games is to provide professionals with fun and adaptable tools to keep learning, alone or with others. This is the goal of their Working Group. In a year, they would like to share with the public health community a high-end game, to bring all of those professionals together so they can learn as a group. In the meantime, find quizzes developed by specialists in their fields, to allow you to practice along the way.







### Join a community of nerds who love facts.

Those Nerdy Girls are an all-volunteer team of female PhDs and MDs <u>curating COVID-19</u> <u>content for the greater good</u>. They love facts for educational purposes. Nothing in this community substitutes for advice from your healthcare provider. But it's a community to help you stay safe and stay sane during this time.







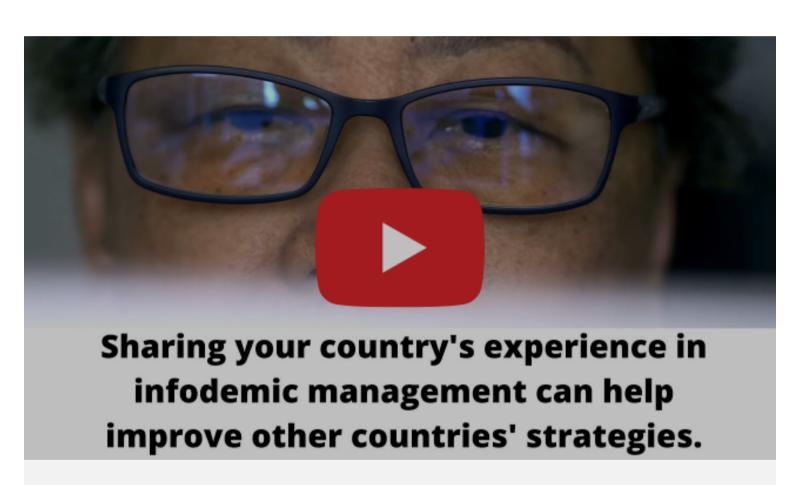
### Test your skills to see if you can spot internet trolls.

This is a <u>quiz</u> developed by Clemson University where you examine images of real social media content and decide whether it's from a legitimate account or an internet troll.

### YouGov COVID-19 Public Monitor

# Share your pandemic experience to support research and public health data generation.

YouGov is a global public opinion organisation that is putting full focus on gathering information about COVID-19, asking people to share their experiences of the global pandemic and using that unique insight to provide health organisations with data that helps them understand and fight the spread of the virus. Data from the COVID-19 behaviour tracker by Imperial College London and YouGov is accessible on GitHub.



## Submit a poster to WHO's whole-of-society infodemic management conference. Deadline is 20 November 2020.

WHO wants to know what tools country health authorities are using to manage rumors and misinformation, and to mitigate the harmful impacts of the COVID-19 infodemic. If you're a professional who works in infodemic response for your government, we invite you to submit a poster about the approaches you're taking. Posters will be presented at the WHO infodemic management conference this December. See our <u>poster submission guidelines</u> for more details.



### Submit a proposal to the WHO. Deadline is 30 November 2020.

The WHO Academy has just issued a mega-request for proposals (RFP) to establish a multi-year, long-term agreement with vendors in the following domains:

- 1. Course design and production
- 2. Course delivery
- 3. Research and evaluation
- 4. Learning technology and innovation
- 5. Digital marketing of courses and services
- 6. Multi-lingual translation capabilities
- 7. Strategic advisory services
- Business services
- 9. Audio visual services

See the RFP here.

### **Recent Events**



### **12 November 2020:**

UNICEF's Office of Research-Innocenti presented its 9th Leading Minds Online webcast 'What the Experts Say - Coronavirus and Children' on The Infodemic & Fake News. A panel of high-level experts investigated the link between misinformation, disinformation and fake news, keeping the balance between fighting hate speech and safeguarding freedom of speech. A selection of audience questions were addressed during the webcast, which was broadcasted on UNICEF Innocenti

website and on YouTube, Facebook.



#### 11 November 2020:

Johns Hopkins Center for Communications Programs hosted a webinar in collaboration with WHO. Facebook, MIT and GOARN about "Utilizing Data from the KAP COVID Survey to Manage the COVID-19 Infodemic" to discuss how countries are continuing to manage surges in COVID-19 infections and fatalities while also attempting to thwart streams of misinformation. The KAP COVID Dashboard provides ministries of health and public health practitioners in 67 countries with a reliable starting point from which to base policy and programmatic decisions. This webinar contextualized the value of the data within the global infodemic and highlighted global findings. Participants were able to learn how country-level implementers have utilized the data from these dashboards to help drive COVID-19 related decision-making. Watch here for the webinar recording to post soon.

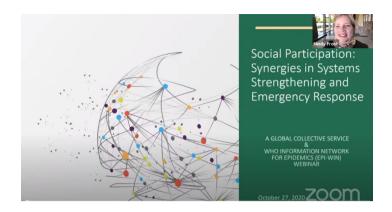


### 29 October 2020:

WHO and partners held a webinar on best practices and lessons learned from an inter-agency perception survey in Asia Pacific. This was a reflection on the challenges and successes of an interagency approach to collecting COVID-

19 perception data in Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and Pakistan. Watch the webinar here.

The COVID-19 crisis has underscored the

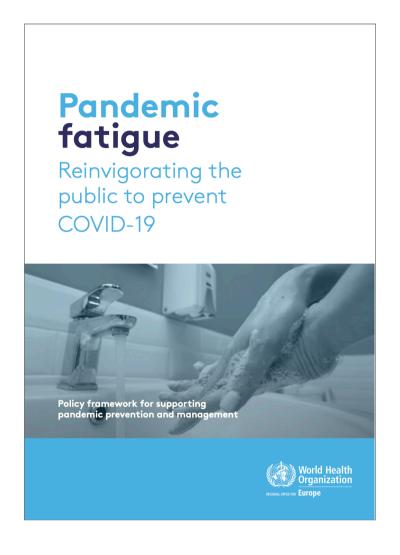


#### 27 October 2020:

need for robust governance of both the emergency response and health systems. Advice to political leaders on the COVID-19 response was largely provided by specialist experts or those with an established relationship with government bodies, reflecting a default governance mode that is still not inclusive. Populations, communities, and civil society were usually either not consulted at all, insufficiently consulted, or consulted very late. Yet we know that such dialogue initiatives are crucial to building trust in government institutions, and gaining broad acceptance of public health measures. Social participation, although not novel in theory, is innovative in practice as decision-makers still struggle with the 'how' of bringing in people's voice into emergency responses and health policies. Watch this webinar from WHO on "Social Participation: Synergies in Systems Strengthening and Emergency Response."

### What We're Reading

If you're feeling overwhelmed by the abundance of new research being published on infodemic management, it just means you're human. We've selected a small collection of interesting articles that may give you deeper insight into the science and the tools behind infodemic management.



### <u>Pandemic fatigue – re-invigorating</u> <u>the public to prevent COVID-19</u>

Despite documented public support for pandemic response strategies across the WHO European Region, Member States are reporting signs of pandemic fatigue in their populations – here defined as demotivation to follow recommended protective behaviours, emerging gradually over time and affected by a number of emotions, experiences and perceptions. Responding to a request from Member States for support in this field, this document provides a framework for the planning and implementation of national and subnational strategies to maintain and reinvigorate public support to prevent COVID-19.



# Under the surface: Covid-19 vaccine narratives, misinformation and data deficits on social media

November 2020

First Draft is pleased to present a new piece of research that has identified dominant vaccine narratives on social media platforms in English, French and Spanish online communities which could erode public trust in a Covid-19 vaccine,

and vaccines more generally. This research demonstrates the complexity of the vaccine information ecosystem, where a cacophony of voices and narratives have coalesced to create an environment of extreme uncertainty. Two topics are driving a large proportion of the current global vaccine discourse, especially around a Covid-19 vaccine: the "political and economic motives" of actors and institutions involved in vaccine development and the "safety, efficacy and necessity" concerns around vaccines.



# Systematic Literature Review on the Spread of Health-related Misinformation on Social Media November 2020

This article focuses on health

misinformation mainly related to vaccine and infectious disease. The findings show high prevalence and popularity of misinformation on social media.

Theoretical frameworks are drawn on disparate disciplinary paradigms. Studies employed content analysis, social network analysis or experiments. More interdisciplinary research is needed to understand the susceptibility of users.

Assessing the risk of Infodemics in response to COVID-19 epidemics

29 October 2020





Check for update

### Assessing the risks of 'infodemics' in response to COVID-19 epidemics

Riccardo Gallotti <sup>1</sup>0¹, Francesco Valle¹, Nicola Castaldo <sup>1</sup>0¹, Pierluigi Sacco <sup>1</sup>23 and Manlio De Domenico <sup>1</sup>18

During COVID-19, governments and the public are fighting not only a pandemic but also a co-evolving infodemic—the rapid and far-reaching spread of information of questionable quality. We analysed more than 100 million Twitter messages posted world-wide during the early stages of epidemic spread across countries (from 22 January to 10 March 2020) and classified the reliability of the news being circulated. We developed an Infodemic Risk Index to capture the magnitude of exposure to unreliable news across countries. We found that measurable waves of potentially unreliable information preceded the rise of COVID-19 infections, exposing entire countries to faisehoods that pose a serious threat to public health. As infections started to rise, reliable information quickly became more dominant, and Twitter content shifted towards more credible informational sources. Infodemic active variety is ginable provide important cues for misinformation mitigation by means of adequate communication strategies.

The recent explosion of publicly shared, decentralized information production that characterized sightal cocteties and in ratory for the observation and study of complex social dynamics', and potentially functions as a laboratory to understand, test and validate possible solutions to large-scale criess'. Pandemics are an instance of such crises, and the current outbreak of COVID-19 may describe the control of the control o

Contrary to what could be expected in principle, this natural experiment reveals that, on the verge of a threatening global pandemic emergency due to SARS-CoV-2 (refs. 611), human communication activity is largely characterized by the production of informational noise and even of mideading or false information? This generates waves of unreliable and low-quality information with potentially dangerous impacts on society's capacity to respond adaptively at all scales by rapidly adopting hose norms and behaviours that may effectively contain the propagation of the pandemic." Spreading false or mideading information may prevent the timely and effective adoption of appropriate behaviours and of public health recommendations or measures." Therefore, on the one hand, we face the threats of a pandemic, which spreads on in the absence of effective therapies and valid countermeasures and calls for major efforts to model and anticipate the time course of the stuffission." On the other hand, we can speak of an infodemic threats, which proliferates when credible information sources fail threats? which proliferates when credible information sources fail threats? which proliferates when credible information sources fail threats? Which proliferates when credible information sources fail content to capture the attention and trust of some parts of the public, for whom alternative, low-quality sources are more appealing as they

prejudices<sup>24</sup>, or sound more convincing, thanks to their typical straightforward messages<sup>25</sup>.

The appeal of low-quality, misleading or manipulative information relies on simple, effective psychological mechanisms, such as curbing anxiety by denying or minimizing the seriousness of the threat; controlling fear and anger by targeting scapegost individuals, groups or institutions as the ones responsible for the crisis; and delivering an illusory sense of control through the provision of 'miracle' remedies. Similarly to epidemics, infodemics could be thoughted of as outbreaks of false trumours and unreliable news<sup>222</sup>—with unex-

As shown in Fig. 1, an infodernic is the result of the simultane us action of multiple human and non-human sources of unrelible or misleading news in times of great abundance of circulating information. Note that, although this study does not directly dea with non-human accounts and their role in (mis-)information difsion, we include them in the figure because they are known to important contributors of noise in online social media 2-2-3. As sers are repeatedly bit by a given message from different sources his works as an indirect validation of its reliability and relevance cauding the user to spread it in turn and to become a vector or

The COVID-19 crisis allows us to provide an evidence-base assessment of such risks and of the real-time interaction of infodemic and epidemic spread." We focus our attention on the analysis on messages poted on Tvitter?. an online social network characterized by heterogeneous connectivity" and topological shortcuts typical of small-vorted systems. Information spread on this type of network is well understood in terms of global cascades in a population of individuals who have to choose between complementary alternatives, while accounting for the behaviour and the relative see of the individual's social neighbourhoods"; as well as for factors that characterize the popularity of specific content, such as the memory time of users and the underlying connectivity structure.

'CoMuNe Lab, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trento, Italy. <sup>2</sup>IULM University, Milan, Italy. <sup>3</sup>Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trento, Italy. <sup>38</sup>e-mail: pierluigi.sacco@iulm.ii mdedomenico@fbk.eu

NATURE HUMAN REHAVIOUR I www.nature.com/nathumhehav

During COVID-19, governments and the public are fighting not only a pandemic but also a co-evolving infodemic—the rapid and far-reaching spread of information of questionable quality. We analysed more than 100 million Twitter messages posted worldwide during the early stages of epidemic spread across countries (from 22 January to 10 March 2020) and classified the reliability of the news being circulated. We developed an Infodemic Risk Index to capture the magnitude of exposure to unreliable news across countries. We found that measurable waves of potentially unreliable information preceded the rise of COVID-19 infections, exposing entire countries to falsehoods that pose a serious threat to public health. As infections started to rise, reliable information quickly became more dominant, and Twitter content shifted towards more credible informational sources. Infodemic early-warning signals provide important cues for misinformation mitigation by means of adequate communication strategies.



# 5 Tips for Greater Inclusivity inHuman Centered Design Activities29 October 2020

Human-centred design has become something of a buzzword in the humanitarian sector. But what does it actually mean? In the simplest terms, human-centred design is a practical and

It draws upon lived experiences, recognising that various perspectives, most importantly those of the end user, will be useful in crafting solutions. This article lists tips for how to ensure design methods are inclusive for people with disabilities.

Article

#### Beyond (Mis)Representation: Visuals in COVID-19 Misinformation

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J. Scott Brennen D, Felix M. Simon D, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

#### **Abstract**

This article provides one of the first analyses of visuals in misinformation concerning COVID-19. A mixed-methods analysis of ninety-six examples of visuals in misinformation rated false or misleading by independent professional fact-checkers from the first three months of 2020 identifies and examines six frames and three distinct functions of visuals in pieces of misinformation: how visuals illustrate and selectively emphasize arguments and claims, purport to present evidence for claims, and impersonate supposedly authoritative sources for claims. Notably, visuals in more than half of the pieces of misinformation analyzed explicitly serve as evidence for false claims, most of which are mislabelled rather than manipulated. While this analysis uncovered a small

### <u>Beyond (Mis)Representation: Visuals</u> <u>in COVID-19 Misinformation</u>

10 October 2020

This article provides one of the first analyses of visuals in misinformation concerning COVID-19. A mixed-methods analysis of ninety-six examples of visuals in misinformation rated false or misleading by independent professional fact-checkers from the first three months of 2020 identifies and examines six frames and three distinct functions of visuals in pieces of misinformation.



# Concrete Recommendations for Cutting Through Misinformation During the COVID-19 Pandemic 1 October 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic presents multifaceted challenges for the US health care system. One such challenge is in delivering vital health information to the public—a task made harder by the scourge of health misinformation across

the information ecosystem. In this issue,
Joan Donovan from Harvard Kennedy's
Shorenstein Center, the Technology and
Social Change Research Project
offers recommendations for public health
information officers and communication
professionals drafting communication
campaigns for health agencies and health
organizations to maximize the chance that
timely health advisories reach the public.



# Cybercriminals Exploitation of the Coronavirus Pandemic

1 October 2020

Major disasters are systematically exploited by cybercriminals for financial or espionage purposes. The phenomenon is not new, whether it is the 2004 Tsunami in Asia or the 2010 Earthquake in Haiti.

COVID-19 is no exception to the rule.

There are some relatively simple steps that the users can take to enhance the security of a home computer.



What questions we should be asking about COVID-19 in humanitarian settings: perspectives from the Social Sciences Analysis Cell in the Democratic Republic of the Congo September 2020

Drawing on this experience, we have identified four questions to shape integrated multidisciplinary outbreak

analytics (IMOA): (1) What are the impacts on healthcare-seeking behaviour, changing trends in service perception, and the availability, access and use of health services? (2) What are the perceptions and behaviours of healthcare workers and what impact does this have on outbreak dynamics? (3) What are individual and community understanding, perceptions and practices relevant to adapting public health and social measures? (4) What mechanisms are used to include gender and what impacts do these have on outbreak dynamics?

### **Fun With Numbers**



# MISSION ACCOMPLLISHED!

Congratulations! You are the undisputed master of disinformation and have destroyed the game after collecting a loyal army of over 12 million followers.

#highestscore #Kaboom!
This is your certificate proving you have achieved mastery level of fake news.

Challenge my friends!

Read more

# 12,250,342

You may remember from our last News Flash issue that we challenged you to play the Bad News Game to get a feel for how disinformation campaigns spread. Brian Yau, one of WHO's star infodemic manager trainees accepted the challenge and destroyed the competition. He motivated 12,250,342 pretend people to start following his disinformation machine. Let's hope Brian keeps focused on his efforts to promote healthy behaviors through infodemic management because he has waaaay too much potential to be a disinformation super-spreader!

Now it's your turn. Play the Bad News Game to learn about how disinformation spreads and challenge others to play as well. It's a fun learning exercise and you'll be contributing to scientific research about media literacy and education.

### **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.





Our mailing address is: infodemicmanagement@who.int

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