Infodemic Management News Flash

Feature Artwork

Many of the ways we live and work hardly ever change--we all still put pants on one leg at a time, am I right? But technology has certainly driven societal changes, like generating knowledge faster than we can consume it. Or creating demand for credible information faster than we can supply it. And during a modern-day pandemic, when people face delays getting information about how to make decisions that impact their health, well... you've just witnessed a year of the chaotic spiral that results.

Our friends at First Draft recently highlighted this concept and are working to do something about it. They're looking at methodologies and technical opportunities to help information providers--like reporters, fact-checkers, governments and health institutions--identify "data deficits" in real time, and even track early signals of information demand so they can anticipate the flood before it breaks the levees.

Take a moment to explore their article and the prototype dashboard they've designed to address this issue.

This is the kind of innovation that will move the field of infodemic management forward. And it's engaged readers like you who will continue to spark creativity that will help develop and improve concrete tools that combat infodemics now and in years to come.

Photo credit: Rissjourney

Opportunities for Action

Apply to have your fact-checking efforts funded by Google.

Google News Initiative has a COVID-19 Vaccine Counter-Misinformation Open Fund which aims to support journalistic efforts to effectively fact-check misinformation about the COVID-19 immunization process, and concentrates on projects that aim to reach audiences underserved by fact-checking or targeted by misinformation. **Deadline to apply is 31 January 2021**. Watch the Q&A for applicants here.

Apply to be a consultant for WHO.

WHO is looking for individual consultants, academic institutions or consulting companies with expertise in digital communications, chatbots, global health, COVID-19, communications and behaviour-change messaging to help assess its main COVID-19 chatbots offerings (WhatsApp, Viber, Viber Community, "Florence" and free basics website) to help improve the chatbots for end users.

[Click here for more information.](#) For the full RFP / job description, please send an email with "CHATBOT" in the subject to Andy PATTISON (pattisona@who.int) and copy Juliette DELMAN-LAGOT (delmanlagotj@who.int).
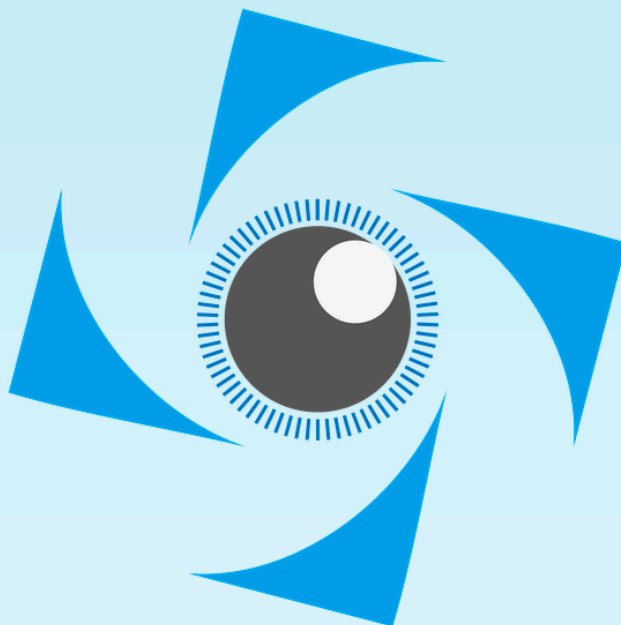
The deadline for proposals is 15 February 2021.

Larson says there are
3 domains of confidence
experts

Watch a quick video on the impact of trust and COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

Check out a recent [video from NowThis](#), which gives more insight on the importance that trust plays in successful vaccine rollout.

open your eyes

{Fake news for dummies}

[2018-1-BG01-KA204-047871]

Open your eyes to fake news.

We are constantly surrounded by all kinds of information, from political ads to commercial marketing, which gets to us with no filter other than our own capacity to critically assess its validity. Biased information appears to be particularly difficult to decode for less media-literate. The European Union Erasmus+ Programme has co-funded the Open Your Eyes project which targets adult learners and educators and seeks to improve their digital skills by providing them with tools to identify fake news and fight the spread of disinformation online. Sharpen your literacy skills here.

Upcoming Events

 29-31 May 2021

Because of the pandemic, the Medical Informatics Europe conference has extended its early bird deadline and the deadline for poster and paper submissions to **31 January 2021**. See more details here.

1-2 February 2021

The I Am Here first international conference will focus on policies concerning hate speech and misinformation. Experts from the world of politics, the church, legislation and civil society will meet to talk about hate speech and misinformation, and will look for solutions for politics, technology companies and members of society. Register and attend.

The Data for Policy conference series is a global forum for multiple disciplinary and cross-sector discussions around the theories, applications and implications of data science innovation in governance and the public sector. The International Organisation Committee for the conference invites paper and panel session proposals at the conference to be also considered for potential post-conference publications in Data & Policy (subject to peer-review). **Deadline for papers and session proposals is 25 March 2021.** See additional details here.

Recent Events

The United Nations World Data Forum (UNWDF) brought together various actors that contribute to strengthening the use of data in journalism. Watch the recording here.

In this fourth installment of a series on COVID-19 and disinformation, speakers including WHO discussed COVID-19 disinformation and the future of internet governance. The event was hosted by the Government of Canada and the

Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, a research institute based at Concordia University. Watch the recording here.

16 December 2020

Each week, First Draft hosts free webinars for communities around the world, during different time zones and in multiple languages to share skills, insights and tools to support reporters and the wider public in response to coronavirus. Watch one of the latest webinars on the challenge of reporting on vaccine misinformation.

What We're Reading

Addressing COVID-19 Misinformation on Social Media Preemptively and Responsively
Volume 27, Number 2--February 2021

This article highlights how shareable graphics can help improve public

knowledge about COVID-19, and encourages wider use of them to combat misperceptions.

Science in the Newsroom Handbook
2021

Science in the Newsroom is a programme to help upskill newsrooms and boost journalism focused on addressing the major science related challenges of our time. Complete the form to gain access to the handbook

Western Anti-Vaxxers Are Undermining COVID Vaccine Rollouts in African Countries
19 January 2021

Experts tell VICE World News that African countries face an epic battle against a "Frankenstein of fake news" originating from outside the continent.

6 Ways to Incorporate Social Context and Trust in Infodemic Management
2020

This brief explains how social science can inform infodemiology by making it more attuned to different social, political and cultural contexts and to the relationships between people and formal institutions. By

providing an understanding of the contexts and cultures in which infodemics circulate, social scientists can help infodemic managers to work with people to make decisions based on the most accurate and appropriate information.

COVID-19 Misinformation Trends in Australia: Prospective Longitudinal National Survey

7 January 2021

This study aimed to investigate the prevalence and factors associated with COVID-19 misinformation in Australia and their changes over time. This prospective, longitudinal national survey was completed by adults (18 years and above) across April, May and June 2020. The findings of this study highlight important gaps in communication effectiveness, which must be addressed to ensure effective COVID-19 prevention.

"Down the Rabbit Hole" of Vaccine Misinformation on YouTube: Network Exposure Study

5 January 2021

The aim of this study was to explore how individuals are exposed to antivaccine misinformation on YouTube based on whether they

start their viewing from a keyword-based search or from antivaccine seed videos.

~~Fun~~ With Numbers
STUN

1 in 20

According to the September 2020 *Failure to Act* report from the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), even when users reported misinformation to internet platforms, fewer than 1 in 20 of the posts were removed.

What's the reason, you ask? Digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are designed to keep us on the platforms through automated algorithms. Whether true or false, sensational posts, motivate people to click and share. When we click our way down a rabbit hole, that generates revenue for website owners, influencers, advertisers and retailers who sell products. CCDH calculates that anti-vaccine disinformation alone is worth ~$1B a year.

As the old saying goes, don't hate the playa, hate the game. Or rather... maybe it's time for infodemic managers and tech leaders to work together to change the game and create disincentives for spreading harmful information and incentives for perpetuating good information.

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.