

## Failure to Act

How Tech Giants Continue to Defy Calls to Rein in Vaccine Misinformation





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The Center for Countering Digital Hate is a not-for-profit NGO that seeks to disrupt the architecture of online hate and misinformation.

Digital technology has changed forever the way we communicate, build relationships, share knowledge, set social standards, and negotiate and assert our society's values.

Digital spaces have been colonised and their unique dynamics exploited by fringe movements that instrumentalise hate and misinformation. These movements are opportunistic, agile and confident in exerting influence and persuading people.

Over time these actors, advocating diverse causes - from anti-feminism to ethnic nationalism to denial of scientific consensus - have formed a Digital Counter Enlightenment. Their trolling, disinformation and skilled advocacy of their causes has resocialised the offline world for the worse.

The Center's work combines both analysis and active disruption of these networks. CCDH's solutions seek to increase the economic, political and social costs of all parts of the infrastructure - the actors, systems and culture - that support, and often profit from hate and misinformation.



Young people have the power to solve the world's biggest challenges. Restless Development is a global agency that works with young people so that they can lead in solving those challenges.

Whether that means supporting communities to end child marriage or prevent HIV, Restless Development works with young people to change their lives and the lives of people in their communities.

Restless Development works with young people in 74 countries around the world and is led by nine Hubs across Africa, Asia, the USA and UK. The agency has been working with young people since 1985 and its work is led by thousands of young people every year.

#### **Youth Against Misinformation**

This initiative is being coordinated and supported by Restless Development and the Center for Countering Digital Hate. It aims: to monitor and root out dangerous COVID-19 misinformation online; and build the skillset and agency of young people; to understand how misinformation is spread online, identify fake news; and develop strategies to tackle it. Volunteers are trained in how to deal with harmful online misinformation, based in part on the principles of CCDH's Don't Spread the Virus initiative.





#### 1 Introduction

By the time a Coronavirus vaccine is widely available, tens of billions of dollars will have been expended researching and producing it. Vaccines are among the safest, most effective and consequential inventions in medical history. They have saved countless people from disease and death.

And yet, despite scientific consensus, vaccines are opposed by a growing social media ecosystem of Counter-Enlightenment actors, snake oil salesmen and the misinformed. This Anti-Vaxx industry, which CCDH calculates is worth a billion dollars a year to social media companies, is, in theory, countered by governments, scientists and fact-based journalism, and yet Coronavirus vaccine hesitancy is growing.

Tech giants realise it would be toxic if people knew how they nurture this deadly ecosystem, so they have made big claims on dealing with Coronavirus misinformation. For this report, we sought to verify their claims. Restless Development and CCDH trained young volunteers in how to identify misinformation. They scoured Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter, recording and reporting misinformation through the platforms' interfaces.

Of the 912 posts flagged and reported by volunteers, fewer than 19 in 20 posts containing misinformation were dealt with (4.9%). Much debate about misinformation on social media is about automated algorithms and detection. But this exercise shows that even when companies are handed misinformation on a silver platter, they fail to act.

Alongside this report, we polled US citizens' attitudes towards a Coronavirus

vaccine. The results are deeply concerning:

- 1. The proportion of US adults who probably or definitely won't take a Coronavirus vaccine once it is available is now 29% (it was 26% in our June polling). The proportion who don't know if they will or not is 17%. This combines to a total of the US population who are Coronavirus "vaccine hesitant" of 46% (it was 41% in June).
- 2. Among minority communities, Coronavirus vaccine hesitancy is higher still. 58% of African American respondents were Coronavirus vaccine hesitant. 52% of Hispanic respondents were Coronavirus vaccine hesitant.
- 3. The proportion of respondents saying they definitely or probably will not vaccinate is higher 35% among those who use social media more than traditional media to gain information about Coronavirus than the inverse 24%. There is also significantly higher belief in various misinformation statements, e.g. 5G conspiracy theories or that the pandemic was planned, among those who get more information about Coronavirus from social media.
- 4. There is no major gap in trust levels between white and African American communities in scientists or government: trust in scientists is high; trust in government low. However, African Americans are more likely than white Americans to trust information they receive on social media. A major insight-led public health education drive to warn about the dangers of trusting information on social media is urgently needed.





The effectiveness of counternarratives in health misinformation, and uptake of prosocial behaviours, in particular, vaccine promotion, is highly contested. We need people to understand that platforms are unsafe environments in which lethal propaganda flows unhindered.

5. There is a major gap in vaccine hesitancy between those who voted in 2016 for Secretary Hillary Clinton (29%) and those for President Donald Trump (55%). This suggests a push by the President and his party to persuade their base could be very valuable.

The time for inaction is over.

We are offering any government, scientific or civil society body that can make use of our polling or our misinformation database to contact us for access to raw datafiles.

We are also calling on advertisers, legislators and regulators to step up.

Users are not the customers of Facebook or Twitter. We're their product; our data packaged and access to us sold to their real customers: the advertisers, who therefore have an outsized influence on them. Over a thousand advertisers protested the lack of action by tech giants on hate and misinformation in July 2020, under the banner of #StopHateforProfit. This report shows why they and others need to continue to

take action until social media companies get the message.

Legislators should accelerate plans for holding those companies and their executives accountable for harm done for profit, for example through the UK's Online Harms Bill. US legislators should continue demanding the transparency we need to deal with this problem.

And regulators should use their existing powers to act. The UK's communications regulator, Ofcom, for example, already has the power to regulate some video content as on-demand program services. They must act against content that urges people to put lives at risk.

This is an immediate crisis, with a ticking bomb about to go off in our societies. Inaction has a cost in lives. This is not the first time CCDH or other civil societu organisations have warned of the chronic and acute dangers of misinformation. When it comes to hate or misinformation that flows across their platforms, social media companies have proven they do not care and listen only to advertisers and the threat of regulation. They do not listen to polite requests for change. Given the acute nature of the Coronavirus crisis, their failure to act must now be met with real consequences.

#### **Imran Ahmed**

Chief Executive Officer
Center for Countering Digital Hate

Reifler, J., Richey, S., and Freed, G.L. (2014), 'Effective Messages in Vaccine Promotion: A Randomized Trial', *Pediatrics*, doi: 10.1542/peds.2013-2365; and Nyhan, B. and Reifler, J. (2015), 'Does correcting myths about the flu vaccine work? An experimental evaluation of the effects of corrective information'

Vaccine, doi: 10.1016/j.vaccine.2014.11.017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See the work of Nyhan and Reifler in this sphere, for example Nyhan, B., Porter, E., Reifler, J. et al. (2019), 'Taking Fact-Checks Literally But Not Seriously? The Effects of Journalistic Fact-Checking on Factual Beliefs and Candidate Favorability', *Political Behavior*, doi:10.1007/s11109-019-09528-x; Nyhan, B.,





# 2 Tech giants need stronger policies on anti-vaccine misinformation

The world's leading social media platforms have made a conscious decision not to ban anti-vaccine misinformation from their platforms.

New policies announced by Facebook in March 2019 in response to a series of measles outbreaks stopped far short of removing known spreaders of antivaccine misinformation from the website. Instead Facebook decided to "reduce the ranking of groups and Pages that spread misinformation about vaccinations in News Feed and Search."<sup>2</sup>

Following Facebook's lead, both YouTube and Twitter announced measures that fell far short of removing anti-vaccine misinformation from their platforms.<sup>3</sup> This is linked to a deeper failure of platforms to tackle all kinds of health misinformation that has seen them scrambling to keep up with public demands for tighter controls in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. For example, Facebook does not monitor health misinformation as a distinct part of its regular Community Standards Enforcement Report.<sup>4</sup>

But, given the role a Coronavirus vaccine will play in saving potentially millions of lives in this pandemic, misinformation about that vaccine is covered by both their stated policies on banning Covid misinformation and harmful misinformation in general. We have collated their own standards on these issues below.

#### facebook

Facebook has promised to remove false content or conspiracy theories about Covid that could be harmful, saying this was "an extension of our existing policies to remove content that could cause physical harm."<sup>5</sup>



Instagram has promised to remove "harmful misinformation related to COVID-19" as well as false claims or conspiracy theories flagged by fact checkers and leading global health organisations.<sup>6</sup> As Instagram's owner, Facebook's community standards on "content that

https://about.instagram.com/blog/announce

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Facebook, 7 March 2019, https://about.fb.com/news/2019/03/combatt ingvaccine-misinformation/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> TechCrunch, 23 February 2019, https://techcrunch.com/2019/02/22/youtube demonetizes-anti-vaccination-videos/ The Verge, 14 May 2019,

https://www.theverge.com/2019/5/14/18623 494/twitter-vaccine-misinformation-antivax-searchtool-instagram-facebook/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Facebook Transparency, retrieved 27 August 2020,

https://transparency.facebook.com/communi ty-standards-enforcement

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Facebook, 30 January 2020, Facebook, January 30 2020,

https://about.fb.com/news/2020/05/corona virus/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Instagram, 24 March 2020,





could cause physical harm" also apply to Instagram.



Twitter has now promised to remove tweets that deny the effectiveness of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, promote false cures for the disease or deny scientific facts about it.<sup>7</sup> The platform has a standing policy to label or remove misinformation that could be harmful.<sup>8</sup>



YouTube had largely relied on its existing policy banning "content which claims that harmful substances or treatments can have health benefits" until it added COVID-19 misinformation policy to its Community Guidelines on 20 May.<sup>9</sup>

YouTube now says it will not allow Covid misinformation "that poses a serious risk of egregious harm" or that "spreads medical misinformation that contradicts the World Health Organization's (WHO) or local health authorities' medical information about COVID-19."<sup>10</sup>

ments/coronavirus-keeping-people-safeinformed-and-supported-on-instagram

https://blog.twitter.com/en\_us/topics/company/2020/covid19.html# misleadinginformation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Twitter, 27 March 2020,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Twitter, 11 May 2020, <a href="https://blog.twitter.com/en\_us/topics/product/2020/updating-our-approach-to-misleading-information.html">https://blog.twitter.com/en\_us/topics/product/2020/updating-our-approach-to-misleading-information.html</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> YouTube, retrieved 27 August 2020,

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801964?hl=en

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> YouTube, retrieved 27 August 2020, <a href="https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9891785">https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9891785</a>





# 3 Despite exposure, the Anti-Vaxx Industry is growing thanks to platform inaction

Two months ago, the Center for Countering Digital Hate published its report, The Anti-Vaxx Industry, highlighting 409 Anti-Vaxx social media accounts with a total of 58 million followers. We found that the 147 most popular accounts in our sample had gained at least 7.8 million followers since 2019, an increase of 19 percent.<sup>11</sup>

Following publication, we sent Facebook, Twitter and YouTube a complete list of accounts we identified as major sources of anti-vaccine misinformation on their platforms, asking them to "investigate and take action to remove these accounts to prevent them from endangering people's safety..."

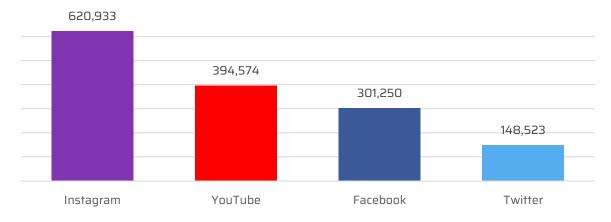
Our latest analysis shows that just six accounts from our list of 409 have been removed, with a total of 363,000

followers. This means action was taken against less than 1% of the Anti-Vaxx network we exposed.

The weak action taken has done nothing to limit the growth of the wider Anti-Vaxx network, which across 423 Anti-Vaxx accounts now identified in our sample, has seen a net increase in its following increase of 1,468,854 or 2.5 percent since July. It now stands at 59.2 million followers.

Continuing a trend recognised in our earlier report, Anti-Vaxx accounts on Instagram grew fastest in this period, adding 620,000 followers or 9 percent of its previous total. It means Instagram contributed 42 percent of Anti-Vaxx follower growth, despite representing just 13 percent of the total following.

#### Instagram's anti-vaxxers grew most since July



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> The Anti-Vaxx Industry, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 6 July 2020, <a href="https://www.counterhate.co.uk/anti-vaxx-industry">https://www.counterhate.co.uk/anti-vaxx-industry</a>





Facebook is still the leading platform for Anti-Vaxxers, hosting accounts with 31.9 million followers in total, but growth is relatively low with 301,000 followers added since our last report or 1 percent of its previous total. YouTube saw growth of 2 percent on Anti-Vaxx accounts with 16.9 million followers, and Twitter growth of 7 percent on a following of 2.2 million.

Just ten actors supplied the wider Anti-Vaxx network with three-quarters of its total growth in this period. Foremost amongst these was London Real, a UKbased network of social media channels operated by former banker, Brian Rose, that accumulated a further 287,000 followers by releasing professionallyproduced videos with prominent Anti-Vaxxers including David Icke.<sup>12</sup>

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the nephew of former president John F. Kennedy and head of the Anti-Vaxx organisation Children's Health Defense, continued the trend of strong social media growth identified in our previous report, adding 225,000 followers.<sup>13</sup>

Instagram drove the growth of the top ten Anti-Vaxxers, accounting for 557,000 of their extra followers in this period. This was followed by YouTube, which helped them add 238,000, Facebook which added 235,000 and Twitter least of all with 69,000.

One problem unique to YouTube is its network of channels that repackage conspiracy theories as business

motivational videos, first identified in our May report on the network surrounding David Icke and again in our report on the Anti-Vaxx Industry.<sup>14</sup> These channels, including Be Inspired, Video Advice, Success Archive, Inspire Discipline, Be Inspired and Just motivation added another 295,000 followers to reach a total following of 10.5 million.

Although the continued rapid growth of the Anti-Vaxx Industry is alarming, there are encouraging signs that a large proportion of it is driven by just a small number of actors. The information contained in our report on The Anti-Vaxx Industry gives tech giants a clear basis on which to act against these accounts and curtail the immediate growth of the network.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> London Real, Instagram, 18 August 2020, https://www.instagram.com/p/CEBYHBcKw1\_/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The Anti-Vaxx Industry, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 6 July 2020, page 9, <a href="https://www.counterhate.co.uk/anti-vaxx-industry">https://www.counterhate.co.uk/anti-vaxx-industry</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> #DeplatformIcke, Center for Countering Digital Hate, 1 May 2020, page 15, https://252f2edd-1c8b-49f5-9bb2cb57bb47e4ba.filesusr.com/ugd/f4d9b9\_db 8ff469f6914534ac02309bb488f948.pdf# page=15





#### The ten fastest growing anti-vaxx networks

Network of accounts	Growth since July	Top growth platform	Current followers
1. London Real	287,487	Instagram (192,053)	3,055,077
2. Valuetainment	224,842	Instagram (96,553)	7,134,310
3. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.	180,226	Instagram (132,876)	1,029,464
4. Rashid Buttar	146,703	YouTube (82,000)	1,145,205
5. Ben Lynch	54,862	Instagram (31,151)	424,689
6. Erin & Joe Mercola	50,248	Instagram (27,201)	3,581,048
7. Rizza Islam	48,653	Instagram (33,487)	874,983
8. Shiva Ayyadurai	34,346	Facebook (15,843)	1,119,396
9. Bruce Lipton	33,450	Facebook (16,514)	1,038,317
10. Zach Bush	28,585	Facebook (28,585)	78,451
TOTAL	1,089,402	556,597 (Instagram)	19,480,940





# 4 Platforms failed to remove 95% of Anti-Vaxx misinformation reported to them

Platform	Reported	Removed	Account Removed	Flagged	Acted On
Facebook	569	14 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (3.3%)	33 (5.8%)
Instagram	144	3 (2.1%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.4%)	6 (4.2%)
Twitter	137	4 (2.9%)	2 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.4%)
YouTube	41	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	912	21 (2.3%)	3 (0.3%)	21 (2.3%)	45 (4.9%)

For this report, 1,000 Coronavirus vaccine misinformation posts were identified, recorded and reported to the platforms by volunteers in the period from 21 July to 26 August. Of those reports, 88 were filtered out by the CCDH for not meeting the threshold of constituting clearly harmful misinformation. This left 912 posts for auditing to see what action was taken.

For the study, we assumed posts and accounts that can no longer be accessed were removed by the platform on which they appeared. It is possible, however, that they were removed by group owners, administrators or posters.

Results are shown in the above table. We found that 95.1% of posts containing misinformation were not acted on by social media companies after our volunteers flagged them as containing misinformation.

Of the 4.9% of reported posts that were acted upon:

- 2.3% of posts were removed from the platform entirely
- 0.3% of posts belonged to accounts that have now been removed from the platforms
- 2.3% of posts were labelled as false and remained on the platforms with a disclaimer

Although each of the social media platforms investigated failed to remove the vast majority of the posts, some did slightly better than others.

Facebook removed or flagged 2.5% of the posts reported to them, while none of the 41 videos reported to YouTube were acted upon in any way. This was despite YouTube claiming to have adopted policies regarding Covid-related misinformation that appear to be stricter than other platforms.





# 5 Platforms have still not acted on three-quarters of misinformation we reported in Will To Act (June 2020)

Platform	Reported	Removed	Account Removed	Flagged	Acted On
Facebook	334	26% (+15.8)	0.3% (+0.3)	3.3% (+1.2)	29.6% (+17.3)
Instagram	135	5.9% ()	8.9% (+4.5)	0.0% ()	14.8% (+4.4)
Twitter	179	6.7% (+0.7)	12.3% (+9.5)	0.0% ()	19% (+15.7)
Total	649	16.5% (+10.2)	5.4% (+3.4)	1.7% (+0.6)	23.6% (+14.2)

In June, we published our report Will to Act<sup>15</sup>, showing that social media platforms removed fewer than one in ten posts reported for Covid misinformation.

Following publication, Facebook requested and we supplied a complete list of the misinformation posts our volunteers had collected.

For this report, we revisited those posts to audit whether further action was taken in the last three months. The table shows that while some further action was taken, three quarters remains intact.

Despite requesting and receiving a full list of Facebook posts containing misinformation featured in our Will to Act report, the platform still only removed one quarter of the posts we identified as breaching their rules. These include posts claiming that Covid is a "bioweapon", that it is "caused by vaccines" and various conspiracies about Bill Gates.

Facebook proved to be particularly poor at removing the accounts and groups posting misinformation, with just 0.3 percent banned. This may be because Facebook does not want to lose the user engagement and therefore revenues generated by these accounts.

Twitter proved to be most effective in removing accounts, with 12.3% banned from the platform. This follows encouraging signs that Twitter is taking a proactive approach to removing and flagging misinformation about Coronavirus on its platform.

Removal rates were notably poorer on Instagram than they were on Facebook, despite both companies sharing the same set of community standards and similar policies on Covid misinformation. This is particularly concerning given that this report shows Instagram remains a strong source of follower growth for Anti-Vaxxers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> CCDH, Will to Act, June 2020: https://www.counterhate.co.uk/willtoact





#### What Youth Against Misinformation volunteers felt about these findings:

"It's frustrating that these companies are among the wealthiest and most influential in the world, yet they still seem more concerned with the profitability of harmful actors on their platforms than protecting the public from their dangerous misinformation."





## 6 Examples of material not acted upon

These are examples of posts the social media companies our volunteers reported but against which no action was taken. Posts are provided for research purposes only. A database of all posts is available on request for government and scientific authorities and verified researchers.

#### What Youth Against Misinformation volunteers thought about the posts they found:

"I think it has a huge impact on public perception of important issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I think it's especially harmful to people who are mentally most vulnerable during this period of social distancing, as they are less likely to have a close social network of people who can help them to challenge these attractive conspiracy theories you see online.

"Many of these misinformation provocateurs know this and actively target the most vulnerable people which I think increases people's anxiety and has a detrimental effect on their mental health."

#### Many posts in our sample claim that vaccines are poisonous





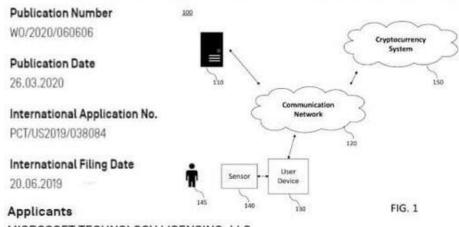


Some posts promote an elaborate conspiracy popularised by David Icke that links Covid, 5G and vaccines to a plot to track and control the world's population

BILL GATES JUST PATENTED HIS 5G-AI-NANO-BIOTECHNOLOGY WORLD POPULATION MONEY MIND & BODY CONTROL SYSTEM

## 1. W02020060606 - CRYPTOCURRENCY SYSTEM USING BODY ACTIVITY DATA

#### NANO SCALE IS 40,000 times smaller than an inch



MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGY LICENSING, LLC

[US/US]; One Microsoft Way Redmond, Washington

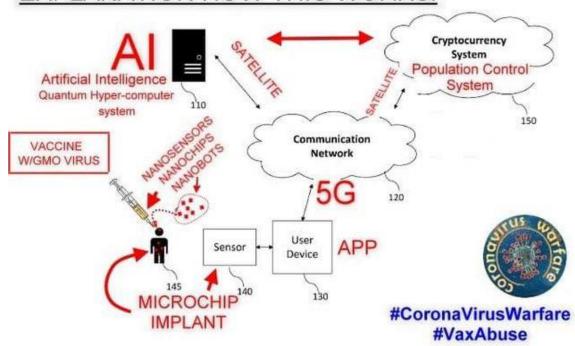
98052-6399, US

https://patentscope.wipo.int/search/en/detail.jsf?docId=WO2020060606&tab=PCTBIBLIO

Annotated in red

Source: World International Property Organization

#### **EXPLANATION HOW THIS WORKS:**







The anti-vaxx entrepreneur Rashid Buttar has promoted a version of this conspiracy theory on his YouTube channel with half a million subscribers, saying "they are hoping that the human race becomes reliant on vaccines and antiviral medication"



In just one video on the conspiracy channel Valuetainment with 1.8 million views, the host Patrick Ben-David allows his guest Rashid Buttar to claim that Covid is "manmade", that the disease is part of "a depopulation agenda", that 5G is making people ill and that vaccines are "causing autism" and "causing cancer"







## A number of posts claim that Covid is a "false flag" or "Plandemic" in order to force compulsory vaccinations







## Anti-vaxxers continue to promote the idea that 5G mobile networks worsen or cause Covid's symptoms



Stephanie Seneff, PhD, looks into factors behind Covid-19 hot spots for the latest edition of our Wise Traditions journal.

Glyphosate combined with the rapid rollout of 5G may enhance effects seen in those with Covid-19. Annual influenza vaccination may also have increased some individuals' susceptibility to an acute response to Covid-19. Then, of course, is the impact of air pollution. Seneff will also present at our 2020 Wise Traditions Conference in Atlanta this November. We'd love you to join us!



WESTONAPRICE.ORG

Air Pollution, Biodiesel, Glyphosate and Covid-19 - The Weston A. Price Foundation



6 comments 109 shares





Another popular theory claims that diseases and viruses do not exist, and that illnesses are instead a consequence of toxins in our environment

shared a post.

26 July

## THE TRUTH ABOUT 'DISEASES' AND 'VIRUSES'

#### 'VIRUSES' AND 'DISEASES' DO NOT EXIST.

THEY WERE BOTH CREATED BY THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY WHO USES THE FLAWED 'GERM THEORY' TO SELL MEDICINES AND **VACCINES TO THE POPULOUS FOR MONETARY** GAIN AND POPULATION CONTROL. IF THE 'GERM THEORY' WAS CORRECT THERE WOULDN'T BE A HUMAN ALIVE TODAY TO TELL THE STORY. **GERMS, BACTERIA, FUNGUS, PATHOGENS AND EVEN 'VIRUSES' (WHICH ARE NOT 'VIRUSES' BUT** PROTEIN BASED EXOSOMES WITHIN OUR RNA) ARE EVERYWHERE. LIFE IS MADE UP OF THESE THINGS. OUR BODIES ARE MADE UP OF THESE THINGS. SO CALLED 'DISEASES' ARE **PURELY SYMPTOMS OF AN UNDERLYING** TOXICITY WITHIN THE CELLS. SO CALLED 'VIRUSES' ARE MANUFACTURED WITHIN OUR OWN **BODIES AS A PROTECTION MECHANISM AGAINST** OVER TOXICITY. WHEN WE ARE OVERLY TOXIC **OUR BODY CREATES A NATURAL DETOXIFICATION** PROCESS CALLED A 'FLU', A 'COLD' OR A 'PNEUMONIA' TO RID THE BODY OF THESE **DEADLY TOXINS. 'VIRUSES' ARE NOT** CONTAGIOUS IN ANY WAY OR FORM. THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN CATCH A 'VIRUS' IS TO BE INJECTED WITH ONE VIA A VACCINE.

Pleiah Ikafa Solfeggio

Riley Marilyn 25 July



2 comments 18 shares





## Many posts in our sample claim that masks are ineffective in limiting the spread of Coronavirus, are a form of mind control or are actually dangerous







Kate Shemirani, a UK-based conspiracy theorist, has tweeted comparing vaccines to "gas chambers" and "a Holocaust"



Changes your DNA. You won't be human. You won't be of the creator. You will be GMO. You can technically be patented. It's likely you will not be around to worry about that. MRNA vaxxine.



6:24 AM · Aug 18, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone



11:15 am · 10 Aug 2020 · Twitter for iPhone





## Some misinformation is targeted specifically at African-Americans, Latinos and Muslims





Es por eso que una vez que haigas tomado la Marca de la Bestia no podras ser salvo. Ya no serás completamente humano y, por lo tanto, irredimible.

También hace que todos, tanto pequeños como grandes, tanto ricos como pobres, tanto libres como esclavos, se marquen en la mano derecha o en la frente, para que nadie pueda comprar o vender a menos que tenga la marca, es decir, el nombre de la bestia o el número de su nombre. Esto requiere sabiduría: que el que tiene enten... See more





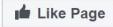






47,713 Views





An Influential American Muslim Scholar speaking on Vaccines, Health, and Prophetic Medicine

and giving great advice to medical doctors and anyone who practices ... See more





## While some posts from Anti-Vaxxers rely on insinuation, followers often respond with much more extreme, and sometimes violent, language



#### **Informed Choice Washington**

15 August · 🕥

This ENTIRE Covid debacle -- the blanket approach with no thought to the massive collateral damage -- has been directed every step of the way by IDMOD, a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation company, which has global goals of vaccination at all costs, along with vaccine i.d.s, and restriction of life and travel based on vaccination status. This is not conspiracy but what Bill Gates has said dozens of times in interviews -- and what is said in the report: "In the absence of a safe and effective vaccine, coexistence with the virus requires ongoing mitigation measures and recognition that return to normal will not be possible in all spheres of activity." That's simply criminal. Effective treatments exist now. And 99%+ of the population is not at risk of severe disease.

Doctors and scientists the world over have grave concerns about the safety of any coronavirus vaccine because of the potential for pathogenic priming and autoimmune reactions. This will go down in history as the most disastrous state response to a TREATABLE infection ever. Here is just the latest of IDMODs-GATES FOUNDATION reports, that DOH links to that is pushing masks and fear and waiting for vaccines instead of supporting treatments and getting back to normal life NOW.

https://covid.idmod.org/.../WA Situation Report 13 COVID-19 t...

#### Copied

**Andrew Mather** 

I want a shotgun. Right now, I want a shotgun... for the entire of all politicians, media, Big Pharma, everybody...

Read this... read it... and read what 'testing positive' really means!

It means you might have a cold! A cold!

And test 1.9m people in Victoria state, Australia, they found 16,000 people who might have a cold!

Official CDC.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html



CDC.GOV

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Like · Reply · 2 d









ICAN INVESTIGATES: IS FAUCI'S NIAID CHANGING THE RULES? READ ICAN'S FULL LETTER TO FAUCI HERE:

https://www.icandecide.org/.../letter-to-anthony-fauci-regar.../

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJbH9gx8MH0



Fauci created COVID19

He is SOLELY responsible

And needs to be PUNISHED~

Arrested, imprisoned & EXECUTED FOR TREASON & MASS

MURDER

Like · Reply · 14w





## Bill Gates has become symbolic of a number of Covid and anti-vaccine conspiracy theories - over one in ten posts in our sample referred to him in some way



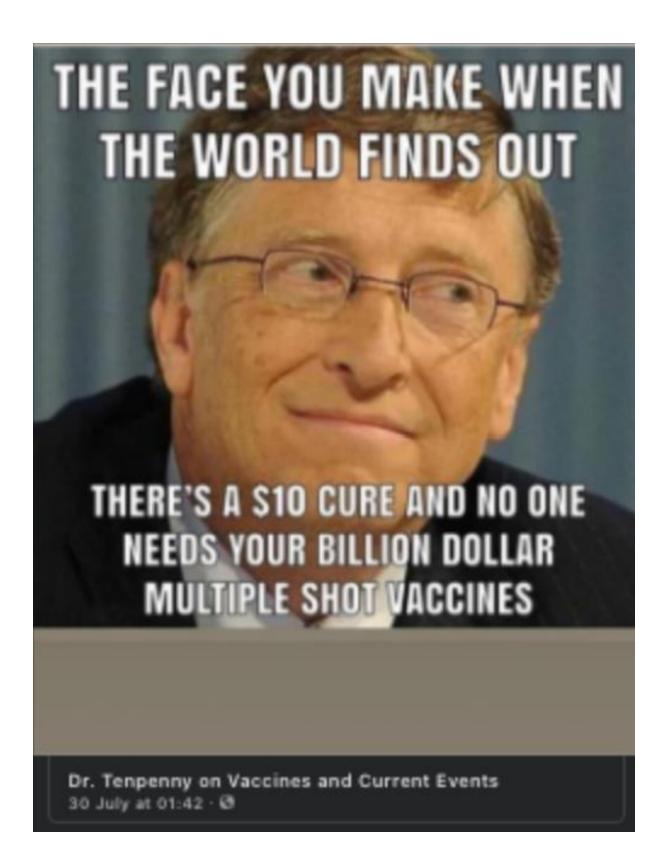


**@** 🖒 😮 425

281 comments 160 shares











Facebook claims to be able to recognise posts containing the same images or videos and act on all of them consistently - but some posts like this one were left intact while identical posts from other users were removed







## Instagram has allowed campaigner Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to post anti-vaccine misinformation that attracts tens of thousands of likes

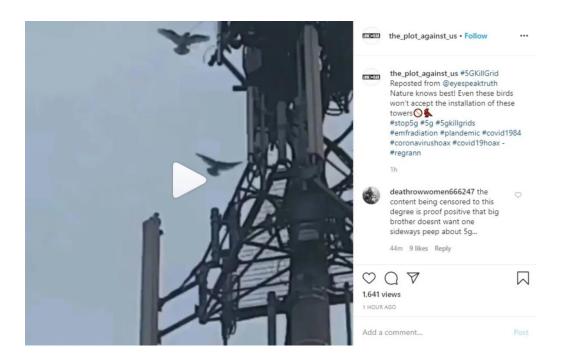








## Some accounts posting misinformation are removed only to return under a slightly different name









## The conspiracy theorist Shiva Ayyadurai is present on all major social media platforms where his misinformation is shared thousands of times



Starting today, @MassGovernor @CharlieBakerMA - will fine \$500 for gatherings in PRIVATE homes - if more than 10, #ForcedMasks.

All of this based on #FakeScience, to fearmonger YOU to #ForcedVaccinations, "Immunity Passports" - FASCISM & big \$\$ for #BigPharma.

#### DO NOT COMPLY!



1.8K

274 comments 749 shares





## Appendix: Methodology

The Youth Against Misinformation team of research volunteers worked on this project for four weeks, from 21 July. We have used the posts they reported to platforms up to and including 26 August for this report.

Volunteers were trained and managed by both Restless Development and the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH). Training covered how to spot misinformation about coronavirus, the most prominent narratives and conspiracy theories, the best available resources for checking whether a claim is truthful, as well as how to navigate the platforms and report posts. CCDH staff explained the platforms' claimed terms of service and rules, to ensure that posts that were being reported contravened stated guidelines.

Regular feedback sessions with CCDH and Restless Development staff, the latter of whom have experience in safeguarding, ensured volunteers had safe spaces in which to identify any concerns they held.

For this report, the team were assigned a range of social media accounts from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube that were identified by our report, The Anti-Vaxx Industry, as spreaders of anti-vaccine and Covid

misinformation. Volunteers investigated these accounts and for each post containing misinformation they found, they reported it to the relevant platform and recorded the following information in a database:

- A screenshot of the post
- A URL link to the post
- The date the content was posted
- The date the content was reported
- The platform on which it was posted
- The name and URL of the account or group where the misinformation was posted
- The topics that the misinformation related to
- Any further important observations of interest

Volunteers were also encouraged to report any other posts containing Covid or anti-vaccine misinformation that they came across in conducting this work, although this formed a minority of the posts recorded at just 17.6%.

CCDH audited the tweets, posts and pages in the database, removing a small proportion which on examination did not meet the criteria for harmful misinformation. We then checked which posts, accounts and groups the platforms had acted upon.

#### Why Youth Against Misinformation volunteers got involved:

"I joined Youth Against Misinformation to stop the spread of misinformation that harmed public health efforts against Coronavirus. When one person refuses to follow the government guidance, it puts other people at risk.

"It is only together that we can overcome the pandemic, and misinformation undermines it, therefore putting everyone's health at risk."

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