

COVID-19: FAKE NEWS

Disinformation and misinformation around COVID-19 – a sneaky threat

COVID-19 Home



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Spreading misinformation can start:

- › from individuals, such as criminals, after some sort of profit;
- › from states and state-backed actors seeking to advance geopolitical interests;
- › from opportunists looking to discredit official sources.

It only gains traction if the public share it through social media.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

Spreading disinformation and misinformation about COVID-19, though not always a criminal offence, has very serious repercussions, endangering public health and directly affecting people's lives.

It puts people at risk by:

- › promoting fake products and services (e.g. fake COVID-19 tests and vaccines);
- › promoting a false sense of security (e.g. misleading information about treatments);
- › promoting suspicion of the official guidelines and sources.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



YOU CAN HELP BREAK THE FAKE NEWS CHAIN! Unless the information comes directly from an official source, take it with a grain of salt.

1. Establish whether you have indeed come across fake information.

- › **Be mindful** – fake news will often tell you what you want to hear with clickbait headlines.
- › **Look around** – is the website trustworthy? Check the website's about page, mission and contact info.

- › **Check the sources** – is any other news source reporting on the same thing? How many sources does the story quote?
- › **Photo search** – is the news you are reading accompanied by a photo that strikes you as out of context? Run an online search, it might be your clue towards figuring out that this is an example of misinformation.
- › **Check the date** – some news outlets re-publish old posts or promote old news as current stories. Check the publication date of the article and check if the timeline it refers to makes sense.
- › **Turn to the experts** – go to reputable websites, such as the [World Health Organization](#), your [national health authority](#) and the [European Commission](#). Is the information also available there?

2. If you have come across fake information, **do not engage with it**. Do not comment and do not share further. Doing so would just help make the post more popular.

3. If it was shared on social media, **report the post to the platform**. If you know the person who shared the fake news, send them a private message and tell them that the information they posted is likely false. Send them these tips so they understand the risks.

4. Contribute to sharing official information. **Share updates from trustworthy**, official websites that report on COVID-19.

GENERAL TERMS:

[COVID-19](#)

TARGET GROUPS:

[General Public](#) · [Law Enforcement](#) · [Academia](#) · [Professor](#) · [Students](#) · [Researcher](#) · [Press/Journalists](#) · [Other](#)

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