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News Item

Does What We Know About Fake News Hold Up in a Pandemic? | Center for Social Media and Politics

By Venuri Siriwardane
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> As I wrote this, a slickly edited conspiracy theory video called “Plandemic” circulated on Facebook and YouTube, racking up millions of views before it was banned by both platforms. Made to look like a documentary, the 26-minute video peddled falsehoods about COVID-19, the safety of vaccines, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the most visible public health expert during the crisis.
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> The video is emblematic of what the World Health Organization has called an “infodemic,” or the rapid spread of dangerous false information about the COVID-19 pandemic. It represents a new information ecosystem for those who study misinformation and disinformation to explore and understand, including researchers at the Center for Social Media and Politics at NYU (CSMaP), which harvests social media data to study political attitudes and behavior online.
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> I spoke with Joshua Tucker, professor of politics and co-director of CSMaP, to chart a course forward for those studying at the intersection of social media and politics, who must now adapt to a rapidly changing research environment. Tucker’s expertise covers mass political behavior and the relationship between social media and politics. He argues we should go back to the drawing board to figure out if what we’ve learned about fake news holds true in a global pandemic context.
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Source: Does What We Know About Fake News Hold Up in a Pandemic?