

# A Year in Review: 2021 | MediaWell

By Jason Rhody, Molly Laas, and Catherine Weddig  
December 22, 2021

In 2018, we built MediaWell to address widespread, international concern about the consequences stemming from dis- and misinformation campaigns on social media, political polarization, and election interference. Our mission is to bring robust historical and cultural context to a series of issues all too often lacking scholarly framing. We offer a comparative and global lens for understanding the broad impact of these phenomena via curated news articles, expert reflections, and literature reviews. As a challenging 2021 comes to a close, we are proud to highlight the work MediaWell has supported throughout the year to further scholarship and empower readers.

## **Expert Reflections and Essay Series:**

- [The Challenge of Debunking Narratives: How TV News Failed on Trump's Claims of Electoral Fraud](#) | Claire Wardle
- [This Might Hurt a Little: Finding Common Ground in Vaccine Hesitancy](#) | Sara E. Gorman
- [Beyond Disinformation: Essay Series](#) | Heidi Tworek, Melody Devries, Nelanthi Hewa, Noel Brett, and Wendy Chun
- [Extremism Online: Essay Series](#) | Bharath Ganesh, Cindy Ma, Daniel Karell, David Nemer, Deana A. Rohlinger, and Fenwick McKelvey
- [Small Platforms and the Gray Zones of Deep Extreme Speech](#) | Sahana Udupa

## **Live Research Review:**

- [The Contagion of Stigmatization: Racism and Discrimination in the "Infodemic" Moment](#) | Jonathan Corpus Ong

## **Collaborative Research Report Funded in Partnership with the British Academy, the Social Science Research Council, and the UK's Science and Innovation Network in the USA:**

- [Understanding Vaccine Hesitancy Through Communities of Place](#) | The Young Foundation's Institute for Community Studies and the US' Institute for Community

## Research

MediaWell has also shared over 1,000 news items on our site this year to highlight news pieces, critical analysis, and journal articles. The articles we've highlighted represent in-depth takes on a wide and diverse array of topics and sources that has helped our audiences make sense of a shifting media ecosystem.

From the outset, MediaWell was conceived as a project in the public interest, with content aimed at a general audience of students, journalists, scholars, policymakers, and interested citizens. We continue to look forward to furthering our mission of mapping the growing research areas of mis- and disinformation to empower people, and we also are excited to announce that we will be broadening our scope in the new year.

In this next phase, we will foreground the essential role of mass mediation in shaping political participation, and call attention to structural biases in our media systems and political institutions. We will continue to grow MediaWell's areas of research mapping in topics often related to or entangled in information disorder, such as racial justice and inequality, vaccine hesitancy, platform governance, labor and worker rights, toxicity and hate, all of which are aligned with broader challenges of election interference, repressed political participation, and amplifying extremism. As disinformation is a symptom of broader problems, we will continue to frame MediaWell around healthy democratic discourse and policy, and expand our work in the areas of platform governance and accountability. We consistently are working hard to address the moving parts of this growing field, and next year will further this mission.

Thank you for your support and see you in the New Year!

With appreciation,

The MediaWell Team