

Amazon profits from coronavirus conspiracies | Coda Story

By Erica Hellerstein

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On Monday morning, I was chatting with a friend on WhatsApp when my messages abruptly stopped sending. A massive global outage had forced Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to temporarily shut down, unleashing mass panic online.

As the blackout stretched from one hour to two, I mulled some very Coda-appropriate thoughts. What would life look like if the three platforms... just didn't come back? What effect would their disappearance have on the health conspiracy ecosystem? Would the Infodemic feel their absence?

The fact is that, while much of the public attention on Covid-19-related misinformation is focused on social media, another, far less scrutinized platform is quietly providing fertile ground for misinformation: Amazon.

The online retailer is a hotbed for vaccine conspiracies and coronavirus myths. Go ahead and type "Covid-19" into the Amazon search bar. For me, the first book that pops up is *"The Truth About Covid-19: Exposing the Great Reset, Lockdowns, Vaccine Passports,"* by Joseph Mercola. [According](#) to the New York Times, Mercola — who was banned by YouTube last week — is "the most influential spreader of coronavirus misinformation online."

Other books that appear in Amazon's top search results for "Covid-19" include titles such as *"Is Covid-19 a Bioweapon?"* and *"Covid-19 and the Global Predators: We Are the Prey."* When I searched for "vaccine," the first book was, once again, Mercola's *"The Truth About Covid-19."*

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