

Bending the Curve of Fake Pandemic News | Project Syndicate

By Philip N. Howard

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OXFORD - Would you believe that the coronavirus was developed by a government to weaken its foreign rivals? Or that “patriots” created it to foment a revolution against “big government” and the “deep state”? Sadly, far too many people who have encountered such disinformation online have shared it with their friends and family.

Nonetheless, we are learning more about who produces fake pandemic news, and how to stop its circulation. In addition to the health-care workers risking their own lives and the scientists working on treatments and a vaccine, another branch of the COVID-19 response also deserves recognition. Over the past few years, the world’s fact checkers have developed a capacity to spot and label lies circulating in the public sphere. Now, they have turned their attention to junk news about the COVID-19 crisis, helping social-media platforms move more quickly to dispel and discourage rumors, misinformation, and [conspiracy theories](#).

[...]

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