

Distributed Amplification: The Plandemic Documentary | Media Manipulation Casebook

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Plandemic, a 26-minute trailer video about coronavirus conspiracy theories, went viral in May 2020 because of distributed amplification. In response to its high viewership, major social media platforms moderated Plandemic and prepared for the full-length video. The platforms' efforts slowed the spread of Indoctrination, the anticipated 75-minute movie. Indoctrination failed to achieve the virality Plandemic had.

STAGE 1: Manipulation Campaign Planning and Origins

On May 4, a little over month into the COVID-19 crisis hitting the US, a 26-minute video trailer called *Plandemic* hit all the major social media platforms in a coordinated launch. With high production quality, *Plandemic* teased an upcoming full-length film, but stood on its own as a product of planned disinformation. By misquoting physicians and researchers and by citing conspiracy theorists, *Plandemic* argued that the coronavirus was planned, vaccines are harmful, masks "activate" coronavirus, and that the ocean has "healing microbes." In short, it sought to sow doubt and discredit the scientific and medical community.

[...]

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