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Mapping COVID-19: How web-based maps contribute to the infodemic | SAGE Journals

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> A proliferation of web-based maps have appeared depicting many different aspects of the spread of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). In this commentary, we consider the usage of web-based mapping during the COVID-19 pandemic and argue that web maps have been widely misused for delivering public information on this fast moving, epidemiologically complex, and geographically unbounded process.
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> **Introduction** In this commentary, we examine the use of web-based mapping during the first few months of the global coronavirus pandemic (SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19). Our specific conceptual contribution arises from our view that web-based mapping and related cartography have been widely misused. The flexibility, dynamism, and ease of creation inherent in today's web-based mapping architectures have seen these digital maps become part of the 'infodemic' during the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) warned that the COVID-19 pandemic 'has been accompanied by a massive "infodemic"—an overabundance of information—some accurate and some not', making it very difficult for people to access trustworthy data sources and reliable information as required (WHO, 2020). We argue that web-based maps are not bad tools but become cumbersome instruments when used incorrectly, widely, and without consideration for the underlying data, models, processes, and basic cartographic principles. Ash et al. (2018) challenge thinking about ways in which digital technologies, such as web-based maps and associated platforms, reshape geographies and mediate the production of geographical knowledge.
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