

Opinion: Covid-19, vaccine hesitancy and the misinformation conundrum | The Washington Post

By Catherine Rampell

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It's hard to teach an algorithm to identify misinformation when humans themselves can't agree on what misinformation is — and when political leaders can't decide whether we should have more or less of whatever it entails.

Lately, vaccine hesitance has been calcifying into outright vaccine refusal. That's partly because so many Americans have been fed a steady diet of misinformation and conspiracy theories about vaccine risks. Roughly 90 percent of Americans who don't plan to get vaccinated say they fear possible side effects from the shot more than they fear covid-19 itself, a recent YouGov poll found. Roughly half of those who reject the vaccine believe the U.S. government is using the vaccine to microchip the population. (Hey, that would at least explain the global chip shortage.)

Where are Americans getting these kooky ideas? Politicians and pundits have been quick to blame social media platforms.

[...]

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