

Science journal calls on scientists to combat Facebook misinformation | Phys.org

By Phys.org

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Leading US journal *Science* on Thursday issued a rare editorial calling for scientists to fight back against the COVID misinformation that proliferates on Facebook. "The pandemic has revealed shocking ineptness by the scientific establishment at conveying messages about masks, vaccination, or the dangers of consuming horse drugs and aquarium cleaner," wrote editor-in-chief H. Holden Thorp.

The former chemistry professor added that social media had been skillfully exploited by "antiscience forces," singling out Ben Shapiro and Dan Bongino, right wing public figures who have built up loyal followings.

Communicating about research is inherently difficult because the scientific process is slow and iterative, with caveats and answers that aren't always definitive, conceded Thorp—and such content does not always lend itself to viral posts.

But the problem is "the antiscience opposition doesn't care about the caveats," he added.

While the pandemic has seen the rise of numerous credible scientists who have amassed large followings on Twitter—examples include Ashish Jha, dean of Brown School of Public Health and NYU professor Celine Gounder—the same is not true on Facebook.

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