

YouTube Has Been Cracking Down On Coronavirus Hoaxes, But They Are Still Going Viral | BuzzFeed

By Ryan Broderick

February 12, 2020

If you search “coronavirus” or “Wuhan” on YouTube — even in incognito mode, which removes customization from the search results — you’ll see high-quality content from verified news providers. But that doesn’t mean that hoaxes about the virus aren’t being watched on the platform in huge numbers.

BuzzFeed News viewed a list on Monday of 500 of the most-watched YouTube videos featuring the keyword “coronavirus,” according to the social metrics dashboard BuzzSumo. Many of the top videos are from news agencies like Britain’s [Channel 4 News](#), the [South China Morning Post](#), and [BBC News](#). But that list also contains dozens of popular videos that feature unconfirmed or false information about the virus. In some cases, videos have earned millions of views with claims that the virus is an engineered bioweapon, that it originated from Chinese people eating “bat soup,” or that the death count is actually 10 times higher than reported. As of Tuesday, there were more than 43,000 [reported cases](#) of the virus, with 99% in China, and 1,018 deaths

YouTube has waged a [well-documented](#) battle over the last year against the conga line of conspiracy theories that dance below the surface of the platform. Last February, the company [demonetized](#) anti-vax content. Last March, it [announced](#) it would be showing “information panels” — text widgets that offer debunks from the site’s fact-checking partners — on searches for topics “prone to misinformation.”

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