

COVID-19 pandemic Mis-information management

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EPI•WiN

infodemic
MANAGEMENT

An infodemic accompanying the pandemic

- An infodemic is an overabundance of information, good or bad that makes it difficult for people to make decisions for their health.
- Misinformation, disinformation and fake news can cause real harm to health, public trust, social cohesion and emergency response.

We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic. **Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous.**

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General, World Health Organization



The COVID-19 mis-information can harm health



Methanol poisoning in Iran



Unproven herbal remedy in Madagascar



Unsafe use of cleaning products in the US

“Approximately 800 people have died, 5,876 have been hospitalized and 60 have developed complete blindness after drinking methanol as a cure of coronavirus.”

Photo credit :<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/iran-700-dead-drinking-alcohol-cure-coronavirus-200427163529629.html>, <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/05/unproven-herbal-remedy-against-covid-19-could-fuel-drug-resistant-malaria-scientists>, https://www.cnn.com/us/live-news/us-coronavirus-update-04-24-20/h_d3b4da7f4ba4054207abe4cf783b10f4; Sources: Islam, M. S., Sarkar, T., Khan, S. H., Mostofa Kamal, A. H., Hasan, S. M. M., Kabir, A., ... & Chughtai, A. A. (2020). COVID-19–Related Infodemic and Its Impact on Public Health: A Global Social Media Analysis. *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, tpm200812.

Technology revolutions drive societal changes

- Societal impacts of digital transformation are a global phenomenon
- Paradigm shift in the way information is produced, distributed and consumed



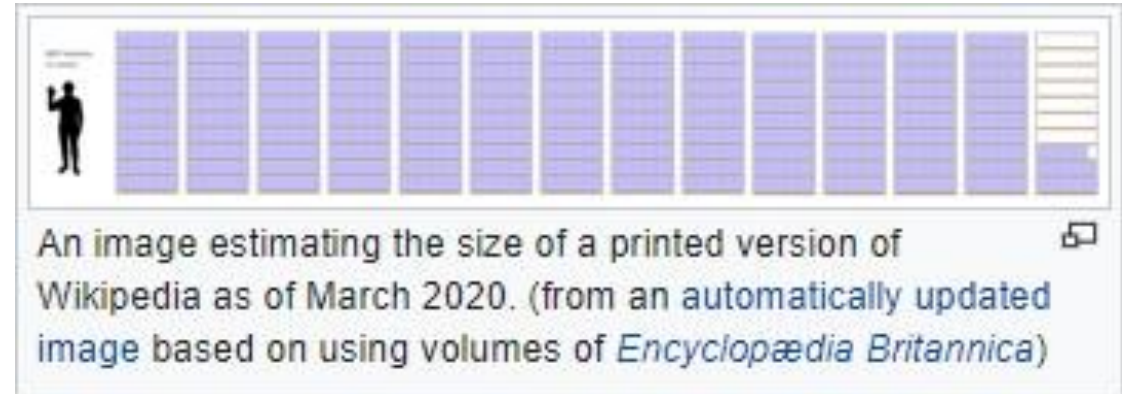
infodemics were not really possible in the early 1900s

Although rumors were.....



Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition

- 1910-11
- 1500 contributors
- 40000 articles
- In English



Wikipedia

- 6 million articles in English
- 40 million members
- 130000 members active in last month (Nov 2020)
- 304 active languages
- 18 000 000 000 page views/month

The rules of media and information dissemination have changed

- Everyone is an author, editor and disseminator



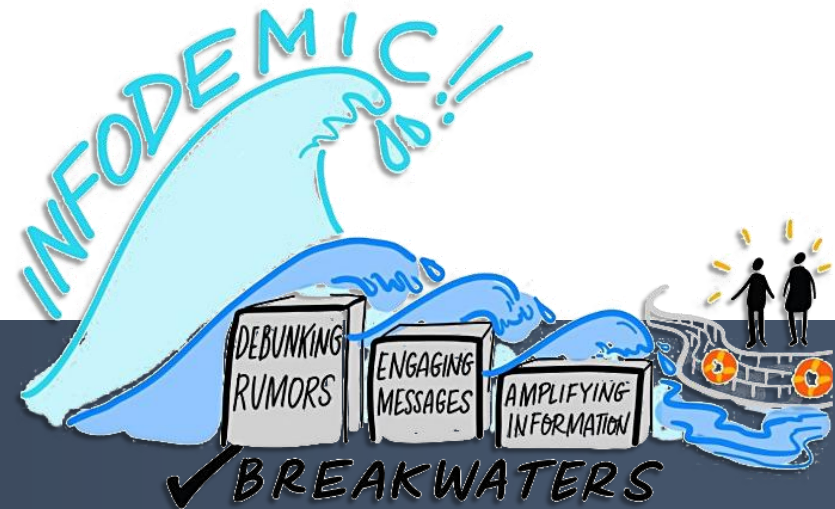
facebook



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

The infodemic during the COVID-19 pandemic

- First pandemic in the highly digitized society of 21st century
- Managing the infodemic has become more challenging with rapid spread of mis- and dis-information through social media
- In some countries, misinformation has generated mistrust in governments, public health authorities and science
- Managing the infodemic management is critical to managing the pandemic



What is infodemic management

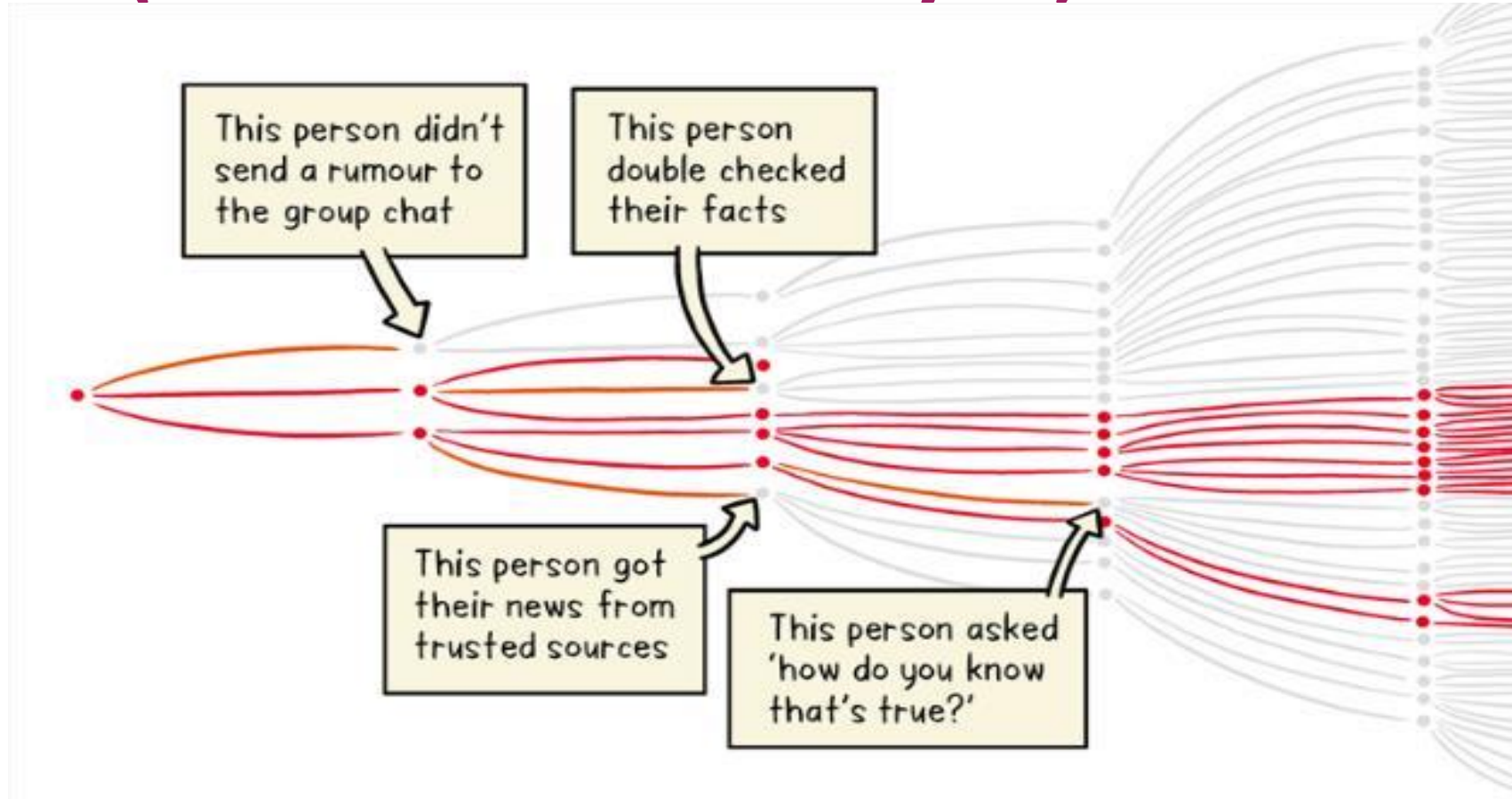
Infodemics thrive during times of uncertainty

Falsehoods: 70% more likely to be shared than accurate news

→ **systematic use of evidence-based analysis and interventions to manage the infodemic during epidemics and pandemics**



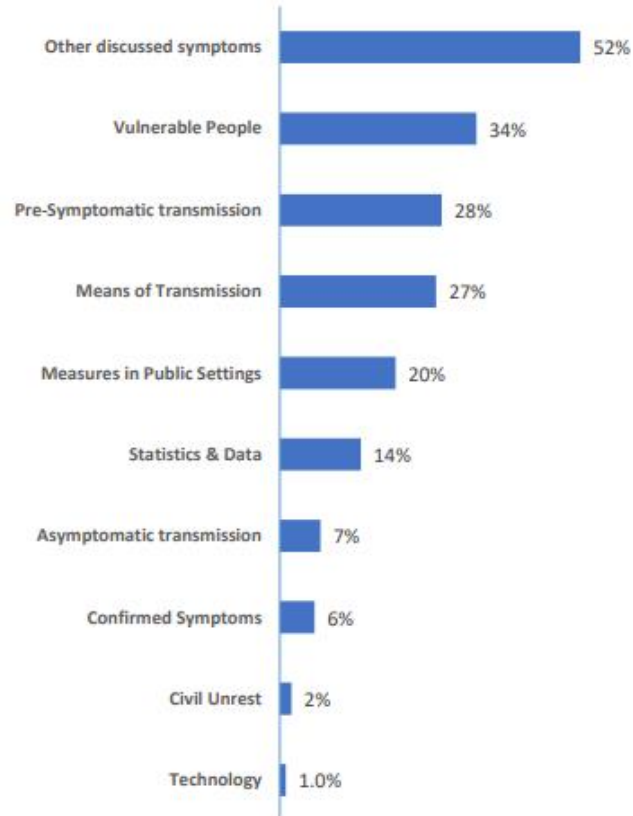
Understanding infodemic transmission dynamics (social network analysis)



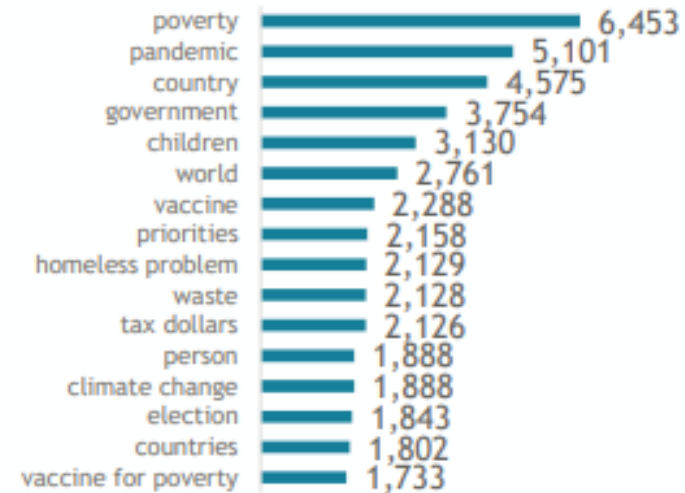
Drawing by Sam Bradd

Quantifying information through social listening

Top rising topics (29 Oct - 4 Nov)
Based on % change of conversation volume from the previous week



Top Keywords in Social Media Conversation about Vulnerable people



Excluding terms like 'virus' and 'coronavirus'.

Infodemic management

- evolving area of research and practice
- This requires an understanding of how information flows, but also understanding of cognition and behavior
- **ROLE of BigTech & data companies?**
 - Remove poor information and misinformation
 - Remove content that is harmful
 - Implement policy

