

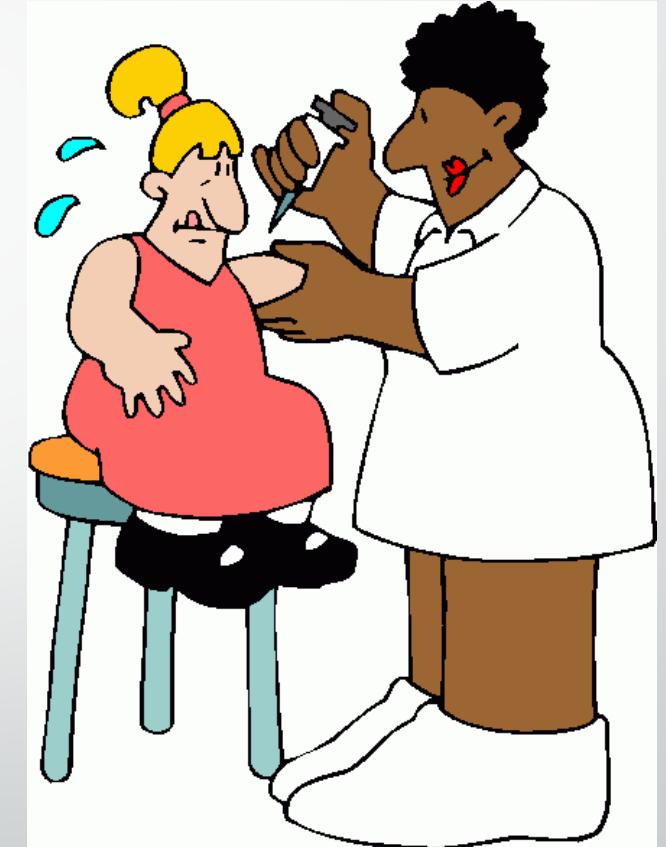


# **Infodemic: Inoculating Against Coronavirus Misinformation**

Presented by Andy Katell  
March 24, 2020

# Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- The problem & why it's important
- Helpful tools
- Followup





Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has encouraged informed participation in government. We strive to increase understanding of public policy issues through education and advocacy.

The League works to register and provide voters with election information through voter guides, candidate forums and debates. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. The League is an activist, grassroots organization whose members believe that voters should play a critical role in their democracy.

Membership is open to anyone 16 years of age or older.

# Infodemic

“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  
World Health Organization Director-General  
Munich Security Conference, February 15, 2020

# Inoculation



“The spread of false and misleading news is a national public health emergency that threatens the foundation of a society built on shared knowledge and values... The real solution requires transformative change, the realization that every student in America needs to be **inoculated with a dose of news literacy** before they leave middle school.”

-- Howard Schneider

Executive Director, Center for News Literacy  
Stony Brook University, December 13, 2018

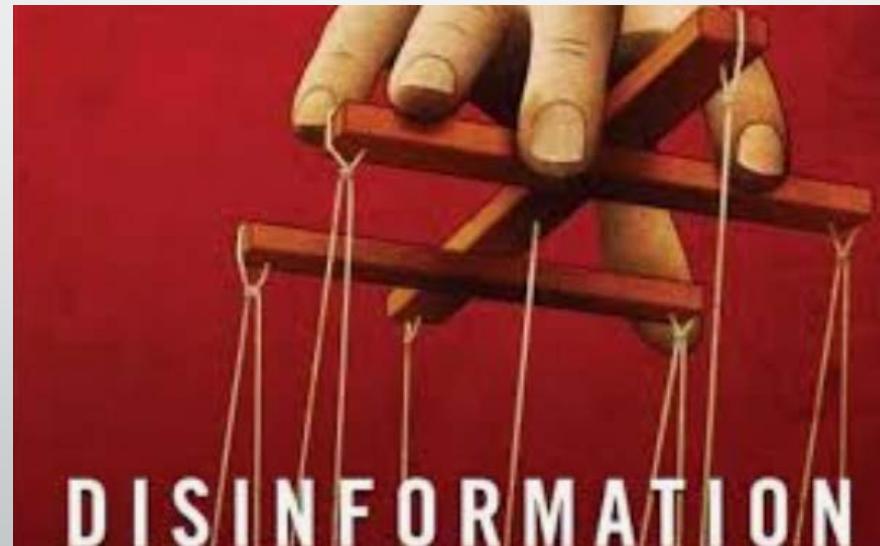
What is

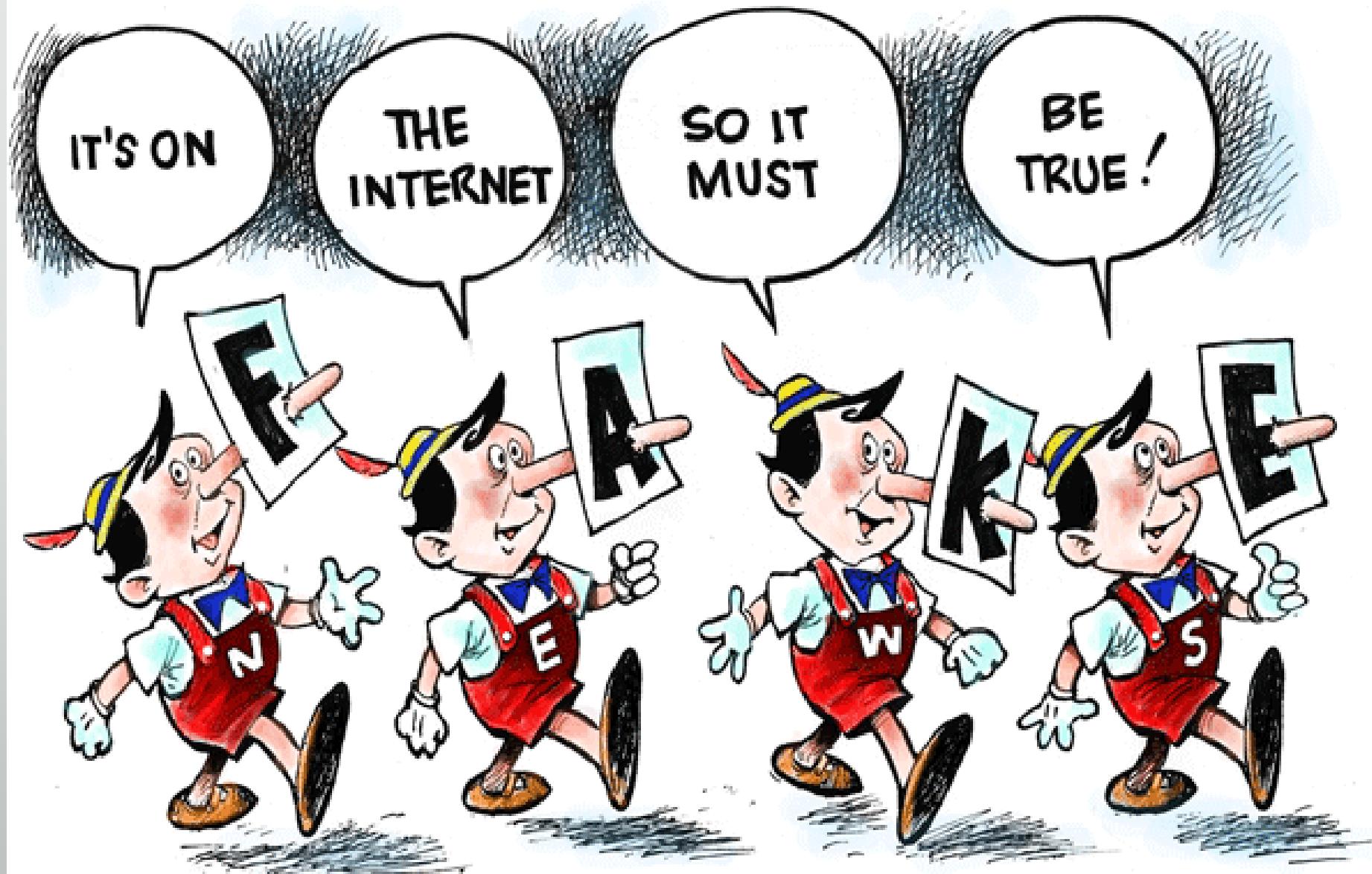


Intentional attempt to spread hoaxes or  
false information, for profit or influence

# What is Misinformation & Disinformation?

False information deliberately and often covertly spread, to influence public opinion or obscure the truth





# Our Challenges

## Challenge 1

Information overload

## Challenge 2

Speed vs. accuracy

## Challenge 3

The blurring of the lines

## Challenge 4

Overcoming our own bias

# The First Amendment Empowers **YOU!**



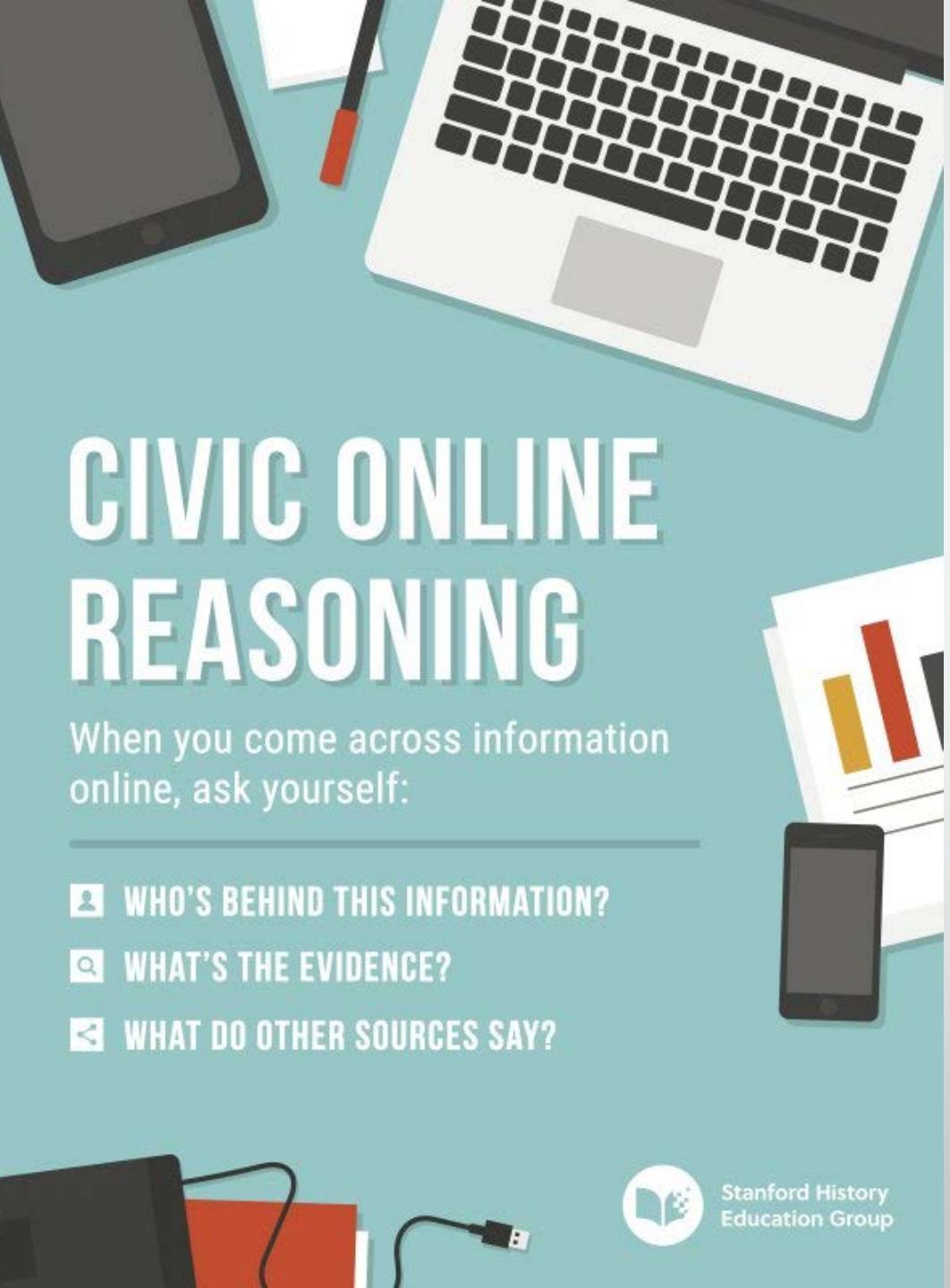
# YOU

are in charge of determining what's reliable

# News Literacy



Educate yourself and think critically to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports



# CIVIC ONLINE REASONING

When you come across information online, ask yourself:

- ❑ WHO'S BEHIND THIS INFORMATION?
- ❑ WHAT'S THE EVIDENCE?
- ❑ WHAT DO OTHER SOURCES SAY?



Stanford History  
Education Group

## Three Questions

1. Who's behind the information?
2. What evidence?
3. What do other outlets say?

# Standards of Quality Journalism

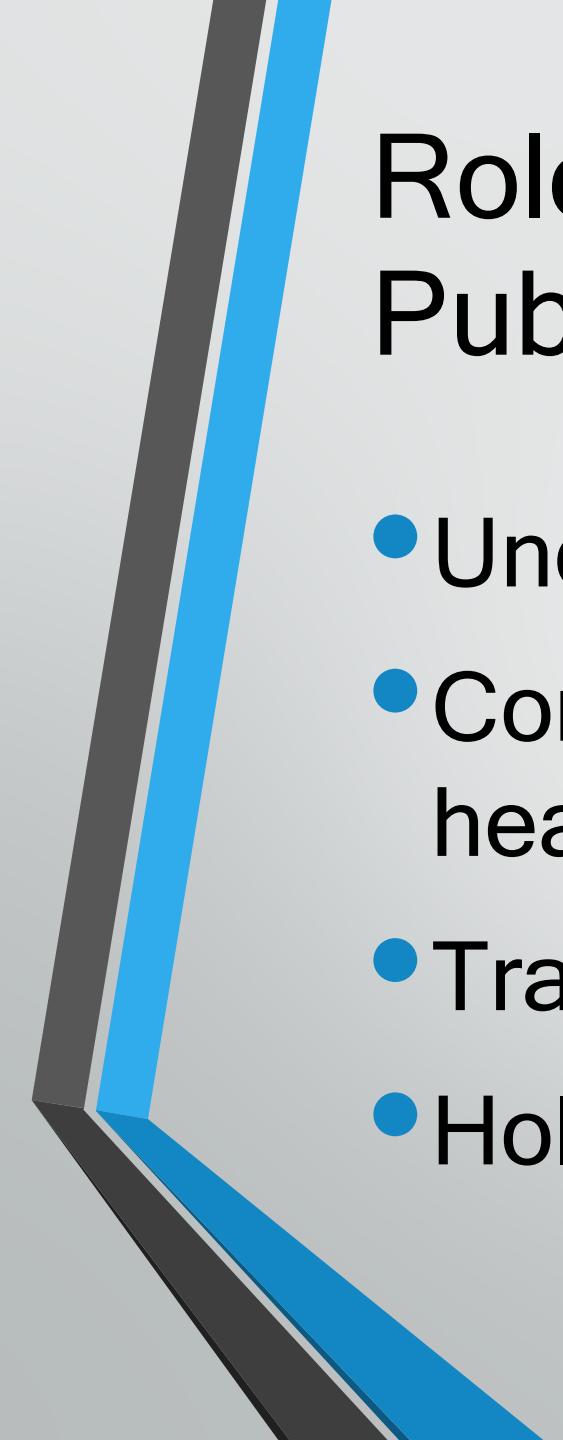
Verification

Sourcing

Fairness

Accountability and Transparency

Context



# Role of Traditional News Media in Public Health Crisis

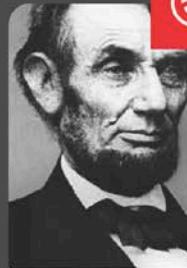
- Uncover, inform/educate on the facts
- Convey critical government advisories and health information
- Track and influence policies
- Hold elected officials accountable



# Fake News & Misinformation

# FIVE TYPES OF MISINFORMATION

## SATIRE



THE PROBLEM WITH QUOTES FOUND ON THE INTERNET IS THAT THEY ARE OFTEN NOT TRUE.

-ABRAHAM LINCOLN

FAKE

Uses humor or exaggeration to critique or mock a person, organization or policy.

## FALSE CONTEXT



Replying to [@...](#)  
My Militia is also along the border making stops. We've already detained two full busses of illegals trying to vote. #redwave #Elections2018



FAKE

Takes an image, a quote or other piece of content and puts it into a new, false context to change its meaning.

## IMPOSTER CONTENT



Donald J. Trump   
[@realDonaldTrump](#)  
Wow! Worst flood in 1000 years! Amazing! Experts say precedented! Flying to Texas to see it myself! Exciting! Then Missouri for huge rally.

REPLIED 1 RETWEET 18889 12:35 PM - 30 Aug 2017

FAKE

Falsely uses a well-known name, brand or logo to fool people into believing that it is authentic content.

## FABRICATED CONTENT



Myrtle Beach man who shot at Hurricane Florence dies after bullet ricochets

A 33-year old man from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, has been confirmed as one of the first fatalities of Hurricane Florence after he ignored warnings and went into the storm. According to a

FAKE

Is entirely made up and is designed to deceive you into thinking that it's real.

## MANIPULATED CONTENT



FAKE

Makes changes in original material in an effort to deceive or create a false context (for example, an image where something has been added or deleted using photo editing tools).

# What Are Misinformers Trying to Achieve?

- Barrage the audience with falsehoods, repeatedly
- Fool/trick us
- Complicate the issue
- Create chaos and confusion
- Sow doubt



*“I don’t care anymore.”*

*“Whatever.”*

*“I’m moving on.”*

# Social Media Facilitate Fake News & Misinformation

- >40% of visits to 65 fake news sites come via social media
- Fake news spreads 6x faster than real news
- Seniors over 65 shared nearly 7x as many articles from fake news domains as people aged 18-29
- About half the public say they've been exposed to at least some made-up news and information related to the coronavirus (Pew Research Center, March 2020)

# Russian Disinformation

≡ 🔎 BUSINESS INSIDER  [Subscribe](#)

## **Russia has been accused by the US of spreading conspiracy theories that coronavirus is a biological weapon created by the CIA, and now the UK has set up a unit to fight them**

Adam Payne and Isobel Asher Hamilton Mar 9, 2020, 7:45 AM   



20

# Russian TV's U.S. Conspiracy Claim



# Citizen “Journalists” and Chinese Censorship

 China Is Censoring Coronavirus Stories. These Citizens Are Fighting Back. f t </>



My purpose is to make sure that

0:00 4:08 CC HD

 22

# Fighting Back

Tools to Differentiate Factual from Fake News

# What are Tech Companies Doing?

Facebook, Google and Twitter are directing users searching for information about the outbreak to authoritative sources. Facebook has sought to ban posts, photos and videos that push harmful misinformation, including bogus claims of cures.



# Facebook Flagging Fake Video



# How to Tell: *Fact or Fake?*



- **Pause** before sharing
- **Question** content always, especially info that appeals to fear, anger or partisan extremes on either side
- **Check** website address
  - Beware of .com extensions, e.g. .co, .ru, .cn
- **Read** beyond headline, to full story, before liking or sharing
- **Beware of** politically framed content

# How to Tell: *Fact or Fake*

- **Research** whether other media outlets are reporting this
- **Pay attention** to people mentioned & quoted
- **Inspect** images and logos
- **Verify content and accounts** by checking sources, authors & identities
- **Read** “About Us” section



# Examine Social Media Techniques



- Few posts, many followers
- Many followers, few likes & comments
- Following unusually high No. of accounts

# Social Media Disinformation Techniques

- **Sock Puppet**: Fake accounts posing as people to influence, disrupt or push news
- **Troll**: Person posing as identity, or sock puppet
- **Troll Farm**: Group of trolls
- **Bot**: Software automating likes, shares & comments
- **Botnet**: Network of bots, often thousands



# Digital Resources For Fact Checking

- **PolitiFact.com** - *Truth-O-Meter*: <http://www.politifact.com>
- **Snopes.com**: <https://www.snopes.com/news>
- **FactCheck.org**: <https://www.factcheck.org>
- **Washington Post Fact Checker**:  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/?utm\\_term=.d06f7354ff5b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/?utm_term=.d06f7354ff5b)
- **Tin Eye reverse image checker**: <https://tineye.com/>
- **Media Bias/Fact Check News**: <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com>

# Trustworthy Sources for Coronavirus Info

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- **World Health Organization's Coronavirus Mythbusters -**  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>
- **Johns Hopkins University & Medicine's Coronavirus Resource Center -**  
<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>
- **Federation of American Scientists' Coronavirus Project -**  
<https://fas.org/ncov/>
- **State & local health departments**

# Fake News/Misinformation Video & Images



- Fake news can also come in the form of edited and manipulated clips and images
- Videos taken out of context

# Live Fact Check

 Jay-R Fernandez 

**Whuan market China..the origin of corona virus**

Grabe grabe...Ganito pala market nila sa Whuan puro exotic foods binebenta dito, kya pla lumabas ang sakit na Corona Virus.. 😱😱



Click to expand

II 3:16

Like Comment Share

287 · 130 Comments

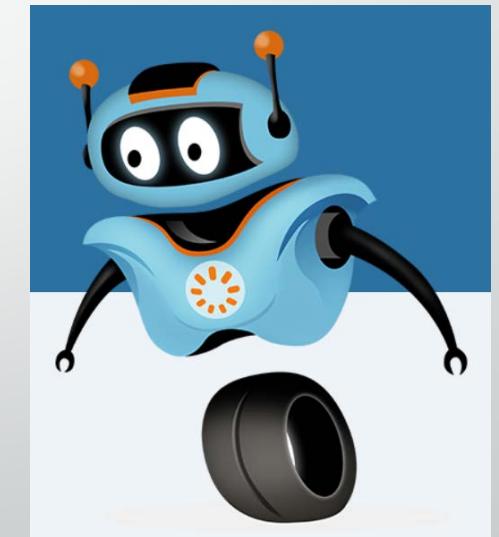
# Reverse Image Search

<https://tineye.com>

Search by image and find where that image appears online



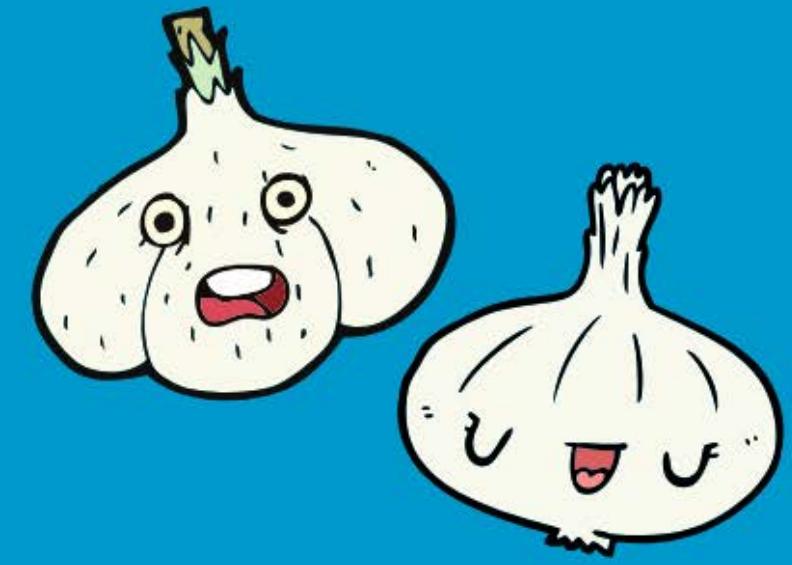
Upload, paste or enter Image URL



# WHO Mythbusters

Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Can eating garlic help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?



# Miracle Cures?

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### Coronavirus: The fake health advice you should ignore

By Reality Check team  
BBC News

🕒 8 March 2020

[Share](#)

[Reality Check](#)



**Top Stories**

**Spain and France impose sweeping new restrictions**  
Spain sharply restricts citizens' movements while France has closed non-essential public places.  
🕒 1 hour ago

**US adds UK and Ireland to coronavirus travel ban**  
🕒 1 hour ago

**Some scientists say UK virus strategy 'risks lives'**  
🕒 4 hours ago

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# Bad Advice, Widely Circulated

March 9 at 4:50 PM · 

My dear friend, Loren Buford, sent the following message to me that I need to share with all my friends - and the general public:

"This info is from my friend that works for CDC that passed this along to his family and friends. I'm passing it along as well..

The new NCP coronavirus may not show sign of infection for many days, how can one know if he/she is infected. By the time they have fever and/or cough and goes to the hospital, the lungs is usually 50 % Fibrosis and it's too late!

Taiwan experts provide a simple self-check that we can do every morning: Take a deep breath and hold your breath for more than 10 seconds. If you complete it successfully without coughing, without discomfort, stuffiness or tightness, etc., it proves there is no fibrosis in the lungs, basically indicating no infection.

In critical times, please self-check every morning in an environment with clean air.

SERIOUS EXCELLENT ADVICE by Japanese Doctors treating COVID-19 cases:

Everyone should ensure your mouth & throat is moist, never DRY. Take a few sips of water every 15 mins at least. WHY? Even if the virus gets into your mouth...drinking water or other liquids will WASH them down through your esophagus into the stomach. Once there in tummy...your stomach ACID will kill all the virus. If you don't drink enough water more regularly....the virus can enter your windpipes and into the LUNGS. That's very dangerous.

Please send and share with family, friends and everyone."

 23      52 Comments 25 Shares

 Like       Comment       Share



Fact check on first claim (holding breath):

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/taiwan-experts-self-check/?emci=cb049f03-d167-ea11-a94c-00155d03b5dd&emdi=c4ea6159-f467-ea11-a94c-00155d03b5dd&ceid=7981182>

# Did Lysol Anticipate COVID-19?

 **Yahaira Rodriguez Cotto**  
Yesterday at 9:35 p. m. • 

El Lysol elimina bacterias incluyendo el Coronavirus 😊 o sea que eso no es de ahora eso lleva años?



• Human Coronavirus  
• Pseudomonas aeruginosa  
• Streptococcus pyogenes (Strep)  
• Campylobacter jejuni  
• Shigella flexneri serotype 1B

**FUNGISTATIC:**  
• Aspergillus niger (Mold & Mildew)

This product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. Remove the entire cap from the canister. Locate wipe at opening in lid. DO NOT PUSH FINGER THROUGH OPENING. Securely shut between uses to prevent moisture loss. Repeat for stubborn stains. To Sanitize / Disinfect: wet surface. Surface must remain wet for the entire time. To Disinfect: Allow to remain wet for 4 minutes. Wipes that come in contact with food: Use only on hard, non-porous surfaces.

 **Raven Dutko**  
• January 26 • 

Look at the lysol bottle.... human coronavirus on the label.

This virus outbreak is big drama. Media being used to create fear. Loosh. People running for vazzenes to be "protected".

We must be wise. We must step back, think, let people who do the work to research get information out and listen to the data.

Reaction is our demise. Responding is wise.

Common toxic lysol kills the virus though GSE and Thieves Oil... healthy, natural items are even better.

DO NOT USE LYSOL. ITS A SERIOUS TOXICANT.

Time to think, people, and calm ourselves.

 125      39 Comments 233 Shares

 Like     Comment     Share

View 18 more comments

 Leimay Ramirez Hazel Mae Guillermo Ramirez  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Leimay Ramirez Ivy Antonio Guillermo  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Peter Vanne If you can find it try and see what the active ingredients are. There should be something similar.  
Like · Reply · 1d

# No!

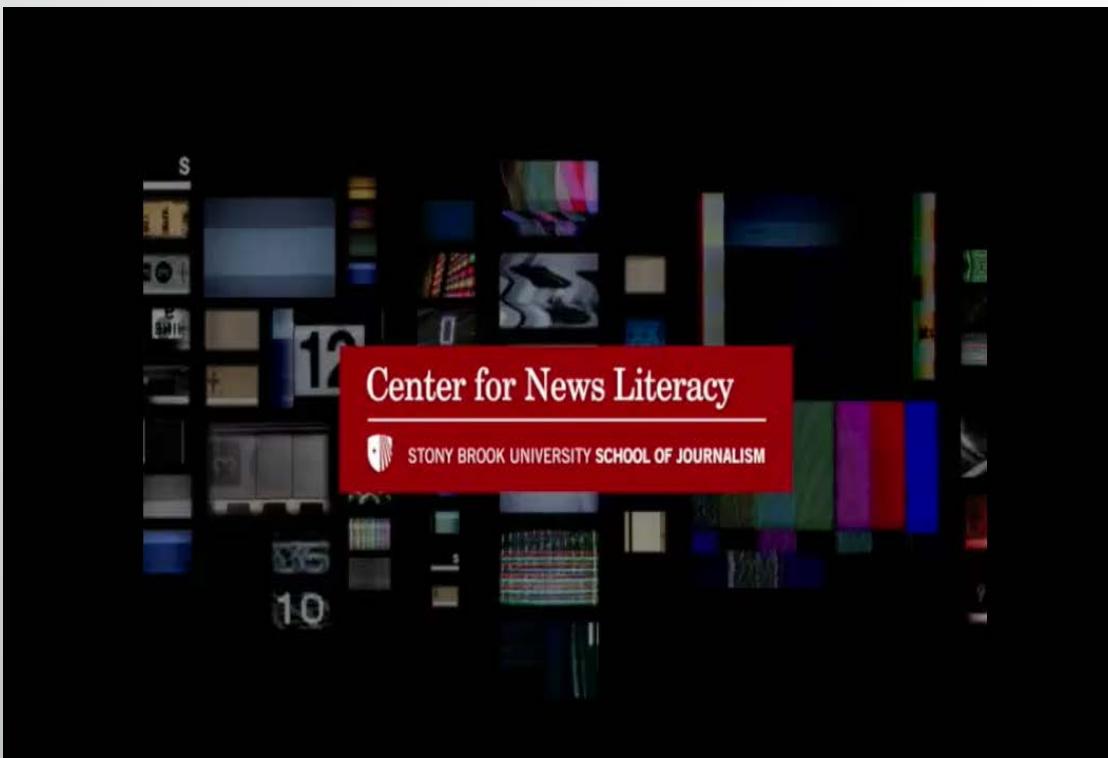


## FACTCHECK.ORG®

These posts are among [several instances](#) in which the generic use of the term “coronavirus” has led to confusion, with people on social media erroneously conflating mentions of already known coronavirus strains with the new one.

The word “coronavirus” is not specific, and can apply to any virus in the coronavirus family. The name [derives](#) from the crown-like look of the viruses under a microscope.

# Credits



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- Share your views with elected officials
- Vote in **EVERY ELECTION**
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# New 2020 NY State Election Calendar

- Village elections postponed until April 28 presidential primary (absentee ballots due April 21)
- Congressional and district attorney primaries to be held June 23
- General election scheduled November 3
- Check [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) for **updates**
- Also: Fill out the 2020 Census





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