Tracking and Network Analysis of the Spread of Misinformation Regarding COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted some of the social and cultural flaws in our ability to communicate about vital issues of public health. In this presentation we examine how COVID-19 misinformation has spread and the effectiveness of different social media platforms in combating it. We provide an overview of the history of facts-checking directed toward the COVID-19 pandemic, and then discuss theoretical reasons, from behavioral science and social psychology, explaining why labeling social media misinformation may or may not work as a mitigation strategy.

We then discuss our own analysis of the effectiveness of misinformation labeling by Facebook and Twitter, with some surprising results. Finally, we discuss a broader research and development program designed to expand social media research, increase the potential for labeling misinformation on social media sites, and the effects these activities might have on the entire social media ecosystem.

Registration is required for this Zoom event. Scan the code or visit http://cas.illinois.edu/node/2552

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