

First Draft Impact Report

Q2. 2021



Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Attention was firmly focused on the United States in the first weeks of the year, as the nation grappled with the repeated, rampant and false denial of the legitimacy of election results. But as the United States increasingly exports disinformation claims and tactics around the world, while vaccine misinformation floods every continent, an international perspective has never been more critical.

In this quarter, First Draft has worked to uncover disinformation threats from across the globe. We have trained journalists, health workers and concerned citizens in Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Central America, Europe and North America. Our reporting has covered events in Papua New Guinea, India, Hong Kong and China. And we reported on the findings of a six-month investigation into vaccine disinformation in West Africa.

We have also ramped up our work on preventative interventions against disinformation. We shared new guidance on inoculation and prebunking, and have launched a new program of work on credibility indicators called “Misinformation Markers.”

And our work continued to engage audiences with features and insights in Wired, Marie Claire, BBC, Vice and The Economist.

We are pleased to share our impact during Q2 2021, and look forward to the coming months, when we plan to further equip people around the world with the tools, knowledge and inspiration to share accurate information.

The story



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38
training
events



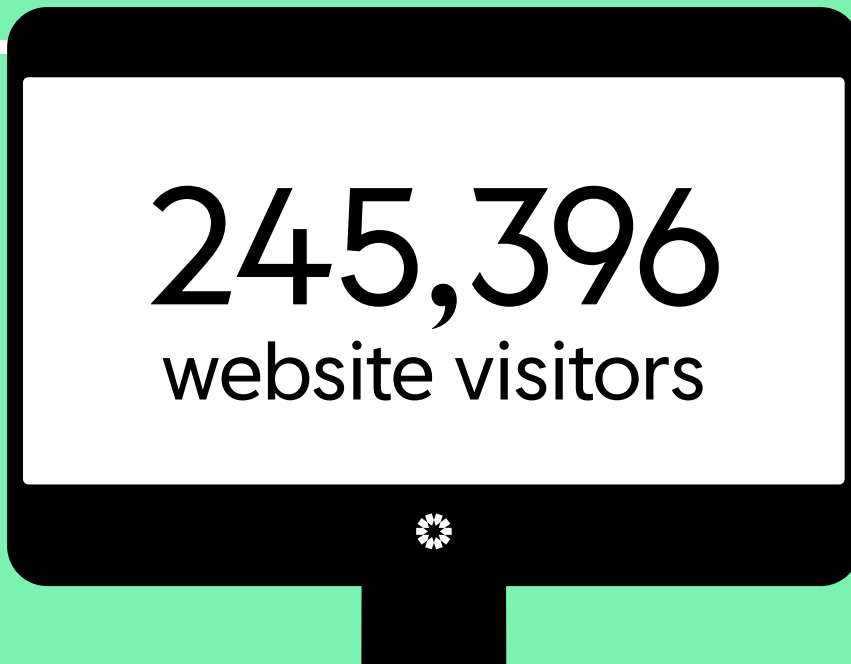
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3,704
people trained



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Audiences
from Europe,
North America,
Central America,
APAC, Africa



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245,396
website visitors

In Q2 2021, we wrapped a major program of work called Vaccine Insights. We delivered:

The Vaccine Insights Flexible Learning Course

A 13-part training course delivered live, with each session given three times to reach people in North American, European and Asia-Pacific time zones.

The Vaccine Insights Hub

A center of expertise and dashboard for global insights on vaccine misinformation. which is updated daily.

The building blocks of reporting on vaccine misinformation

A short PDF guide on how to create credible reporting on a complex, sensitive and fast-evolving subject.

The Vaccine Insights Newsletter

A weekly overview of the key insights and resources on vaccine misinformation, delivered to the inboxes of over 1,000 individuals in the field.

Insights Reports

A monthly report with analysis of the key themes, trends, threats, narratives and data deficits related to vaccine misinformation from the previous month.

Having already directly reached thousands of key individuals through our dynamic range of products and services, we are excited to implement what we have learned in our next series of programs.

Vaccine Insights Program

Foreign anti-vaccine disinformation spreads to West Africa



West Africa Report

For six months, First Draft has monitored and mapped vaccine disinformation and narratives in West Africa. In June, we published a major report based on that monitoring along with additional investigative research to show how vaccine misinformation is traveling through the region. The report has since been shared widely with influential figures within the misinformation space in the region.

Through our monitoring and research, one finding stood out: Foreign narratives and conspiracy theories — initially developed and popularized in North America — are taking hold in West Africa, further eroding trust in institutions in the region. Sources operating outside West Africa have been driving these narratives. While they are being spread in part by actors employing sophisticated amplification techniques, this should not be taken as evidence of “foreign interference.” Determining the existence of “foreign interference” is a complex undertaking outside the scope of this report. Instead, this report highlights the narratives filtering through West Africa and demonstrates the ways in which they spread.

Misinformation Markers

As we grapple with synthetic media, deepfakes and misinformation in general, we must devise new ways to help everyday people understand what it is they're looking at on their screens. We need to help them to know whether it's accurate, whether it documented a real event and how to slow down and think before sharing.

First Draft has launched a new program of work called Misinformation Markers to explore the techniques and tools social media platforms and governments can consider using when writing new regulations.

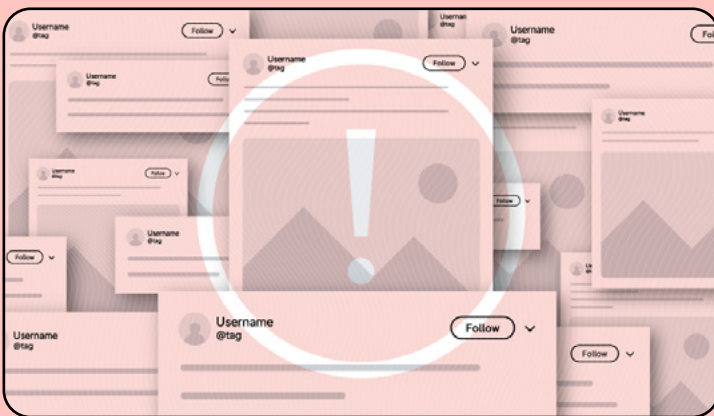
From deepfakes to
TikTok filters: How do
you label AI content?



There are lots of
ways to label AI
content. But what
are the risks?



We have also launched our guidance on overlays (visual filters placed on images of misinformation to reduce their spread when featured in news articles). By working with policy specialists and designers, we have provided seven design principles to help newsrooms create overlays. In the coming months, we will be launching a free tool to help trusted partners apply overlays to their images.



Overlays: How
journalists can
avoid amplifying
misinformation
in their stories



How we
use overlays

English Español Français

Language Hubs

First Draft offers a wide range of translated training materials to ensure we reach as many people around the world as we can. To help make those materials as accessible as possible, we have brought together all our Spanish and French resources into a single place. We'll be adding more of these for other languages in the months ahead.

[Recursos en español](#)

[Ressources en français](#)



Every day, First Draft monitors the social web for the most important vaccine narratives and emerging threats. We have begun to publish monthly reports that review the key trends and themes from the previous month, offering both fresh insights and an archive for future use by researchers and journalists.

Insights Reports

[Vaccine Misinformation
Insights Report: April](#)

[Vaccine Misinformation
Insights Report: May](#)

[Vaccine Misinformation
Insights Report: June](#)



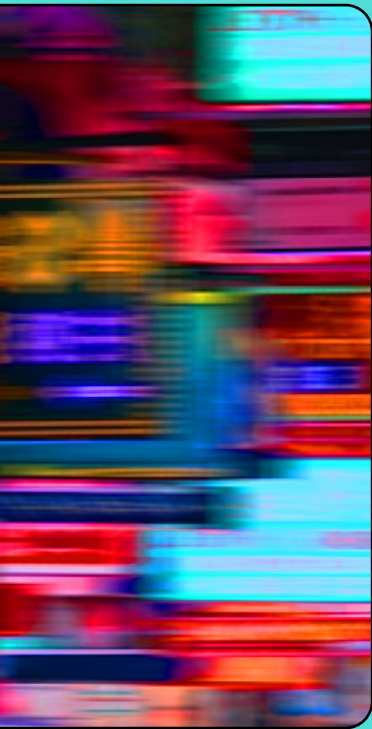
Reporting

F First Draft continues to investigate timely and diverse issues related to misinformation in an exciting portfolio of original reporting. Outside of our other programs of work, we are delighted to have published nine original stories on a range of topics, to help bring to light disinformation from around the world.

- [Vaccine misinformation in Papua New Guinea draws on distrust of authorities](#)
- [4chan and 8kun users spread climate change denialism YouTube videos](#)
- [How fringe candidates use misinformation to gain outsized online influence](#)
- [Chinese-made vaccines are being subject to misleading narratives](#)
- [Vaccine misinformation in Facebook comment sections: a case study](#)
- [Hesitancy behind Hong Kong's low vaccination uptake is driven by political tensions](#)
- [How an anti-Muslim influence operation spread on Indian social media](#)
- [Anatomy of an anti-Muslim influence operation](#)
- [The unproven lab leak theory, Wuhan lab and virus origin: Reporting best practices](#)

We have also continued our regular reporting with the Daily and Weekly Briefings, which are gaining a growing daily readership of over 10,000 journalists, researchers and policymakers.

Original



Asia-Pacific

Heading into the second quarter of the year, our Asia-Pacific Bureau broadened and deepened its research and analysis on the most impactful disinformation in the region. We monitored and deciphered a range of misleading narratives, politically motivated rhetoric and conspiracy theories linked to the unproven Wuhan lab-leak theory and devised a much-needed guide to best practices for journalists reporting on this sensitive subject without further amplifying misinformation.

Other focuses for our monitoring included myriad inaccurate or false claims sparked by geopolitical dynamics in the region along with the Covid-19 vaccines, and our case study on vaccine hesitancy in Hong Kong succinctly demonstrated the real-life impact of online misinformation. In this time zone, we are strategically positioned to cover major news events that break overnight in EMEA and AMER and identify the problematic online conversations that ensue. Perhaps the most prominent example of this in Q2 was our work on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. As clashes erupted, we quickly located the dominating false narratives circulating on social media and alerted our media partners to preliminary findings as well as important debunks, especially around misleading visuals.

The APAC team also provided guest lectures for undergraduate and postgraduate classes at the University of Technology Sydney, and presentations on media literacy at the Media Literacy Lab Educator's Summit and the Australian Media Literacy Research Symposium.

Special Projects

In May, First Draft's Special Projects team hosted two training sessions for the Disinformation Defense League, a collective made up of civil rights and community-based organizations. Our training increased members' capacity to conduct research and monitoring in their own communities. The first session focused on the key principles of online monitoring; the second on teaching advanced techniques for verifying online sources.

The team has continued to provide daily top-line reports to the collective. These focus on racialized disinformation and analyze narratives that are likely to result in negative outcomes for communities of color. The Special Projects team keeps regular office hours where we connect with members of the community to give them updates on narratives of interest, hear about concerning narratives that have emerged in their communities and advise on considering tipping points.

Disinformation Defense League

Daily top-line reports

Rockefeller Foundation

We continue to play an integral role in the creation of training and resources for the Rockefeller Foundation's Equity-First Vaccination Initiative in collaboration with the Public Good Projects, Pink Cornrows and Brown University.

Training and simulation sessions

The Special Projects team is preparing four training sessions and a simulation to share knowledge about vaccine misinformation, expand community-based organizations' capacity for local research and monitoring and help them develop counter-messaging strategies. The team has also worked to develop local monitoring Live Displays and Tweetdecks for member organizations and we will implement the use of a tip line via First Draft's CrossCheck mobile app. Finally, the team has delivered a weekly vaccine misinformation report that analyzes and debunks national and local vaccine narratives. The report also includes messaging recommendations for the larger narratives highlighted each week.

Training and Partnerships

First Draft is pleased to be working with major global brands to help them prepare for disinformation.

- **Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (AJI) Indonesia** - translated our Vaccine Insights course into Bahasa versions for Indonesian journalists/NGOs/CSOs.
- **Data Leads** - translated our Vaccine Insights course for its “VaxCheck Town Hall,” consisting of 30 online workshops for 29 states and Union Territories across India in English, Hindi and other regional languages. In total, more than 4,500 participants — including media practitioners, media students, local health workers, doctors, NGO workers and local government health officials — joined the training. The participants came from more than 700 organizations.
- **Financial Times** - session on how to spot, verify and report on disinformation.
- **Google LATAM** - a series of online [GNI Live Trainings](#) to prepare journalists from across Latin America to cover upcoming elections. First Draft covered the theoretical approach to information disorder and how to report during elections.
- **PHIRI (Population Health Information Research Infrastructure)** - a session during a conference on lessons learned and good practices on infodemic management during the Covid-19 pandemic in Europe.
- **TEGNA** - three practical sessions on monitoring, verification and responsible reporting training for TEGNA’s VERIFY team.
- **Mercy Corps Puerto Rico** - two sessions on how to understand information disorder, how/why false information spreads, and how to verify and report.
- **Médecins Sans Frontiers** - a two-hour interactive simulation and masterclass for MSF health workers, centered around an information crisis in the Central African Republic, where MSF has historical operations. This helped them build capability to react to an unfolding crisis, and showed how they can prepare and protect themselves online.
- **Rockefeller Foundation** - masterclasses on the fundamentals of information disorder and credible reporting.
- **Uganda Health Communication Network** - an hourlong presentation for medical professionals, librarians and health communicators in Uganda for the 2021 Annual Scientific Conference.
- **CORE Group** - CORE Group’s Vaccine Confidence Live Webinar Series: Protecting Communities by Transforming Vaccine Hesitancy to Confidence
- **Consortium of Universities for Global Health** - an hourlong session on practical tips for fighting disinformation for university lecturers preparing medical and health students, reaching over 300 people.

Thank you.