Arts and Humanities Research Council

THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

The Pandemic and Beyond: Communication and messaging during COVID-19

15th March 2022

Pandemicandbeyond.exeter.ac.uk
@PandemicBeyond #PandemicAndBeyond
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THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

The Arts and Humanities Contribution to Covid Research and Recovery

An Introduction

PI: Professor Pascale Aebischer

CIs: Prof Victoria Tischler, Prof Des Fitzgerald, Prof Sarah Hartley, Dr Benedict Morrison
PDRAs: Dr Karen Gray, Dr Eleanor O'Keeffe, Dr Rachael Nicholas
PS colleagues and interns: Garth Davies, Olivia Rees, Blakeney Clark

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A HUB FOR RESEARCHERS, DECISION-MAKERS, AND USER GROUPS TO UNDERSTAND HOW COVID-19 IS IMPACTING ON LAW, CULTURE, SOCIETY, HEALTH AND THE ARTS

The Pandemic and Beyond brings together 70+ teams of researchers across the UK who are exploring the wide-ranging impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and looking for solutions.

Our virtual hub connects research teams with each other and with user groups and decision-makers. Our aim is to ensure that expertise and resources are shared and that decisions about how best to tackle the pandemic and its aftermath is informed by relevant research on culture, society, law, Arts and health.

Our work is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

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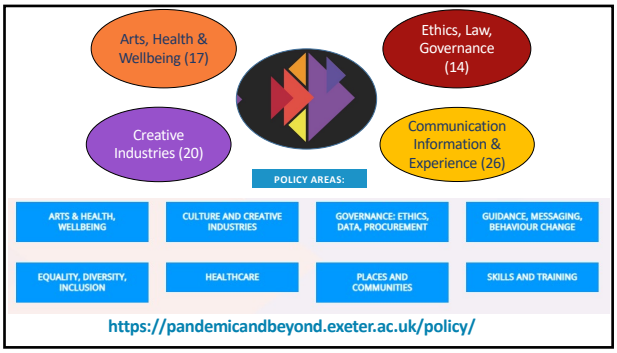

https://pandemicandbeyond.exeter.ac.uk/policy/

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CULTURE COMMONS

Sealey Associates

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THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

- Funder: Arts and Humanities Research Council; with additional funding from the University of Exeter (Policy Support Fund; Open Innovation Platform)
- Based at: University of Exeter / Wellcome Centre for the Cultures and Environments of Health
- Policy Support: Culture Commons and Policy@Exeter
- Independent Evaluation: Sealey Associates

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University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

One Size Doesn't Fit All:
the value of segmentation in Covid messaging

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Infodemic: Combatting Covid-19 Conspiracy Theories

Peter Knight (Manchester)
Clare Birchall (KCL), Jonathan Gray (KCL), Liliana Bounegru (KCL)
Marc Tuters (Amsterdam)
Infodemic.eu

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Research summary

- Traced emergence and development of conspiracy narratives and communities during pandemic
- Looked at interventions by platforms
- Used combination of big data and close reading
- Identified distinctive mechanisms and features of conspiracy theories
- Focus on how these theories fit in wider political and online environment

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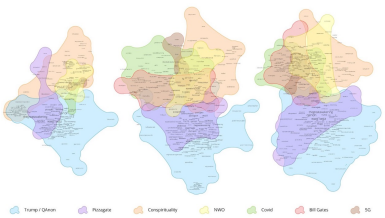

Hashtag co-occurrence in posts from the Instagram dataset in the first three quarters of 2020 (dataset: c. 500k posts, 30k associated images)

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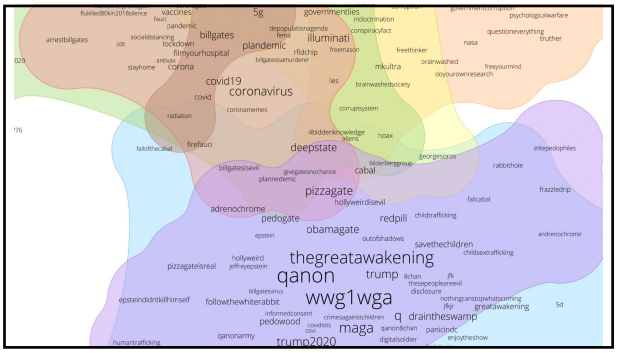

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Findings: conspiracy theories in the pandemic…

- not more popular, but more visible
- not new, but recombined in new ways
- not from a particular misinformation pipeline
- can't be blamed on a single political group
- convergence between right-wing extremists and lifestyle libertarians
- not the result of a lack of information; can't be combatted by fact checking or debunking alone
- rooted in a worldview, not abnormal psychology
- resonate with genuine concerns/resentments

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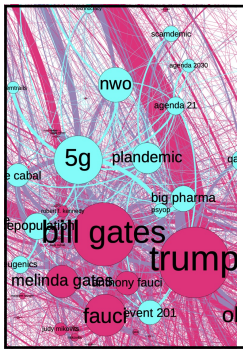

Policy implications

- Deplatform when necessary
- Demotion better deplatforming: no right to amplification
- Audit the algorithm
- Demoting and deplatforming important, but never enough. Instead: **understand the demand for this content as much as the mechanism of supply**.
- Shifts in social media content moderation welcome; but **self-regulation by the industry will never be enough**.
- The infrastructure and business model of social media platforms fuels the spread of conspiracy theories. **Need to redesign the infrastructure and incentives of social media companies—a public service internet**.

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Scenes of Shame and Stigma in COVID-19

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Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health
University of Exeter

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- **Rethink.**

Reconsidering the explicit or tacit use of shame has to be the starting point, and has the potential to be the most difficult. This involves vulnerability, and critical reflection on the possible harms of past practice.

- **Create.**

Formalising a collective understanding of how shame is produced and experienced can provide the basis for a shared code of conduct, or a shame-proofing toolkit to apply to future interventions.

- **Reflect.**

Conduct frequent and challenging reviews on work of any description which has the potential to generate, spread, or exacerbate shame.

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University of Southampton

Routes of Infection / Routes to Safety:
Creative mapping of human-viral behaviours on the bus to understand infection prevention practices

Emma Roe* Geography and Env Science
Paul Hurley* Geography and Env Science/ Artist
Charlotte Veal* Landscape, Architecture and Planning
Sandra Wilks* Health Sciences
*University of Southampton *University of Newcastle

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Distorted Bus Environment

University of Southampton

Changing the Microbial Landscape

i.e. The bus microbiome is more like an outdoor environment than an indoor environment.

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Infection Prevention Communication
Imagination-led

- Represent human and microbial communities on the bus
- Focus on nonhuman characters
- Use humour instead of shock tactics or didacticism
- Create positive rather than negative messaging
- Don't anthropomorphise (or monsterise) microbes as individuals
- Acknowledge microbes' invisibility to humans, but somehow represent them.

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Interim Report and four mini-films
Available to watch

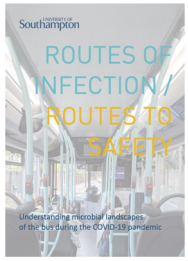
You're never alone on the bus – film 1 – 'Fresh air shows we care'.

You're never alone on the bus – film 2 – 'Use your head to stop the spread'.

You're never alone on the bus – film 3 – 'Leave some space, just in case'.

You're never alone on the bus – film 4 – 'Keep your micro-passengers to your self'.

https://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/routestosafety/outputs/



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Cultural translation and interpreting of Covid-19 risks among London's migrant communities (AH/V013769/1)

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SOAS University of London

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Ethnic and Minority language communities

- How to tackle disproportionate impacts of Covid-19 on migrant communities and the difficulty of reaching those communities with Public Health messages?
- Working with 14 language communities: Arabic, Algerian Arabic/French, Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Somali, Sylheti, Swahili, Turkish, and Yoruba

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Policy Recommendations

- Provide clear English Covid-19 guidelines: even local people are confused about the government's English recommendations. In communities less versed in the - nuances of English, interpretation of these guidelines can be far more confusing, rendering them less helpful.
- Work with language and culture specialist from communities and universities. They can provide advice on how to reach and communicate with each community.
- Support local governments to provide audio translations accessible both through websites and by telephone.
- Provide a hotline where people can talk/consult in their own language/s.

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Higher Education Innovation and Collaboration

Thank you for entering your name and email address in the chat

You will be contacted by Sealey Associates for evaluation of the effectiveness of our policy engagement. Your survey responses and feedback will help us shape our future policy work.

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