

Gatherings of an Infovore*: Coping With More Than the Pandemic

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Finding a new word in an article is a real treat for an infovore. So, when I came across “infodemic” in a recent *Scientific American* article, I immediately wanted to research where it came from. As is often said, “There is nothing new under the sun.” This was indeed true of this “new” word.

The first several entries I found about this “neologism” attributed it to David Rothkopf writing in a May 2003 *Washington Post* article. Rothkopf argued that an infodemic was making the current outbreak of the SARS virus “harder to control and contain.” I thought that it was quite appropriate for the term to be resurrected and even more appropriately applied to the global dissemination of information concerning COVID-19.

COVID has created a perfect storm for fringe science

Grimes DR. *Scientific American*. April 26, 2021.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/covid-has-created-a-perfect-storm-for-fringe-science/>

Words we’re watching: ‘infodemic’

Merriam-Webster.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/words-were-watching-infodemic-meaning>

BUZZWORD infodemic

Maxwell K. Macmillan Dictionary. June 3, 2020.

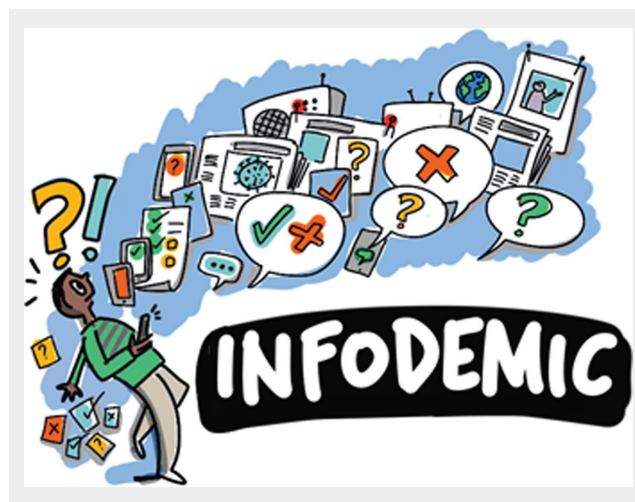
<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/infodemic.html>

Managing the COVID-19 infodemic: promoting healthy behaviours and mitigating the harm from misinformation and disinformation

WHO, UN, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNAIDS, ITU, UN Global Pulse, and IFRC | 23. September 2020.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation>

*A person who indulges in and desires information gathering and interpretation. The term was introduced in 2006 by neuroscientists Irving Biederman and Edward Vessel.



Credit: WHO/Sam Bradd.

Let’s flatten the infodemic curve

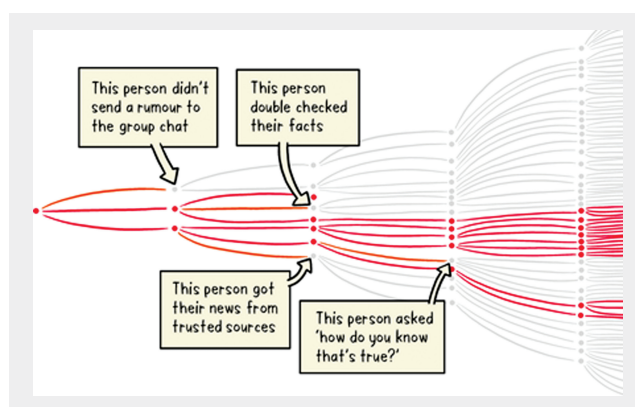
World Health Organization.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/let-s-flatten-the-infodemic-curve>

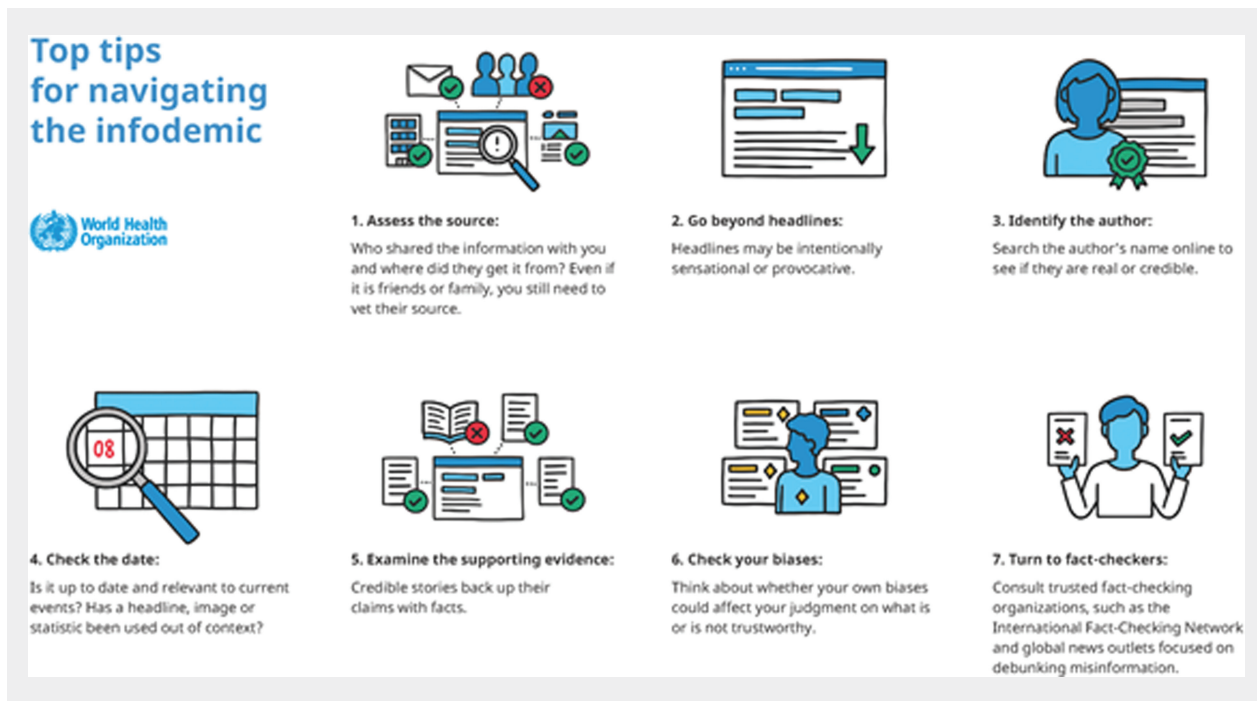
The coronavirus is the first true social-media “infodemic”

Hao K, Basu T. *MIT Technology Review*. February 12, 2020.

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/02/12/844851/the-coronavirus-is-the-first-true-social-media-infodemic/>



Credit: WHO.



Credit: WHO.

The coronavirus 'infodemic' is real. We rated the websites responsible for it.

Gregory J. STAT News. February 28, 2020.
<https://www.statnews.com/2020/02/28/websites-spreading-coronavirus-misinformation-infodemic/>

Scientists develop smart search app for COVID-19 literature

University of Toronto. Medical Press. April 27, 2020.
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-scientists-smart-app-covid-literature.html>

Pandemic spawns 'infodemic' in scientific literature

Carnegie Mellon University. PHYS.org. September 11, 2020.
<https://phys.org/news/2020-09-pandemic-spawns-infodemic-scientific-literature.html>

The COVID-19 social media infodemic

Cinelli M, Quattrocioni W, Galeazzi A, Valensise CM, Brugnoli E, Schmidt AL, Zola P, Zolla F, Scala A. Nature. Sci Rep. 2020;10:16598.
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-73510-5>

The "Infodemic" of COVID-19

Solomon DH, Bucala R, Kaplan MJ, Nigrovic PA. Arthritis Rheumatol. 2020;72:1806–1808. <https://doi.org/10.1002/art.41468>

Barbara Meyers Ford has retired after a 45-year career in scholarly communications working with companies, associations/societies, and university presses in the areas of publishing, and research. If interested in connecting find her at www.linkedin.com/in/barbarameyersford and mention that you are a reader of *Science Editor*.