

The Role of Public Action in Fighting Misinformation

Section: Technology and science

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In times of crisis, social media can quickly become a landscape where both verified information and misinformation spread widely. From public health emergencies to natural disasters, the challenge of distinguishing reliable sources from false claims remains critical. [Scientific literacy](#) and [media literacy](#), as previously published on this daily, have emerged as a key tool, equipping citizens with the ability to discern credible information from unverified rumors.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a clear example of this phenomenon. The World Health Organization warned not only of the health risks but also of an “infodemic”—a rapid surge of information, both true and false. [In one relevant study](#), researchers analyzed 1,000 tweets during the early days of the pandemic. They found that while false information initially circulated more widely, tweets with science-backed evidence and fact-checking generated significantly higher engagement over time. This insight suggests that, when given access to accurate information, people are more likely to engage with and share it than with misinformation.

The lessons learned from COVID-19 extend to today’s crises. Whether facing climate emergencies, geopolitical conflicts, or health scares, citizens play an active role in shaping the digital conversation. By sharing verified evidence,

individuals contribute to a collective understanding that can counteract misinformation. Studies show that scientific literacy not only helps people verify sources but also empowers them to share reliable information more confidently. It is crucial for individuals to read information on social media with a critical eye. Before sharing, take a moment to verify the facts through reliable sources. By doing so, each of us can play a part in countering misinformation and ensuring that only credible information reaches wider audiences. In times of crisis, an informed and cautious public is one of our strongest defenses

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