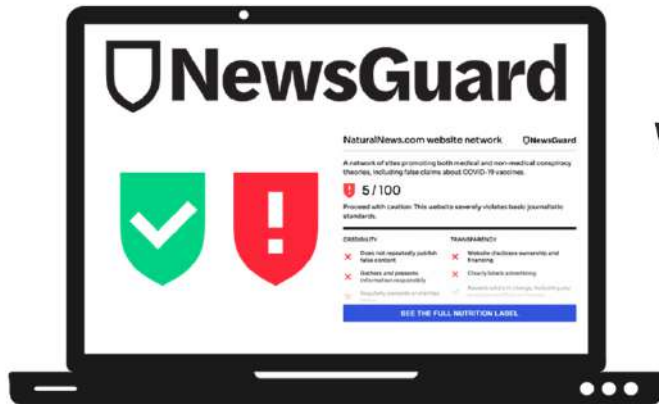**Disinformation war**
Fighting misinformation
through journalism

Media Literacy program
with public libraries,
schools, and other news
literacy champions

NewsGuard

To equip citizens of all ages and backgrounds with the skills and tools to assess the credibility of information and avoid misinformation.

NewsGuard

What is NewsGuard?

- A company created in March 2018 **by journalists, with journalists**.
- Our mission: fighting online misinformation, including Kremlin-based misinformation about the Ukraine war.
- Our idea: rating news **at the source level** as an alternative to fact-checking, which evaluates the reliability of individual claims.

NewsGuard's vision

- **You walk into a library**. But instead of seeing books neatly arranged by subject, instead of being able to see who the publisher is, instead of being able to know something about the author from the book jacket, and instead of a librarian on hand to guide you make your reading choices, you only see **millions of individual pieces of papers flying around in the air**.

- **That's the internet**. In a news feed or search results you only see a headline or a sentence or two. You have no idea who's feeding you the news.

NewsGuard Uses Journalism to Fight Misinformation Online

We help readers, brands, and democracies counter misinformation with our two human-curated data sets:

- Our **Reliability Ratings**: Credible, independent assessments of the trustworthiness of the 8,200 news and information websites that comprise 95+ percent of online engagement in covered markets
- Our **Misinformation Fingerprints**: A detailed, constantly-updated catalog of the top myths spreading online

BY THE NUMBERS

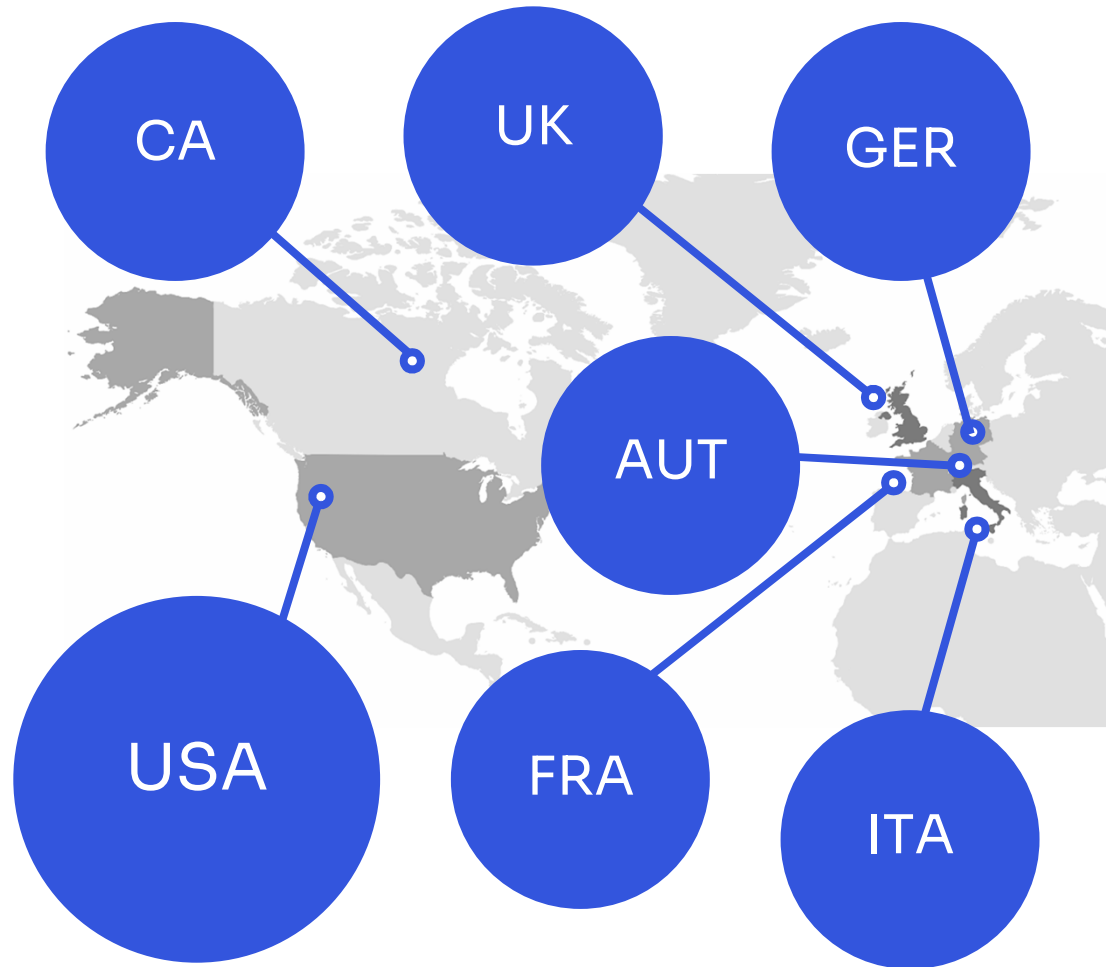# Our progress to date

8,200+ Websites rated

95% Percent of online coverage

50+ Websites added weekly

5+ Journalists reviewing any given website

480+ Myths

800+ Library and media literacy partnerships

CA UK GER AUT USA FRA ITA

NewsGuard

NewsGuard's Nine Journalistic Criteria

CREDIBILITY

- Does not repeatedly publish false content (22 points)
- Gathers and presents information responsibly (18 points)
- Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5 points)
- Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5 points)
- Avoids deceptive headlines (12.5 points)

TRANSPARENCY

- Discloses ownership and financing (7.5 points)
- Clearly labels advertising (7.5 points)
- Reveals who's in charge, including possible conflicts of interest (5 points)
- Provides the names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5 points)

NewsGuard

Nutrition Labels for News

Our analysts, who are trained journalists, rate news and information websites based on nine basic, apolitical criteria of journalistic practice.

The criteria measure the credibility and transparency practices of each site we rate.

Each website gets an overall red rating or green rating and a Trust Score of 0-100 points based on the nine criteria.

Each rating is backed by a detailed, transparent "Nutrition Label" explaining the rating and providing examples and citations.

Clients can apply NewsGuard's data programmatically or use the Nutrition Labels to inform human decision-making.

ilpost.it

An Italian website publishing national and international news, focusing on explanatory content.

92.5 / 100

This website mostly adheres to basic standards of credibility and transparency.

- Does not repeatedly publish false content 22 points
- Gathers and presents information responsibly 18
- Regularly corrects or clarifies errors 12.5
- Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly 12.5
- Avoids deceptive headlines 10
- ✗ Website discloses ownership and financing 7.5
- Clearly labels advertising 7.5
- Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest 5
- The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information 5

Criteria are listed in order of importance. Learn More.

Ownership and Financing

Il Post is owned by a private company with the same name, based in Milan.

As of November 2021, gaming company Banzai Media Srl held approximately 30 percent of the company's shares, according to the Italian Chamber of Commerce. Corporations Intek Group Spa, and View Different Inc. each own approximately 20 percent of the company. Other shareholders include Il Post's founder and editor-in-chief, Luca Sofri; Bergamo mayor Giorgio Gori, a center-left politician; and Andrea Guerra, the former president of the Italian food chain Eataly.

Il Post's revenue comes from advertising, sponsored articles and subscriptions, including a premium subscription that lets users view the site without ads and provides newsletters and podcasts.

Content

Il Post covers national and international news, focusing on foreign affairs and popular culture. The site is well-known for its explainer stories, and its slogan is "well explained" ("Spiegato bene"). Content is divided into sections including Italy, World, Politics, Technology, Internet, Science, Culture, Economy, Europe and Sport. The website also publishes photo and video galleries, including a fixture called The Picture of the Day (La foto di oggi).

The website publishes electronic editions of the front pages of leading Italian newspapers in its Media section.

The site produces a daily podcast for subscribers, hosted by radio and television writer Matteo Bordone, and features a section with news on the European Union.

Il Post links to more than 100 blogs, including those by technology writer Massimo Mantellini and fiction writer Massimo Papi. The site's top editors also have blogs that link to the site under different domains.

Il Post publishes daily updates on the COVID-19 pandemic, with news on vaccines, the tracking of new variants, and measures in Italy to avert the spread of the virus. The site also publishes daily graphics and data on the new daily cases in Italy, divided by region, and analysis on general trends.

Credibility

Most news coverage on Il Post summarizes content produced by other media outlets, both national and international such as Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, The New York Times, The Guardian and The Wall Street Journal. Original articles generally cite firsthand interviews and reliable sources, such as public officials and documents. The site also republishes articles from U.S. news outlets, including The Washington Post and Slate.

NewsGuard

Our Nutrition Labels

science.org ⛉ NewsGuard

The website of Science magazine, a weekly academic journal that publishes science-related news and research on global public policy, innovations, and technology.
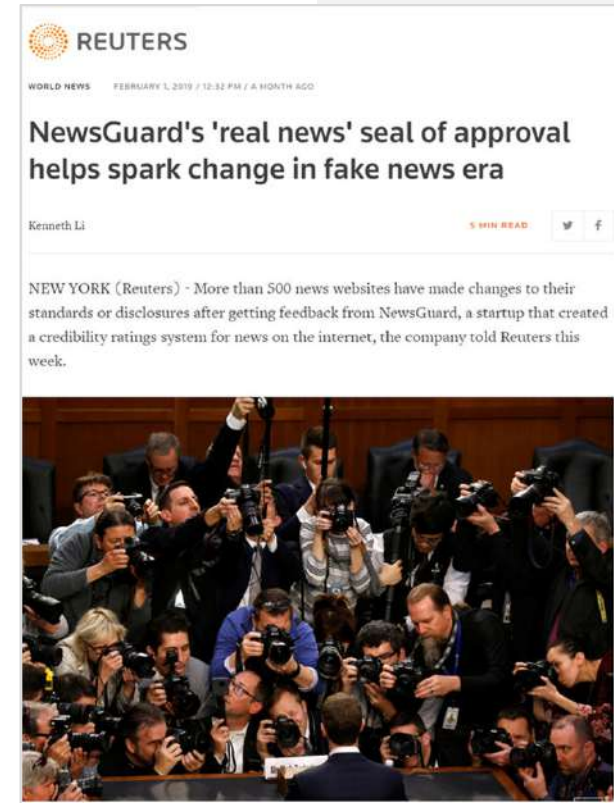
✅ 100 / 100

This website adheres to all nine of NewsGuard's standards of credibility and transparency.

CREDIBILITY

✓ Does not repeatedly publish false content

✓ Gathers and presents information responsibly

✓ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors

TRANSPARENCY

✓ Website discloses ownership and financing

✓ Clearly labels advertising

✓ Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest

SEE THE FULL NUTRITION LABEL

Google | covid 19 vaccine side effects statistics | ✕ 🎤

https://www.science.org › article · Traduci questa pagina

✅ Antivaccine activists use a government database on side ...

The number of deaths reported after a **COVID-19 vaccination** as of 24 May—4863—represents just 0.0017% of more than 285 million doses of **vaccine** given, the agency ...

https://jamanetwork.com › journals · Traduci questa pagina

✅ Analysis of COVID-19 Vaccine Type and Adverse Effects ...

di AL Beatty · 2021 · Citato da 70 — Most **adverse effects** were mild, but studies reported approximately 50% to 90% of participants experiencing some **adverse effects**. Although data ...

https://www.medicalnewstoday.com › ... ▾ Traduci questa pagina

✅ Global COVID-19 vaccine summary: Side effects

The FDA notes that the myocarditis and pericarditis **symptoms** that people should keep an eye out for after a **COVID-19** mRNA **vaccine** are chest pain, shortness of ...

⛉ NewsGuard

A two-fold objective:

- Alert users on misinformation sources

- Contribute to a healthier information environment

    - ❏ More than **2,000 news websites** have improved their journalistic practices as a result of engaging with our analysts. They made changes to improve on one or more of the nine criteria of accountability and transparency. These changes help legitimate publishers re-establish lost trust with readers.

REUTERS

WORLD NEWS   FEBRUARY 1, 2019 / 12:32 PM / A MONTH AGO

NewsGuard's 'real news' seal of approval helps spark change in fake news era

Kenneth Li   5 MIN READ

NEW YORK (Reuters) - More than 500 news websites have made changes to their standards or disclosures after getting feedback from NewsGuard, a startup that created a credibility ratings system for news on the internet, the company told Reuters this week.

NewsGuard

NewsGuard addresses misinformation and a lack of media literacy skills

Misinformation is prolific online. According to 2019 Pew Research, 9 out of 10 Americans come across made up news with some regularity.

Students at all levels are ill-prepared to judge the credibility of information online, according to 2019 research by Stanford.

- "Overall, young people's ability to reason about the information on the internet can be summed up in one word: **bleak**."

Misinformation cuts across subjects. Almost 2 in 10 websites Italians rely on for news and information publish dangerous health misinformation, according to NewsGuard's analysis.

Sources: https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:fv751yt5934/SHEG%20Evaluating%20Information%20Online.pdf, https://www.journalism.org/2019/06/05/many-americans-say-made-up-news-is-a-critical-problem-that-needs-to-be-fixed/, https://www.statnews.com/2019/07/26/health-websites-are-notoriously-misleading-so-we-rated-their-reliability/

🛡 NewsGuard

Monitoring misinformation and identifying trends

NewsGuard's work monitoring misinformation sites in 6 countries and 4 languages allows us to track misinformation and spot trends.

For example:
- COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines
- Misinformation about elections and electoral processes
- Misinformation about the war in Ukraine
- Misinformation about the 2022 monkeypox outbreak

Russia-Ukraine Disinformation Tracking Centre

Tracking disinformation about Russia and Ukraine

Months before Russian forces invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, false narratives about Ukraine and its allies, many promoted by the Kremlin's disinformation apparatus, were already proliferating online.

Russia-Ukraine Disinformation Tracking Centre

NewsGuard has identified **262** Russia-Ukraine disinformation sites and is tracking the top false narratives that they are publishing about the war in Ukraine

To date, NewsGuard's team has identified and is tracking **260+ domains** some with a history of publishing false, pro-Russia propaganda and disinformation — that have promoted false claims about the Russian-Ukraine conflict.

These websites include not only official Russian state media sources, but also anonymous websites, foundations, and research websites with uncertain funding—at least some of which may have undisclosed links to the Russian government.

- ☑ **English-language websites: 121**
- ☑ **French-language websites: 43**
- ☑ **German-language websites: 22**
- ☑ **Italian-language websites: 29**
- ☑ **Other: 47**

NewsGuard

Russia-Ukraine Disinformation Tracking Centre

Top Russia- Ukraine war myths

Russia employs a multi-layered strategy to introduce, amplify, and spread false and distorted narratives across the world — relying on a mix of official state media sources, anonymous websites and accounts, and other methods to distribute **propaganda that advances the Kremlin's interests and undermines its adversaries**.

While Russia's disinformation firepower has meant that pro-Russia disinformation remains dominant, **anti-Russia or pro-Ukraine disinformation has also started to emerge**. These narratives tend to paint a triumphant picture of Ukrainian armed forces while making unsubstantiated anti-Russia claims.

Russia-Ukraine Disinformation Tracking Centre

Examples of myths

- **Minimizing Russian aggression** —> Russia did not target civilian infrastructure in Ukraine
- **False flags** —> The massacre of civilians in Bucha was staged
- **Discrediting the Ukrainian leadership** —> Nazism is rampant in Ukrainian politics and society, supported by the authorities in Kyiv
- **Targeting countries that support Ukraine** —> The U.S. has a network of bioweapons labs in Eastern Europe

72 myths as of Sep. 12, 2022

NewsGuard

The U.S. "bioweapons" labs

Russia presenta le prove all'ONU dei laboratori ucraino-Usa. L'ora della verità

sabato 12 Marzo 2022   Grande inganno   3 commenti

Gli uomini di Mosca all'ONU scaricheranno sul tavolo degli 'assi' che faranno comprendere il senso del presunto azzardo militare di Putin. Oggi sarà svelato il sostegno degli Stati Uniti alle attività criminali del Nazi-Governo ucraino, il quale negli ultimi 17 anni ha addirittura impiegato massivamente esseri umani, e finanche bambini, come cavie per **la ricerca in ambito di armi biologiche costituite da agenti patogeni apparentemente naturali.**

L'azione di Putin contro il governo di Kiev non si è trattata, quindi, di un'invasione militare tout court ma di unità russe che sono state schierate per proteggere con la forza l'Umanità dal rischio che dai laboratori di produzione di malattie potessero fuoriuscire armi biologiche molto più distruttive del COVID-19, evidentemente funzionali all'Agenda 2030 concepita sul presupposto annunciato di ben 10 anni di pandemie. Nel corso di questo processo di messa

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MYTH: The U.S. has a network of bioweapons labs in Eastern Europe.

THE FACTS: On Feb. 24, 2022, a thread by the Twitter account @WarClandestine suggesting that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was actually targeting U.S. bioweapons laboratories in Ukraine was widely shared on social media using the hashtag #USBiolabs. The thread cited claims by Russian officials that the U.S. maintains a network of bioweapons labs near Russia's borders in Eastern Europe. Russian state-owned media outlets have been making similar claims since at least 2016.

These claims are typically based on a misrepresentation of the U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program, which collaborates with partner countries to reduce the threat of outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases by helping partners to secure dangerous pathogens and to quickly detect outbreaks, according to the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine's website. The U.S. has been providing aid to Ukrainian laboratories since 2005, when the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and U.S. Department of Defense signed an agreement intended to limit the threat of bioterrorism by implementing safeguards on deadly pathogens from Soviet-era biological weapons programs. The Biological Threat Reduction Program has since helped to construct and modernize Ukrainian laboratories. The labs themselves are run and primarily financed by the Ukrainian government. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) noted in response to claims about the presence of U.S. military biological laboratories in a May 2020 statement that "no foreign biological laboratories operate in Ukraine."

The mythical "Ghost of Kyiv"

Генеральний штаб ЗСУ / General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine ✔
March 11 · 🌐

"Привіт, російський нелюде, я лечу по твою душу!", - Привид Києва.
"Hello, russian villain, I'm flying for your soul!" - the Ghost of Kyiv.

#stoprussia

"Hello, Russian nel "de, I'm flying on your soul! ", - The Ghost of Kiev.
"Hello, russian villain, I'm flying for your soul!" - the Ghost of Kyiv.

#stoprussia

⚙ · Hide Translation · Rate this translation

👍❤ 45.836   1054 Comments 8578 Shares

MYTH: Videos show the "Ghost of Kyiv" shooting down Russian planes. —

THE FACTS: On February 24, 2022, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, wrote in a post on Facebook that at least six Russian planes and two helicopters had been destroyed on the first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The following day, a video began appearing on Twitter and Facebook purportedly showing a Ukrainian MiG-29 shooting down a Russian Su-35 fighter jet. The video was subsequently retweeted by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense. Some users claimed that this video showed "the Ghost of Kyiv," an unidentified Ukrainian pilot said to have shot down several Russian planes.

The above-mentioned video of a Ukrainian MiG-29 shooting down a Russian Su-35 is not real-life footage, but was actually made using the videogame Digital Combat Simulator (abbreviated "DCS") and then miscaptioned by social media users. The video posted on Twitter and Facebook was first uploaded to YouTube with the title "GHOST OF KIEV KILL" and its description read, "This footage is from DCS, but is nevertheless made out of respect for 'The Ghost of Kiev.'"

The Ghost of Kyiv has not been identified or proven to exist. While the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and former president Petro Poroshenko have made references to the Ghost of Kyiv on social media and The Times reported that "a Ukrainian military source" had said that the pilot was real, attempts by fact-checking organizations including PolitiFact and Deutsche Welle to confirm the Ghost of Kyiv's existence have gone unanswered by the Ukrainian government.

**Quickly, governments and platforms took measures
to prevent the spread of Russian propaganda:**

- March 2022: RT and Sputnik ban in Europe
- Yet, we were seeing these myths continue to spread, on an **ever-growing list of websites**
  - 116 sites at launch in March
  - 172 in early April
  - **262** as of yesterday *(including variations of RT domain names and sites that copy and paste entire RT articles)*
- The propaganda was reaching other platforms, and other foreign actors have stepped in to replace the Kremlin's disinformation apparatus as soon as it was curbed *(including China, Venezuela, and Belarus, reaching a big audience on social media)*

NewsGuard

The role of advertising
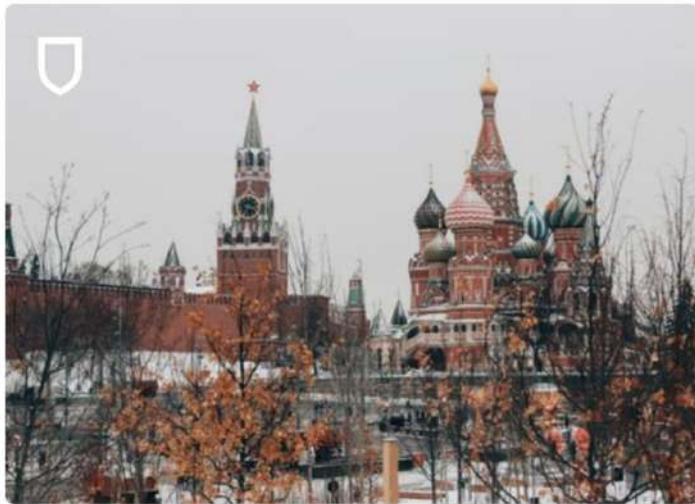
Despite promises, Google and other platforms are still funding Russian disinformation

A new analysis by NewsGuard finds that dozens of websites publishing Russian disinformation narratives about the Ukraine invasion continue to receive advertising revenue from Google and other advertising companies.

Read It Now

NewsGuard

Why is misinformation thriving?

- Hoaxes generate interest, which means **money**.
- Measures taken by platforms and governments against the largest and most well-known players of the Kremlin disinformation machine only addressed the **tip of the iceberg.**
- There is a much wider **misinformation ecosystem** which continues to receive advertising revenue from Google and other advertising companies.
- **At least 70 of the 260+ sites promoting false claims about Ukraine run programmatic advertising**.
- **4,000 + brands** bought ads on misinformation websites publishing COVID-19 myths - including healthcare insurers; COVID-19 vaccine provider Pfizer and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC.)

Programmatic advertising

- The automatic (and obscure) placement of digital ads via **algorithms**, through live auctions of inventory and ads, with pages chosen based on a target demographic.
- Brands use **brand safety companies** to avoid placements on violent, pornographic, and other "brand unsafe" environments... but algorithms are not great at spotting misinformation.
- The result : **well-known brands have their ads appear on sites they do not intend to support these sites, and their CEOs and CMOs are unaware that their ads are subsidizing Kremlin propaganda,** while thinking they are protected.
- On Sputnik News sites, the Russian ad tech company Yandex has recently replaced Google.
- But what about other websites? Not identified by Google and other ad tech companies, they are still allowed to received ads placed by the tech giant and others.
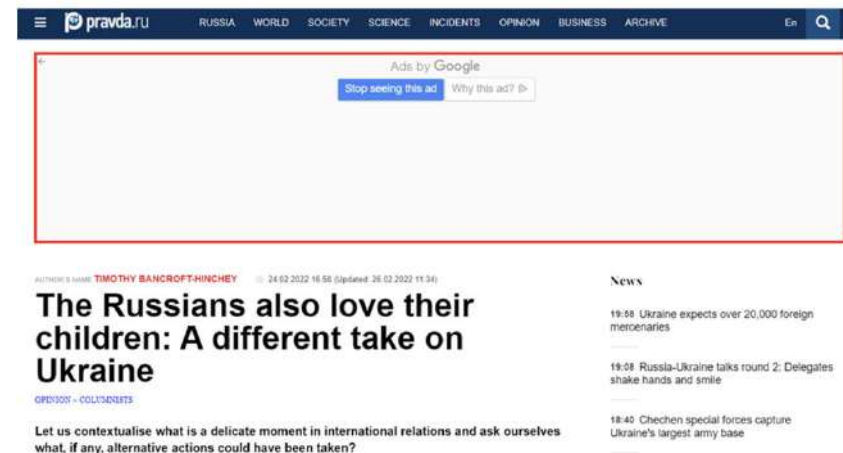
How big of a problem is it?

- **$2.6 billion each year** sent to misinformation providers, according to our evaluation.
- Only **1.68% of display ad** spending goes to misinformation providers...
- But programmatic advertising is a **huge business** ($155 billion globally in 2021)... and it's growing...
- And this is only an **estimate** – could be way more.
- In comparison: newsrooms worldwide are struggling. (total digital advertising on all U.S. newspapers was about $3.5 billion in 2020).

NewsGuard

Repeat offenders: websites that spread COVID-19 misinformation are now peddling Ukraine disinformation on social media

NewsGuard
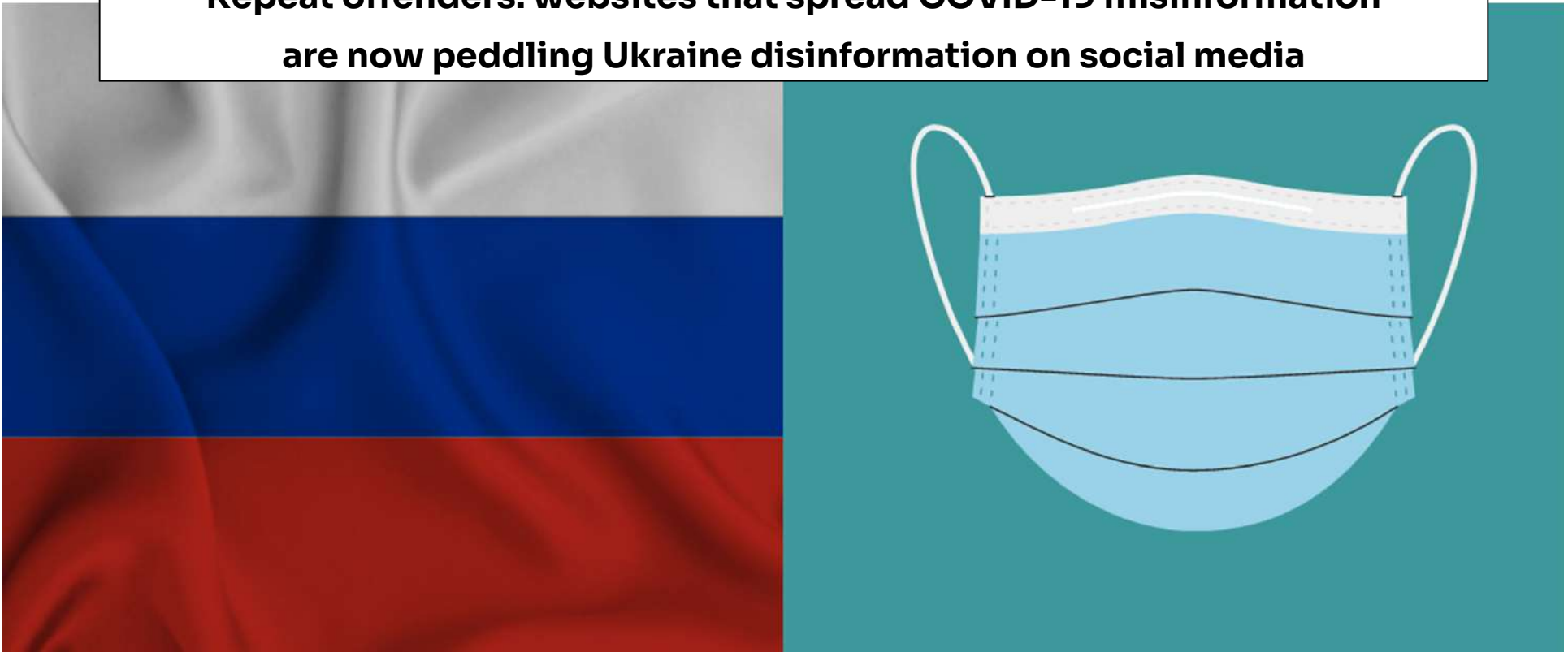
- As of June 3, 2022, **91 sites** included in our Coronavirus Misinformation Tracking Center were also spreading disinformation about the war in Ukraine.
- Of these, **57** were still **active on social media**: 43 on Twitter, 41 on Facebook, and 23 on YouTube.
- **31** in English, **31** in French, **16** in German, and **13** in Italian.
- **23** were still receiving advertising revenue through programmatic advertising, hosted by advertising platforms such as **Google** and **MGID**.
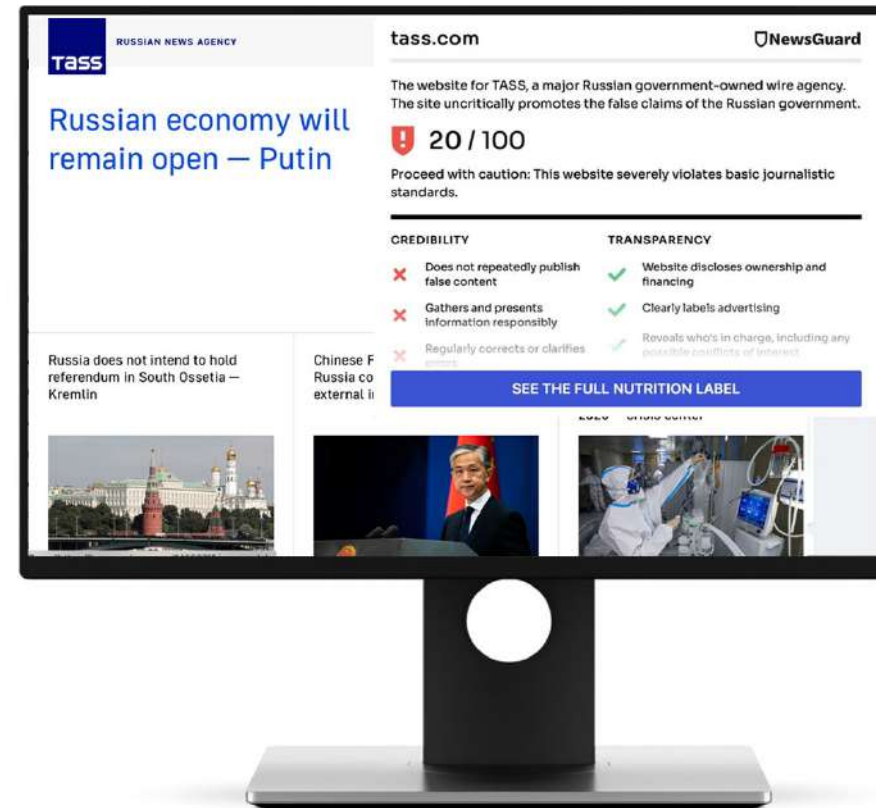
NoGeoingegneria

Portale contro le manipolazioni climatiche ed ambientali

An anonymously-run website that focuses on environmental issues. The site often publishes false and misleading claims, including about 5G technology, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine war.
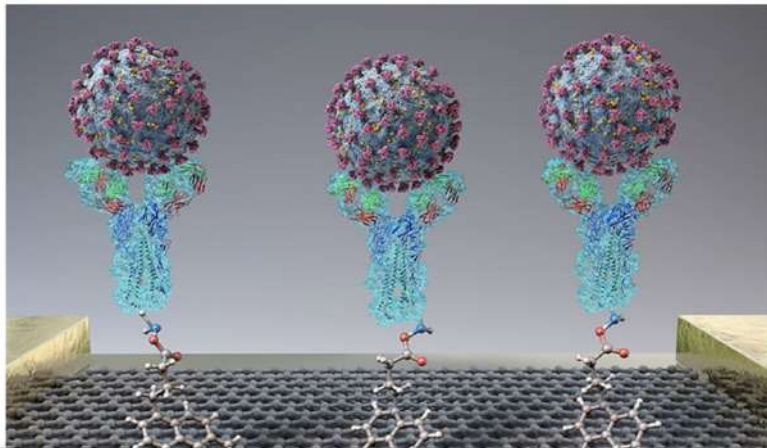
⚠ **7.5 / 100**

Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

SALUTE

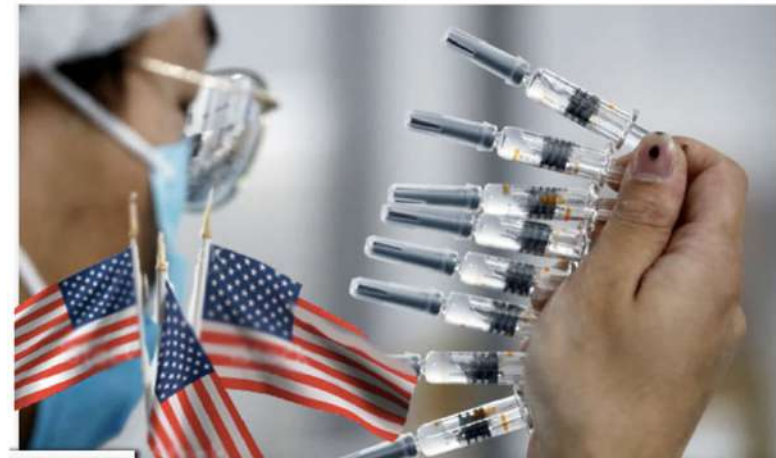# NANOPARTICELLE DI OSSIDO DI GRAFENE NEL VACCINO COVID

14 LUGLIO 2021

SHARE ON: f ♥ 8+ ℗

NEL CUORE DELL'UCRAINA / I 13 BIO-LABORATORI MILITARI & SUPER SEGRETI DEGLI STATI UNITI

26 FEBBRAIO 2022

SHARE ON: f ♥ 8+ ℗

The limitations of the actions taken by platforms

Misinformation providers find ways to bypass the platform's measures

- Deliberate misspelling of words and replacing of letters with special characters to avoid detection.
- Use of sarcasm or satire.

Platforms rely on independent fact-checkers

- However, fact-checks are completed days or weeks after false claims are spread. This can lead to odd situations on platforms, with the same myth being flagged at times and left unchecked at others.

NewsGuard

Solutions

- **Making misinformation less lucrative**
  → Decisive action from top companies could severely reduce the reach of online misinformation. Since a large portion of misinformation providers are repeat offenders, cutting their funding can drastically affect the spread of misinformation, including its next waves before they emerge.
  → In targeting credible websites, brands and their ad agencies can also work on the positive edge of the sword, and **support responsible journalism**, which remains the best antidote to misinformation.

- **Building interventions like ours,** to push people to pause and think before they share hoaxes online and contribute to their spread.
  → Research published by New York University demonstrates that individuals who frequently consume low-quality news improve their news diets after receiving access to NewsGuard's Red and Green Reliability Ratings.

Solutions

- **Media literacy**: provide tools to librarians and educators to help people build their skills, and their immunity against misinformation.

- Of course, **platforms need to do more too,** be more transparent about their algorithms, and the reach of misinformation – that's why we are signatories of the **European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation**.

NewsGuard

Thank you

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