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Presenter Information

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND BELIEVABILITY OF COVID-19 RELATED NEWS HEADLINES

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The aim is to better understand the influence of social media on believability of news headlines regarding COVID-19. As of recently, fake news has become a very prevalent topic due to the current political climate as well as the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Social media plays a huge role in identifying inaccurate information and labelling it as a “fake news” through their fact checker. At the same time, people shared inaccurate information from articles that were “fake” on facebook, twitter, instagram etc. Additionally, there is also a lot of fake news about the current COVID vaccine since there is news being shared about it having a microchip in it or killing people, especially when it’s scientifically inaccurate. Therefore, in this study we want to analyze how likely are people to believe fake news that they receive on a specific news platform, and whether people who use a lot of social media are more or less likely to believe fake news. The way we are executing our project is through the development of a survey to test participants on their level of believability. Participants will be displayed with news headlines that are either fake or real. Participants are blind to the type of headline they are asked. They will be asked to state on a scale of 1-5 how believable the news headline is. The participants will be asked questions such as how long they spend on each social media platform and where they are most likely to receive their news from. We are using COVID-19 as the topic to decipher if individuals who spend more time on social media are more likely to believe fake news. We want to understand where participants received their news from, what social media platforms they utilize the most, and if they are more likely to believe fake news based on time spent using social media. Overall, our projected conclusion is that people who spend more time on social media are more likely to believe fake news compared to those who do not.