

DAILY COVID-19 Misinformation and Scam Report

Date: 04/08/2020

Executive Summary

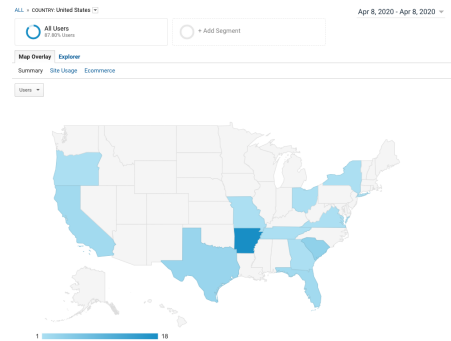
As of April 8, 2020, COSMOS has added 288 entries of misinformation, scams, and fake media to the database. Over the past 24 hours, 13 new cases of misinformation and scams were identified. Immediate action suggested involves warning citizens of fake websites that are scamming people out of large amounts of money under the guise of selling them large quantities of face masks which never arrive.

Key Insights

- Of immediate concern** - Fake companies purporting to sell face masks in large quantities are scamming people. Two found so far include: Agro-SzabKft.com and protectivemaskdirect.com (which is now suspended). This is an active situation. Fake companies purporting to sell face masks in large quantities are scamming people out of large amounts of money. These scam companies create fake websites and forge operating licenses. These scam companies even send fake invoices to their victims. Citizens need to be warned to not order products from untrusted, unverified websites. Two found so far include: Agro-SzabKft.com and protectivemaskdirect.com
 - A citizen attempting to help the Mongolian government obtain much-needed masks was scammed out of \$13,000 for the 100,000 masks that they ordered back on March 4, 2020.
 - The same thing happened to a citizen in Athens.
- Over the past 24 hours, the top sources being used to spread COVID-19 misinformation include:
 - Facebook
 - YouTube
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
- Over the past 24 hours, 41 visitors from six countries and eleven US states visited the website. Within Arkansas, use originated from seven cities, with Little Rock being the most frequent city.



- Over the past 24 hours, the website has gained reach into South Carolina, Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Virginia.



Top three misinformation themes –

- “5G causes coronavirus (COVID-19)”
- “Fake remedies to cure or prevent coronavirus (COVID-19)”
- “Scam products and/or scam websites”

Recommendations - Continue messaging (mass media) via local governments and news outlets about testing, CDC guidelines, phishing emails, scam direct mailings via the USPS, and scam websites selling face masks and phony products. Continue radio broadcasts (AM/FM) with the same information to reach rural communities. Advertise these mediums on digital billboards where possible.