

Executive Summary

As of April 17, 2020, COSMOS has 358 COVID-19 misinformation items in the database, reflecting a 2.9% increase in content over the past 24 hours. Americans are being targeted by spam emails offering personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves. Misinformation about cures are still widely circulating and resurfacing. As previously stated, critical to this report would be input from Arkansas consumers; to date, zero reports have been received from the website.

Key Insights

Email Scams: U.S. consumers are still being targeted through spam emails offering high-demand PPE. These emails offer a limited-time deal and feature a clickable image that leads to a site. The address provided in the emails are likely to be false. In the screen capture provided by an email that was received today (see Figure 1), the email listed is a USPS store. The address and Unsubscribe link are not text, but an image that leads to the same address the graphic about the 'supposed' deal links to. Consumers should not be clicking on any links in any unsolicited email.

Unproven cures are still circulating: Despite the debunking of Hydroxychloroquine as a cure, social media posts are still claiming this to be a 100%-effective medication for COVID-19 (see Figure 2). This claim is combined with a political statement.

Politically-motivated misinformation: Misleading information that is partially false is actively being shared on social media. The aim is to support or blame a political party. These claims are likely to increase over the next few months as the presidential election draws closer.

Website Traffic: 76 users visited the COVID-19 misinformation site on April 16, a 171% increase from the previous day. 49.4% of the overall traffic has been through the direct input of the website address, 47% by clicking on links in social media, 2.6% clicking on referral links from sites other than social media and 1.3% organic search engine result clicks (Figure 3). Out of the 73 U.S. users, 43% were from AR, the remaining visitors originated from VA (11%), TX (10%), CA (8%), FL (5%), NY (5%), SC (3%), TN (3%), AZ (1%), and DC (1%) – see figure 4. Out of the 31 users from AR, 26% are from Little Rock, 10% from Amity, 10% from Cabot, 10% from Conway, 6% from North Little Rock, 6% from Rogers, 6% from Van Buren, 3% from Benton, 3% from Bentonville (see Figure 5). The remaining 3% did not set their specific location.



Attention:
What you are about to see may come as a surprise! Air-borne viruses have been spreading faster than ever and in over 210 countries. From Boston to Budapest there are countries and cities with confirmed cases.
In this situation, the use of masks - well-made, properly worn and sensibly used ones, has become one more piece of armor to protect our rather vulnerable species.

The FreedomMASK is one of the best solutions to continue a healthy lifestyle.

[Click Here to Save up to 50% off and Free Shipping Worldwide](#)

If you'd prefer not to receive future emails, [unsubscribe here](#).
2212 Park Ave #203 - Tustin, CA 92782

Figure 1- Email Scam received by researcher

 **Rightwing_Vet**
@Rightwing_Vet

These pills can be produced for about 10 cents each.

It's a cure that doesn't make anyone rich and doesn't give anyone more power or control.

Now you understand the problem.



4:02 AM · 4/12/20 · Twitter Web App

Figure 2 - Screen capture of Tweet is shared on Facebook.

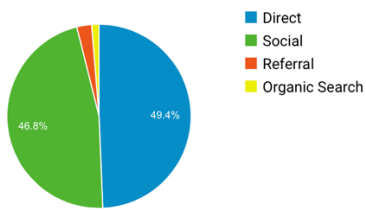


Figure 3 – Website traffic source distribution

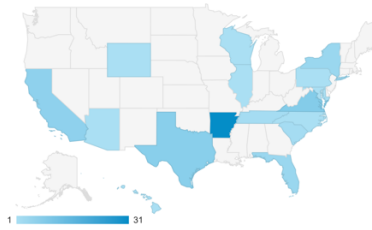


Figure 4 – Website traffic geographic distribution (US)

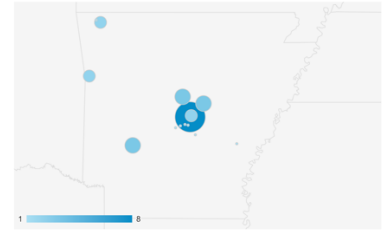


Figure 5 – Website traffic geographic distribution (AR)

Recommendations - In addition to previous recommendations: stress to consumers to only buy from reputable stores and websites and not to click on any links in unsolicited emails.