

Appendix C: Content creation methodology

The 250 posts were created using current or recent news after removing most, if not all, identifying elements to minimize any potential internet searches by participants during the experiment. Consistent with Pennycook, Cannon & Rand (2018), these messages were divided into five broad categories: plausible, implausible, true, false, and wholesome. The plausible category included headlines that participants were more likely to be certain about (e.g., “There is a low chance of mobile phone use leading to cancer”), with the reverse being true for the implausible category (e.g., “There is an 87% chance that Indian women report a better quality of life than men”). True and false categories, respectively, contained the same information as headlines in the plausible and implausible categories but without the probability or likelihood phrasing. As a result, the phrasing of the true and false categories was more like a traditional news headline. For the aforementioned examples, the phrasing of the true headline was “Using mobile phones is not associated with an increased risk of cancer,” and the false headline was phrased as “Indian women report a better quality of life than men.” The rationale for using the same basic source news but phrasing it differently was to assess if changing the certainty phrasing affects the spread of misinformation. The wholesome category was used as a control, and its headlines were mainly employed to test whether participants in the social condition were more likely to share wholesome content compared to those in the financial condition. All the messages were randomized and counterbalanced, with each participant receiving all five types of messages across the three days of the experiment.

Tattle’s *Khoj* database was used for viewing words in IFCN-certified fact-checking articles in a particular week. After considering the overall word frequency and the number of clusters a specific word belonged to, some keywords were chosen to help build an overarching theme (e.g., the words “COVID-19,” “myths,” and “vaccines” led to the creation of the theme “health”). The *Khoj* database was also supplemented by manually tracking fact-checking websites like WebQoof, Alt News, The Logical Indian, and Boom, and keeping up-to-date with various online news media outlets for over a month. A breakdown of the subthemes and phrasing of headlines is provided in Tables C1–C3.

Table C1. Themes, subthemes, and headlines in each category.

Themes	Subthemes	Number of Headlines
Health	COVID-19	12
	Vaccines	8
	Myths	8
	Risks	4
	NeoCov	4
Science/Tech	Aerospace	4
	Agriculture	4
	Energy	4
Tech	5G	6
	Non-gaming app	2
	Space	4

	Crypto	4
	VR	4
	Health & tech risk	4
Science	Medical discovery	4
	Planets	4
	Climate	4
	Material science	4
	Health-related advances	4
	Blackhole	4
Political	Prison	4
	Finance	16
	Flag	4
	Education	4
	Election	8
	International Relations	4
	Protests	4
	War	4
Religiopolitical	Muslims	8
Religion	Antinational	2
	Fatwa	2
	Anti-Hinduism	4
	Scripture	4
Miscellaneous	Environment	4
	Entertainment	8
	Sports	4
	Quality of life	4
	Online Dating	4
	Wildlife	4
	Plastic	4
	Toothpaste	4
Total		200

Table C2. Types and frequencies of phrasing used for plausible messages.

Plausible					
Type of phrasing	probability	likely/unlikely	very likely/very unlikely	high possibility/low possibility	high chance/low chance
Number of headlines	10	12/2	5/1	10/0	10/1

Table C3. Types and frequencies of phrasing used for implausible messages.

Implausible					
Type of phrasing	probability	likely/unlikely	very likely/very unlikely	high possibility/low possibility	high chance/low chance
Number of headlines	9	12/3	5/1	9/1	9/1