

MARCH 19, 2021

Tech Insight Update: Anti-Vaccine

ANTI-VACCINE STATS

Recent polls and studies include statistics regarding the level of public trust in Covid-19 restrictions and the COVID-19 Vaccine:

- According to a recent Marist Poll, only 58% of the U.S. public said they would get vaccinated as soon as a vaccine, a drop from last year's poll that recorded 69% of Americans planned to get vaccinated.
- A total of 31 million people follow anti-vaccine groups on Facebook, with 17 million people subscribing to similar accounts on YouTube.
- Anti-vaccine books now top the search list on Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites, according to Bloomberg.

In 2020, movements like #FilmYourHospital and #EmptyHospitals resulted in individuals with cameras pushing through hospitals and harassing medical staff.

This year, there have already been instances of anti-vaccine protests disrupting operations.

NOTABLE RECENT EVENTS

- **January 23 2021:** Anti-lockdown protesters in Denmark burn down a testing centre.
- **January 29 2021:** A hospital in Clark County, Washington was briefly put into a security lock-down after a group of protesters congregated outside the building to demand the release of a patient in an incident linked to COVID-19 conspiracy theories. Some of the protesters were armed, and the entire situation was live-streamed on YouTube by protesters.
- **January 30 2021:** Anti-vaccine protesters targeted the Dodgers Stadium in Los Angeles, which was operating as a vaccination site. The protest halted traffic and temporarily cut off access to the mass vaccination site.
- **February 20th 2021:** Anti-Vaccine rallies across Australia were joined by a few thousand people in total. In Melbourne, some protesters clashed with police and several arrests were made.
- **March 7th 2021:** Around 3000 Anti-vaccination protesters from across Romania converged outside the parliament building in Bucharest, Romania.

PLATFORM STANCES ON VACCINE MISINFORMATION

Facebook & Instagram

- Facebook stated they intend to crack down on misinformation regarding COVID-19 and vaccines, however;
- Facebook has been accused of being a “shopfront for anti-vaxx products,” directing customers to online marketplaces where these products can be purchased.
- Instagram has been accused of “suggesting” anti-vaccine misinformation.
- Many anti-vaccine groups still exist on these platforms.

YouTube

- Removed advertisements from anti-vaccine videos, meaning the account holders would not make money.
- Youtube has stated that they are committed to “reducing the spread of harmful misinformation and showing information panels, to help combat misinformation”, despite anti-vaccine misinformation still existing on the site.

Twitter

- Stated that the National Health Service or Department of Health and Human Services would appear as the first result for anyone searching for vaccine-related topics in the UK and USA as well as labeling tweets that contain misleading information about the vaccines.
- Implemented a “strike” system that determines when further enforcement action is necessary, removing more than 8,400 Tweets and challenging 11.5 million accounts worldwide. Five or more strikes results in permanent suspension from the platform.
- Despite these measures, many anti-vaccine accounts still thrive on Twitter.

ANTI-VACCINE CHANNELS

- Anti-vaccine misinformation has spread to many fringe communities on Social Media, particularly to Qanon and “Natural Mommy” groups and pages.
- Anti-vaccine messages are often shared on pages that primarily focus on a different topic, thus researchers have struggled to track these sources. However, many of the groups exist on Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube, and well as alternative channels like Minds.com, Mewe.com and Bitchute.com
- The Twitter hashtag that the rallies are being organized under is “we will ALL be there”

Some key influencers and groups include:

- **Andrew Wakefield** Physician who was struck off the medical register due to his involvement in the Lancet MMR autism fraud @DrWakefield
- **Keri Hilson** 4.2 million Twitter followers, posted now-deleted tweets attempting to link the coronavirus to 5G mobile networks.
- **Shiva Ayyudari** The leader behind #FireFauci — 230k followers with a YouTube video viewed over 6 million times in a week
- **RFK Jr.** Spoke at an anti-vaccine rally in Albany in May 2019
- **Children’s Health Defense** RFK Jr.’s organization
- **Sherri Tenpenny** @BusyDrT
- **Toni Bark** @doctorsensation
- **Susanne Humphries** - Wrote the book “Dissolving Illusions: Disease, Vaccines, and the Forgotten History”
- **Joseph Mercola** @mercola
- **Del Bigtree** Producer of misinformation documentary “Vaxxed” @delbigtree
- **Vani Hari** @thefoodbabe
- **Healthnut News** @unhealthytruth
- **@joshuacoleman** Instagram
- **@Visforvaccine** Instagram
- **Your Baby, Your Way** Facebook group
- **“Shop Mask Free Los Angeles”** Facebook group responsible for organizing the Dodgers Stadium protest
- **A Voice for Choice** @avoiceforchoice



CONFIRMED EVENTS OF THE MARCH 20TH WEEKEND (Non-Exhaustive)

‘World Wide Rally for Freedom & Democracy’ protest

When: Sat., March 20 2021, 11 am (CDT)

Where: Across the UK, with emphasis on London, England.

- The world wide protests are billed as anti-COVID-19 restrictions and against vaccine implementation in certain countries.

Other rally locations in USA and Canada include:

- Point State Park, Pittsburgh; Union Square, Manhattan; E.Jones St, Raleigh; Black Patch Distillery, Madison, Alabama; California Ln, Arlington, Texas; W. Washington St, Phoenix; Yavapai Vista Point, Sedona; E.Lexington St, Las Vegas; Grass Valley, CA; Oregon State Capitol, Salem; City Hall, Sarnia; Maine State Capital, Augusta; 400 Block Wausau, Wisconsin; Human Rights Museum, Winnipeg; Prince’s Island Park, Calgary; Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver.

UN Anti-Racism Day:

- **When:** Sat, March 20 1 pm
- **Where:** Nationwide, USA
- Activists are encouraged to take the knee “wherever they are”.
- This could lead to further unified actions. An online rally featuring high profile speakers from politics, education and various unions will take place.

Anti-Lockdown Protests:

When: Sat., March 20 2021, 1 pm

Where: London and Edinburgh in the United Kingdom.

- The exact location for London has not been confirmed. Potential for further actions to be organized at short notice across other towns and cities.
- Anti-lockdown / anti-establishment protests organized for London and Edinburgh are likely to cause significant disruption. The events have been organised by “Stand Up X” who have held disruptive events throughout the pandemic. They have not released exact details for the action in London; however, previous events indicate they could commence from Hyde Park or Trafalgar Square.
- Furthermore, possible disruptive actions could be organized at short notice in relation to the death of Sarah Everard and the ‘Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021’, which has caused uproar with protest groups.

International Stop 5G Global Protests:

- **When:** Sat., March 20 2021
- **Where:** Locations have not been confirmed.
- The day beforehand (Fri. March 19), anti-5G activists plan to gather at SpaceX offices (1 Rocket Road, Hawthorne).

To learn more about how we have gathered and analyzed this material, reach out to us at info@liferaftinc.com