

Good ebola virus in social media essay example

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



Information about Ebola virus hazard flooded all mass media including TV, radio and internet social media. The controversial information overflowed media after Ebola hemorrhagic fever was declared an epidemic in October. Mass media help authorities and healthcare organizations to spread the proper information about Ebola outbreak and educate everyone how the virus is transmitted, to recognize the first symptoms of the fever, how to act if there was a contact with potentially ill person, how to protect themselves. Analysis of social media posts enables the healthcare professionals to map the disease as it moves across the countries and regions.

On the other hand, media also spread non-accurate, false information and rumors about Ebola disease and contribute to raising panic in the audience. Media play a vital role in spreading information about Ebola outbreak, because it facilitates early warning systems, response to the outbreak, and also communication between health authorities, healthcare providers and international institutions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses internet media to respond to people's concerns and to spread information. The major misconception the CDC is trying to fight via media sources (for example, via Twitter, Flickr) is about the ways Ebola is transmitted. CDC looks at misconceptions as evidence that it needs to talk about certain issues and areas and be more proactive through responding to the people's questions, providing photos, infographics, etc.(Murphy, 2014.) Algorithms developed by the big data analysts (for example, HealthMap, Sickweather, Lancet) helps to track the disease route across the Globe via analyzing the clues from online social media and local news reports as well as via analysis of flight routes (AFP, 2014.) New technologies are also helpful

in predicting epidemics. According to Omobola Johnson, Nigerian Minister of Communication Technology, the progressive technologies and social media (instruments used to track the virus spread by analyzing alerts from Android app, Twitter, and Facebook) “ were key to her country being declared Ebola-free” (AFP, 2014.) Information spreads over internet very quickly. After the first Ebola case was diagnosed in the United States, number of Twitter mentions of the virus increased from 100 per minute to more than 6, 000 (Luckerson, 2014.) But many online media users take advantage of social media capabilities to share rumors and cultivating irrational fears regarding Ebola. Misinformation is spread over the internet much faster than the virus ever could (Firger, 2014.) Social media is also full of conspiracy theories about the epidemic, for example, that state authorities are putting the Ebola virus in regular vaccines.

There're many false cases mentioned in social media posts, some experts call the people who spread panic “ infected”, because they take bad information from non-reliable source and spread it across their network. Fact that people trust the information that comes from their friends and relatives via social networks more than information from the officials makes the situation even more “ contagious.”

Many health and government officials try to fight the virtual hysteria about Ebola via their online presence and spreading accurate information. The experts say that quick and accurate information “ disseminated as widely as possible is the only way to fight the spread of falsities (Luckerson, 2014.) The other effective way to fight rumors is to identify the main influencers, inform

them and, thus, let them spread accurate information in their networks of friends.

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