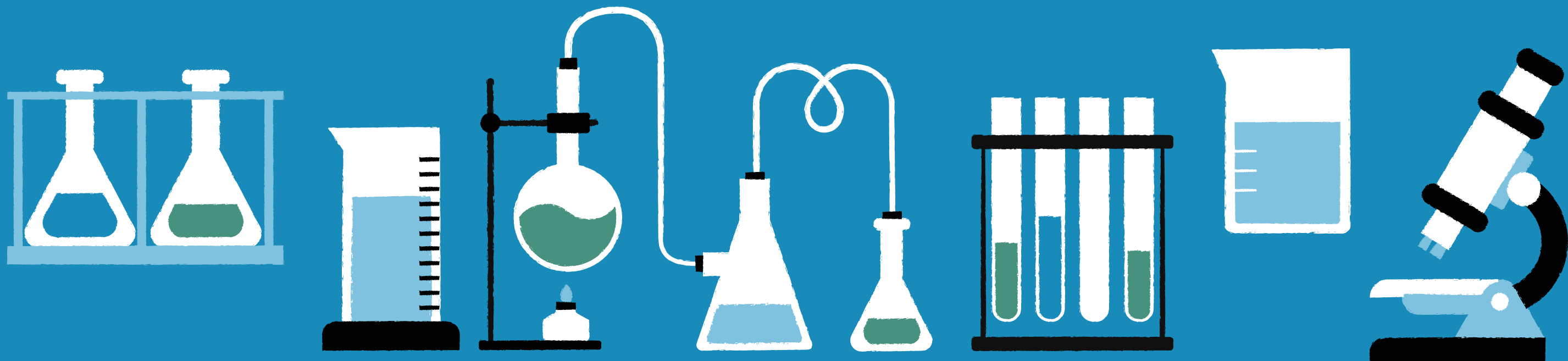


Science Communication in the Age of Misinformation

Fiorda Llukmani, ZSI



Misinformation is a major challenge in science communication. False information and conspiracy theories can spread quickly, and are often amplified by social media. This can lead to confusion, fear, and mistrust in the scientific community.

“Sometimes that information is aligned with the values that we hold, which makes us more likely to accept it,” Sara Yeo, a science-communication expert.





The pandemic has made clear that bad information can kill.

One of the most insidious problems with fake news is how easily it lodges itself in our brains and how hard it is to dislodge once it's there. We're constantly deluged with information, and our minds use cognitive shortcuts to figure out what to retain and what to let go.

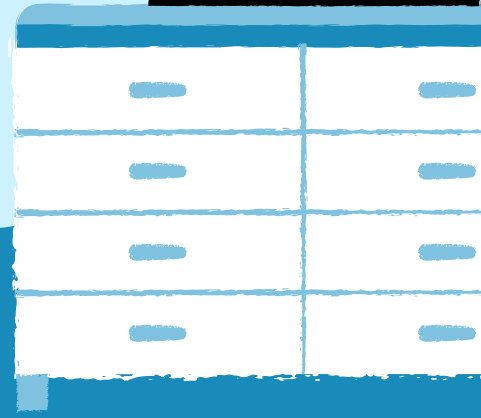
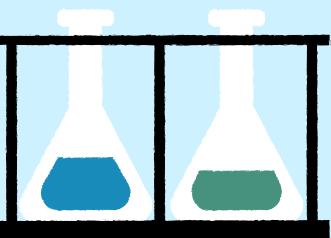


Figure 7: COVID-Related Disinformation in the West Balkans on Social Media¹¹³

| | Hydroxychloroquine Fakes | | Bill Gates Fakes | | Combined COVID-19 Fakes | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Country | Total Interactions | % Disinformation | Total Interactions | % Disinformation | Total Interactions | % Disinformation |
| Albania | 3 921 | 100 % | 23 762 | 69 % | 27 683 | 74 % |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 2 636 | 48 % | 7 918 | 17 % | 10 554 | 25 % |
| Kosovo | 3 941 | 51 % | 11 106 | 46 % | 15 047 | 47 % |
| North Macedonia | 1 300 | 0 % | 1 984 | 40 % | 3 284 | 24 % |
| Serbia | 10 348 | 92 % | 12 751 | 79 % | 23 099 | 85 % |
| TOTAL | 22 146 | 76 % | 57 521 | 59 % | 79 667 | 63 % |

Source: Authors' calculations, *CrowdTangle*

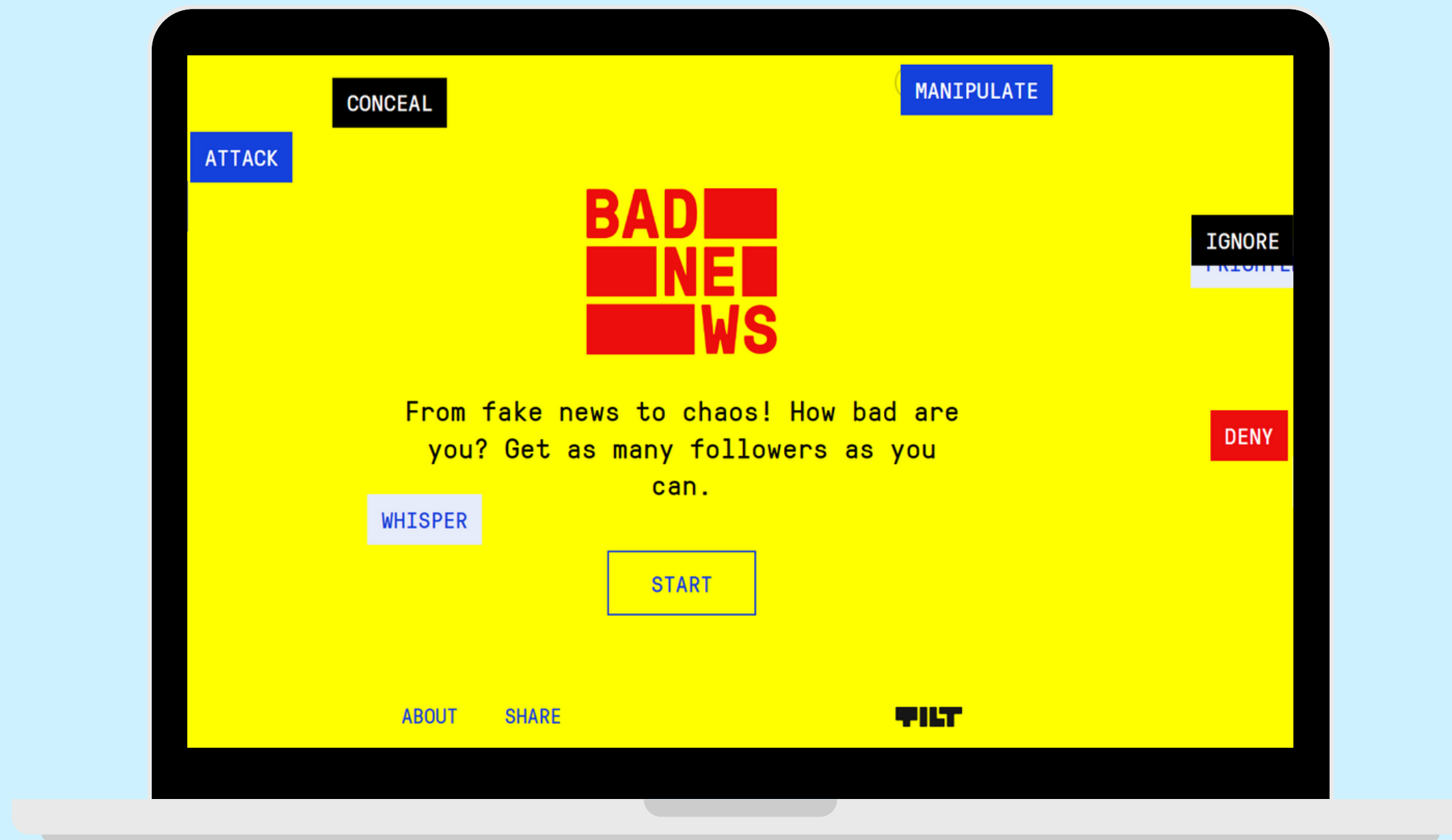
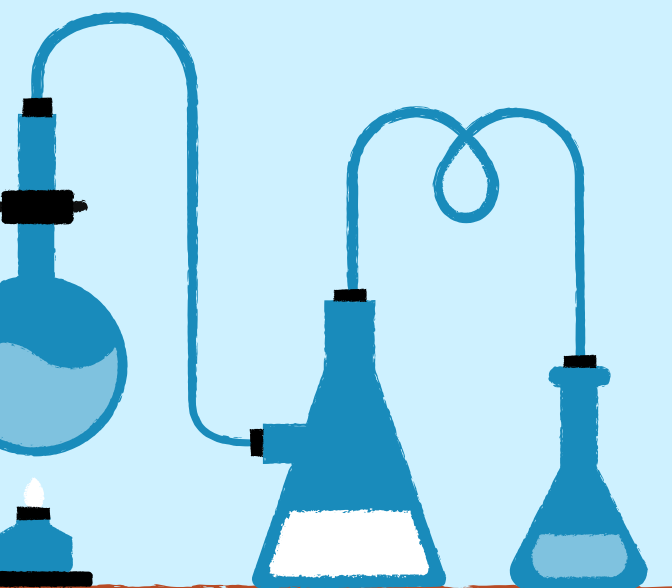
Mapping Fake News and Disinformation in the Western Balkans and Identifying Ways to Effectively Counter Them

Misinformation as a sickness

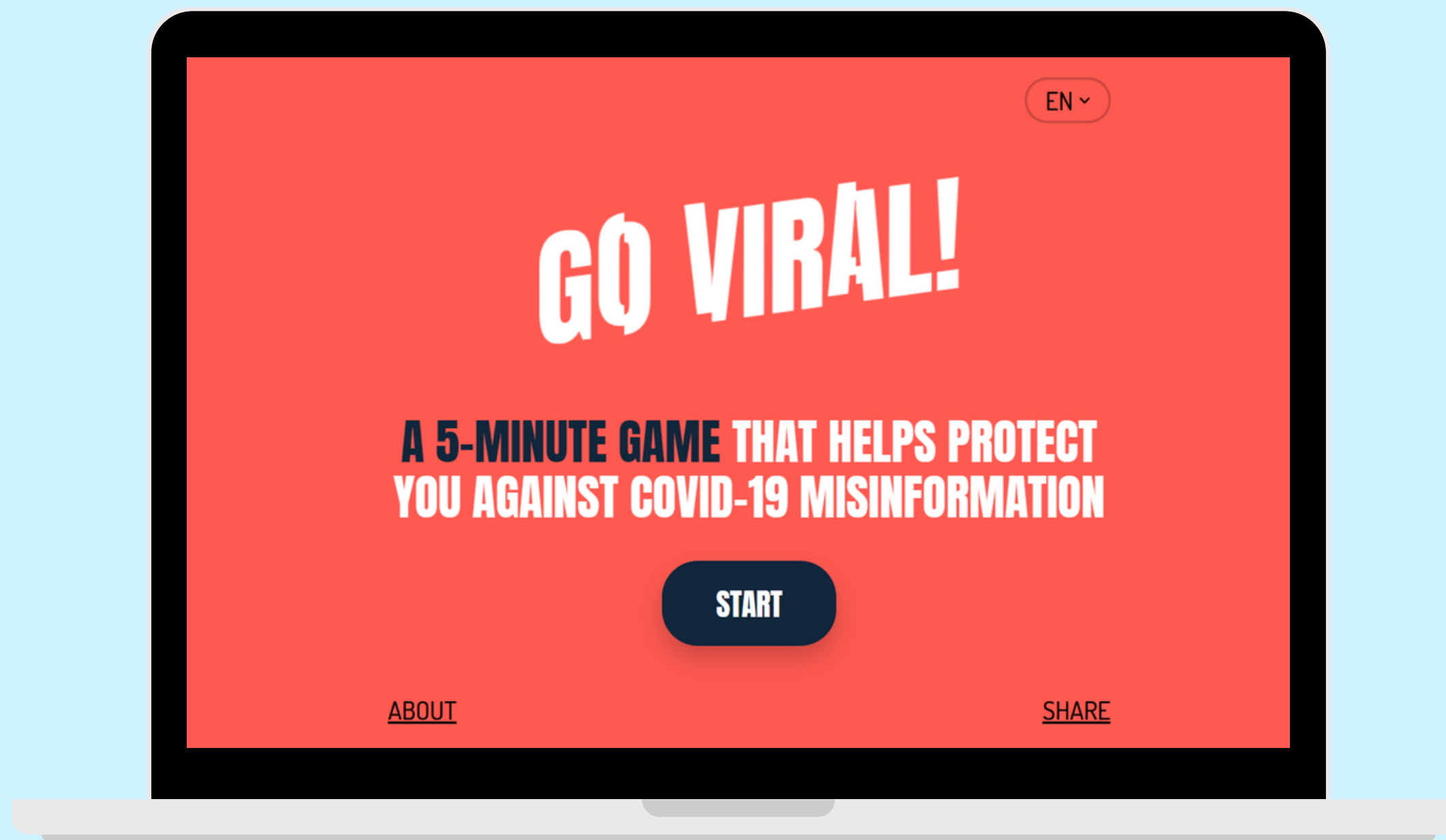
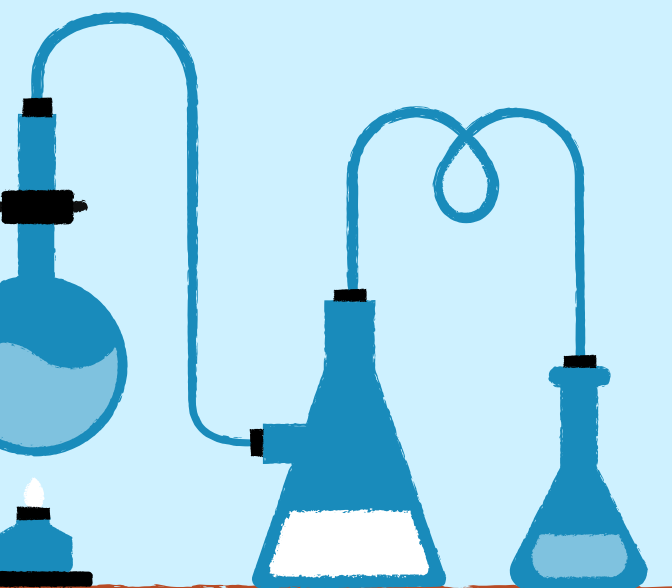


Think of misinformation as a sickness that spreads like a virus. Prebunking is like a weaker version of that sickness that helps your body build up defenses against the real thing. It's like a vaccine that helps protect you from bad information.

Researchers made a game called Bad News to teach people how to recognize and fight against misinformation. They found that it was very helpful, so they made a new game called GO VIRAL! to help people recognize COVID-19 misinformation. Early results show that playing the game can help people better understand what is true and what is not about the pandemic.



www.getbadnews.com/



www.goviralgame.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

- Essential in combating misinformation
- Allows scientists to share their knowledge and research with the public, and to dispel myths and misconceptions
- Good science communication helps build trust between scientists and the public



If you were to explain a scientific study to your friend, what would be the easier way for them to learn?

+

Using visuals and storytelling

-

Write an article

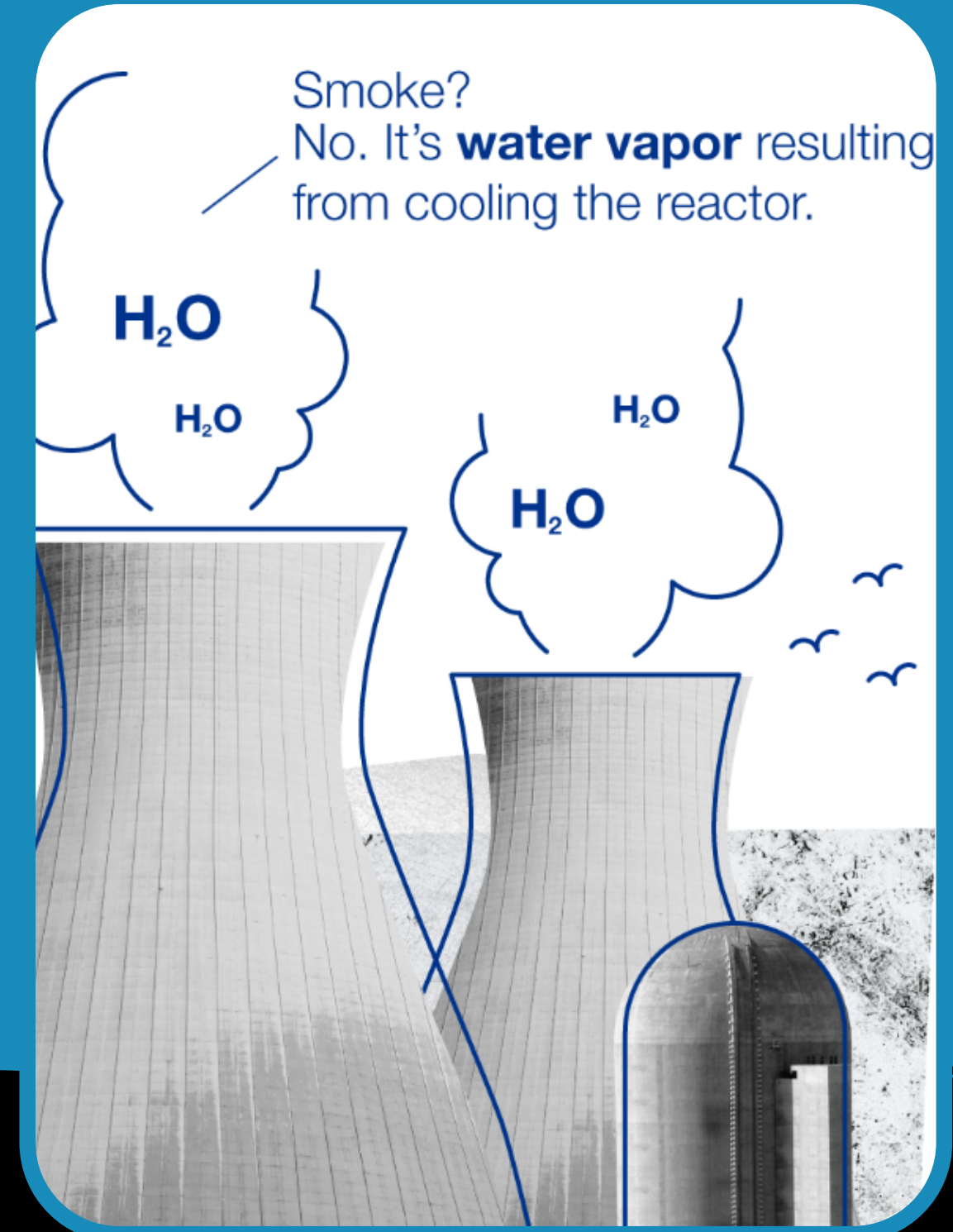


Out of these two images, which one provides more information?



Did you know that nuclear energy generates over 1/3 of the world's low-carbon electricity?

Nuclear power avoids the release of 2 gigatonnes of carbon yearly — that's the equivalent of taking 400 million cars off the road every year.



Strategies for Effective Science Communication

1

Use clear and simple language

Avoid using technical jargon and explain scientific concepts in simple and understandable terms.

2

Tell a story

Use storytelling techniques to engage your audience and make the science more relatable and interesting.

3

Use visuals

Incorporate graphs, charts, images, and videos to help illustrate your points and make the science more accessible.

4

Provide context

Put the science into context by explaining why it matters and how it relates to real-world issues and challenges.

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS?

Consider the source

Check the author

Supporting sources?

Read beyond

Check the date

Is it a joke?



FACT-CHECKING SITES AND PLUG-INS



<http://www.factcheck.org/>

<https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>

<http://www.snopes.com/>

<http://www.politifact.com/>



ONLINE COURSE ON SCIENCE COMMUNICATION



Learn to communicate scientific knowledge effectively with TRESKA's MOOC! Explore digitalization's impact on development and communication, gain insights from scientists, journalists, and policymakers, and discover how to maintain public trust.

[Watch their videos here](#)



CONTRIBUTION OF WG2 TO THE TOPIC

- **Social Media Engagement Guide**
- **Factsheet “How to communicate science in a world of misinformation”**
- **Webinar “Core skills for effective science communication”.**

RECOMMENDATIONS



Communicating science |
Sheril Kirshenbaum |
TEDxCongressAve



Science Communication

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- TRESKA MOOC - online course on science communication
- Mapping Fake News and Disinformation in the Western Balkans and Identifying Ways to Effectively Counter Them- EU





Contact:
llukmani@zsi.at
Research Policy &
Development Section
www.zsi.at

