

Sharing Information about COVID-19: Feedback from the Coronavirus Discourses' Public Involvement Panel

Background

Researchers on the Coronavirus Discourses project are interested in the trajectories of public health messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic. To explore where individuals have accessed information and contributed to conversations, we asked our Public Involvement Panel (PIP) to keep a focussed journal for three days.

The PIP members were asked to split their feedback into online and offline sources of COVID-19 information, and online and offline places where they were contributing to conversations about COVID-19. Four people contributed.

Sources of COVID-19 Information

In their journals, our PIP members reported that official Government and NHS COVID-19 information sites and NHS app., news websites, and television news were major sources of COVID-19 information. They also accessed information from community groups on Facebook and individuals on Twitter. Further information was accessed on WhatsApp from groups and known individuals, whilst Messenger was identified as a platform where family groups shared information. Employers' intranet homepages (e.g., MSN News and University webpages), work emails, and online meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom and MS Teams) were also channels of information.

Offline sources of COVID-19 information primarily included BBC radio stations and television news (e.g., BBC and Channel 4), followed by family and friends. PIP members also reported reading public billboards, signage, and relatives' newspapers. One person described avoiding daily news on television and radio.



Contributions to Conversations about COVID-19

PIP members named WhatsApp groups as key platforms for contributing to online conversations about COVID-19, alongside voice and FaceTime calls with family and friends. Nonetheless, some reported choosing not to contribute to online conversations about COVID-19, because they did not see themselves as experts, or did not use social media.

Offline, the PIP members contributed to conversations about COVID-19 on the telephone and in face-to-face interactions with colleagues, family, and friends. One PIP member mentioned avoiding conversations about COVID-19 at home.

This small-scale study will inform our wider research involving privacy preserving language analysis and will contribute to discussions surrounding the landscape of COVID-19 information available to, and reproduced by, the UK public.



C19COMMS

Coronavirus Discourses

The University of Nottingham in collaboration with Cardiff University is working in partnership with Public Health England, Public Health Wales, and NHS Education for Scotland to investigate linguistic evidence for effective public health messaging.