



ONE COUNTRY

“COVID-19”

Snapshot of Online and Social Media Analysis in Rural
Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire,
Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin

April 6 – 13, 2020

Rural Citizens



124,000 original posts



37,000 unique authors

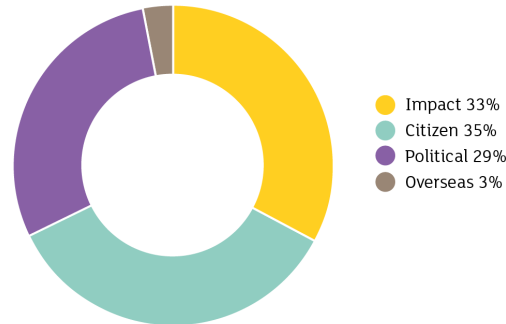
Overview

People are becoming increasingly confused by inconsistent messaging from authorities and the media. They understand what they need to do in general, but question why some things are allowed and not others.

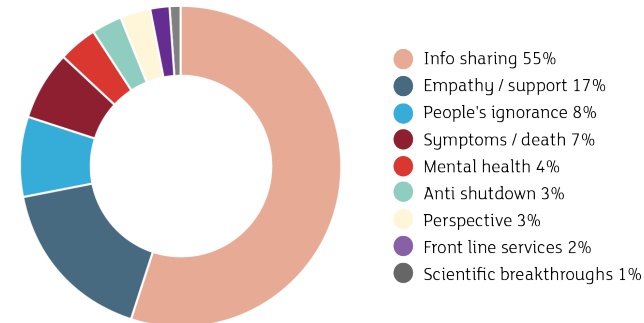
President Trump continues to shoulder much of the blame for the spread of coronavirus. His attempt to pass responsibility and blame to others has fueled an increase in levels of anger. Meanwhile, the GOP comes under attack for allegedly putting lives at risk during the Wisconsin Supreme Court election in order to suppress turnout.

In general, discussions regarding the impact of the disease are becoming more detailed as the weeks tick by. Generalization and detachment is quickly being replaced by reality as facts and figures meet life experience.

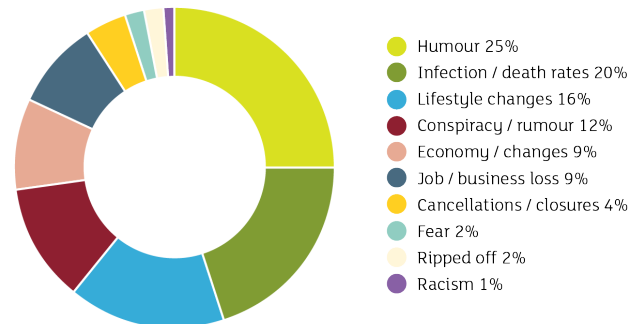
DISCUSSION SPLIT



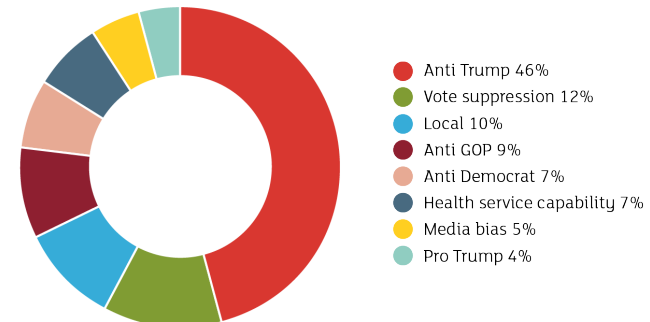
CITIZEN DISCUSSION



IMPACT DISCUSSION



POLITICAL DISCUSSION



ONE COUNTRY

Analysis: Key Takeaways

Impact Discussion

- Plenty of people are resorting to humor to get through the tough times. While some citizens are clearly being flippant, the majority are just trying to cheer themselves up and lift the spirits of others.
- Reported infection/death rates are being discussed in increasing levels of detail. Previously they tended to be more general. Now citizens speak of the impact on nursing homes and grocery store workers for example, or what it means for a particular industry such as meat packing.
- Clearly lifestyles have been affected, yet rather than continue to just share tips on childcare or discuss films they have watched, the conversation has moved on to new hobbies, things or people they miss, or how they are going to make changes to their lives after the coronavirus.
- Many continue to express negative thoughts about the impact of the pandemic on the economy. However, some are raising the possibility of an opportunity to reset the future, e.g. climate change or reducing waste.
- Heartbreaking conversations appear online about the loss of jobs and broken businesses.
- Conspiracy and rumors continue to circulate throughout social media such as the “fact” that COVID-19 was made by the Chinese. In addition, there appears to be growing anger that China – having allegedly started the virus – is now making money off the crisis.



Analysis: Key Takeaways

Citizen Discussion

- Rural people continue to use online communities to share evolving information and advice. Yet the picture appears to be increasingly confused as more information is being digested. Many are unsure exactly what constitutes social distancing, e.g. “can I go fishing?” or are revisiting exactly how the disease can be caught. In addition, there is a large conversation regarding hydroxychloroquine and its effectiveness, side effects, and availability.
- People use social media to express their angst and look for support. This conversation has moved on from anxiety about what is to come to what is actually happening to them or people they know. Compassion and empathy is being expressed in response.
- Plenty of anger is reserved for people showing ignorance about the disease and behaving in a way that endangers others.
- Mental health and associated problems are worsening as loneliness sets in. For people who have little else to think about, the disease is a becoming claustrophobic experience.
- Meanwhile, a small but vocal minority opposes any lockdown. These people feel that the authorities have overreacted, and that the pain of shutting down the economy will cause more death and suffering than COVID-19.



Analysis: Key Takeaways

Political Discussion

- Trump continues to face heavy criticism for his handling of the pandemic, which consumes 41% of the entire political discussion. There is no doubt in these people's minds that Trump's inaction has led to many needless deaths. They call him out for trying to deflect the blame toward other countries/states/individuals/organizations and say the buck stops with him.
- Wisconsinites accuse the GOP of attempting to suppress the vote in their state by forcing voters to the polls in the middle of a pandemic. They warn that such ruthless voter manipulation by the GOP will continue to November and cost many lives unless they are stopped.
- A relatively vibrant conversation is taking place in Wisconsin, focusing on the action of state authorities. Most prominent in the discussion is Governor Whitmer, who is singled out for praise and attention.
- The Trump administration takes further heat for failing to provide sufficient personal protective equipment, respirators, and testing.
- Meanwhile, both the right and left continue to take pot shots at one another as the crisis swirls around them.



Sample Posts

Impact Discussion

💡 *The nightly COVID updates sometimes make me forget that those numbers represent real people.*

💡 *Well this explains the lack of junk mail I have been getting lately. 70% of the stuff in my mail box before this pandemic was trash ads. Now is the time to restructure the service.*

💡 *Went to mcdonald's for the first time in ages. The young woman running the register was visibly upset. She told me this was her last shift she was getting all month and needed the money bad to feed her kids - COVID19 is brutal on our workforce.*

💡 *Good lord my coworker told me that the communists created COVID-19 and are behind the World Health Organization and Human Rights organizations all over the world. 🤔🤔*

💡 *This murderer China Communist Party is making billions out of Chinese Virus (COVID-19). Orders for vents and mask are enormous #ChinaLeidPeopleDied #ChineseVirusCensorship #theyMustPay*



Sample Posts

Citizen Discussion

💡 *What is #Hydroxychloroquine ??? How does it work against #coronavirus??*

💡 *If a tiger can get the Coronavirus doesn't that make house cats a little bit susceptible to the virus? I need answers*

💡 *If your grandparents are missing you/you're missing them during this pandemic I'm praying for you because that s**t is cruel.*

💡 *America WILL beat this! In the meantime, stay strong and pay it forward! Share how you're helping your community through Coronavirus*

💡 *Can't make this up: in the middle of the pandemic, a guy at Costco uses the bathroom without washing his hands. Bad in any time, terrible at this time.*

💡 *My ❤️ breaks for anyone who has been diagnosed with #COVID—19 because they HAVE to be alone and that loneliness can be scarier than death. #MentalHealth is still important*

💡 *Very concerned, covid is real, but not the crazy pandemic people fear. The flu has been far more destructive this year. There are other major things happening as a result of this. It's concerning*



Sample Posts

Political Discussion

🗣️ *You were getting the warnings, the briefings, & Congress/the media was imploring you to take #COVID19 #TrumpPlague seriously. Instead you said "1 guy from China" brought it in. Then said we only had "15 cases, soon to be 0". YOU messed up, the federal response has been terrible!*

🗣️ *All of the excuses in the world can't cover up the fact that Donald Trump is directly responsible for botching the Corona virus response in the United States. All because he only cared about his poll numbers.*

🗣️ *I worry that we will not succeed at protecting our #VotingRights during the #COVID19 pandemic. The third branch of government is falling down on upholding this constitutionally-guaranteed right. How many more people will die to vote?*

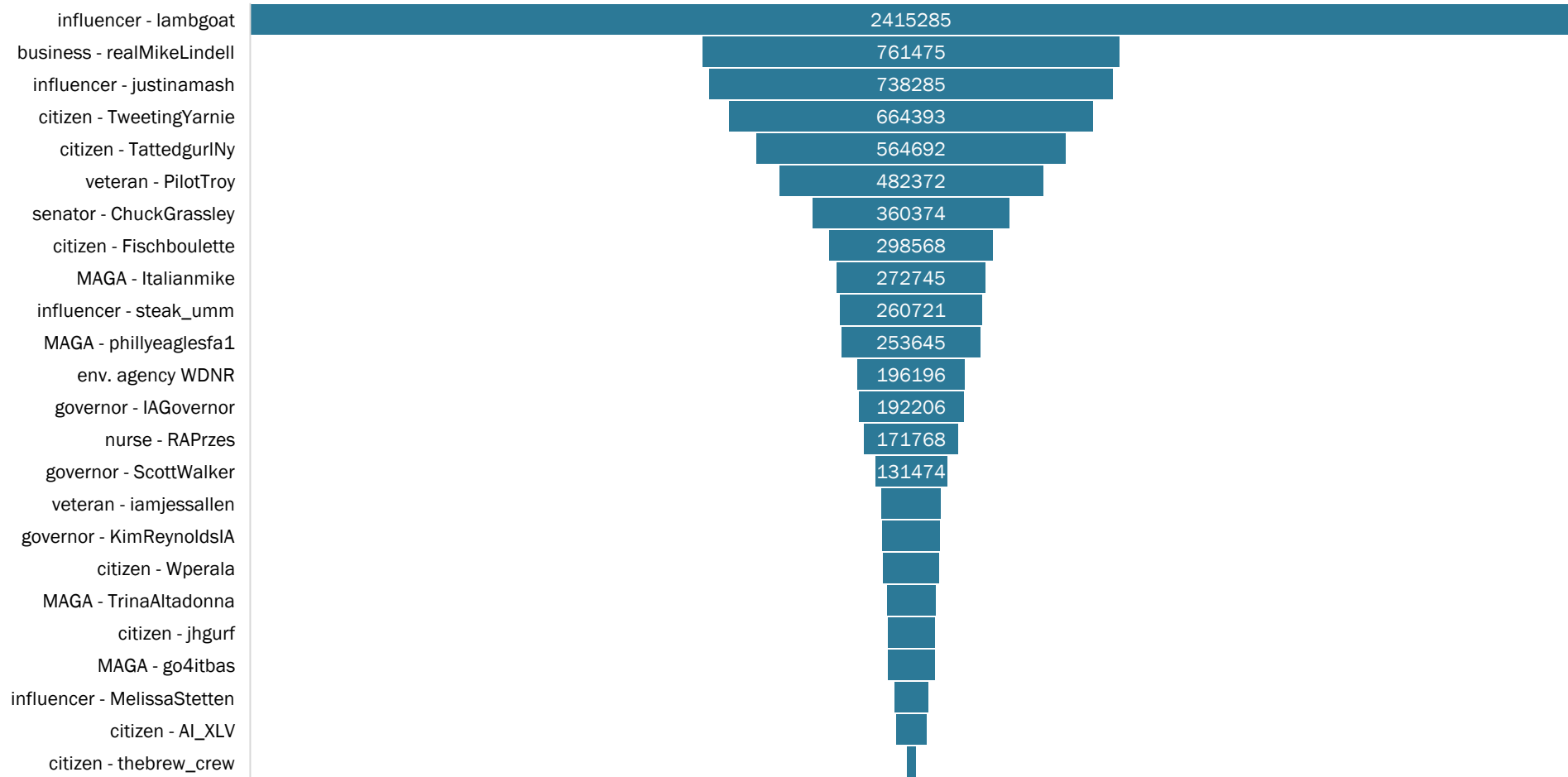
🗣️ *Protect the November election from the coronavirus and @realDonaldTrump by passing a bill to guarantee every voter can cast a ballot by mail!*

🗣️ *Is Nancy Pelosi drunk and trying to push another one of STUPID BILLS through again? She needs to be committed!!!*

🗣️ *Would suspect if there wasn't a lockdown and you became sick with Covid, or a member of your family, you would be the first to bitch that "not enough was being done to protect the citizens of Michigan"! #stayhome Keep up the good work @GovWhitmer*



Who is Driving the Conversation?



Notes on the data: The funnel chart above shows the most influential authors in the discussion across the six states by the reach of their posts on the topic of COVID-19. The figures in the middle of the chart show the number of impressions for the author's relevant posts. An impression is counted every time a post is seen in a user's social media feed.



Prepared for One Country Project

by  **impact**Social



Methodology

This analysis is based on collected, publicly available, online data, geo-located to rural populations in the six states from April 6-13, 2020 related to COVID-19. In total, 124,000 posts from 37,000 authors were collected across the six states.

Randomized, representative samples of these conversations were analyzed after removing shares, retweets, repetition, media, and influencers from the dataset to focus solely on the views of local citizens. These conversations were then scored – positive, negative, or neutral.

