



# ONE COUNTRY

“COVID-19”

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

May 4 – 10, 2020

# Rural Citizens



88,000 original posts



29,000 unique authors

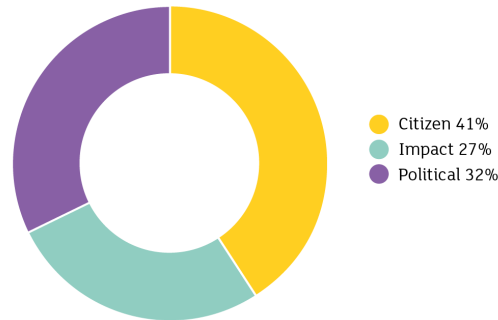
## Overview

Commenters continue to share information in a discussion that has become increasingly confused as citizens are bombarded with advice, guidance, and new regulations from a huge variety of sources. A major fight is underway about the real COVID-19 death rate, with the political right shouting that the figures have been grossly inflated.

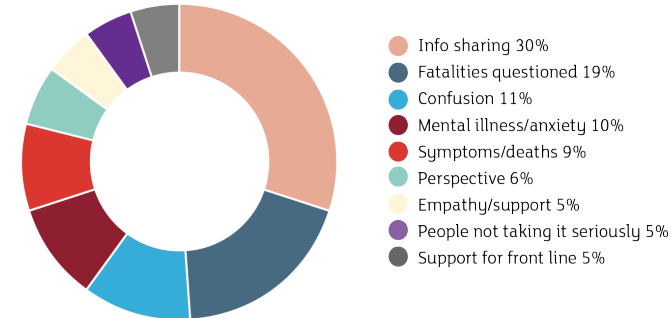
Workers consider what a return to work may look like as they read and share reports that the economic downturn is comparable to the Great Recession.

President Trump comes under increasing attack from rural people who feel he is not in control of events. His capricious approach to the crisis makes him vulnerable to criticism as fatalities continue to rise. Divisions increase between people who are fearful that their state is opening too soon and those who feel the impact of COVID-19 has been greatly exaggerated and lockdown should never have occurred.

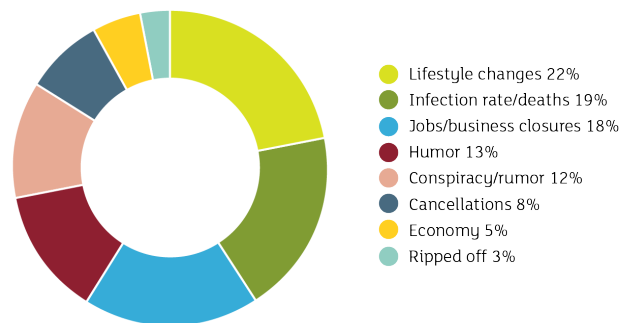
## DISCUSSION SPLIT



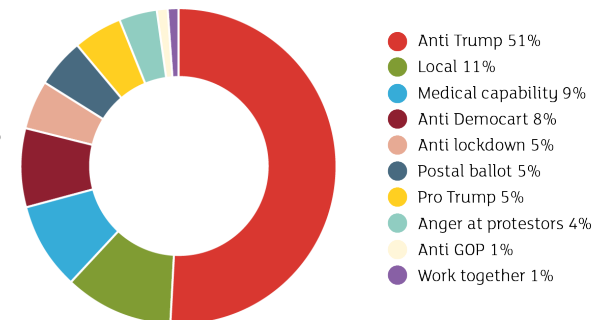
## CITIZEN DISCUSSION



## IMPACT DISCUSSION



## POLITICAL DISCUSSION



ONE COUNTRY

# Analysis: Key Takeaways

## Citizen Discussion

- Rural folks continue to share all they know about the disease, including best practices, impacts on pregnancy, effective drug use, etc. Overall, information is being passed responsibly and with good intentions. However with a rise in information, new rules, and regulations, the conversation is becoming increasingly confused as the weeks go by.
- Similarly people go online to simply ask others what is happening and what they should/should not do i.e. “Why is my county not open when we only have a few cases?,” “Do I need to wear a mask?” “Where can I get a test?,” etc.
- The number of people questioning the fatality rate continues to increase. There are some who feel that deaths are being underreported and thereby question whether the disease is deadlier than suggested.
- Meanwhile others feel that COVID-19 deaths are being grossly exaggerated (or even made up). They are angry that deaths from natural causes are being marked as COVID-19, leading to the lockdown. Some suggest the disease is a hoax or fake and has been created by Democrats. Curiously there is little suggestion as to what the Democrats might gain from such action.
- Meanwhile others continue to try to add some perspective and hope by looking to positives that may come from the crisis.



# Analysis: Key Takeaways

## Impact Discussion

- The now familiar conversations with regards to infection and death rates in the country/state continue to dominate as dire comparisons with fatalities from Vietnam and gun violence are cited.
- COVID-19 spreading in the White House has increased levels of concern. It has made the virus more real for some people who had previously felt immune or detached from the crisis.
- The local and national economy clearly weighs on people's minds, influenced by media reports of America's worst ever recession, which are being widely shared.
- Thoughts are increasingly focused on how and when to get back to work. The overall conversation is tinged with a sense of trepidation as to what their world will look like by the time they return.
- China continues to be the center of conspiracy theories fueled by the Trump/Pompeo intervention which suggested that COVID-19 was created in a Wuhan lab. People on both sides of the political divide debate the validity of these claims.



# Analysis: Key Takeaways

## Political Discussion

- Many rural people continue to take a dim view of the president and his handling of the crisis.
- It is fair to say that many of the people openly attacking Trump each week are not part of his base. Yet there are plenty who are less partisan, who simply see the fatalities ticking up each week and feel their president is not in control of events. They accuse him of preferring to pass the buck or say something outlandish than look for solutions such as increasing the availability of PPE or testing.
- Many are also anxious that their state, encouraged by the president, is opening too soon.
- Yet much of this concern is drowned out online by people who think the seriousness of the disease has been grossly exaggerated and demand the end of lockdown.
- In addition, there is an increasing number who feel the crisis has been created/prolonged by Democrats. They aggressively attack the Democratic leadership for what they have done to their state/country.
- State politicians continue to take criticism and praise, often in equal measure. This week Governor Whitmer had to share the limelight with Governor Wolf whose profile seems to be increasing the longer the crisis goes on.



# Sample Posts

## Impact Discussion

🗣️ *Our covid numbers are like our gun deaths .. higher, greater, then all other countries on earth #COVIDIOTS  
#covidnightmareUS*

🗣️ *THE WHITE HOUSE HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19? WHAT THE HELL!*

🗣️ *With entire states ordered to stay at home amid the coronavirus pandemic--and things like open houses and in-person showings considered major health risks--the business of buying and selling houses is not what it was just a short time ago.*

🗣️ *Fauci is a wolf in sheeps clothing! He needs to get exposed for the fraud he is and charged for the laws he has broken! \*\* Dr. Fauci Denies Culpability Following Revelation That His Agency Funded Coronavirus Bat Studies at Wuhan Institute*

🗣️ *You ever notice how the media works with the globalists to occupy your attention while they slowly strip your freedom and liberty away? Pandemic Impeachment Russian collusion Me Too Movement Brett Kavanaugh Mass shootings*

🗣️ *Of course WHO denies this. They are just as much to blame for this pandemic as China.*

🗣️ *#COVID19 Actual U.S. unemployment "could be" close to Great Depression levels at 25 percent, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin*



# Sample Posts

## Citizen Discussion

💡 *If it was here in November, like YOU claimed, then why wasn't it a pandemic? On top of that, IF it was here in November, wouldn't it be the second wave now?*

💡 *My county has about 30 cases of the Covid and is still closed. Pittsburgh has nearly 1400 and gets to open*

💡 *Nobody died from covid19 because it doesn't exist. If it did then would've proven it exists, wouldn't be pressuring doctors to list it on death certificates, would actually have a covid19 test. OTS ALL BS! 💡 What comes AFTER covid19 is what is dangerous*

💡 *AREN'T THEY GONNA FALSIFY LITTLE RICHARDS DEATH AS COVID 19 ?OH HE DIED AT HOME SEE HOW THIS WORKS ? AMERICA DOES, LETS OPEN UP AND STOP THIS CHARADE NOBODY TRUSTS FAUCI GATES HILLARY COMEY THEY ALL DONE ...GITMO LET'S GET BACK TO LIFE ON EARTH DEMONS BYE*

💡 *I would say the current case number estimates are quite off. Until there is an ample supply of testing kits, we won't truly know the extent of COVID-19 infections. With that said, we are probably under counting the total case count. It's possible the death rate is lower then.*

💡 *We have gone from hating on each other, demeaning each other... to praying for each other's health, wellbeing, and families! I hope and pray that may the #NewNorm be a more peaceful and humane norm.*



# Sample Posts

## Political Discussion

🗣️ *To be fair though, the US represents less than 1/20 of the world's population but now also 1/3 of the world's COVID-19 cases and over 1/4 of the world's COVID-19 deaths. I surmise this is a direct reflection of our federal government's lack of preparation and delayed reaction.*

🗣️ *His talent as an escape artist has run out because he's up against an even more amoral, vicious enemy. Microbes don't give a damn about Trump's fake narrative and suppression of the facts.*

🗣️ *Now we learn that trump suppressed the science based plan for reopening the economy. Why? The Wisconsin gop is just parroting the bullshit of divide and conquer. WHERE IS THE COVID-19 TESTING??? LISTEN TO SCIENCE!*

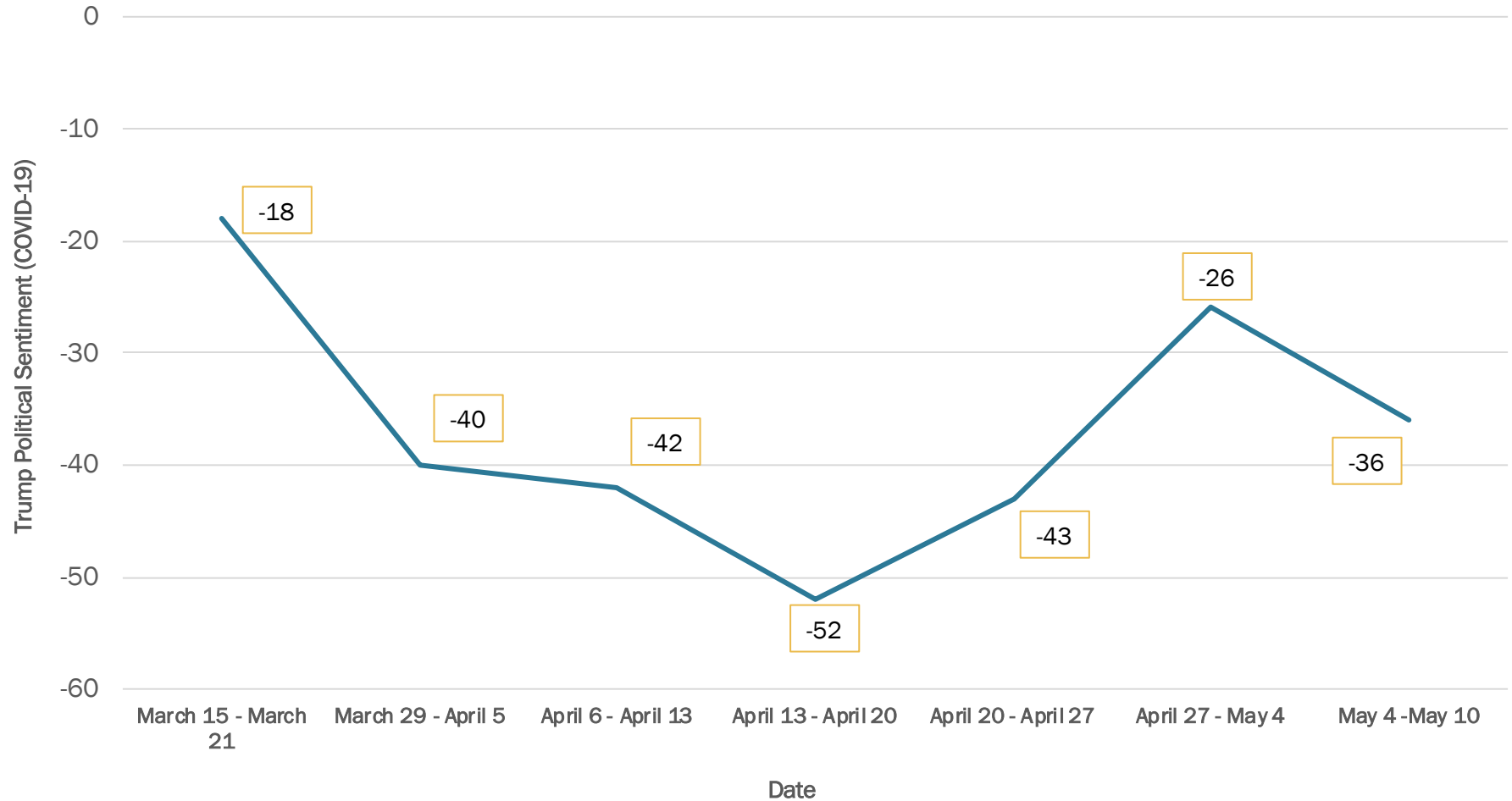
🗣️ *States, cities and local municipalities are shutting down your lives because people think the world is ending. It's not true. COVID-19 is not as bad as they said. Be safe and respect others. Call your local government officials and demand they reopen commerce, parks, etc.*

🗣️ *@SenSchumer @SenateDems @SenatorCardin Put the mask back on to save us all from the crap you spew out of that foul mouth. You spent 3 years spewing Trump/Russian collusion hoax and now you want oversight? Oversight should be on you and your party. Get real and find out why NY and NYC killed so many people with covid19*





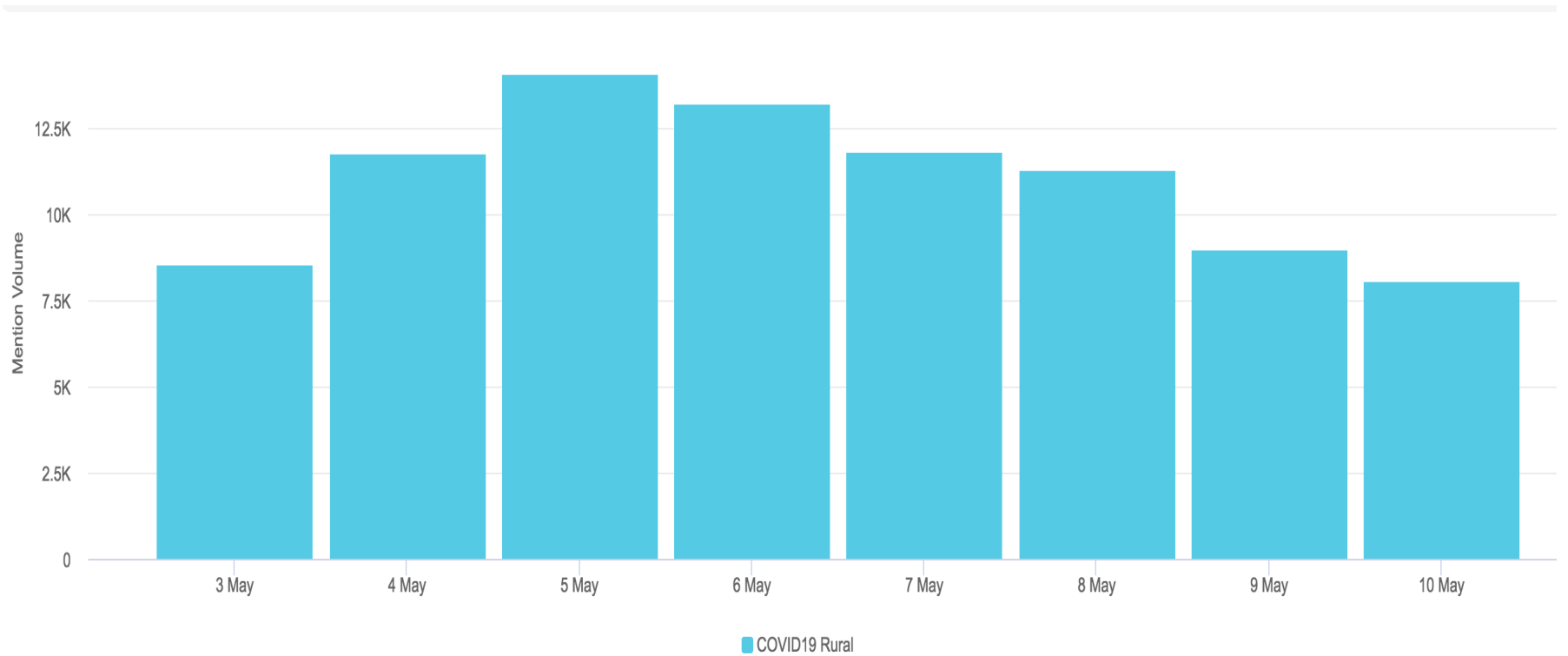
# Trump Net Sentiment



**Notes on the data:** The line chart above tracks net sentiment on Trump in relation to COVID-19. It will show shifts in the perception of how the president is dealing with the pandemic and how this plays out within rural social media discussions over time.



## CORONAVIRUS RURAL CONVERSATION – DISCUSSION VOLUME (BY DAY)



# 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 May 4 – 10, 2020 related to COVID-19. In total, 88,000 posts from 29,000 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.

