



ONE COUNTRY

“COVID-19”

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

May 10 – 17, 2020

Rural Citizens



84,000 original posts



28,000 unique authors

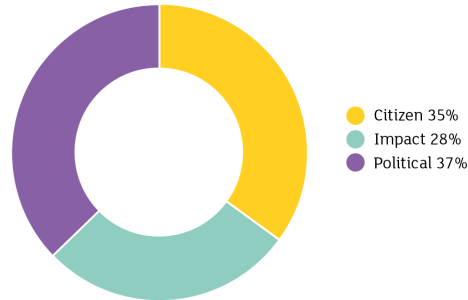
Overview

As COVID-19 continues to spread, rural Americans are sharing details of death/infection rates in relation to where they and their relatives live. Meanwhile job seekers are trying to remain upbeat despite the economic reality.

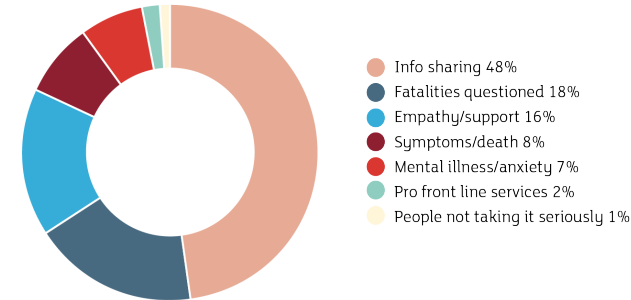
Confusion reigns as to the effectiveness of certain drugs in the fight against COVID-19. Also, skepticism towards COVID-19 continues despite fellow citizens going online to share their experience of the illness or the death of a relative/friend.

Trump has failed to receive support against accusations that he is accountable for the rapid spread COVID-19. Instead, staunch GOPers focus their anger towards Democratic governors, accusing them of being directly responsible for the excessive number of deaths in nursing homes. These same governors come under fire for not lifting the lockdown sooner.

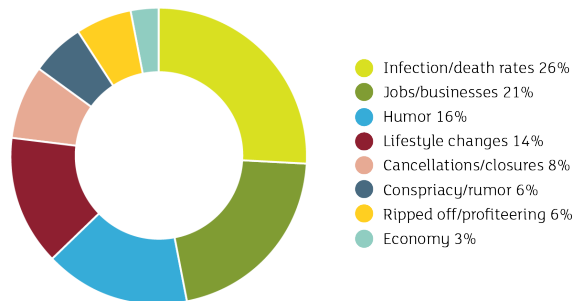
DISCUSSION SPLIT



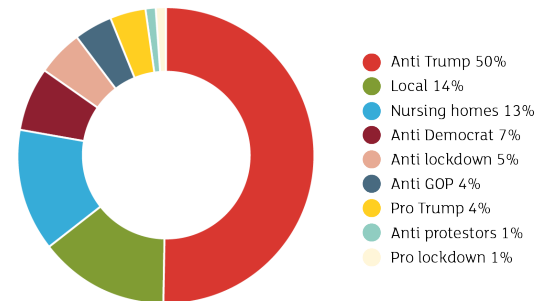
CITIZEN DISCUSSION



IMPACT DISCUSSION



POLITICAL DISCUSSION



ONE COUNTRY

Analysis: Key Takeaways

Citizen Discussion

- Information sharing is leading to confusion, rather than creating clarity during COVID-19. Initially, conversations regarding the need to wash hands, avoid face touching, etc. were straight forward to understand. However confusion now reigns over important issues such as the effectiveness of certain drugs or PPE. Many people feel strongly that they know what works – due to something they have read or experienced.
- Armchair doctors and epidemiologists have no qualms about sharing this information. As a result, the volume and inconsistency of information prevents people from getting a sense of the truth.
- Part of this confusion is influenced by the growing number of people who simply do not accept that COVID-19 is anywhere near as deadly as they are being led to believe. This conversation is an ever widening echo chamber which people join and contribute their “fact” or argument to reinforce their central point – they are being lied to.
- And yet - at the same time - many people readily go online to talk about how they/or someone they know either has COVID-19 or has died from it.
- Understandably there is no shortage of people expressing their troubles with mental illness and looking for help. In response, there are plenty of examples of people getting help either through friendship groups or volunteer organizations.



Analysis: Key Takeaways

Impact Discussion

- At the beginning of COVID-19, death rates were mentioned by rural commenters out of concern and curiosity. Large clusters of figures were being shared of terrible things happening to fellow Americans, far away.
- Yet now we see a totally different conversation as the disease spreads from county to county. Increasingly, the figures discussed are more exact, the geographical details precise, and the comparisons detailed.
- In general, there are plenty of people who are desperately trying to stay positive about their job or business. Some are speaking of job postings, while others consider how they might change their business offering to adapt to the new world.
- Yet there are a great many who just feel despair. They see themselves as realists rather than pessimists who remain unconvinced that their prospects will improve as the economy opens up.
- The Chinese government continues to be a favorite among conspiracy theorists. Meanwhile the anti-vaxxers continue to make their case and invite people to sign a petition against mandatory vaccination.



Analysis: Key Takeaways

Political Discussion

- President Trump has a problem. For the last two weeks he has faced relentless attacks for his handling of COVID-19 with a small fraction of his supporters coming to his aid. As a consequence, the powerful accusation, “you dropped the ball on this one, every death is on your hands” has gone unanswered.
- Furthermore, Trump’s attack on Obama has riled the left further.
- That is not to say his supporters have been sitting idle. On the contrary, many have spent the last week considering the excessive number of people dying in nursing homes and conclude that a policy of forcing people with COVID-19 into care was pursued by Democrat governors.
- These same governors come under further attack for their lockdown policy. For these lawmakers, there is simply no winning in the eyes of many of their citizens. They are either heroes or villains or somewhere in between depending on how each person feels about the disease and where they sit politically.
- Meanwhile, the left and right continue to trade insults as each accuses the other of being responsible for the outbreak, wrecking the economy, and politicizing the crisis.



Sample Posts

Impact Discussion

💡 *Three new cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Mower County, Minnesota. All three are between their 30's and 40's! This is not just a disease that affects elderly people!*

💡 *I live in WI. Soon to be the leader in new cases of the corona virus. Cheers 🍺😞*

💡 *I'm so sorry about the losses you've suffered lately because of this damn pandemic. Its not fair at all.*

💡 *And now the BS opening of the plants begin. One question comes to mind...Who the hell can buy a new car now?*

💡 *Peoples Republic of China's Communist dictator Xi Jinping 'personally asked the WHO to hold back information about human-to-human transmission and delayed the global response by four to six WEEKS' at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak*

💡 *Chinese Spies Are Trying to Steal Research on Coronavirus Vaccine*



Sample Posts

Citizen Discussion

🗣️ *Zinc Vitamin D Vitamin C Melatonin HCQ Z -Pac Isopropyl Alcohol are things that affectively combat COVID-19*

🗣️ *I still can't get over the fact that someone was trying to convince me that wearing a mask was more harmful than COVID-19*

🗣️ *According to CDC stats, roughly 900,000 people die yearly in the US. This year, basically no difference. Actually it is down from 2017 even with the Covid. Hmmm*

🗣️ *Creating a panic and fear to sell a vaccine is an agenda. Has anyone taken a look at the sids death rates during the pandemic with no vaccinations being given?*

🗣️ *3 of my friends lost their Moms to Covid in the last 3 weeks, 3 different states. 2 healthy, prior, 1 in a nursing home recovering from surgery. Another friend lost an uncle that was dearly loved. All in two weeks. It's a lot of grief for a lot of people.*

🗣️ *Hi friends. Please give this a listen. It touches on some super important subjects and puts things like this pandemic into perspective. I know I've been struggling with my mental health and self-worth more than usual lately and this gave me some new views on it all*



Sample Posts

Political Discussion

🗣️ *Fake virus? More trumpian bullshit. Don't insult those of us who have lost loved ones during this pandemic because Shitforbrains did nothing to protect us.*

🗣️ *YOU are a disgrace to America. Not the media that you call “fake” just because they won’t kiss your ass like they do at Fox “News” and OANN. And the blood of everyone who has died from the Coronavirus is on YOUR hands.*

🗣️ *Seems as if it’s the democratic governors killing our elderly people by forcing the nursing homes to take positive COVID patients*

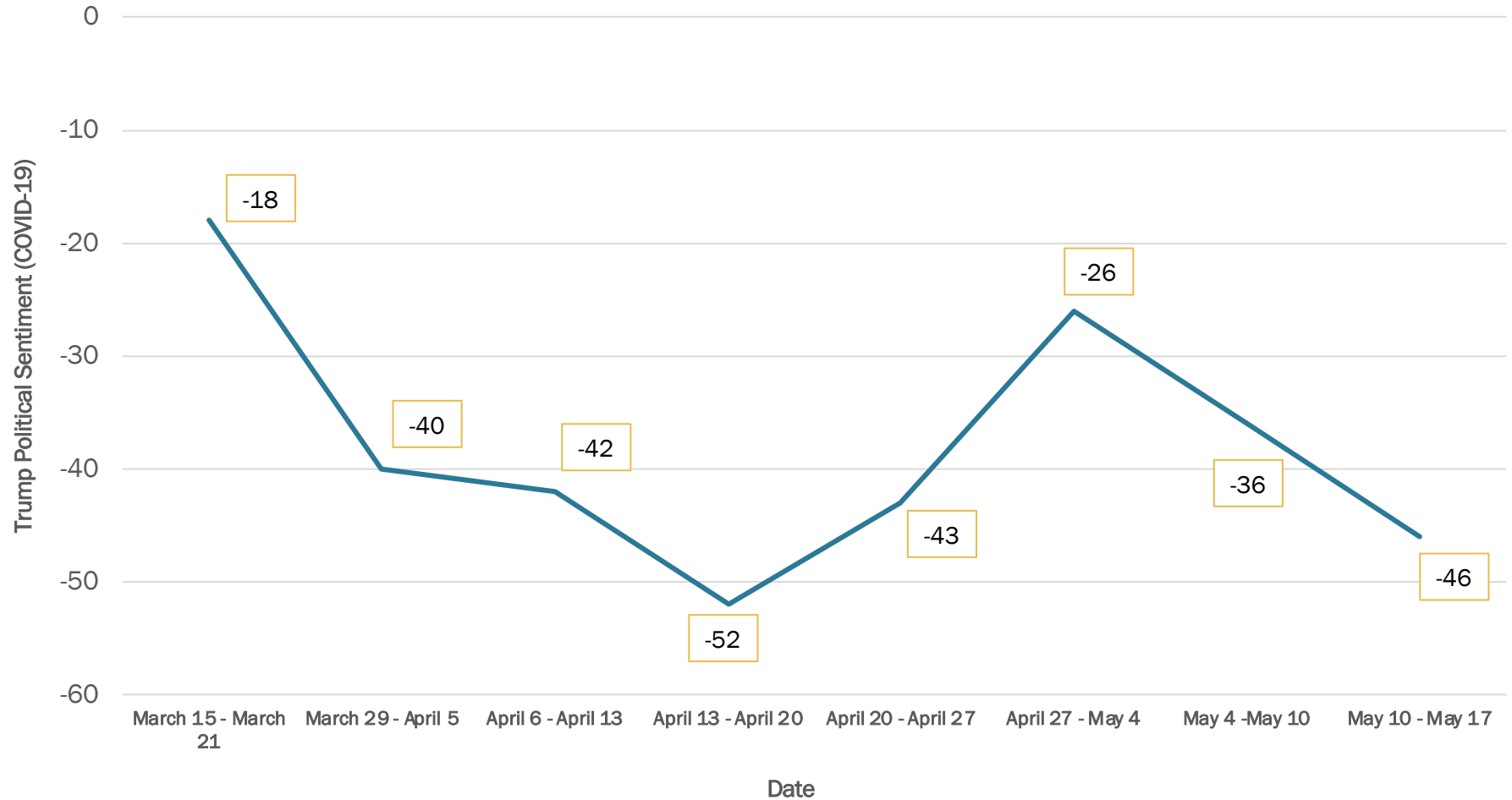
🗣️ *TomWolf It appears that your political career has contracted a case of terminal COVID-19. You should start looking for another job now.*

🗣️ *As a Pennsylvanian I am proud of the people in my state who are expressing their displeasure in the way @realDonaldTrump has handled this crisis. Cheers to @GovernorTomWolf doing his best to protect us.*

🗣️ *Instead of wasting time pointing fingers at @GovernorTomWolf and condemning his cabinet secretaries, Republicans should be working with us to find solutions to issues that arise amid the #COVID19 pandemic. Don't find fault. Find a remedy.*



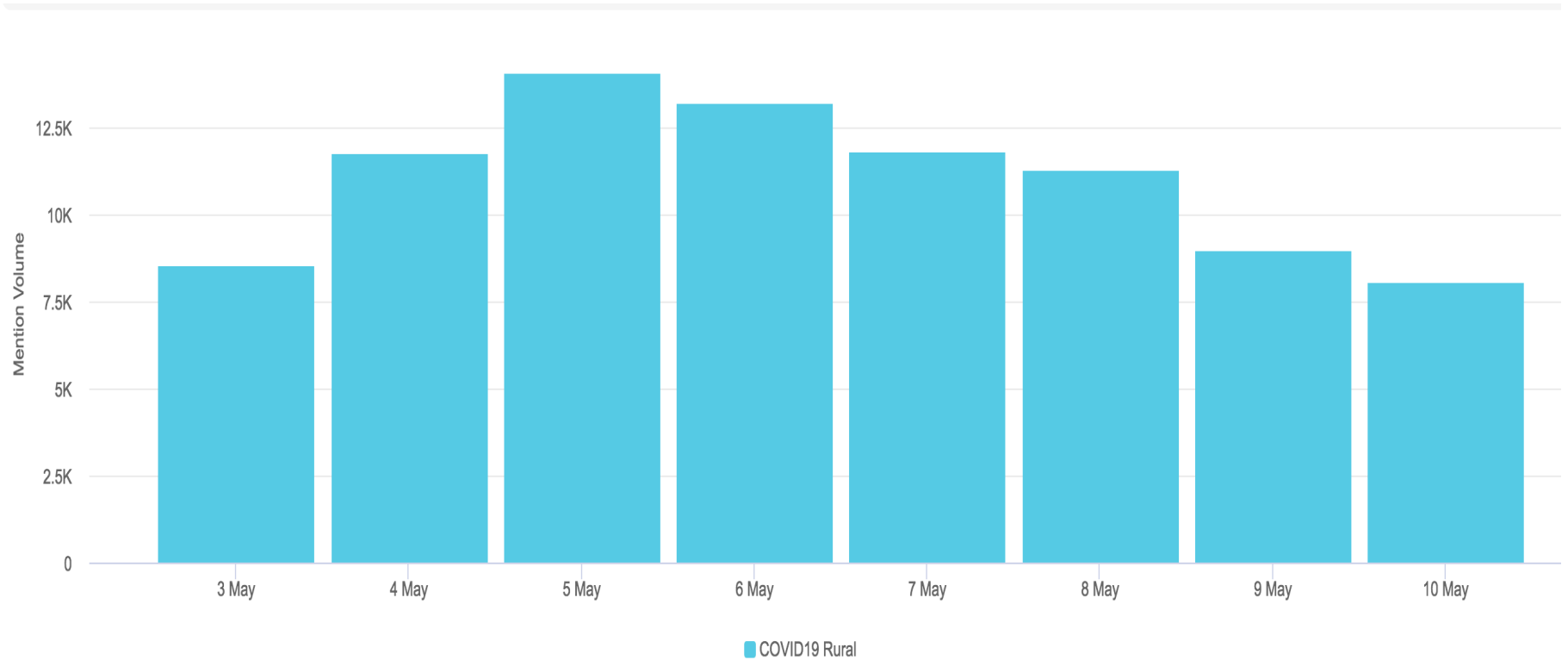
Trump Net Sentiment



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 10 – 17, 2020 related to COVID-19. In total, 84,000 posts from 28,000 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.

