



Twitter Report: Staying safe and informed on Twitter during COVID-19

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Executive Summary

As the global community faces the COVID-19 pandemic together, Twitter is helping people find reliable information, connect with others, follow what's happening in real time, and commit to safe behaviours, from washing hands to wearing a mask. Twitter has an important role to play as a place for good faith public debate and discussion around critical public health matters.

A year since coronavirus swept the world as we know it off its feet, and billions of conversations related to the pandemic have taken place on Twitter. From conversations that connected people to valuable



information and resources, to people coming together to share their experiences, Twitter has become one of the largest repositories of public data to understand context, perceptions, and the evolution of discussions around COVID-19.

Throughout these unprecedented times, Twitter has continued to adapt and update our policies and enforcement, as well as increase transparency and share more data to ensure experts and the public can better analyse how discussion around COVID-19 continues to evolve. We have kept an updated blog with all relevant information on Twitter's efforts [covid19.twitter.com](https://twitter.com/covid19) and to date, **over 160 million people have visited the COVID-19 curated page, over two billion times.**

Below is an overview of the measures we have taken to protect the health of the public conversation while ensuring we are a collaborative and open partner in endeavours to address the challenging and changing online and offline issues society is facing.

April updates

- In the month of April, we challenged¹ 2,779 accounts, **suspended 260 accounts**, and **removed 5,091 pieces of content globally.**²
- We are in the process of **updating the COVID-19 search prompts to include official information on COVID-19 vaccines**, as it is already the case in Denmark, Spain, Ireland and as of April, Italy. We will continue this work in partnership with the relevant and willing public health organisations.
- During **World Immunization Week** we introduced **COVID-19 vaccines home timeline prompts** in 16 markets. These received an average of 5,188,759 impressions in the 16 markets; an average of 2,201,240 impressions in Spain and of 323,456 in Ireland.³ We also hosted a [Twitter conversation](#) on COVID-19 vaccines with the European Commission's DG SANTE, the ECDC and EMA.
- From 1 April 2021 to 30 April 2021, 869 Promoted Tweets violated our COVID-19 advertising policy. They were halted and removed from promotion according to our policy. It is estimated that about 96% of the violating content during that time was detected by our automated systems.

Ongoing updates

- Since introducing our COVID-19 guidance last year, we have challenged 11.7 million accounts, suspended 1,155 accounts, and removed over 32,800 Tweets worldwide.
- Our dedicated COVID-19 search prompt feature **has been expanded to over 80 countries worldwide, including 17 EU Member States, and is currently available in 29 languages.** This helps people who search for COVID-19 info find credible, authoritative content at the very top of their search page.
- We currently have **273 prompts active in 99 countries worldwide**, including EU Member States, covering 12 issue areas.

¹ We use "anti-spam challenges" to confirm whether a human is in control of an account we suspect is engaging in platform manipulation. For example, we may require the account holder to verify a phone number or email address, or complete a reCAPTCHA test.

² The figures above are raw data, and will be subject to change as they are reviewed for publication in our biannual Transparency Report. We have provided this information well ahead of time as we are committed to providing more transparency on our actions throughout this reporting period.

³ Date range: 26 April - 3 May 2021.



- In over 30 countries, we launched '[Twitter Events Pages](#)' that bring together the latest Tweets from a number of authoritative and trustworthy government, media and civil society sources in local languages. We regularly update these pages to ensure that people are met with credible information on Twitter.
- Every week, we serve around 300 million impressions of content in the [COVID-19 explore tab](#) to over 14 million customers.
- Following the update to our COVID-19 misleading information policy regarding misleading information about vaccines, we will label or place a warning on Tweets that advance unsubstantiated rumors, disputed claims, as well as incomplete or out-of-context information about vaccines. Tweets which advance harmful false or misleading narratives about COVID-19 vaccinations will continue to be removed.
- Throughout the pandemic **we have granted 183 Ads for Good grants**, i.e. pro-bono advertising credit, to nonprofits worldwide.
- Over 100 researchers and developer teams representing 30 different countries were granted access to the [COVID-19 API stream endpoint](#). More than half of them focused on studying disinformation and misinformation around COVID-19, others examined public perceptions, sentiment, and the evolution of people's attitudes about the pandemic over time.

This report contains information on policies, products, philanthropy activities and actions undertaken from 1 to 30 April 2021. Via the following links you can consult the reports submitted in [July](#), [August](#), [September](#), [October](#), [November](#) and [December](#) 2020 as well as in [January](#), [February](#) and [March](#) 2021.

Helping people find reliable information

As countries all over Europe are facing a new surge of COVID-19 cases, we continue our efforts to protect the public conversation, elevate sources of reliable information, and build partnerships with governments and non-profit organisations.

In January 2020, before the official designation of the virus and in partnership with national public health agencies and the WHO, we launched a dedicated search prompt feature so that when somebody searches for COVID-19 they are met with credible, authoritative content at the very top of their search experience. We constantly monitor the conversation on the service to ensure that any keywords, including misspellings, generate the quality search results.

Prompts have been expanded to over 80 countries worldwide and available in 29 languages. In the EU, the prompt is active in: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. In Belgium and Finland, a bilingual prompt was created. It is also available in the United Kingdom.

All countries in the EU were contacted and offered the opportunity to launch the prompt. This opportunity still stands.

In over 30 countries, we launched '[Twitter Events Pages](#)' that bring together the latest Tweets from a number of authoritative and trustworthy government, media and civil society sources in local languages.



We continued to elevate the conversation addressing safety and effectiveness of mask wearing with a series of [Twitter Moments](#) in English, Spanish and Portuguese and [marketing campaigns](#) and a [customised emoji](#) that can be activated with the hashtag #WearAMask, which was translated into 20 languages.

Every week, we serve around 300 million impressions of content in the [COVID-19 explore tab](#) to over 14 million people on Twitter. Each of these impressions is an opportunity to keep people better protected and healthy as they navigate rapidly changing circumstances during COVID-19. The [COVID-19 explore tab](#) was recently refreshed with three new features to further help people find accurate and reliable information around COVID-19: PSA Carousel, Topics and Lists.

Public Service Announcement (PSA) Carousel

This feature makes it easier to find reliable information on the safety and efficacy of vaccines as well as on how they work. It allows for multiple Public Service Announcements to be grouped together. People can scroll through them to select one.

COVID-19 Vaccines: Know the facts



Why vaccines are safe



How COVID-19 vaccines are effective



How COVID-19 vaccines work

COVID-19 Topics

We are regularly updating our topics. Those related to COVID-19 include COVID-19 news, COVID-19 government and public officials, COVID-19 experts.

COVID-19: government & public officials



Ursula von der Leyen [@vonderleyen](#) · 6h

Today, we are taking measures to speed up approval of adapted [#COVID19](#) vaccines that tackle new variants of the virus.

Faster approval = more vaccines in circulation, and more Europeans protected from the virus.

[#HERA](#) Incubator

261

244

1K



COVID-19 Lists

Twitter Lists allow people to customise, organise and prioritise the Tweets they see in their timeline. By clicking on a List, users will be shown a stream of Tweets from only the selected accounts on that List (e.g. health and science organisations, reporters).



Lists about COVID-19, vaccines and more

Follow these lists to discover more voices on some of the key issues during the pandemic



COVID-19: Health news

Here is a collection of health and science media organizations

[Twitter Moments](#) @TwitterMoments

Follow



COVID-19: Reporters

A collection of reporters covering the COVID-19 pandemic around the world.

[Twitter Moments](#) @TwitterMoments

Follow

COVID-19 Vaccines

Elevating authoritative information on COVID-19 vaccines

To ensure we are surfacing credible public health information on the COVID-19 vaccine, we are working in partnership with EU Member States to update and expand the COVID-19 prompts to provide not only information on COVID-19, but also credible information on COVID-19 vaccines. People looking for terms related to Coronavirus and vaccines will be directed to the dedicated pages on the relevant national public health agency's website. We're committed to protecting the health of the public conversation on Twitter — ensuring individuals can find information from authoritative sources is a key part of that mission.

This option can be selected by the national or federal public health agency in every country and has already been implemented in Denmark, Spain and Ireland. In April the [updated and expanded COVID-19 prompt was introduced in Italy](#) in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Health.





Awareness and press coverage:

Il Sole 24 Ore: [Covid e fake news, in un anno rimossi 22.400 tweet. E ora Twitter vigilerà anche sui vaccini](#)

La Stampa: [Covid, su Twitter i dati sui vaccini in collaborazione con il Ministero della Salute](#)

Ansa: [Covid: Twitter include anche informazioni su vaccini](#)

Askaneews: [Twitter aggiorna il messaggio con le informazioni sui vaccini](#)

Il Sole 24 Ore: [Coronavirus ultime notizie. Francia, fonti: dopo AstraZeneca, seconda dose con vaccino mRNA](#)

PrimaOnline: [Twitter e il Ministero della Salute estendono la funzione di ricerca sul Covid-19 per fornire informazioni accurate sui vaccini](#)

Affari Italiani: Covid: [Twitter-ministero Salute per news ufficiali e verificate, aggiornata funzionalità](#)

Quotidiano Sanità: [Vaccini Covid. Twitter e Ministero della Salute insieme per fornire informazioni accurate](#)

COVID-19 Vaccines Home Timeline Prompts

During World Immunization Week (24-30 April) we rolled out a [COVID-19 vaccines home timeline prompt](#) with a Public Service Announcement (PSA) delivering factual information about COVID-19 vaccines in the home timeline of 16 countries.

This prompt, which is an additional and separate feature from the COVID-19 prompt mentioned above, directed people to market-specific Moments with content from local public health, media, health experts and government sources covering a wide range of topics relevant in each country, such as vaccine safety, effectiveness, vaccines available, distribution plans, how to stay safe before/after vaccinations and more.

The COVID-19 vaccines home timeline prompts received an average of 5,188,759 impressions in the 16 markets during World Immunization Week⁴.

⁴ Date range: 26 April - 3 May 2021.



The prompt in Spain (below) received an average of 2,201,240 impressions.



Vacunas contra la COVID-19: obtén datos precisos

Tu salud importa. Asegúrate de tener la información más actualizada sobre las vacunas contra el coronavirus (COVID-19).

Más información

Ministerio de Sanidad



Foto tomada de @Reuters

COVID-19 · EN DIRECTO

COVID-19: Lo que necesitas saber sobre la vacunación en España

Mantente informado sobre las vacunas COVID-19 que se han aprobado en el país, cuál es el orden de vacunación y qué debes hacer después de haber sido inoculado. Sigue leyendo para saber más:

- 📌 La importancia de vacunarse
- ✅ Las vacunas que se han aprobado en España
- 🇪🇸 ¿Cuándo me tocará vacunarme?
- 🤔 ¿Qué debo hacer después de recibir la vacuna?
- 🤒 Posibles efectos secundarios
- 🌿 ¿Debo vacunarme si ya he pasado la COVID-19?

The prompt in Ireland (below) had an average of 323,456 impressions.



COVID-19 Vaccines: Know the facts

Your health matters. Make sure you have the most up-to-date information on the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations.

Learn more

HSE



Photo via @Independent_ie

COVID-19 · LIVE

COVID-19: Keep up with Ireland's latest safety and vaccine guidance

Here's what you need to know about COVID-19 vaccines in Ireland and how to stay safe before and after receiving one, according to health officials. Keep reading for more guidance on:

- 📌 Vaccine effectiveness
- 🤔 What to do after receiving the vaccine
- 📌 Vaccine supplies
- 🇮🇪 Vaccines and variants
- 📌 How to stay safe until you receive the vaccine
- 📌 Vaccine strategy



Twitter conversation between @TwitterGov, European Commission, ECDC and EMA

During World Immunization Week we hosted a [Twitter conversation](#) on COVID-19 vaccines between our [@TwitterGov](#) handle and the European Commission's DG SANTE ([@EU Health](#)), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ([@ECDC EU](#)) and the European Medicines Agency ([@EMA News](#)).

The [conversation](#) covered aspects including [vaccine safety](#), [side effects](#), the [length of vaccine protection](#) and highlighted key resources for people to get accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines, such as the [European Vaccination Information Portal](#) and the [COVID-19 vaccine tracker](#).

An extract of the conversation is presented in the next page.

Additional key conversations about vaccine safety and access on Twitter are presented in this [thread](#). It is also noteworthy that during World Immunization Week the [WHO hosted a number of Twitter Spaces conversations about vaccines](#).



TwitterGov @TwitterGov

Hi @EU_Health, @EMA_News, and @ECDC_EU

It's #WorldImmunizationWeek what better time to talk about COVID-19 vaccines?

Let's start with the big question: why should we get vaccinated?

3:32 PM · Apr 29, 2021 · Twitter Web App

40 Retweets 28 Quote Tweets 90 Likes

Who can reply? People @TwitterGov mentioned can reply.

EU_HEALTH - #SafeVaccines @EU_Health · Apr 29
Replying to @TwitterGov @EMA_News and @ECDC_EU
To protect yourself and those around you!

Safe and effective vaccines are our best chance to eliminate diseases and control the COVID-19 pandemic.

1 6 32

TwitterGov @TwitterGov · Apr 29
Are vaccines safe?

1 2 13

EU Medicines Agency @EMA_News · Apr 29
All vaccines are rigorously tested for quality, safety and efficacy in large clinical trials with tens of thousands of participants before they can be used in the EU. After authorisation, we closely monitor, review evidence and take quick action, when needed.

1 10 29

TwitterGov @TwitterGov · Apr 29
What about side effects?

1 2 10

EU_HEALTH - #SafeVaccines @EU_Health · Apr 29
All medicines have side effects, but you need to compare this with the benefits. The most common side effects from vaccination are mild & short lived, such as pain at the injection site.

1 10 27

EU Medicines Agency @EMA_News · Apr 29
Most side effects are identified before a vaccine is licensed. Some side effects are so rare, they may only show up once millions of people have received the vaccine. The EU's safety monitoring system is set up to rapidly detect and deal with possible safety concerns.

1 9 32

EU Medicines Agency @EMA_News · Apr 29
The safety of #COVID19vaccines is stronger with everybody's participation! Please report any suspected side effect to your doctor, national authority in your country or the vaccine manufacturer hma.eu/nationalcontac...

1 17 29

TwitterGov @TwitterGov · Apr 29
How long does the COVID-19 vaccine protect us for?

1 1 11

EU Medicines Agency @EMA_News · Apr 29
It's difficult to say for the moment as more data is needed, but we are monitoring this very carefully. We have asked researchers and vaccine manufacturers to gather more information and submit it to us for assessment.

1 6 29

ECDC @ECDC_EU · Apr 29
Remember this is a new virus. We need more information on how efficient the vaccines are in reducing transmission and how long they work.

1 6 29

In the meantime, all measures - #PhysicalDistancing, #HandHygiene, use of #FaceMasks where required - are key!

1 6 29

Don't forget about: #PhysicalDistance #HandWashing #FaceMasks
More information on: ecdc.europa.eu

TwitterGov @TwitterGov · Apr 29

Where would you recommend that people get accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines?

1 2 8

EU_HEALTH - #SafeVaccines @EU_Health · Apr 29

It can be difficult to assess the accuracy of information on COVID-19. Checking your sources is vital.

The European Vaccination Information Portal can help! It includes authoritative sources in all EU countries.

**Have a look:

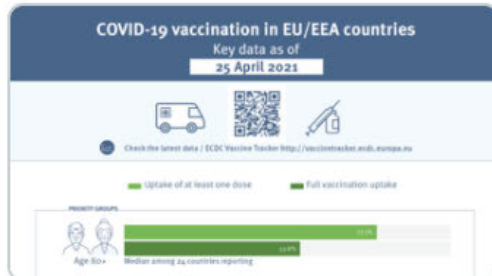
Trusted sources
List of verified vaccine-related websites from EU Member States
vaccination-info.eu

1 13 29

ECDC @ECDC_EU · Apr 29

We also set up the "#COVID19 Vaccine Tracker", an interactive dashboard that allows to monitor vaccination roll-out and progress in the EU.

You can find it here bit.ly/ECDCVaccTracker



1 24 43

EU_HEALTH - #SafeVaccines @EU_Health · Apr 29

And in closing, let's share the simple message that #VaccinesWork

The pandemic may have focused our attention on the COVID-19 vaccination, but for more than 200 years routine immunisations have been protecting us from severe diseases all over the world.

Safe and effective vaccines save lives and help us live close together
SAFE VACCINES FOR EUROPEANS #SafeVaccines European Commission

Stella Kyriakides and 3 others

1 22 32

TwitterGov @TwitterGov · Apr 29

We've really enjoyed our conversation today!

Thank you for all the work you are doing to keep people safe as we live through the #COVID19 pandemic.

1 13



Updates to our work on COVID-19 vaccine misinformation

As the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines expands, people continue to turn to Twitter to discuss what's happening and find the latest authoritative public health information.

In previous reports, we shared our [approach](#) around the conversation surrounding COVID-19 on Twitter as well as misleading [information around COVID-19 vaccines](#). We prioritize the removal of the most harmful misleading information and we will label Tweets that contain potentially misleading information about the vaccines.

In the context of a global pandemic, vaccine misinformation presents a significant and growing public health challenge. We are focused on mitigating misleading information that presents the biggest potential harm to people's health and wellbeing.

Twitter has an important role to play as a place for good faith public debate and discussion around critical public health issues.

Under our COVID-19 misinformation policy, [we already required the removal](#) of Tweets that include false or misleading information about:

- The nature of the virus, such as how it spreads within communities;
- The efficacy and/or safety of preventative measures, treatments, or other precautions to mitigate or treat the disease;
- Official regulations, restrictions, or exemptions pertaining to health advisories; and
- The prevalence or risk of infection or death.

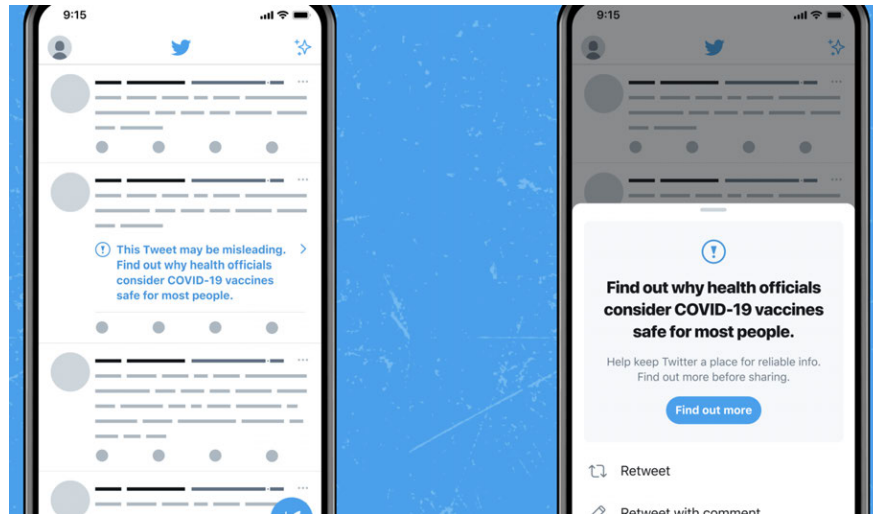
Following the expansion of this policy we will require people to remove Tweets which advance harmful false or misleading narratives about COVID-19 vaccinations, including:

- False claims that suggest immunizations and vaccines are used to intentionally cause harm to or control populations, including statements about vaccines that invoke a deliberate conspiracy;
- False claims which have been widely debunked about the adverse impacts or effects of receiving vaccinations; or
- False claims that COVID-19 is not real or not serious, and therefore that vaccinations are unnecessary.

As of 1 March 2021, we apply labels to Tweets that may contain misleading information about COVID-19 vaccines, in addition to our continued efforts to remove the most harmful COVID-19 misleading information from the service.

We also introduced a strike system that determines when further enforcement action is necessary. We believe the strike system will help to educate the public on our policies and further reduce the spread of potentially harmful and misleading information on Twitter, particularly for repeated moderate and high-severity violations of our rules.

COVID-19 misinformation labels look like this:



Labels will first be applied by our team when they determine content violates our policy. Those assessments will be used to further inform our automated tools and to advance our proactive capacity to identify and label similar content across the service. Our goal is to eventually use both automated and human review to address content that violates our COVID-19 vaccine misinformation rules.

Machine-learning and automated language processing takes time to be effective. As such, we are beginning with English-language content first and use this same process as we work to expand to other languages and cultural contexts over time. (Spanish and Portuguese will follow).

Labels will appear in the set display language and may link to curated content and official public health information or the Twitter Rules. Our goal with these product interventions is to provide people with additional context and authoritative information about COVID-19.

Through the use of the strike system, we hope to educate people on why certain content breaks our rules so they have the opportunity to further consider their behavior and their impact on the public conversation. This strike system is similar to our recent update to the Civic Integrity Policy. Individuals will be notified directly when a label or required Tweet removal results in additional account-level enforcement. Repeated violations of the COVID-19 policy are enforced against on the basis of the number of strikes an account has accrued for violations of the policy.

- One strike: no account-level action
- Two strikes: 12-hour account lock
- Three strikes: 12-hour account lock
- Four strikes: 7-day account lock
- Five or more strikes: permanent suspension

An [appeal](#) mechanism is available.

As health authorities deepen their understanding of COVID-19 and vaccination programs around the world, we will continue to amplify the most current, up-to-date, and authoritative information. We are all



in this together, and we will continue to update you on our progress as we strive to play our part to protect the public conversation at this critical time.

COVID-19 Guidance Enforcement

Since introducing our COVID-19 guidance last year, we have challenged 11.7 million accounts, suspended 1,155 accounts, and removed over 32,800 Tweets worldwide.

In the month of April, we challenged 2,779 accounts, suspended 260 accounts, and removed 5,091 pieces of content globally. ⁵

Advertising on COVID-19

Twitter has restricted advertising containing implicit or explicit reference to COVID-19. More specifically, advertising containing implicit or explicit reference to COVID-19 is allowed when it refers to adjustments to business practices and/or models in response to COVID-19 and support for customers and employees related to COVID-19, with the following restrictions:

- distasteful references to COVID-19 (or variations) are prohibited
- content may not be sensational or likely to incite panic
- prices of products related to COVID-19 may not be inflated
- the promotion of certain products related to COVID-19 may be prohibited
 - We currently prohibit the advertising of medical face masks and alcohol hand sanitisers (with or without reference to COVID). Other products may be added to this list and enforcement can be retroactive.
- the mention of vaccines, treatments and test kits is permitted, only in the form of information, from news publishers which have been exempted under the Political Ads Content policy.

Public Service Announcements related to COVID-19 from governments and supranational entities (for example, World Health Organisation), as well as trusted partners approved by the Public Policy team are permitted. Also allowed is news related to COVID-19 from media publishers who have been exempted under the Political Ads Content policy.

For complete information about Twitter's Ads Policies, visit [Twitter.com/adspolicy](https://twitter.com/adspolicy) and [Twitter Ads Policy update log](#).

Twitter released [guidelines](#) on [brand communication in times of crisis](#) in order to help brands communicate with their customers, employees, and the broader ecosystem during the pandemic.

⁵ The figures above are raw data, and will be subject to change as they are reviewed for publication in our biannual Transparency Report. We have provided this information well ahead of time as we are committed to providing more transparency on our actions throughout this reporting period.



Violations of COVID-19 advertising policy

Our advertising policy on COVID-19 is very strict so violations of that policy do not in any way imply misinformation or disinformation.

From 1 April 2021 to 30 April 2021, **869** Promoted Tweets violated our COVID-19 advertising policy. They were halted and removed from promotion according to our policy.

- We reviewed a random sample of 100 ads from that cohort and did not find any which contained misinformation.
- We estimate that about **96%** of the violating content during that time was detected by our automated systems, and approximately **4%** was brought into human review and rejected for policy violations.

Ads for Good grants to support nonprofits

Through our Ads for Good grants, i.e. pro-bono advertising credit, we continue to partner with nonprofits and NGOs around the world to elevate authoritative information on COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic **we've granted 183 Ads for Good grants to nonprofits across 55 countries**. In addition, we have donated premium advertising products, including Promoted Trend and First View products, to elevate critical public health information.

An example of Ads for Good grant supporting nonprofits' response to the COVID-19 crisis is the one used by the [Italian Red Cross doctors to recruit doctors and nurses](#).





In parallel, we continue to support nonprofit organisations campaigning on issues ranging from equality to Internet safety, from freedom of expression to sustainability, thus contributing to addressing the wider impact of COVID-19.

Nonprofit organisations in Europe supported through Ads for Good in the month of April include (but are no limited to):

- [Webwise](#), which promotes safer more effective use of the internet by children and young people in Ireland;
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#), a leading tech charity working globally to eliminate child sexual abuse images and videos from the Internet;
- [Internet Matters](#), which empowers Parents and Teachers to make confident, informed choices about their children's online safety.
- [Detect Then Act: #1dayofHappiness campaign](#) to counter hate & misinformation, with 200 digital volunteers from over 30 countries, and 30 European CSOs, with support from Ads for Good they had over 1.22 million impressions on Twitter.
- The [Princes Trust](#) used the Ads for Good grant to promote their COVID-19 support hub, where young people can access free tools, educational, money management and mental health resources as well as course information.

Transparency

Transparency is core to everything Twitter does. We are open about the challenges we are facing and the measures we're putting in place to serve the public conversation at this critical time.

Data Access

Twitter firmly believes in open data access to study, analyse, and contribute to the public conversation; which is why we continue to maintain a broad public API. Researchers use Twitter data to provide valuable feedback on how the online conversations and interactions evolve on and off Twitter. We continue to provide more accessible ways to make data and information publicly available to researchers.

Since 2006, [Twitter's APIs](#) have given researchers and developers the opportunity to tap into what's happening in the world. Twitter's APIs are a unique data source for academics and are used around the world in a wide range of fields, from disaster management to political science, every day. Every major social science conference likely features multiple papers based wholly or largely on Twitter data. Our service is the largest source of real-time social media data, and we make this data available to the public for free through our public API. No other major service does this. You can find out more [here](#).

Academic Research product track on the new Twitter API

Since the Twitter API was introduced, academic researchers have used data from the public conversation to study topics as diverse as the conversation on Twitter itself - from [state-backed efforts to disrupt the public conversation](#) to [floods and climate change](#), from [attitudes and perceptions about COVID-19](#) to [efforts to promote healthy conversation online](#). Today, academic researchers are one of the largest groups of people using the Twitter API.



For over a decade, academic researchers have used Twitter data for discoveries and innovations that help make the world a better place. Over the past couple of years, we have taken iterative steps to improve the experience for researchers, like when we launched a webpage dedicated to [Academic Research](#), and [updated our Twitter Developer Policy](#) to make it easier to validate or reproduce others' research using Twitter data. We have also made improvements to help academic researchers use Twitter data to advance their disciplines, answer urgent questions during crises, and even help us improve Twitter. An example is the launch in April 2020 of the [COVID-19 stream endpoint](#), the first free, topic-based stream built solely for researchers to use data from the global conversation for the public good.

Over two years ago, we started our own extensive research to better understand the needs, constraints and challenges that researchers have when studying the public conversation. In October 2020, we tested this product track in a private beta program where we gathered additional feedback. This gave us a glimpse into some of the important work that the free Academic Research product track we launched in January 2021.

With the new **Academic Research product track, qualified researchers have access to all v2 endpoints released to date**, as well as:

- Free access to the full history of public conversation via the full-archive search endpoint, which was previously limited to paid premium or enterprise customers
- Higher levels of access to the Twitter developer platform for free, including a significantly higher monthly Tweet volume cap of 10 million (20x higher than what's available on the Standard product track today)
- More precise filtering capabilities across all v2 endpoints to limit data collection to what is relevant for your study and minimize data cleaning requirements
- New [technical and methodological guides](#) to maximize the success of your studies

The release of the Academic Research product track is just a starting point. This initial solution is intended to address the most requested, biggest challenges faced when conducting research on the platform. We are excited to enable even more research that can create a positive impact on the world, and on Twitter, in the future.

Further information in this [blogpost](#) and in this [thread](#).

How researchers studied COVID-19 on Twitter

A year since coronavirus swept the world as we know it off its feet, billions of conversations related to the pandemic have taken place on Twitter. From conversations that connected people to valuable information and resources, to people coming together to share their experiences, Twitter has become one of the largest repositories of public data to understand context, perceptions, and the evolution of discussions around COVID-19. Below, we're spotlighting a few stories of how researchers are using Twitter data to study the public conversation around COVID-19.

Over 100 researchers and developer teams were granted access to the COVID-19 stream after a review process. All applications were manually reviewed for four things: 1) Does the application demonstrate



familiarity with the Twitter API and the computational resources required to handle the consumption of a high volume of unstructured data in realtime? 2) Does this project require this level of data access, and it's otherwise not possible to accomplish with the standard v1.1 API? 3) Does the applicant understand the sensitivity of this data and have a clear plan of how to handle it in a safe manner compliant with our Developer Policy? 4) Are they planning to use this data to benefit the public good?

Together, those granted access represent 30 different countries, spanning nearly every continent. The majority were using this data for academic research, collectively representing 92 different academic institutions and universities around the world. About 8% of approved uses were for non-academic organisations or independent developers and researchers, who shared similar goals around using this data for good, like building dashboards, apps, tools, and resources free for the public.

More than half of those approved for this stream are **focused on studying disinformation and misinformation around the facts of coronavirus.**

- Researchers from the University of Washington Center for an Informed Public explored what drove [viral misinformation about COVID-19](#), including how influential people politicized scientific facts.
- Researchers from Northeastern, Harvard, Northwestern, and Rutgers used this data to examine how misinformation enters the social media ecosystem, how far it spreads, and the types of Twitter accounts that spread it. [Their study](#) of over 30 million Tweets found that 80 to 90 percent of “fake news” comes from a few tenths of one percent of all accounts sharing information about the virus. In previous studies, they’ve also explored the relationship between groups likely to share misinformation compared to groups likely to believe it, noting that more research is needed to understand if belief in the information predicates sharing.
- Researchers in the Department of Computer Science at University of Southern California explored how to identify unreliable or misleading content, patterns in how this information spreads, emerging trends in misleading content about COVID-19 (see their [research publication](#)), and identifying coordinated disinformation campaigns (see their [research publication](#)).

In most other cases, developers and researchers used this stream to understand public perceptions, sentiment, and the evolution of people’s attitudes about the pandemic over time.

- Dr. Manlio De Domenico, Head of the CoMuNe Lab with the Bruno Kessler Foundation in Italy used this data to create the [COVID-19 Infodemic Observatory](#). This observatory analyzes geolocalized Tweets, aggregated at the country level, to estimate the fraction of automated posts taking place in the public discussion, and to estimate the average sentiment of Tweets and volume of reliable sources of information. Their work seeks to quantify the ‘infodemic risk’ of a particular location, and has also been [recently published](#) in the Nature journal on Human Behavior.
- Researchers at Penn Medicine also used this data to create an in-depth regional map of COVID-19 attitudes and perceptions in the US. The intent of the dashboard is that it can be used to inform potential public policy and health communications. Check out the [case study](#).
- Clarabridge leveraged this data for their [Social Pulse on COVID-19](#), a part of their information center built to assist people in the customer experience industry and the public.
- More recently, we see more researchers shifting from the study of the virus itself (such as a study of reported symptoms), to the study of topics like vaccinations, public safety measures, and economic recovery.



We have observed that at the beginning of the pandemic, much of the work was focused on symptoms, perceptions of the virus, and credibility of new information. Today, much of that conversation has shifted to the societal impacts that this pandemic has had, and perceptions of vaccinations. In all these cases, the Twitter Developer Platform continues to support developers and researchers who want to use it to improve the future.

Twitter's Transparency Report

Meaningful transparency between companies, regulators, civil society, and the general public is fundamental to the work we do at Twitter — this transparency is a key tenet of our efforts to preserve and protect the [Open Internet](#). In line with this philosophy, in August 2020 we launched our new [Twitter Transparency Center](#) to make our data easier to understand and analyse for those who access our biannual Twitter Transparency Report.

Our latest Twitter Transparency Report presents data from January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020 regarding [enforcement actions](#) under the Twitter Rules, information requests, information operations and removal requests.

The highlights are presented in this [blog post](#).

Appendix

Useful links

- [Coronavirus: Staying safe and informed on Twitter](#)
- [COVID-19: Our approach to misleading vaccine information](#)
- [Updates to our work on COVID-19 vaccine misinformation](#)
- [Twitter Ads Policy](#)
- [Twitter Transparency Report](#)