

# 人们为什么总相信虚假信息

题目：Why people fall for misinformation

作者：Joseph Isaac

In 1901, David Hänig published a paper that forever changed our understanding of **taste**. His research led to what we know today as the taste map: an **illustration** that divides the **tongue** into four separate areas. According to this map, receptors at the tip of our tongues capture sweetness, bitterness is detected at the tongue's base, and along the sides, receptors capture **salty** and sour sensations.

1901 年，大卫·哈尼格（David Hänig）发表的一篇论文永远地改变了我们对味觉的理解。从他的研究中诞生了我们现在所谓的“味觉图”：一张把舌头划分为四个独立区域的示意图。根据这张示意图，舌尖的受体捕捉甜味，舌根检测苦味，舌头两侧的受体则捕捉咸味和酸味。

Since its invention, the taste map has been published in **textbooks** and newspapers. The only problem with this map, is that it's wrong. In fact, it's not even an accurate representation of what Hänig originally discovered. The tongue map is a common **misconception**—something widely believed but largely incorrect. So where do misconceptions like this come from, and what makes a fake fact so easy to believe?

自发明以来，味觉图被陆续刊登在了各类教科书和报纸上。这张图唯一的问题是——它是错误的。事实上，它甚至没有准确地代表哈尼格原本的发现。味觉图是个常见的错误观念——虽然广为人信，大体上却是不准确的。那么，像这样的错误观念是从哪来的？虚假信息又为什么能让人如此轻易地信以为真？

**taste**

n. 味道

**illustration**

n. 错觉

**tongue**

n. 舌头

**salty**

adj. 咸的

**textbook**

n. 教科书

**misconception**

n. 误解

It's true that the tongue map's journey begins with David Hänig. As part of his **dissertation** at Leipzig University, Hänig analyzed taste sensitivities across the tongue for the four basic **flavors**. Using **sucrose** for sweet, **quinine sulfate** for bitter, **hydrochloric acid** for sour, and salt for salty, Hänig applied these stimuli to compare differences in taste **thresholds** across a subject's tongue. 的确，味觉图的旅程是从大卫·哈尼格开始的。哈尼格在莱比锡大学的学位论文中分析了舌头各部位对四种基本味道的敏感度。他用蔗糖测甜味，用硫酸奎宁测苦味，用盐酸测酸味，用盐测咸味。哈尼格用这些刺激来比较被试者舌头各处的味觉阈值的差异。

He hoped to better understand the physiological mechanisms that affected these four flavors, and his data suggested that **sensitivity** for each taste did in fact vary across the tongue. The maximum sensation for sweet was located at the tongue's tip; bitter flavors were strongest at the back; salt was strongest in this area, and sour at the middle of the tongue's sides. But Hänig was careful to note that every sensation could also be tasted across the tongue, and that the areas he identified offered very small **variations** in intensity.

他希望能更好地理解影响这四种味觉的生理机制，而他的数据显示，舌头各部位对每种味道的敏感度确实存在差异。对甜味最敏感的是舌尖；对苦味最敏感的是舌根；咸味在这个区域最强，而酸味则在舌头两侧的中间。但是哈尼格谨慎地指出了，舌头的各个部位都能尝出所有的味道，而且他所划分出的区域之间敏感度差异非常小。

**dissertation**

n. 专题论文

**flavors**

n. 风味调料

**sucrose**

n. 蔗糖

**quinine sulfate**

硫酸奎宁

**hydrochloric**

adj. 盐酸的

**thresholds**

n. 门槛；阈值

**sensitivity**

n. 敏感性

**variation**

n. 变化

Like so many misconceptions, the tongue map represents a **distortion** of its original source, however the nature of that distortion can vary. Some misconceptions are comprised of **disinformation**— false information **intentionally** designed to mislead people. But many misconceptions, including the tongue map, center on misinformation— false or misleading information that results from unintentional inaccuracy.

就如其它很多错误观念一样，味觉图是最初来源的一种曲解，然而这种曲解的性质可能存在差异。有些错误观念是由谣言组成的——刻意设计出来以误导人们的虚假信息。但包括味觉图在内的很多错误观念围绕的是错误信息——因无意的失实导致的错误或误导性信息。

Misinformation is most often shaped by mistakes and human error, but the specific mistakes that lead to a misconception can be surprisingly varied. In the case of the tongue map, Hänig's **dissertation** was written in German, meaning the paper could only be understood by readers fluent in German and well versed in Hänig's small corner of academia. This kicked off a game of telephone that re-shaped Hänig's research every time it was shared with outside parties. Less than a decade after his dissertation, newspapers were falsely insisting that experiments could prove sweetness was **imperceptible** on the back of the tongue.

最常见的错误信息是由差错和人为失误造成的，但是导致错误观念的具体错误可以有惊人的多样性。在味觉图的例子里，哈尼格的学位论文是用德语写的，意味着能真正读懂这篇文章的只有精通德语、且熟知哈尼格的学术细分领域的人。这开启了一场传话游戏，每次和外行人士分享时，哈尼格的研究都会改头换面。他的学位论文发表后不到十年，报纸已经在错误地坚称，实验能够证明舌根完全感受不到甜味。

**distortion**

n.曲解

**disinformation**

n.错误信息

**intentionally**

adv.刻意地

**dissertation**

n.专题论文

**imperceptible**

adj.感觉不到的；极细微的

The second **culprit** behind the tongue map's spread were the images that Hänig's work inspired. In 1912, a rough version of the map appeared in a newspaper article that cautiously described some of the **mysteries** behind taste and smell research. Featuring clear labels across the tongue, the article's illustration **simplified** Hänig's more-complicated original diagrams. Variations of this **approachable** image became repeatedly cited, often without credit or nuanced consideration for Hänig's work. Eventually this image spread to textbooks and classrooms as a purported truth of how we experience taste.

导致味觉图广为流传的 第二个罪魁祸首 是被哈尼格的研究启发的图像。1912 年，一张简略版的 味觉图出现在了报纸上，报道小心翼翼地描述了 味觉和嗅觉研究背后的一些奥秘。这篇报道的插图 在舌头上标注了明确标签，简化了哈尼格 更加复杂的原始图解。这幅平易近人的图像的变体 被反复引用，但往往没有注明来源，也没有对哈尼格的研究有些微斟酌。最终，这幅图像传到了 教科书和教室里，被当成我们如何体验味觉的真相。

But perhaps the factor that most contributed to this misconception was its narrative simplicity. In many ways, the map complements our desire for clear stories about the world around us—a quality not always present in the sometimes-messy fields of science. For example, even the number of tastes we have is more complicated than Hänig's work suggests.

但也许对这个错误观念 贡献最大的因素 是它叙事的简单性。在很多方面，味觉图满足了我们 用明晰的故事讲述身边世界的渴望——然而这一特质在时而繁杂的 科学领域中却时有缺失。举个例子，甚至连味觉的种类 也比哈尼格所提到的更加复杂。

**culprit**

n. 罪犯

**mystery**

n. 奥秘；难以理解的事物

**simplify**

v. 简化

**approachable**

adj. 易理解的；可接近的

Umami— also known as savory— is now considered the fifth basic taste, and many still debate the existence of tastes like fatty, **alkaline**, **metallic**, and water-like. Once we hear a good story, it can be difficult to change how we see that information, even in the face of new evidence. So, next time you see a convenient chart or read a surprising **anecdote**, try to maintain a healthy skepticism— because misconceptions can leave a bitter taste on every part of your tongue.

旨味 (umami) —— 又称鲜味—— 如今被认为是第五种基本味道，还有很多人仍在辩论 其他味道是否存在： 比如脂肪味、碱味、 金属味、水味等。一旦我们听到一个好故事， 想要改变看待它的方式是很难的—— 哪怕有新的证据摆在面前。 所以下次看见一张简便图表，或读了一个惊人轶事时， [“狗没法向上看！”] 请尝试保持一个健康的怀疑态度—— 因为错误观念 会在你舌头上的每个角落 留下一种苦涩的味道。

**alkaline**

adj. 碱性的

**metallic**

adj. 含金属的

**anecdote**

n. 轶事；趣闻