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Misinformation researchers create a new programmatic resource that enables large-scale solutions to combat health misinformation

The new health misinformation toolkit provides a programmatic interface, relevant data, and templates to enable individuals and organizations to identify and track unverified content and rumors around diseases and treatments at scale.

Around the world, physicians and health practitioners have been overwhelmed by online misinformation. Much of this information ends up in the hands of patients and complicates the diagnosis and treatment of problems patients face. Delays in and resistance to sound diagnosis and treatment may lead to excess time and financial costs for practitioners and insurance companies, and impact a patient's health and recovery, and in some extreme cases, cost the patient their life.

Today the Misinformation Research Lab (MRL), a partnership between several research institutions, launches a toolkit that uses cloud-based AI services to allow individuals and organizations to build scalable real-world solutions to health misinformation that affects patients worldwide. The Health Misinformation Toolkit (HMT) is a project supported by Amazon Web Services.

The MRL has assisted numerous organizations around the world with their misinformation efforts including the World Health Organization (WHO), through the creation of the Pan-American WHO Health Infodemic Early Warning System. This system provides health ministry officials in the Pan American region with timely data on unverified health-cased information and rumors, delivered in an easily-accessible format. The MRL has received federal funds to study COVID-19 misinformation and to understand what is needed to scale efforts in combating health misinformation by working closely with hospitals, physicians, and patients. The HMT is a direct response to the needs of those dealing with health misinformation, namely health systems and their professionals.

The HMT is unique in its ability to aggregate rumors and health content from social media into proper disease categories, generate insights, can support multiple languages, and is supported by AWS's cloud-based templates, which enable people to provision all of the toolkit's benefits into their own technology environments and stacks.

Linda Smith, Founder and CEO of EHR Systems International said, "The bottom line is that the Health Misinformation Toolkit is our go-to programmatic solution for up-to-date health misinformation resources that enable us to build functionality within our EHR to alert practitioners to relevant and trending misinformation that can be used for communications with patients."

The HMT benefits individual technologists, physicians, and researchers as well as large corporations through its APIs and open-source software. This new approach to health misinformation will also foster great advances in the field of health informatics.

Professor Jennifer Henderson said she was particularly excited to see the focus on languages and misinformation efforts outside of Europe and North America. "I can clearly see that the HMT is a reflection of the MRL's work with so many countries around the world as the health misinformation problem is not just a Western problem, but rather a worldwide crisis.

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