Introduction

For this project, I chose the topic "COVID Vaccine Misinformation". This topic is relatively less relevant today but was incredibly relevant less than a year ago. Choosing this topic made sense to me because I felt that many people did not take this issue seriously enough, and as a result, the pandemic was much longer than it needed to be. Maybe if this project had been created earlier, it could have benefited any number of people who would otherwise fall victim to vaccine misinformation.

I created two personas to assist in this project. These are Harry Johnson, and Anne Johnson, a conservative husband and wife who fall victim to vaccine misinformation. Through several forms of media, their story is told, and through it, the audience can see the real-world effects of misinformation regarding vaccines.

First, I needed to define some terms. To do this, I created a glossary defining several related terms and concepts. During this part of the project, I used several research sources to assist in defining some of the words. (Source 3, Source 4, Source 5)

Then, I wrote a dialogue between Anne Johnson, Harry Johnson, Sarah Peters (Harry's sister) and Peter Peters. This scene gives some initial insight into the minds of the Johnson family. We see that Harry is quick to believe misinformation and refuses to vaccinate his family. At one point, Harry accuses the vaccines of causing heart attacks – this conspiracy was researched and debunked in Source 2. The reader is then directed to a series of diary entries written by Anne Johnson. In the diary entries, the timeline for the entire project is laid out. We see Anne's initial skepticism turn into radicalism, before regressing to sorrowful regret after her husband dies of coronavirus due to his lack of vaccination. In the diary entries, several

conspiracies are brought up. This was informed by research on right-wing misinformation tactics (specifically conspiracies) in Source 6.

At one point during the workday, Harry is browsing news articles that are spreading misinformation on vaccines. This is depicted in the comic, which shows him reading the articles, spreading the misinformation, and ultimately dying of covid. He was browsing the website Fox News, whose viewers were determined to be significantly more likely to be misinformed. This research is reflected in Source 1.

I included 2 business memos from various points in the timeline. The first is a letter from HR regarding vaccine misinformation. At this point, Harry has been caught spreading vaccine misinformation, and this memo is in response to that. I modeled this memo after suggestions online for how to legally approach this conversation in the workplace. This research came from Source 7.

Finally, I wrapped everything up with a website that walks through all the above forms of media. The website could then be used to convince someone that vaccine misinformation is a very real issue.

Each source below begins with a citation, then covers the required information below the citation. Thus, this document doubles as a Work Cited page.

Source 1

Published: Nov 08, 2021. "Covid-19 Misinformation Is Ubiquitous: 78% of the Public Believes or Is Unsure about at Least One False Statement, and Nearly a Third Believe at Least Four of Eight False Statements Tested." KFF, 22 Nov. 2021, https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-

19/press-release/covid-19-misinformation-is-ubiquitous-78-of-the-public-believes-or-is-unsure-about-at-least-one-false-statement-and-nearly-at-third-believe-at-least-four-of-eight-false-statements-tested/.

I used a (non-scholarly) article titled "COVID-19 Misinformation is Ubiquitous: 78% of the Public Believes or is Unsure About At Least One False Statement, and Nearly a Third Believe At Least Four of Eight False Statements Tested" written by reporter Craig Palosky. This article was published on KFF.org, a site that describes itself as "filling the need for trusted information on national health issues". This article gives statistics on which news sources' viewers were most likely to believe misinformation. Although Fox News only had the third most misinformed viewers by percentage, they had the largest number of viewers. For that reason, I used this research in my comic genre. I implemented this research by making the news site Harry is reading misinformation on in frame 1 be Fox News.

Source 2

Nguyen, H. T.. The Truth about Myocarditis. N.p., H.T.Nguyen, 2022.

For my second scholarly source, I used a book titled *The Truth about Myocarditis*, which was written by author H. T. Nguyen. The book gives statistics about vaccine induced myocarditis, a common argument against vaccines. However, the book shows that vaccine induced myocarditis is much less prevalent than people like Harry Johnson would have you believe.

I implemented this research in my dialogue by having Harry make this argument against vaccines. He says, "Did you hear about those people who had heart attacks after they took it?" Harry has not researched this topic in depth and is therefore unable to give real statistics for it.

Instead, he must rely on misinformation, and open-ended questions that may cause the other conversationalists to mistakenly put trust into Harry.

Source 3

Disinformation and Fake News. Germany, Springer Singapore, 2020.

My third scholarly source was from a book called *Disinformation and Fake News*, which was edited by several people, but does not have an author as each chapter is written by a different author. I cannot find the exact author of this chapter due to the fact I can only see a preview of this page. In this chapter, a definition is given for misinformation. I used this definition to inform my definition in the glossary. Additionally, this chapter provided a separate definition for disinformation, which enabled me to give both terms relevant definitions that clearly reflected the difference between the two. Until reading this chapter, I did not even realize there was a difference between the words "misinformation" and "disinformation". (Other than, of course, one letter.) This research was particularly relevant to the genre since a glossary is essentially a collection of definitions.

Source 4

Wakefield, Andrew J.. Callous Disregard: Autism and Vaccines--The Truth Behind a Tragedy. United States, Skyhorse, 2017.

Source 4 (scholarly) is a book titled *Callous Disregard: Autism and Vaccines--The Truth Behind a Tragedy*. The book is about a disgraced physician named Andrew Wakefield, who is known for falsely claiming that vaccines cause autism. In a particularly interesting turn of events, the book is written by Andrew Wakefield himself. Although this may lead to the veracity of the

book being questioned, it is irrelevant to this topic, as my implementation of this research is limited to his name and basic story. I used this research to inform my definition of "Andrew Wakefield" in the glossary, as he was a major contributor to the original issue of vaccine misinformation, despite the vaccine in question not being the covid vaccine.

Source 5

"Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Niaid Director." National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.niaid.nih.gov/about/director.

My non-scholarly source 5 came directly from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases website. There is not a clear author of the webpage, however, it's safe to assume that Dr. Fauci approves of the information in it, as the webpage in question is his own About page. This page was used to inform my glossary definition for "Dr. Fauci". I used the webpage to research information that was relevant to Dr. Fauci, such as his job title, and the timeframe in which he served as the Chief Medical Adviser to the President of the Unites States.

Source 6

McNeil-Willson, Richard. Framing in Times of Crisis: Responses to COVID-19 amongst Far Right Movements and Organisations. International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2020, http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25256. Accessed 9 May 2022.

Source 6 was found on JSTOR (making it scholarly). It is from a book titled *Framing in times of crisis: Responses to COVID-19 amongst Far Right movements and organisations*. This book gives insight into far-right responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. It does so by viewing far-right actions under the lens of 6 different frames (Migration, Globalisation, Governance, Liberty,

Resilience, and particularly Conspiracy). In my diary entries, Anne brings up conspiracy theories about the COVID vaccine. Since Harry and Anne are implied to lean further to the right than the average American, the information in this book was used to inform my choice for Anne to believe a conspiracy theory. In particular, I used the given statistic that, over 209 posts by far-right organizations, 20 of them were found to reference COVID-19 in the context of conspiracy or misinformation.

Source 7

Lisa Nagele-Piazza, J.D. "What Employee Speech Is Protected in the Workplace?" SHRM, SHRM, 29 Oct. 2019, www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/employee-free-speech-in-the-workplace.aspx.

In my business memo, freedom of speech in the workplace is discussed. In order to inform my writing, I needed to research how freedom of speech was handled in workplaces, particularly how vaccine misinformation could be handled. In an article titled "What Employee Speech Is Protected in the Workplace?" written by legal consultant Lisa Nagele-Piazza, I learned that employees in private workplaces are not protected by the law if they make false speech. I used the following quote: "The First Amendment does not apply to private actors, and employers are private actors." Because of this research, I wrote a business memo from the HR department reminding employees of this fact, and threatening disciplinary action against those who spread misinformation.