

# TrustMap: Mapping Truthfulness Stance of Social Media Posts on Factual Claims for Geographical Analysis

Zhengyuan Zhu

zhengyuan.zhu@mavs.uta.edu  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Arlington, TX, USA

Zeyu Zhang

zeyu.zhang@mavs.uta.edu  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Arlington, TX, USA

Haiqi Zhang

haiqi.zhang@mavs.uta.edu  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Arlington, TX, USA

Chengkai Li

cli@uta.edu  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Arlington, TX, USA

## Abstract

Factual claims and misinformation circulate widely on social media, shaping public opinion and decision-making. The concept of *truthfulness stance* refers to whether a text affirms a claim as true, rejects it as false, or takes no clear position. Capturing such stances is essential for understanding how the public engages with and propagates misinformation. We present the **truthfulness stance map** (TrustMap), an application that identifies and visualizes stances of tweets toward factual claims. Users may input factual claims or select claims from a curated set. For each claim, TrustMap retrieves relevant social media posts and applies a retrieval-augmented approach with fine-tuned language models to classify stance. Posts are classified as positive, negative, or neutral/no stance. These classifications are then aggregated by location to reveal regional variations in public opinion. To enhance interpretability, TrustMap uses large language models to generate stance explanations for individual posts and to produce regional stance summaries. By integrating retrieval-augmented truthfulness stance detection with geographical visualization, TrustMap provides the first tool of its kind for exploring how belief in factual claims varies across regions.

## CCS Concepts

• **Computing methodologies** → **Natural language processing**;  
• **Information systems** → **Geographic information systems**;  
**Social networks**; • **Applied computing** → **Sociology**.

## Keywords

Truthfulness Stance, Factual Claim, Social Media, Large Language Model

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## 1 Introduction

In recent years, the dissemination of factual claims, public narratives, and misinformation has intensified across domains such as health [21], environment [22], and politics [23]. Social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) play a central role in this ecosystem, not only enabling rapid circulation of content [5, 19, 30] but also accelerating the spread of misleading claims and conspiracy theories, which can shape public opinion and decision-making [2, 4, 26]. Social media users frequently react to factual claims by endorsing their accuracy, disputing their validity, or expressing uncertainty. Understanding these responses, referred to as *truthfulness stances*, is essential for analyzing how misinformation and public messaging influence discourse across topics. While prior research in stance detection has examined specific domains such as health misinformation [10], news claims [18], and other controversial issues [28], relatively little work has focused on truthfulness stance toward general factual claims spanning diverse topics [33, 34]. Even fewer studies have incorporated geolocation-based analyses, which are crucial for understanding how perceptions of claim veracity vary across communities and how narratives resonate at regional levels.

This paper introduces the **truthfulness stance map** (TrustMap), accessible at <https://idir.uta.edu/trustmap>. TrustMap provides a visual representation of stance distributions toward factual claims across geographical regions in the United States. It aggregates social media users' perceptions of claim veracity into three categories—*positive*, *negative*, and *neutral/no stance*. A positive stance indicates support for a claim's truthfulness, a negative stance denotes that the claim is disputed as false, and a neutral/no stance reflects either uncertainty or the absence of an explicit endorsement or refutation.

We collected 136,040 tweets related to 2,216 distinct claims for static exploration, of which 24,262 tweets contain geolocation information. Each claim-tweet pair was classified using RATSD (Retrieval Augmented Truthfulness Stance Detection) [34], a model that leverages fine-tuned large language models (LLMs) with retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) [13]. In TrustMap, users can either explore predefined topics and their associated claims or enter a custom claim for real-time analysis. For real-time queries, the system retrieves relevant tweets via X's API and applies the RATSD model to classify their stances. The results can then be explored on an interactive U.S. map, complemented by stance distribution visualizations, LLM-generated explanations for individual tweet

classifications, and regional summary reports. Analysis of the collected claim-tweet pairs reveals that social media users frequently endorse claims as true, irrespective of their actual veracity. At the geographic level, users in certain states show greater difficulty in distinguishing true claims from false ones.

While our prior work [28] analyzed truthfulness stances in the climate change domain, it did not provide a user interface. TrustMap builds on this foundation by extending coverage to multiple domains and enabling real-time claim exploration. To the best of our knowledge, it is the first application that integrates truthfulness stance detection with interactive geographical analytics. Beyond its technical contributions, TrustMap provides practical value: it helps fact-checkers, journalists, and policymakers identify regions most vulnerable to misinformation, supports monitoring of emerging claims, and offers the research community a reproducible tool for studying geographical variation in truthfulness stance. The codebase and data are available at <https://github.com/idirlab/trustmap>, with a video demonstration at <https://vimeo.com/1094263767>.

## 2 Related Work

Although numerous online narrative monitoring and analytics applications exist, most emphasize broad data collection and general analytics [6, 31] or concentrate on popular tasks such as sentiment analysis [1, 14]. In contrast, the incorporation of truthfulness stance into interactive maps or dashboards remains relatively unexplored. Prior systems typically address stance types different from those examined in our work. For example, StanceVis Prime [12] supports the analysis and visualization of sentiment and stance in temporal social media data. It processes documents from multiple text streams and applies sentiment and stance classification, generating data series linked to the source texts. However, its stance detection relies on identifying seven linguistic modifiers [20], which differs fundamentally from our definition of truthfulness stance. Similarly, Liew et al. [15] developed a dashboard for monitoring and analyzing online narratives, but it focuses on *sentiment*-oriented stance toward *general* topics (e.g., vaccine side effects), in contrast to our emphasis on *truthfulness*-oriented stance toward *specific* claims.

Existing applications of truthfulness stance detection primarily stem from our previous work. We first developed a dashboard for the COVID-19 misinfodemic [32], which identified stances toward COVID-19-related claims. However, stance detection was not the system’s primary focus, and its underlying method was less advanced than RATSD. In contrast, TrustMap employs the RATSD model and extends coverage to a broader set of factual claims, including both verified facts and misinformation across multiple topics beyond COVID-19. We also created a framework to analyze social media users’ truthfulness stances toward climate change-related claims [28], and more recently developed the novel truthfulness stance detection methodology RATSD [34]. Together, these earlier efforts form the foundation on which TrustMap is built.

## 3 Design and Implementation of TrustMap

TrustMap is built on a three-stage data pipeline: (1) data ingestion, (2) truthfulness stance classification, and (3) data exploration. In the data ingestion stage, factual claims were collected from PolitiFact (<https://www.politifact.com/>), and claim-tweet pairs were generated

by querying X’s APIs to retrieve tweets related to each claim. In the classification stage, the RATSD model assigned each claim-tweet pair one of three stance classes—positive, negative, or neutral/no stance—to capture the stance of the tweet regarding the corresponding claim’s veracity. For the exploration stage, the labeled pairs were aggregated by tweet geolocation, enabling users to interactively examine stance distributions and patterns through the interface.

### 3.1 Data Ingestion

We collected factual claims from PolitiFact using an in-house fact-check collection tool. PolitiFact was chosen because it offers the most comprehensive coverage, with 25,694 claims spanning a wide range of topics. For each claim, we retrieved tweets by constructing queries to X’s API (<https://docs.x.com/x-api/posts/search/integrate/build-a-query>) using a keyword-based strategy that extracted query terms—typically nouns, verbs, adjectives, and numbers—from the claim text. Tweets were collected within a defined time window extending from one month before to one year after the publication date of the fact-check corresponding to each claim. Tweets shorter than 30 characters were excluded to reduce noise.

We used two strategies to collect geolocation information from tweets, which is key to rendering claim-tweet pairs on TrustMap. The first strategy was to include location operators (e.g., latitude, longitude, and radius) in the query (e.g., “[keywords] geocode:[latitude], [longitude], [radius]”). For this, we selected 78 representative cities across the United States and used their latitude and longitude in the queries. However, this approach yielded limited data, as X users rarely disclose their location in tweets. The second strategy was to retrieve tweets and their metadata, then extract geolocation information from X users’ profile descriptions. All retrieved geolocation strings were normalized using Geopy [9], which converts unstructured text into structured fields such as city, county, state, and country. Among the 136,040 claim-related tweets collected, 24,262 contained U.S. geolocation information obtained using the two strategies described above. All tweets, regardless of geolocation, were included in stance classification and aggregate analyses (Table 2). However, only tweets with U.S. geolocation were used in the TrustMap interactive map and in regional comparisons (Table 3). It is important to note that geolocated tweets represent only a subset of all posts and may introduce demographic bias, since users who disclose or enable location information can differ systematically from the broader population.

### 3.2 Truthfulness Stance Detection Model

We applied RATSD [34] to classify the stance of each tweet toward its associated factual claim. RATSD incorporates contextual knowledge to improve classification accuracy. This enhancement is particularly important because 1) both claims and tweets are often standalone sentences that lack sufficient context for informed classification, and 2) tweets frequently contain acronyms, hashtags, and slang that complicate interpretation.

RATSD enhances stance detection through two components: *context retrieval* and *stance analysis generation*. For each claim-tweet pair, the model first retrieves relevant contextual information using RAG. Contextual documents are constructed separately: fact-check articles are used for claims, while X’s metadata (e.g., user profiles) is used for tweets. During training and inference, the model selects

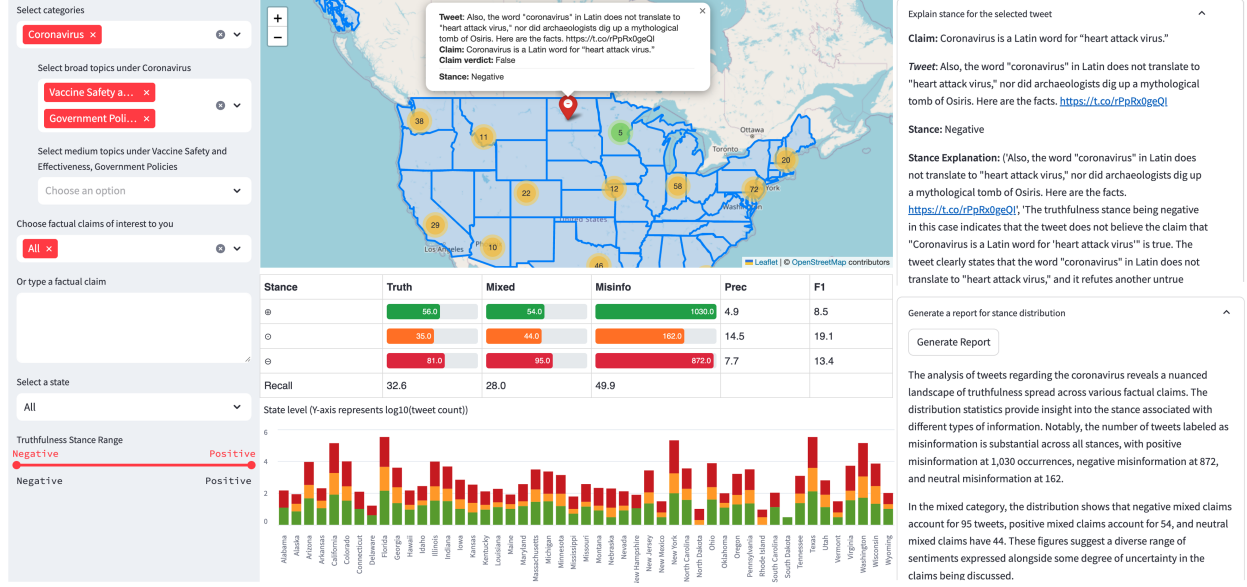


Figure 1: The user interface of TrustMap.

documents relevant to the input claim and tweet, retrieves semantically aligned chunks using BGE embeddings [25], and prompts an LLM to summarize them into coherent context.

Next, RATSD prompts an LLM to generate a stance analysis, which is a natural language explanation of the tweet’s stance with respect to the claim. This generated analysis replaces the original tweet in the classifier’s input, enabling the model to learn from structured, context-rich representations rather than noisy, raw social media text.

Finally, RATSD employs a fine-tuned LLM that encodes an input sequence consisting of the claim, tweet, stance analysis, and contextual knowledge. The model produces a stance prediction by computing a probability distribution over the stance classes through a softmax layer. Training was performed using cross-entropy loss with L2 regularization, and parameters were optimized with the Adam optimizer [11].

### 3.3 Data Exploration in TrustMap

The truthfulness stance results are presented through an interactive user interface (Figure 1) that enables filtering and exploration across regions, topics, and claims. Built with Streamlit (<https://streamlit.io/>), the interface consists of a control panel, an interactive map, statistical charts, and panels with LLM-generated explanations.

The control panel on the left allows users to select claims within one or more broad topics. For topics with many claims, users can refine their selection by choosing medium- or detailed-level subtopics. The multi-level claim topic taxonomy is generated using the LLM-Taxo method [29]. Once topics are selected, a multi-select dropdown is populated with the corresponding factual claims, enabling users to choose specific claims for exploration. In addition to static claims exploration, TrustMap supports real-time analysis: users can manually enter a factual claim in a text input field. TrustMap then automatically formulates a query to X’s API, retrieves relevant tweets, and applies RATSD to assess each tweet’s stance toward the entered claim. This feature enables users to explore new or emerging claims.

Users can further narrow the exploration results by focusing on specific regions, either by selecting a U.S. state from a dropdown menu or by clicking directly on the map. Upon selection, the map will zoom to the chosen state. A slider at the bottom provides additional filtering, allowing users to view tweets by stance class.

On the map, claim-tweet pairs are clustered by geographic location to reduce visual clutter. As users zoom in, these clusters break apart into individual markers. Clicking a marker opens a pop-up that displays the full text of both the claim and the associated tweet, along with metadata such as the tweet’s location, the claim’s veracity rating from PolitiFact (e.g., “True,” “False,” “Pants on Fire”), and the predicted truthfulness stance of the tweet regarding the claim.

Beneath the map, two interactive charts provide aggregated insights. The first chart reports the number of claim-tweet pairs by stance class, along with performance metrics (precision, recall, and F1 score) comparing stance predictions with PolitiFact’s verdicts. The second chart presents stance distributions across U.S. states, helping users identify geographical patterns and regional polarization in public opinion. To support interpretation, TrustMap offers two LLM-based explanation features powered by GPT-4o-mini [17]. At the individual level, users can click a button to generate a rationale explaining why a stance was assigned to a specific claim-tweet pair. At the aggregate level, users can request a summary report highlighting overall stance distribution, dominant narratives, and notable regional deviations. Together, these features help contextualize stance detection results and enhance the interpretation of public discourse.

## 4 Results and Analysis

### 4.1 Performance Evaluation and Results

The RATSD model was trained on the dataset from Zhu et al. [34], which contains 2,220 labeled claim-tweet pairs: 1,262 positive stance examples (stance class denoted as  $\oplus$ ), 451 neutral/no stance examples ( $\odot$ ), and 507 negative stance examples ( $\ominus$ ). To evaluate

Model	$F_{\oplus}$	$F_{\ominus}$	$F_{\ominus}$	$F_M$
BUT-FIT	83.38	72.00	65.11	80.11
BLCU_NLP	85.37	71.43	63.29	73.36
BERTSCORE+NLI	88.68	72.53	81.04	80.75
BART+NLI	88.00	73.42	74.25	78.56
TESTED	84.09	72.37	67.90	74.75
RATSD <sub>Zephyr</sub>	88.67	77.38	80.28	82.10
RATSD <sub>GPT-3.5</sub>	<b>93.27</b>	<b>80.24</b>	<b>87.90</b>	<b>87.13</b>

**Table 1: Truthfulness stance detection model performance.**

performance, RATSD was benchmarked against several state-of-the-art stance detection models, including fine-tuned language models such as pre-trained models (e.g., BUT-FIT [8]), generative pre-trained models (e.g., BLCU\_NLP [27]), and domain-adaptive pre-trained models (e.g., BERTSCORE+NLI [10], BART+NLI [18], and TESTED [3]). RATSD utilizes two alternative fine-tuned LLMs: the open-source Zephyr [24] and the proprietary GPT-3.5 [7]. Evaluation metrics include F1 scores for each stance class (denoted as  $F_{\oplus}$ ,  $F_{\ominus}$  and  $F_{\ominus}$ ) and the macro F1 score ( $F_M$ ). The evaluation results in Table 1, reproduced from Zhu et al. [34], show that RATSD achieves consistently strong performance across all stance classes.

Given RATSD’s strong performance, we rely on its predicted stance labels to evaluate the accuracy of X users’ judgments about claims. Specifically, for each claim-tweet pair, we compare PolitiFact’s veracity verdict for the claim with the stance expressed in the tweet. A user’s stance is considered accurate if it aligns with PolitiFact’s assessment of the claim’s truthfulness. PolitiFact assigns one of six verdicts to each claim: “True,” “Mostly True,” “Half True,” “Mostly False,” “False,” and “Pants on Fire.” To ensure clarity and avoid overly sparse categories, we consolidated these into three broader groups: “True” and “Mostly True” were mapped to “Truth,” “Half True” was renamed “Mixed,” and “Mostly False,” “False,” and “Pants on Fire” were mapped to “Misinformation.” This mapping enables us to assess how well social media users collectively discern the truthfulness of claims. Importantly, this evaluation measures users’ judgments, not model accuracy, which is separately reported in Table 1. Following this setup, we computed precision and F1 scores of users’ judgments for each stance class, as well as recall for each claim verdict category (Table 2).

Stance	Truth	Mixed	Misinfo	Precision	F1
$\oplus$	6,754	5,094	64,643	9.0	15.6
$\ominus$	1,398	1,350	9,677	10.9	11.7
$\ominus$	3,494	4,453	39,177	83.1	48.8
Recall	58.0	12.4	34.5	-	-

**Table 2: Distribution of X users’ truthfulness stances toward Truth, Mixed, and Misinformation, with precision, recall, and F1 score reported for each stance class.**

The results reveal a strong tendency for X users to believe claims are true, regardless of their actual veracity. This is consistent with recent findings [16, 28]. Specifically, nearly 57.0% of misinformation (64,643 out of 64,643+9,677+39,177) is judged as true by users, yielding a recall of only 34.5% for “Misinformation.” At the same time, users exhibit considerable skepticism toward true claims: only 58.0% of tweets about true claims convey a positive stance, while

State	Truth- $\oplus$	Truth- $\ominus$	Misinfo- $\oplus$	Misinfo- $\ominus$	Acc	F1
Washington	74.1% (177)	25.9% (62)	<b>42.7% (719)</b>	<b>57.3% (963)</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>51.2</b>
Florida	69.4% (120)	30.6% (53)	<b>66.6% (1,147)</b>	<b>33.4% (576)</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>32.8</b>
Texas	70.3% (204)	29.7% (86)	62.7% (1,006)	37.3% (599)	53.8	39.8
New York	75.4% (138)	24.6% (45)	54.9% (850)	45.1% (698)	60.3	42.3
California	67.1% (94)	32.9% (46)	62.7% (827)	37.3% (491)	52.2	35.3
Arizona	<b>78.0% (46)</b>	<b>22.0% (13)</b>	63.3% (321)	36.7% (186)	57.3	37.1
Colorado	<b>66.7% (24)</b>	<b>33.3% (12)</b>	58.1% (299)	41.9% (216)	54.3	35.8
Virginia	73.2% (60)	26.8% (22)	62.3% (288)	37.7% (173)	55.3	40.3
U.S.	70.0% (1,444)	30.0% (619)	59.9% (10,299)	40.1% (6,886)	55.0	38.3
All	65.9% (6,754)	34.1% (3,494)	62.3% (64,643)	37.7% (39,177)	51.8	35.0

**Table 3: Truthfulness stance distribution toward Truth and Misinformation across U.S. states. Truth- $\oplus$  and Truth- $\ominus$  denote positive and negative stances toward Truth, respectively, while Misinfo- $\oplus$  and Misinfo- $\ominus$  denote positive and negative stances toward Misinformation.**

more than one-third dispute their validity. Mixed-veracity claims (“Half True”) further illustrate the challenge, as users rarely adopt neutral or uncertain positions. Instead, their responses are strongly polarized, with most tweets either endorsing these claims as true or rejecting them as false.

## 4.2 Geographical Analysis

We analyzed X users’ stance by geographical location. As shown in Table 3, Florida records both the highest count and percentage of Misinfo- $\oplus$  (66.6%), indicating that misinformation is widely endorsed in this region. Florida X users also have the lowest accuracy (51.4) and macro F1 score (32.8). In contrast, Washington stands out with the highest accuracy (65.7) and macro F1 score (51.2), as well as the lowest Misinfo- $\oplus$  rate (42.7%), suggesting that relatively more X users in this state push back against misinformation. Yet even in stronger-performing states such as Washington, F1 scores remain modest. This observation underscores that, while some regional variation exists, users overall struggle to discern the truthfulness of claims. This challenge is reflected in the national-level (“United States”) results, where accuracy is 55.0 and macro F1 is just 38.3. A comparison between “United States” and “All” (which includes tweets from inside and outside the U.S., as well as those without geolocation) shows that U.S.-based users perform slightly better at distinguishing true from false claims, as evidenced by higher accuracy and macro F1 scores.

## 5 Conclusion

TrustMap is an interactive application for analyzing how social media users across regions respond to factual claims. By integrating truthfulness stance detection with geospatial analysis, it provides a nuanced view of public reactions to both accurate information and misinformation. The results highlight notable regional variations in how claims are perceived. Overall, this work illustrates the value of combining truthfulness stance classification with visual analytics to better understand public engagement with factual claims.

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## GenAI USAGE DISCLOSURE

We fully disclose the use of generative AI tools in accordance with CIKM 2025 and ACM guidelines. OpenAI's GPT-4o (via ChatGPT) was employed to enhance the clarity, grammar, and flow of the manuscript. GitHub Copilot assisted with writing, refactoring, and debugging code for dataset processing, annotation tools, and visualizations. All AI-generated content was carefully reviewed, verified, and revised by the authors. Importantly, no core research ideas, experimental design, results, or analysis were produced by AI. All intellectual contributions and final decisions remain solely the responsibility of the authors.

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