

Concerns Around Opposition to the Green Pass in Italy

Social Listening Analysis (plus some ethical reflections)

Giovanni Spitale, Dr. Des., postdoctoral researcher @IBME, UZH
giovanni.spitale@ibme.uzh.ch

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Zurich**^{UZH}

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TOPICS



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1. What's an infodemic?
2. How do we listen to people?
3. What are the ethical implications?

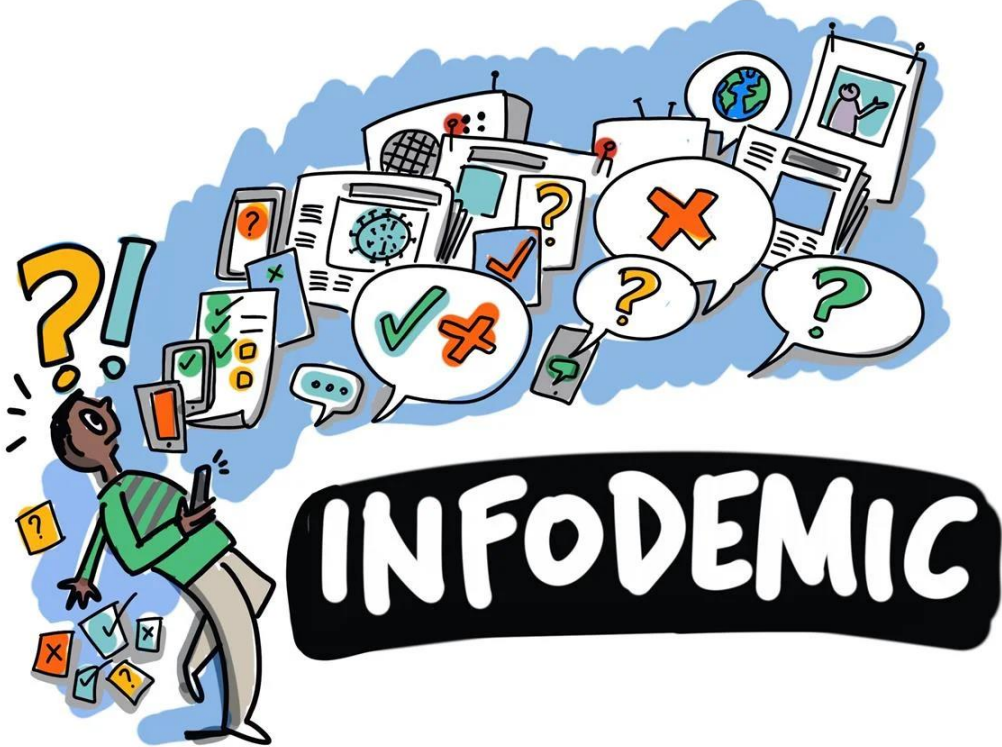
Introduction



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Introduction



Introduction

What is an infodemic?

- **Too much information**, including false or misleading information,
 - in **digital and physical** environments,
 - during a **disease outbreak**.

- Causes **confusion** and **risk-taking behaviours**,
- leads to **mistrust** in health authorities,
- **undermines** the public health **response**.

- Can **intensify or lengthen outbreaks**

- With growing **digitization**, information can **spread more rapidly**. This can help to more quickly fill information voids but can also amplify harmful messages.

Introduction

How to tackle an infodemic?

- provide **free, reliable, trustworthy, factual, multilingual, targeted, accurate, clear and science-based** information,
- ensure **dialogue and participation** of **all stakeholders** and affected communities during the preparedness, readiness and response,
- enhance **transparency, accountability and trust**, which is essential to achieving adequate support for and compliance by the general public,
- increase societal **resilience against disinformation**,

- tackle the creation and circulation of false or manipulated information, in an objective manner and with due respect for citizens' freedom of expression, as well as public order and safety.

Passive social listening

Spitale, Giovanni, Biller-Andorno, Nikola, and Germani, Federico. «Concerns Around Opposition to the Green Pass in Italy: Social Listening Analysis by Using a Mixed Methods Approach». *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 24, n. 2 (February 2022): e34385. <https://doi.org/10.2196/34385>



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Passive social listening

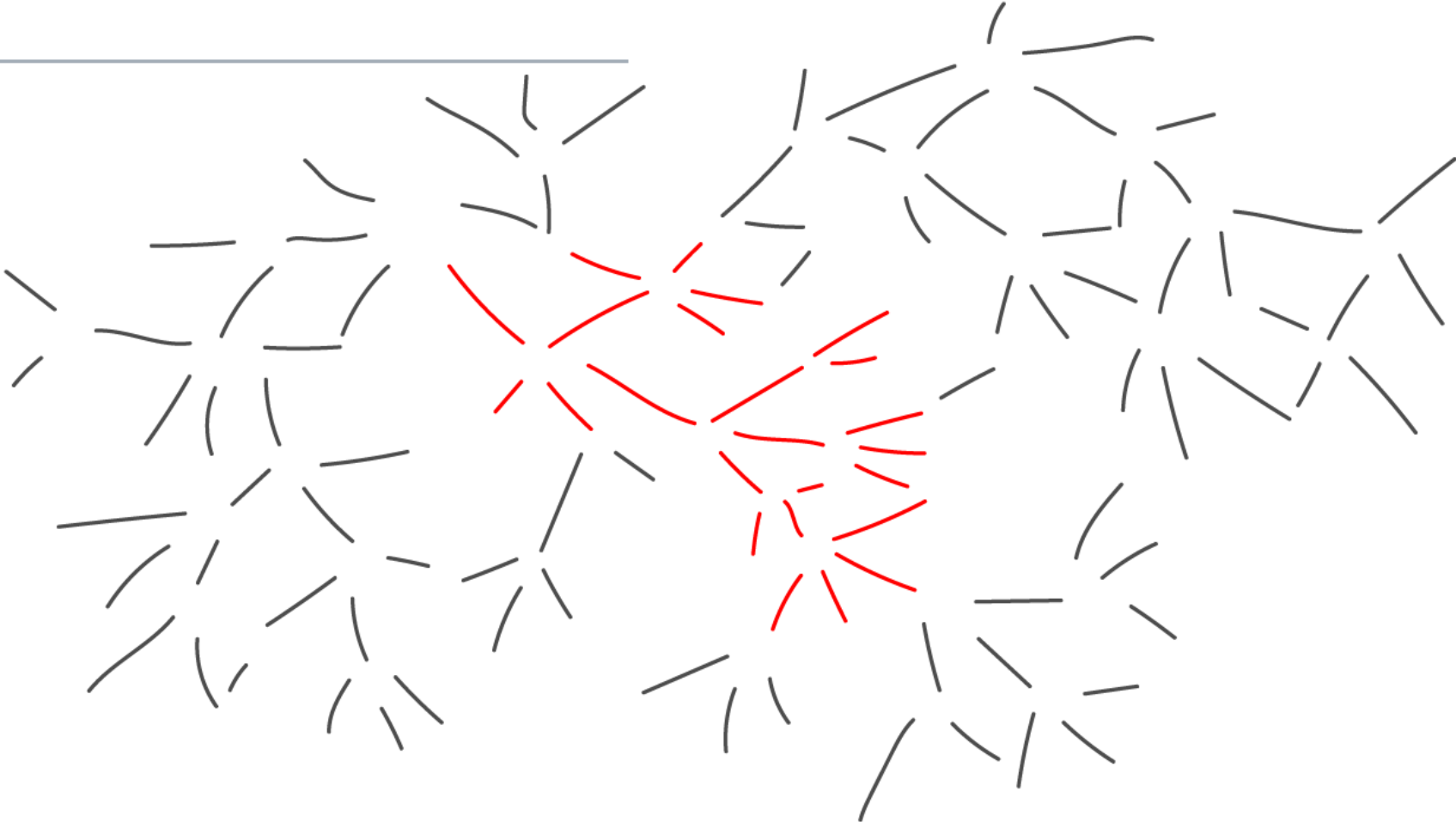


Passive social listening

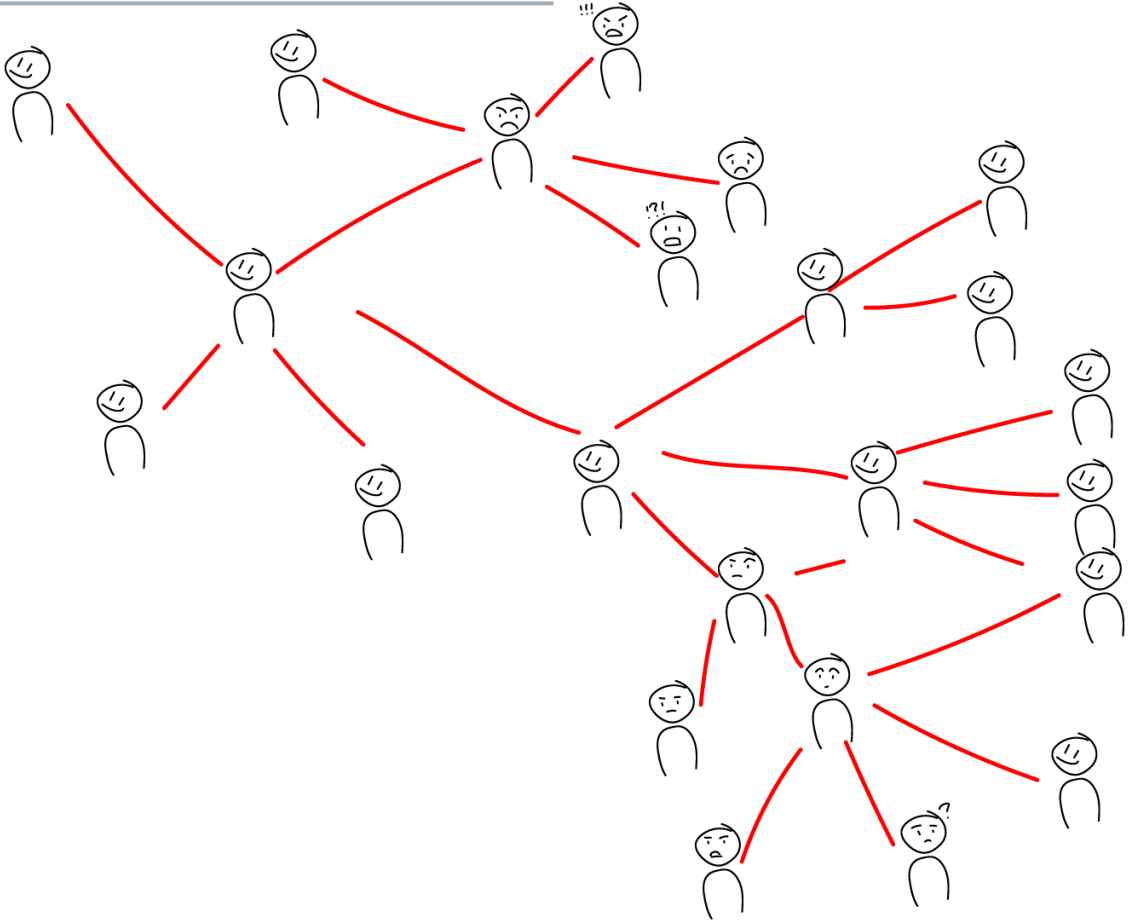


Outreach
Privacy

Passive social listening



Passive social listening



Passive social listening

Some good questions:

What are these people saying?

How and how much?

Who are they?

Why do they want a fake GP?

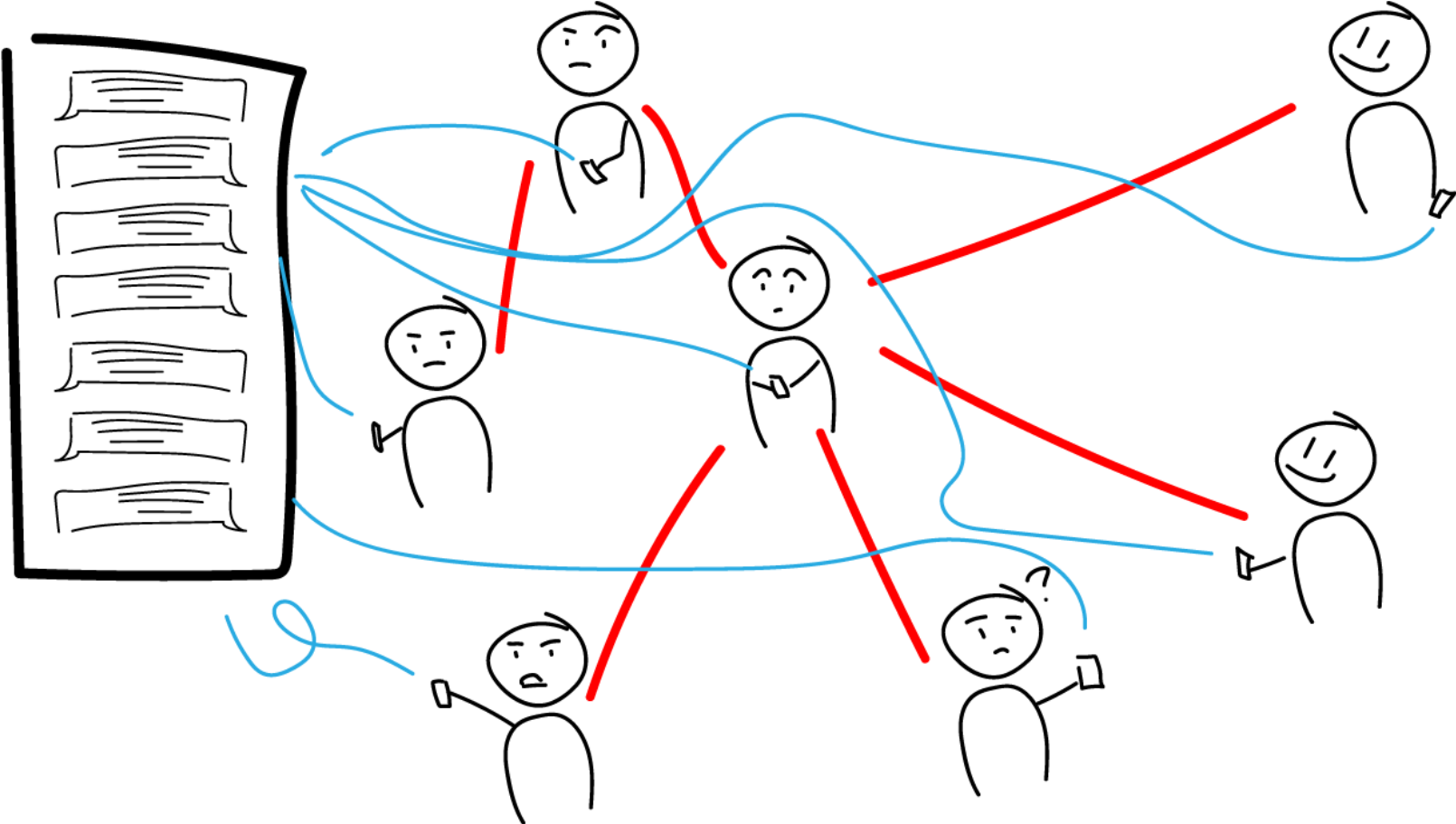
Are they vaccinated?

Are they antivaccinationists?

What are they afraid of?

What are their plans?

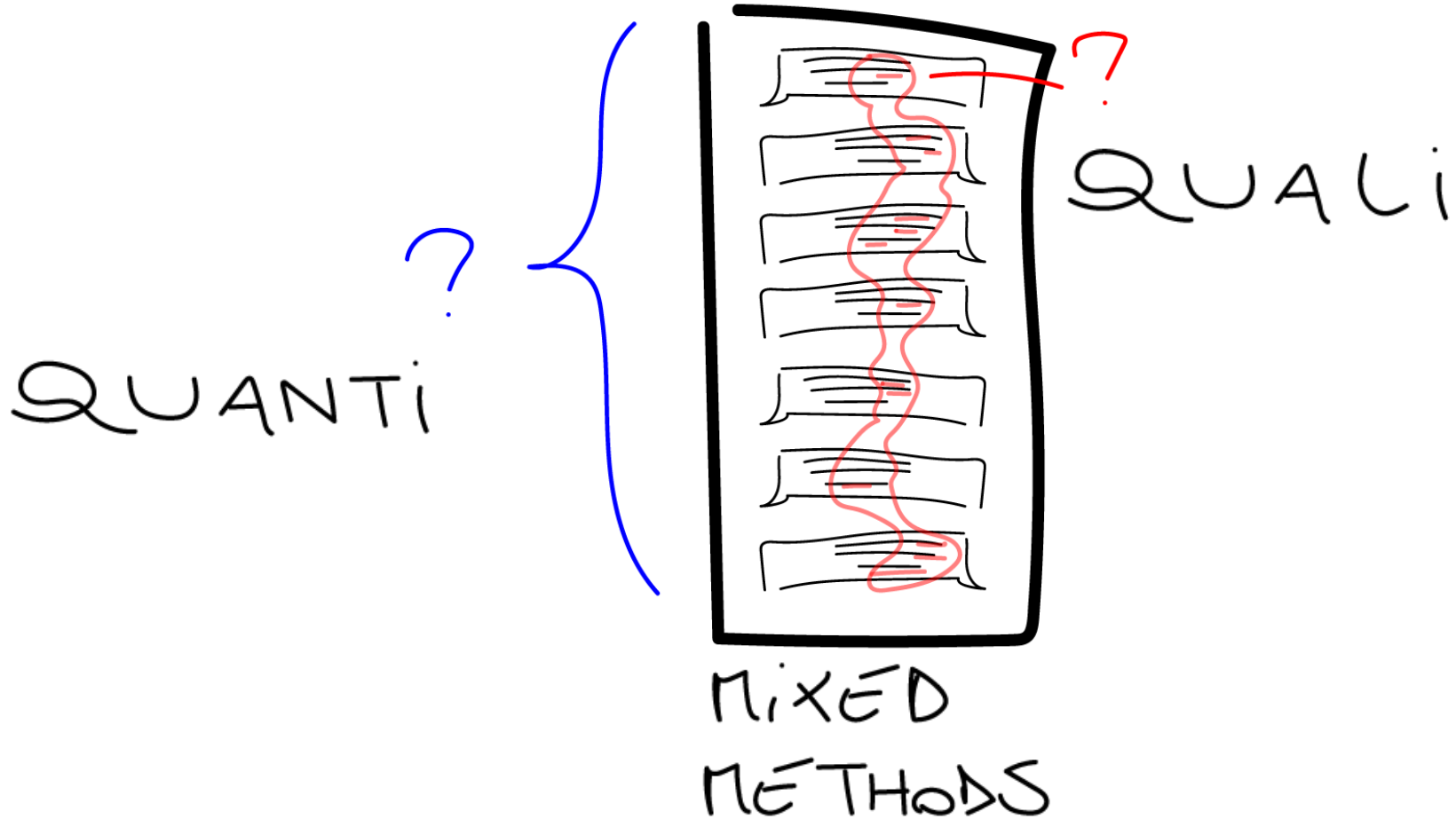
Passive social listening



Passive social listening

Category	Group description	n of users	n of messages
no green pass	university, north	1770	7356
	university, center	5168	10464
	university, south	479	1879
	generic	12295	33707
	Total	19712	53406
control	parrots	296	48494
	videogames	750	43322
	generic	294	10588
	generic	210	1453
	generic	218	21611
	Total	1768	125468

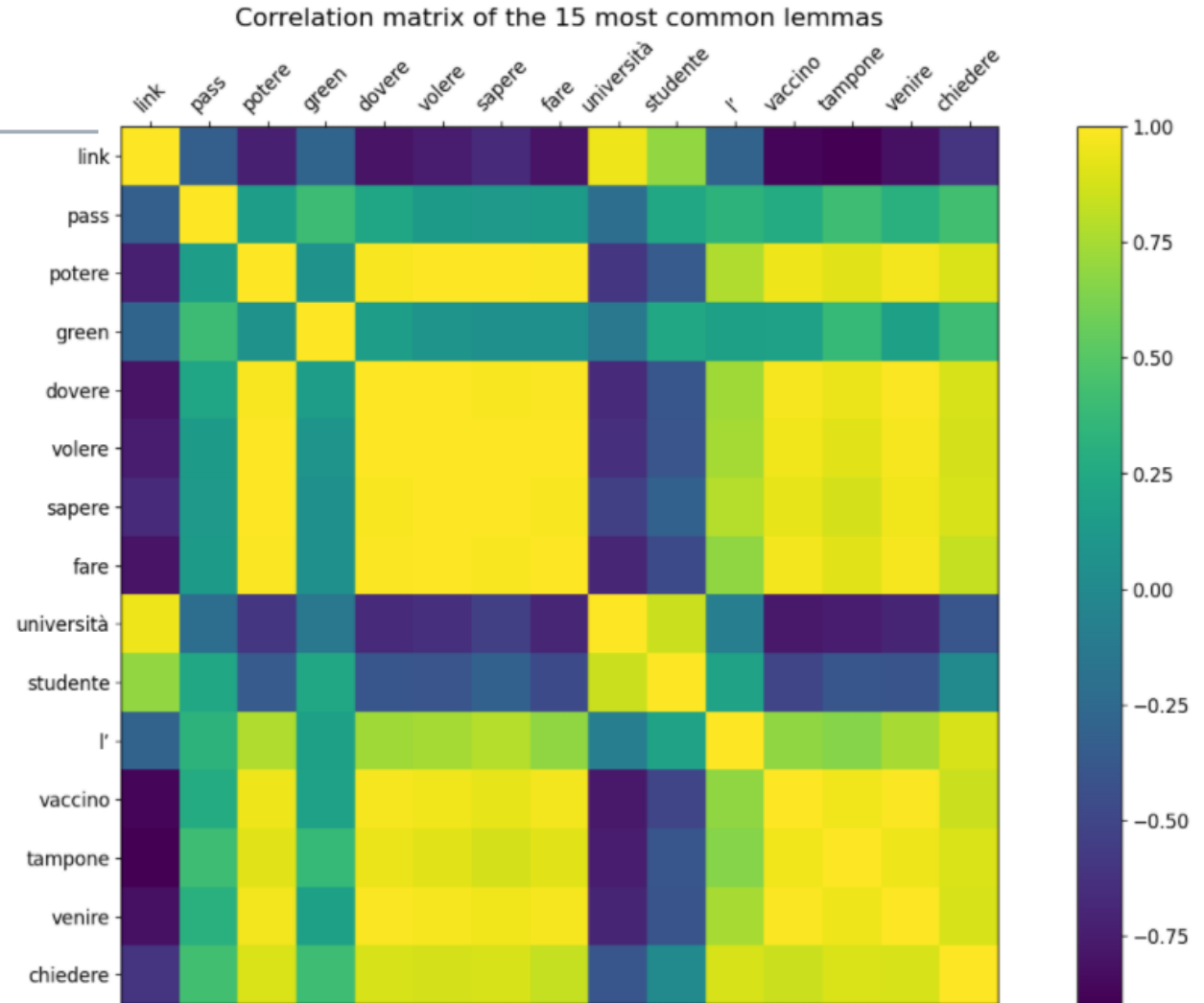
Passive social listening



Passive social listening

This is how distributional semantics works, but with fancy colors that are visible also for colorblind people.

Green (or yellow) indicates a strong correlation, blue (or purple) a low one.

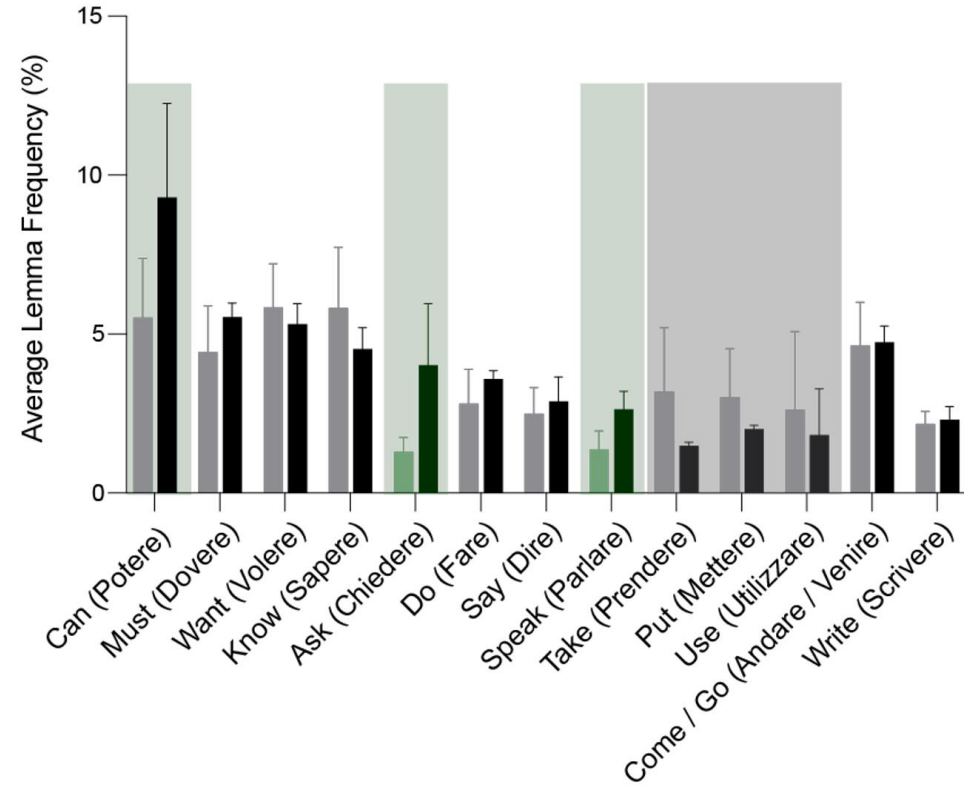


Passive social listening

The no gp dataset contains many lemmas in the spectrum of acting (can, must, want, pretend, ...)

The no gp dataset contains many lemmas in the law spectrum (law, article, ...)

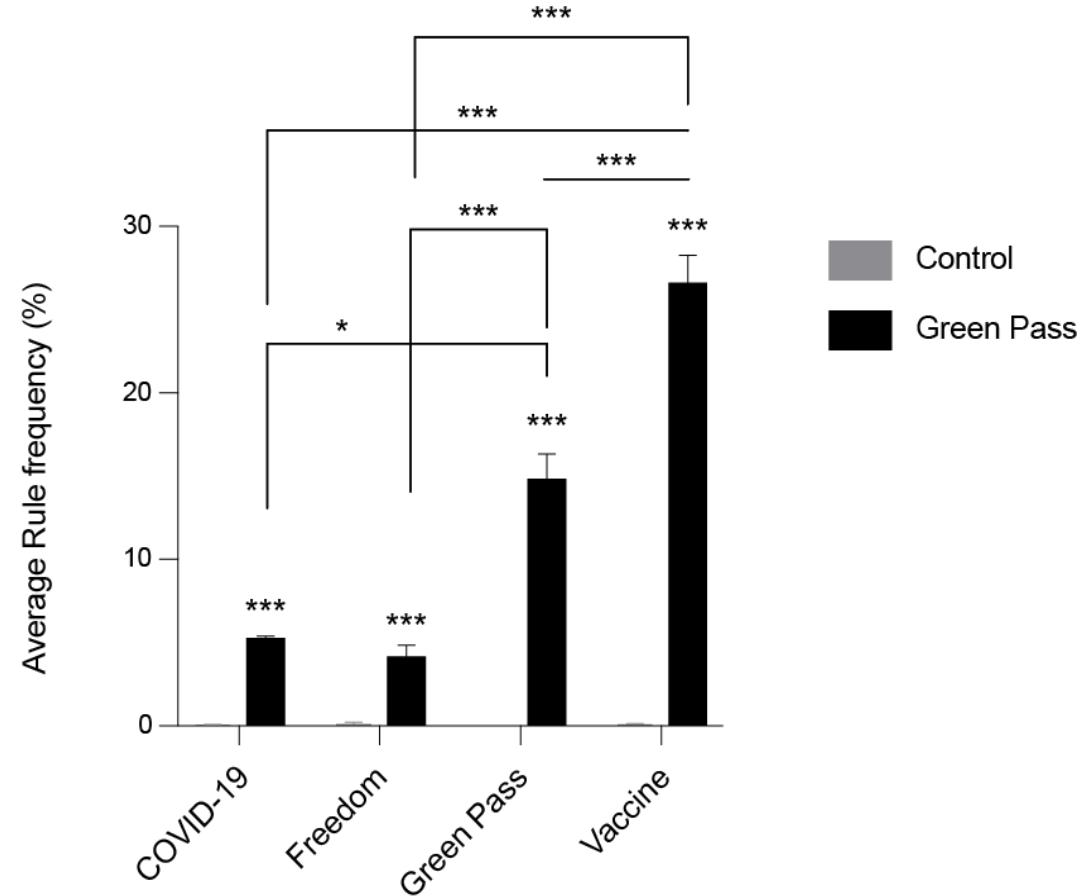
C



Passive social listening

Rules to identify 'freedom', 'vaccine', 'green pass' and 'covid19' fired much more frequently in the no gp dataset. Good, the system works.

The 'vaccines' rule is the one that fired most frequently in the no gp dataset. More than the 'green pass' rule.

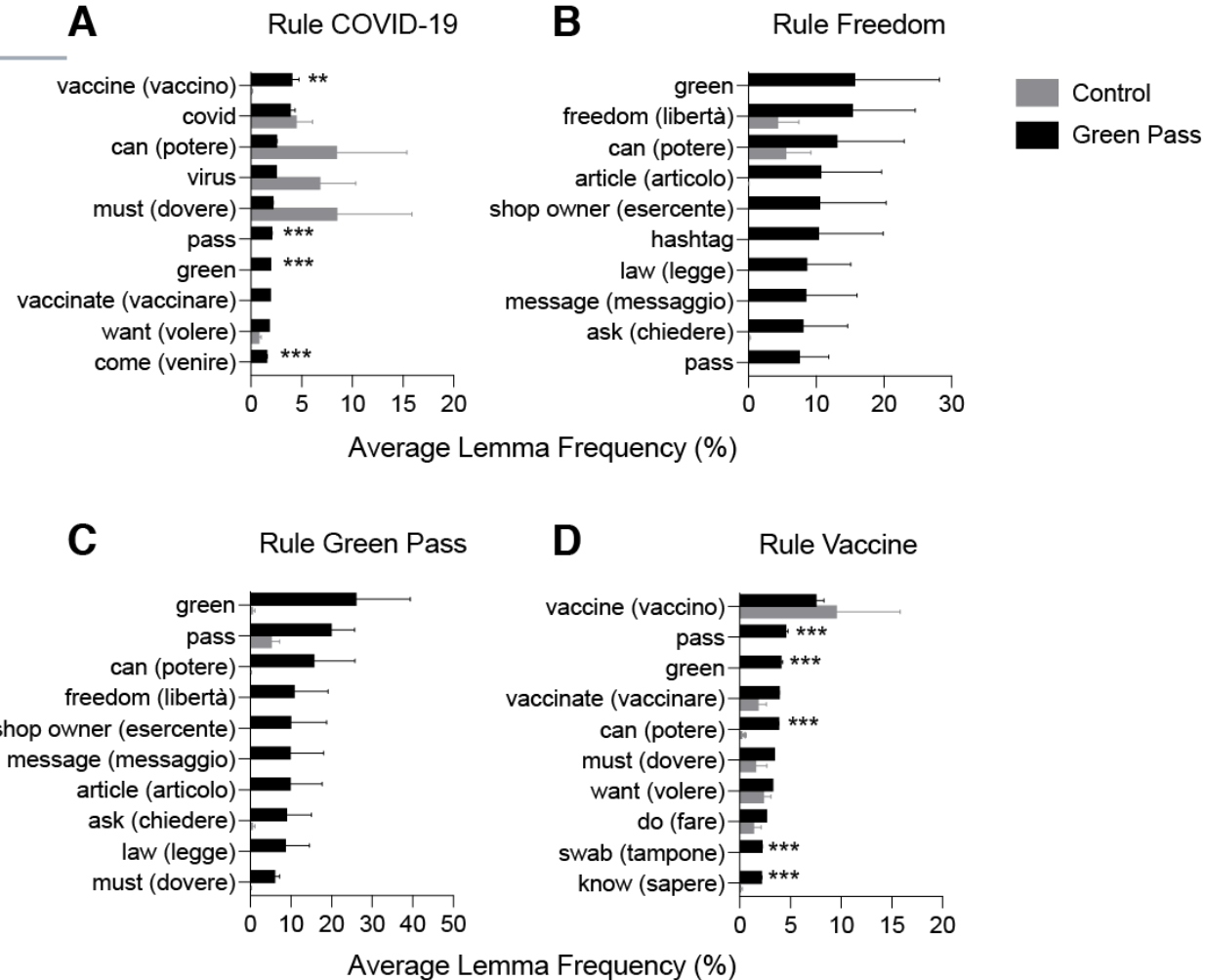


Passive social listening

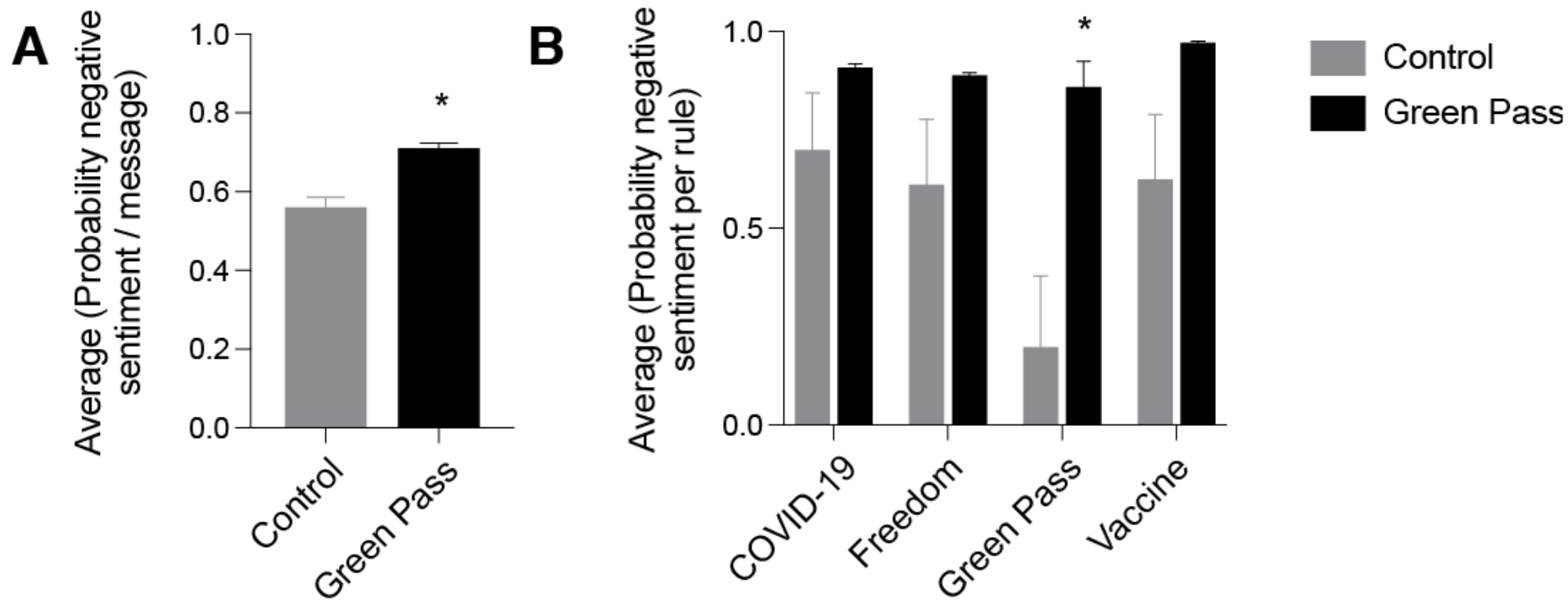
Anything of note?

Maybe in plot D?

The green pass discussion occurs when vaccines are discussed, but not vice versa. Critics of the green pass tend to share anti-vaccine views, but do not want their arguments against the green pass to revolve around their anti-vaccine views. Rather, they prefer to support their position by discussing limitations on personal freedom and advancing legal considerations.



Passive social listening



Passive social listening

Green pass and vaccines 1

On the other hand, it is a big mistake to take a stance on vaccines. Those who want to do so should do so. The point is only to be against this limitation of freedom and many vaccinated people are against the green pass. Do not introduce divisive or extremist elements that vote the initiative down (university, south, Pos. 742)



*how can one ignore the vaccine issue if it is literally the main option for getting a pass??
(university, north, Pos. 6693)*

Passive social listening

Green pass and vaccines 2

We must rebel, this vaccine is a gene therapy with no guarantee that it will work. Vaccinated people are just as infectious as unvaccinated people, it is clear that this vaccine does not protect against COVID. (university, north, Pos. 2612)

Their aim is to manipulate human beings by injecting them with a serum containing graphene, which can react with certain frequencies and modify the behaviour of cells. By changing the behaviour of cells, you can change the behaviour of human beings. (generic, Pos. 72471)



Passive social listening

It's a trap!

IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GREEN PASS IS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION THAT HAS NO RELATION TO THE ACTUAL HEALTH STATUS... (university, center, Pos. 3572 – 3579)

Do you still have to realize that even if the Regime decides to withdraw the COVID PASS, to let you go back to work, you have already become citizens of a totalitarian Regime? Citizens of a lousy Regime based on lies, on the progressive elimination of freedoms, on the violent suppression of dissent? (generic, Pos. 2127)



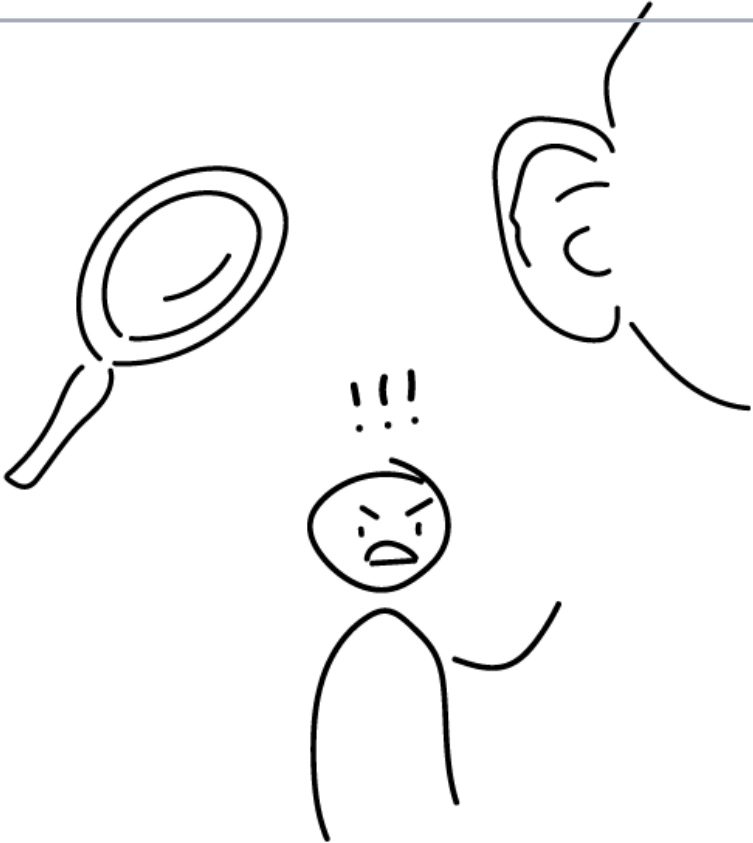
Passive social listening

Vaccines are what this battle is for

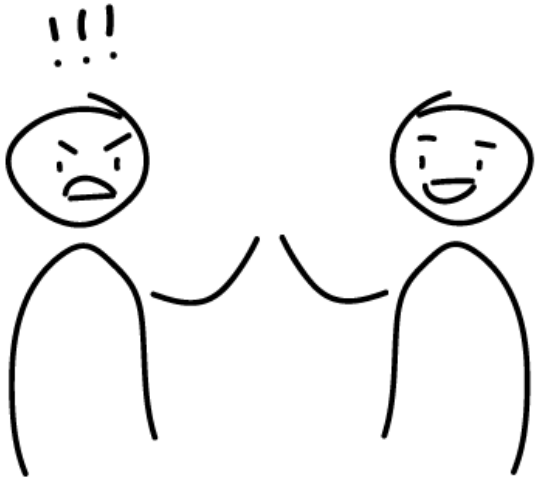
The main argument must continue to be that one must be able to refuse an injection, whatever it may be. The body is mine and I decide. And if you were to be convinced that the serum prevents $x\%$ of the infection (as some try to suggest), would our whole battle fall apart? I certainly hope it's not the case. (university, north, Pos. 24367)



Ethical implications

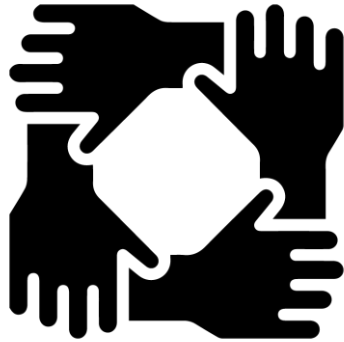


PASSIVE



ACTIVE






Ethical implications



Spitale, Giovanni, Germani, Federico (co-first), and Biller-Andorno, Nikola. «The PHERCC matrix. An ethical framework for planning, governing, and evaluating Risk and Crisis Communication in the context of Public Health Emergencies». *American Journal of Bioethics* (submitted, May 2022. Preprint: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6559205>)

Ethical implications

The PHERCC matrix

Principles	
Openness	
Transparency	
Inclusivity	
Understandability	
Privacy	

Process					
Evidence	Initiator	Channel	Message	Public	Feedback
The scientific reasons that justify, require, and inform the PHERCC action.	The entity (local, regional, national or international) who initiates the PHERCC action.	The system through which the PHERCC action is delivered.	The content of the PHERCC action.	The receiver(s) of the PHERCC action.	How the public receives the message, what the public knows about the crisis.
Is the evidence of public domain and accessible?	Is the initiator committed to open policies?	Is the channel infrastructure developed with open source software?	Is the message distributed under an open license (e.g. CC-BY-SA)?	Is the public openly available to receive the message? (e.g. presence online, social media, etc).	Is the content of the public's feedback openly accessible (after anonymization) to everyone?
Has the evidence been generated through a transparent process?	Is it clear who the initiator is, and under which principles or regulations they operate?	Is it clear who operates the channel and how the channel works?	Is the aim of the message transparent? (e.g. eliciting a specific behaviour, enhancing understanding, ...)	Is (aggregated and anonymized) information about the public visible and inferable?	Is it clear how the feedback was collected and by whom?
Is the evidence generated taking into account different socio-demographic segments?	Does the initiator include a plurality of voices in the definition of the strategy and of the content?	Does the information delivery strategy take into account the specific needs of different segments of the public?	Is the message tailored to the needs and specificities of different segments of the public?	Does the definition of the public take into account a plurality of (reasonable) doctrines?	Does the feedback represent opinions from different segments of the public?
Is the evidence accompanied by interpretative notes and metadata?	Is it clear what are the goals (long - and short- term) of the initiator?	Is it simple to understand how the channel works?	Is everyone from the public able to understand the message? (i.e. language, complexity, timing, ...).	Is the strategy defining the public, its composition, and its segmentation clearly understandable?	Are the content and the representativity of the feedback clearly understandable?
Is the evidence completely anonymized?	Is the individual privacy of the initiator's employees guaranteed (to balance with transparency)?	Does the channel protect users' privacy (e.g. no tracking technologies)?	Does the message contain information that could compromise anyone's privacy?	Is citizens' privacy guaranteed in the delivery of the message? (e.g. cookies, digital fingerprinting).	Is the feedback completely anonymized?

Key messages:

- Passive social listening is incredibly effective;
- But eavesdropping other people's conversations erodes trust;
- Therefore on the long run this approach can start an arms race for privacy vs control (negative impact on effectiveness);
- Active social listening and direct engagement with communities can mitigate this risk.

DIY, hands-on learning is fun

Resources for the curious

The Telegram paper: <https://www.jmir.org/2022/2/e34385>

The software: <https://zenodo.org/record/5534045#.YaiVltDMKUm>

A test run on a toy dataset: <https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/F0AIT3z8wRADu2j>

Toy data for DIY enthusiasts: <https://drive.switch.ch/index.php/s/arv4qZbLqoALBlm>

The PHERCC paper (preprint): <https://zenodo.org/record/6559205>

Another very cool paper about active social listening:

<https://www.researchprotocols.org/2021/11/e33653>

SO LONG, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH.

Download this deck here:



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