Methodology (PNG Social Media Tracker for COVID-19)

Facebook Analysis (1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022)

Objective of Tracker:

(1) To track developing themes of COVID-19 communication on social media
(2) To identify potential knowledge gaps/misinformation in posts or at least map specific potential areas of misinformation

Technical

A customised Python program was written to :

1. identify HTML tags in source Facebook pages
2. scrape all posted content under relevant HTML tags on sampled Facebook pages.

As a form of data triangulation, ParseHub was used to ensure scarping accuracy.

Sampling (15 active Facebook Pages across 136,003 posts)

Sampling was based on identifying the most reached Facebook pages in PNG. The Socialbakers 2020 report was used to filter an initial list. This was subsequently followed up with the broader Media Development Initiative (MDI) team for a list of the most engaged Facebook pages.

The sampled Facebook pages are listed below.

News Media Facebook Pages	Non-News Media Facebook Pages
EMTV Online	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
Loop PNG	Air Niugini
NBC PNG	City Sivarai
FM 100	The Sun of Papua New Guinea
Post Courier	PNG Happenings Today
Click TV PNG	PNG News and Updates
Yumi FM	
Yumi FM News	
Tribe 92 FM	

*The following non-news media Facebook groups: PNG News Page, PNG Breaking News and Sharp Talk PNG have been removed from this iteration of the analysis as they had changed their status to 'private' at some point during the analysis period which disqualifies them from the sample. It should be noted that while the reasons behind their switch to 'private' status is unknown, there was considerable debate around perceived narratives of misinformation being spread within these online communities.

Analysis

Data gathered from the Facebook pages was automatically stored in a common independent .txt file. Data files were then run through a customised concordance software for an initial thematic analysis detailing the frequency of occurrence for each theme based on key words in context (KWIC).

Limitations

The following limitations of the analysis should be noted.

- Only English posts were analysed
- Trends are highly volatile from week-to-week, so findings will differ considerably based on time selected
- Small sample of popular Facebook groups analysed based on reach numbers and recommendations from the Media Development Initiative (MDI) team: findings provide a snapshot from October 2021 to March 2022 and are not universal (generalisable)
- Facebook comments were only analysed for posts with higher engagement rates (>100 comments) and as such not all follow-up discussions were tracked in this analysis
- Due to the differing length of analysis periods across the 4 trackers conducted, caution must be taken when comparing trends between trackers