

ADVANCED COURSE ON
VERIFICATION AND
NEW NARRATIVES
ON FACT CHECKING
FOR NAMIBIAN JOURNALISTS

Windhoek, Namibia
7-9 June 2022

#PeriodismoÁfrica

ORGANIZED BY:

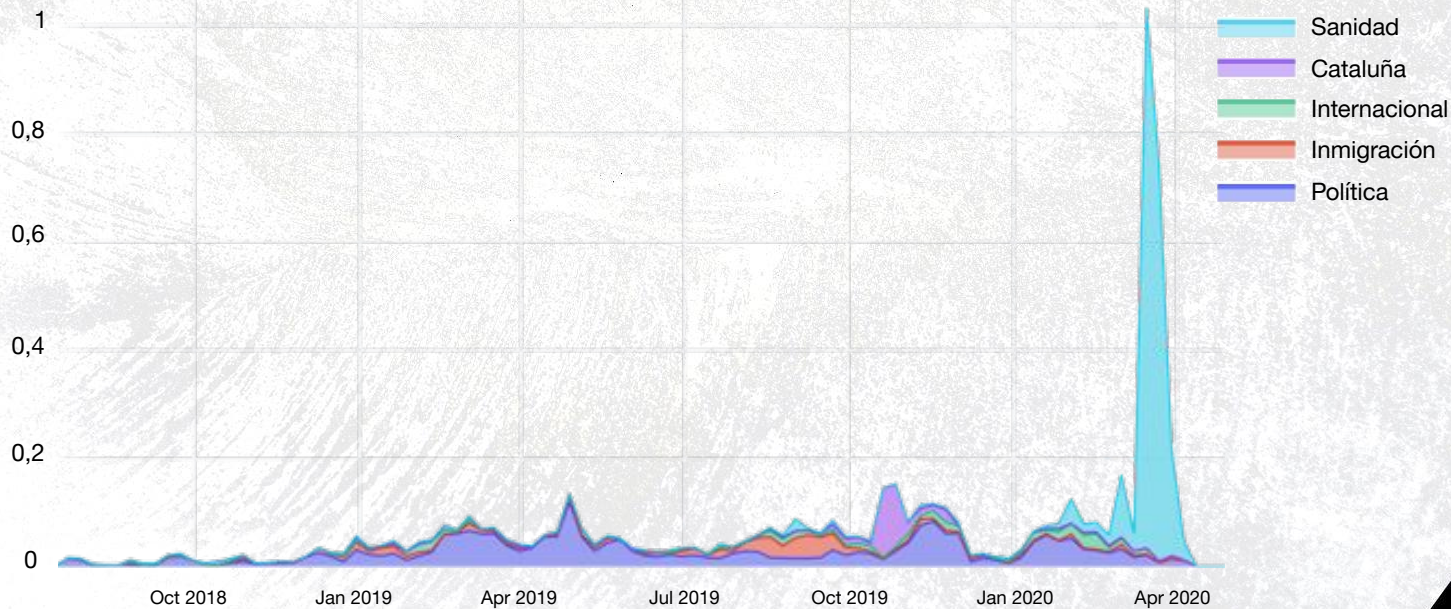


MEDIA PARTNERS:



HOW FACT-CHECKERS IN SPAIN TACKLED COVID-19 DISINFORMATION

Consultas recibidas (reescalado)



Video Campaign “*What the fake!*”

:



*‘Get vaccinated
against hoaxes’*

‘Get vaccinated against hoaxes’

- Initiative to provide the public with **tools** to counter the lies that are being spread about COVID-19 vaccines.
- Through different digital platforms (Tik Tok, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram or smart speakers) we have made available to the public simple guides to identify hoaxes and tools to dismantle them
- More than 12 different **videos**: how to know if it's a **fake tweet**, how to detect altered or out of context **images or videos**, be careful with the **pre-prints**, how to deal with **viral audios**, out-of-context data based on **unproven effects** of vaccines collected in VAERS or Eudravigilance...

WTF!

3

COMPRUEBA EL USUARIO,
NO SOLO EL NOMBRE
DE LA CUENTA



WTF!



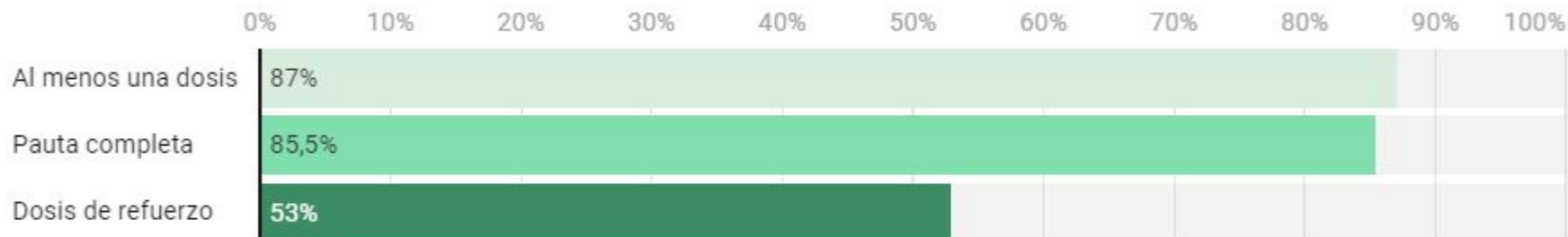
y nos ayudan a resolver las dudas más habituales
sobre el proceso de vacunación

Evolution of COVID-19 vaccination in Spain

EVOLUCIÓN DE LA VACUNACIÓN

Newtral

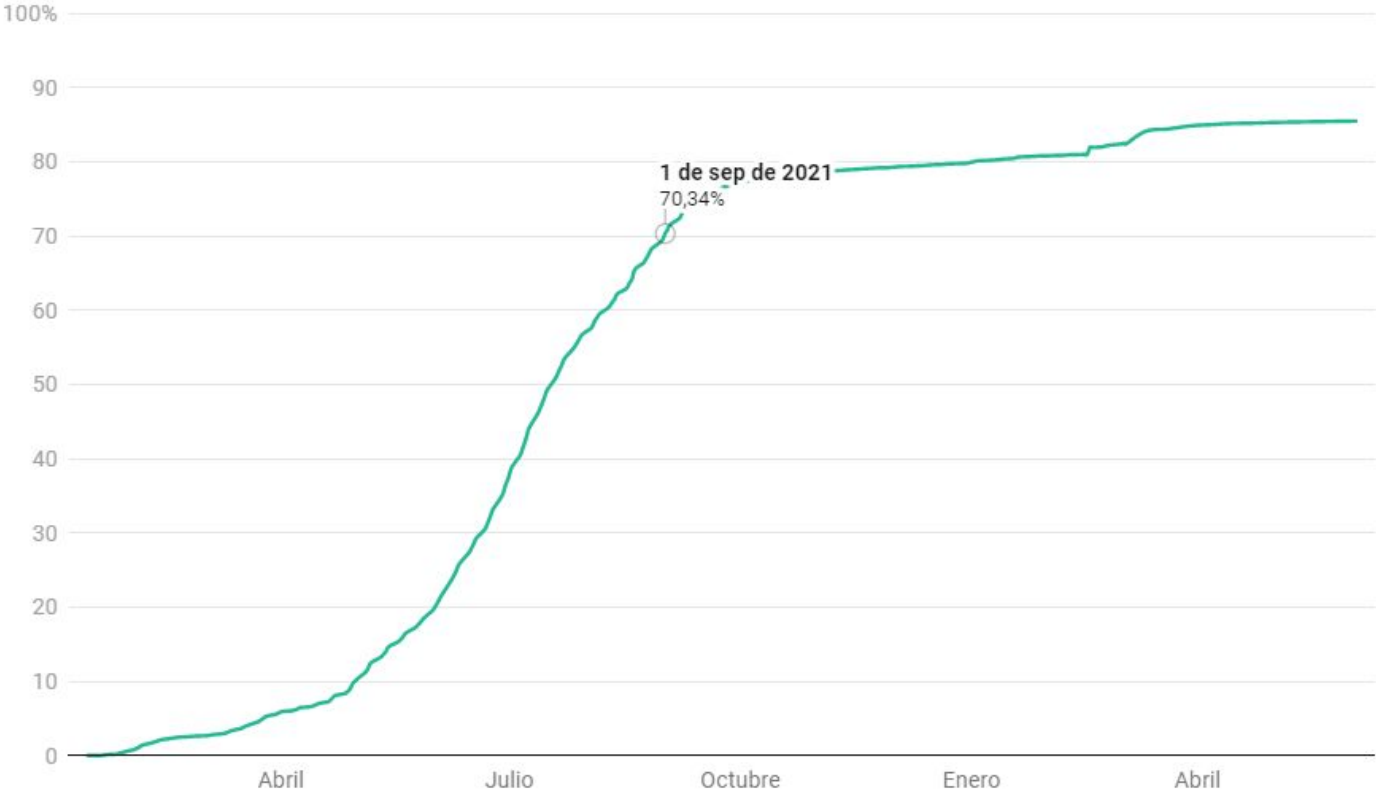
Población con...



Datos actualizados a 03 de junio de 2022

Gráfico: Newtral.es • Fuente: Ministerio de Sanidad • Creado con [Datawrapper](#)

Evolución del porcentaje de población vacunada a nivel nacional



**70% of population
fully vaccinated on
september 2021**

Datos actualizados a 03 de junio de 2022

Gráfico: Newtral.es • Fuente: [Ministerio de Sanidad](#) • [Descargar los datos](#) • Creado con [Datawrapper](#)

Covid-19 most common disinformation and misinformation

- Origin and existence of COVID-19
- Face masks
- PCR tests
- Fake Treatments (ivermectin, chlorine dioxide, hydroxychloroquine...)
- COVID-19 vaccines

Covid-19 vaccines disinformation since the beginning



False article of 'El Mundo' newspaper claiming that the first woman vaccinated against COVID-19 in Spain died 24 hours later.

Covid-19 vaccines disinformation

- Alleged adverse effects of vaccines (EudraVigilance and VAERS data taken out of context).
- Out-of-context images and videos unrelated to the application of vaccines
- Vaccine **components** (graphene, microchips, magnetic properties, heavy metals)
- Vaccination in children and its alleged adverse effects
- Scams related to vaccines and third dose administration

Preparing for the next infodemic - Keys and reflections

- Intensify **collaborative work** among verifiers at the international level. And between verifiers, health specialists and academics
- More **training in science** for citizens and also for journalists (how to read a pre-print, how to know if an article that seems scientific complies with the standards)
- Analyze **monetization of disinformers** and cut off such sources of funding
- **Internal verification** processes and departments within the media



**How Maldita turned to their
community to fight COVID-19
disinformation**

Fact-checking a global pandemic

- COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of fact-checking like no other disinformation crisis
- Good information literally saved lives, unlike hoaxes
- That's the reason why it was important to build effective communication bridges with our audience

Phases of COVID-related disinfo. in Spain

1. Videos and photos of the situation in China
2. Hoaxes about the origin of the virus
3. False remedies to avoid coronavirus
4. Political disinformation against national and regional governments
5. Anti-vax hoaxes
6. **What was it like in Namibia?**



Fact-checking a global pandemic

- Prior to the pandemic, our WhatsApp service was manually managed by one of our reporters
- People sent potential hoaxes for us to verify
- We spotted hoaxes that we weren't seeing on other platforms
- Our service received around 250 daily queries



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And then came COVID-19...



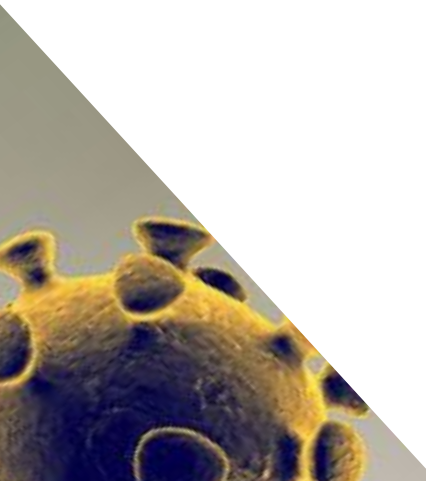
250

daily queries



+2000

daily queries



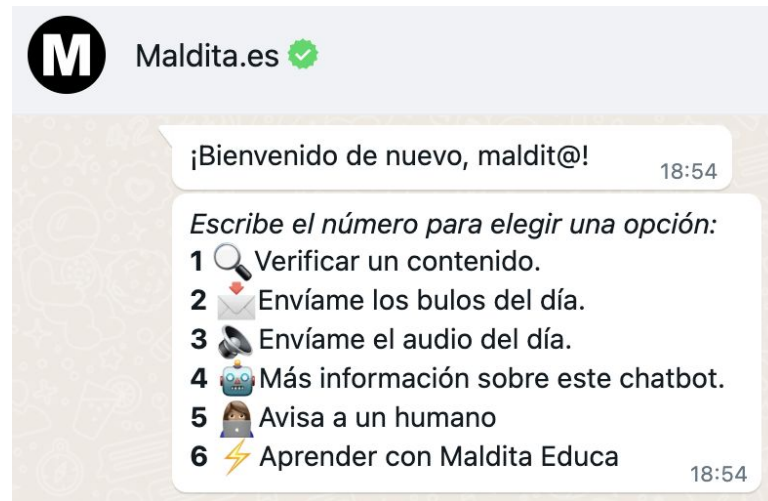


And then came COVID-19...

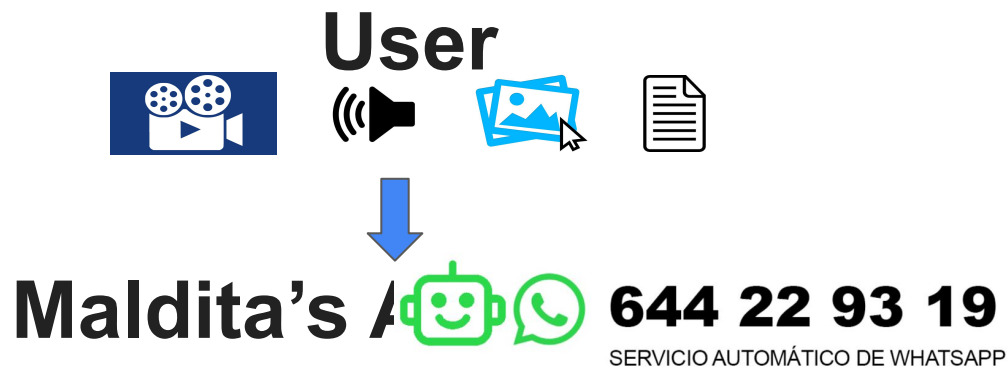
- It was impossible to manually deal with such a large amount of messages in a time when people needed quick replies
- Due to lockdown, we had to send the mobile to each other with a taxi. NOT ideal
- We weren't able to process all the valuable data that we needed in order to know what hoaxes we should prioritize
- It was clear we needed to automate the whole process

Maldita.es' chatbot

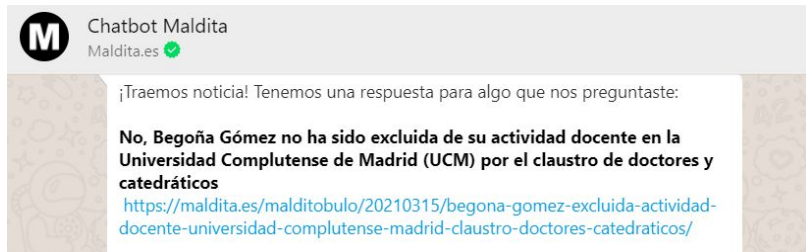
- With such a huge disinformation wave, we automated our service so we could get back to our community ASAP
- This automation meant that all of Maldita's journalists could focus on debunking disinformation



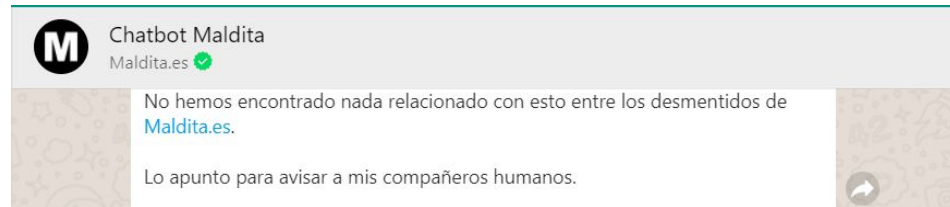
M How does it work? Disinformation verification



If we have an answer



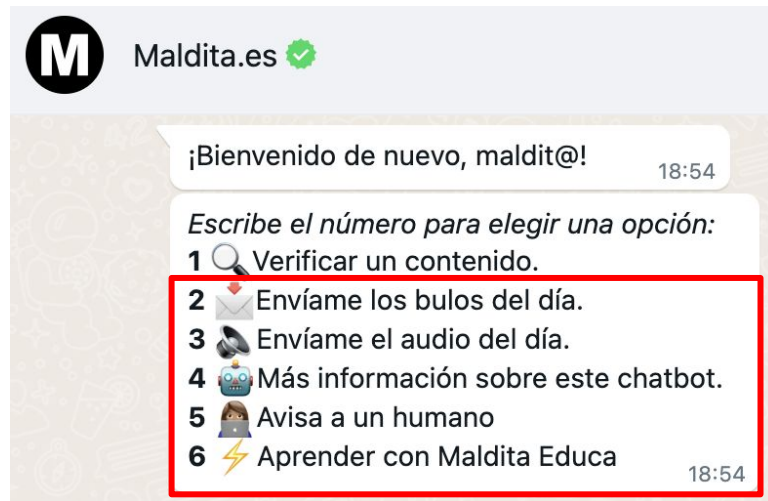
If we don't



How does it work?

- Besides verifying a potential hoax, users can also request the following:

1. A daily text/audio summary of our debunks
2. Talk to a real human
3. Take media literacy lessons



WHAT ELSE DID WE DO?

- We have not only fact-checked: users don't only need to know what's false, they also need to know what's true



WHAT ELSE DID WE DO?

- Stress + overexposure: struggle to stay informed
- We created a coronavirus landing page with information about the pandemic to condense the important in one same site.



+1000 fact-checks

La COVID-19 y sus bulos: 1.280 mentiras, alertas falsas y desinformaciones sobre el coronavirus

Publicado

27/11/2020 12:54

Actualizado

13/5/2022 17:05

Comparte



Lessons from the pandemic

- The bad:
 1. Polarization increase.
 2. Increase of pseudoscientific disinformation.
- The good:

Higher demand of reliable journalism.

