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Accuracy Prompts & News Borders - August 2022 (#103785)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?
No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
We examine the effect of applying differently colored borders around news versus social posts in a social media newsfeed on sharing and liking of social media posts. We hypothesize that colored borders with the addition of an accuracy prompt may help users more easily differentiate between news/informational posts (for which accuracy is important) and social/personal posts - i.e., both apolitical and political social/opinion posts (where accuracy is less relevant). We predict that when news stories are presented with an accuracy prompt and a distinct colored border, participants will be more discerning when sharing or liking true versus false news.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
Participants each view 24 news posts, 24 apolitical social posts, and 24 political social posts, in random order, in a simulated social media newsfeed. For each post, participants decide whether to 'like' and/or 'share' the post by clicking a 'like' and/or a 'share' button (clicking button = 1, not clicking = 0).

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
Participants will be randomly assigned to one of 3 conditions: control (no accuracy prompt or borders on any posts), newsfeed with an accuracy prompt first, or news-colored newsfeed with an accuracy prompt and purple borders on news posts (no borders on social posts).

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
Our main analyses are two general linear models with cluster robust standard errors by participant and headline item, predicting sharing and liking, respectively. As predictors, we include a 4-level headline type dummy (baseline=false, 1=true, 2=apolitical social, 3=political social), condition (baseline=control, 1=accuracy prompt only, 2=accuracy prompt plus news borders), and their interaction.

Our key test will be comparing the coefficients on the interactions between the true news dummy and the accuracy prompt vs accuracy prompt w borders dummies using a Wald test.

If there is no significant difference in the interaction between the true news dummy and the accuracy prompt vs. accuracy prompt plus news borders conditions, then we will rerun the main analysis collapsing across these two conditions (condition variable: baseline=control, 1=treatment).

We will also conduct a main analysis similar to the one described above, except with sharing or liking as a combined DV (1 = liked and/or shared, 0 = no engagement).

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.
At the beginning of the survey, participants go through a social media filter that only allows people that use Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram to complete the survey. Participants who fail a simple captcha at the beginning of the survey are also excluded from continuing to the main task. We also ask participants to practice clicking 'like' and 'share' buttons on posts prior to completing the main study DVs - participants who fail the first practice are asked to repeat this practice test, but are not excluded from the study. Participants who fail both times are still included in the study - though see secondary analyses.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.
We plan to recruit 1500 participants on Lucid.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)
We will also conduct a secondary analysis examining partisanship (z-scored) and item concordance (for news and political social headlines; 0=apolitical social, -0.5=discordant, 0.5=concordant; COVID-related news items classified via pretest data) as potential moderators in our main analysis.

As another secondary analysis, we will also conduct our main analysis, except excluding those who never correctly answered the practice newsfeed questions on either their first or second try. We will also re-conduct our main analysis excluding those who failed all pre-treatment attention checks.