Supplementary material
Academic explanatory journalism and emerging COVID-19 science
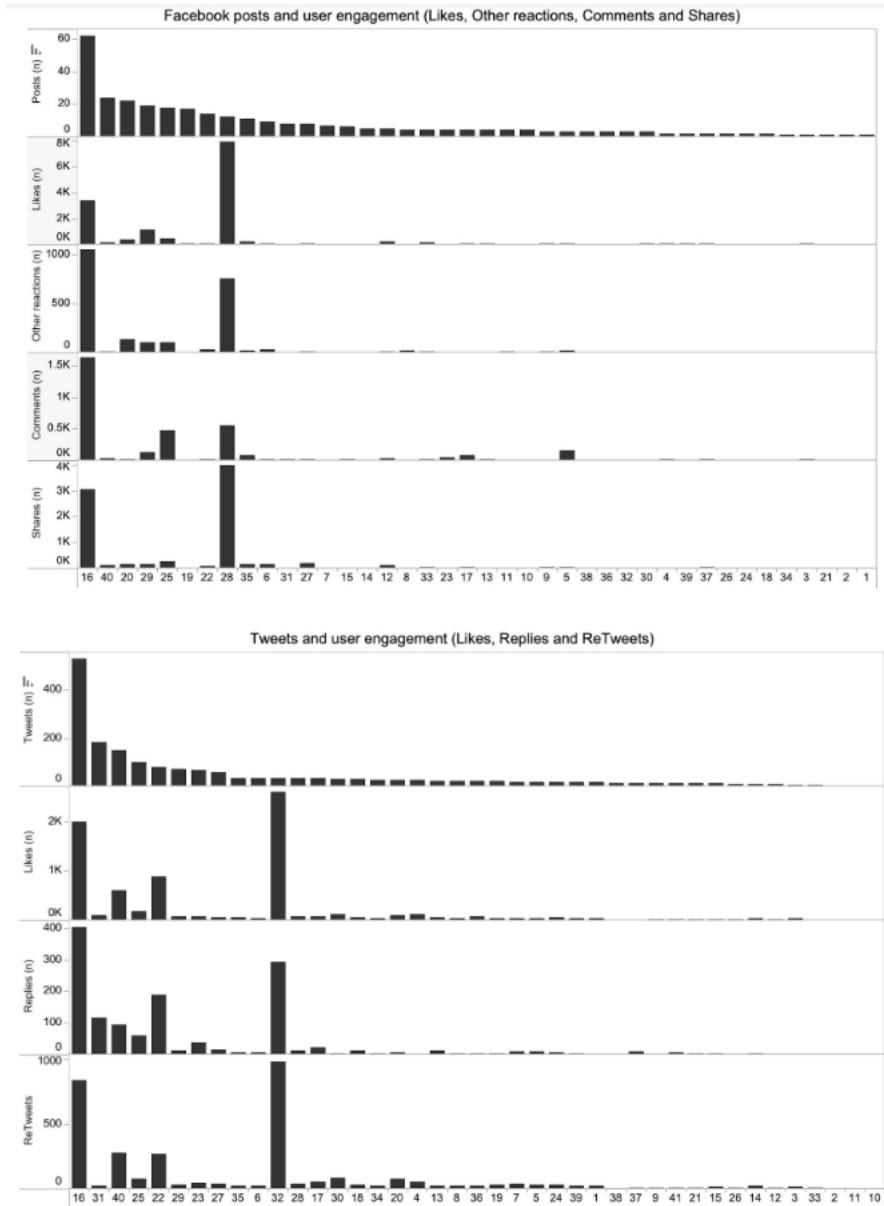

Figure 1. Twitter and Facebook engagement with The Conversation media stories mentioning COVID-19 preprints

TC article no	FB posts (n)	Comments (n)	Likes (n)	Shares (n)	Other reactions (n)
16	61	1627	3369	3068	1049
40	24	30	148	115	13
20	20	22	413	137	133
25	18	478	470	263	106
29	18	130	1168	152	101
19	15	3	47	19	5
22	14	11	94	60	30
28	12	555	7912	3985	752
35	11	84	255	144	16
6	9	12	85	146	26
27	8	21	101	181	15
31	8	9	19	6	0
14	5	0	4	9	1
8	4	3	28	18	16
10	4	1	20	10	4
11	4	4	38	8	7
12	4	25	214	123	12
13	4	14	47	12	5
17	4	80	69	33	2
23	4	44	36	11	2
33	4	20	116	57	6
5	3	162	55	27	20
7	3	3	20	13	1
9	3	1	54	40	6
15	3	10	5	3	1
30	3	3	43	12	0
32	3	2	9	9	4
36	3	0	14	5	1
38	3	5	25	19	2
4	2	14	46	9	3
18	2	0	1	0	0
24	2	0	12	5	0
26	2	0	10	6	0
37	2	11	42	39	4
39	2	4	42	7	4
1	1	0	10	1	0
2	1	0	1	2	0
3	1	15	62	7	1
21	1	0	8	1	1
34	1	6	11	9	2

TC article no	Tweets (n)	Likes (n)	Retweets (n)	Replies (n)
16	530	1,988	839	404
31	183	93	24	117
40	147	596	279	95
25	98	174	73	59
22	80	884	266	188
29	70	81	34	14
23	66	88	45	38
27	57	70	40	15
35	35	70	25	5
6	32	43	22	5
32	32	2,594	986	292
28	31	73	36	12
17	31	72	50	21
30	28	114	84	3
18	28	59	31	12
34	26	45	26	3
20	26	91	79	7
4	23	118	55	1
13	21	52	23	12
8	20	46	20	2
36	19	87	26	2
19	19	44	30	3
7	18	31	35	8
5	18	45	31	10
24	18	51	33	7
39	17	37	22	4
1	15	37	20	1
38	14	10	2	1
37	14	7	8	9
9	12	24	10	1
41	12	19	4	5
21	12	12	9	2
15	11	16	12	3
26	10	22	10	1
14	10	42	24	4
12	7	14	7	0
3	6	34	17	0
33	4	10	8	1
2	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0

Table 1. Twitter and Facebook engagement with The Conversation media stories mentioning COVID-19 preprints

Story number	Story title	Publication date	Story URL
1	How social media is changing research and reactions to coronavirus outbreak	30/1/20	https://theconversation.com/how-social-media-is-changing-research-and-reactions-to-coronavirus-outbreak-130748
2	R0: How scientists quantify the intensity of an outbreak like coronavirus and predict the pandemic's spread	5/2/20	https://theconversation.com/r0-how-scientists-quantify-the-intensity-of-an-outbreak-like-coronavirus-and-predict-the-pandemics-spread-130777
3	Yes, Australians on board the Diamond Princess need to go into quarantine again. It's time to reset the clock	20/2/20	https://theconversation.com/yes-australians-on-board-the-diamond-princess-need-to-go-into-quarantine-again-its-time-to-reset-the-clock-131906
4	The hunt for a coronavirus cure is showing how science can change for the better	24/2/20	https://theconversation.com/the-hunt-for-a-coronavirus-cure-is-showing-how-science-can-change-for-the-better-132130
5	COVID-19 death toll estimated to reach 3,900 by next Friday, according to AI modelling	6/3/20	https://theconversation.com/covid-19-death-toll-estimated-to-reach-3-900-by-next-friday-according-to-ai-modelling-133052
6	How big will the coronavirus epidemic be? An epidemiologist updates his concerns	9/3/20	https://theconversation.com/how-big-will-the-coronavirus-epidemic-be-an-epidemiologist-updates-his-concerns-133133
7	Scientists are still searching for the source of COVID-19: why it matters	12/3/20	https://theconversation.com/scientists-are-still-searching-for-the-source-of-covid-19-why-it-matters-133467
8	Coronavirus: Three lessons from the AIDS crisis	16/3/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-three-lessons-from-the-aids-crisis-133575
9	Viruses live on doorknobs and phones and can get you sick—smart cleaning and good habits can help protect you	17/3/20	https://theconversation.com/viruses-live-on-doorknobs-and-phones-and-can-get-you-sick-smart-cleaning-and-good-habits-can-help-protect-you-133054
10	Fleeing from the coronavirus is dangerous for you, the people you encounter along the way and wherever you end up	23/3/20	https://theconversation.com/fleeing-from-the-coronavirus-is-dangerous-for-you-the-people-you-encounter-along-the-way-and-wherever-you-end-up-133995

11	Coronavirus: are people with blood group A really at higher risk of catching COVID-19?	23/3/20	http://theconversation.com/coronavirus-are-people-with-blood-group-a-really-at-higher-risk-of-catching-covid-19-134181
12	How can I treat myself if I've got—or think I've got—coronavirus?	27/3/20	https://theconversation.com/how-can-i-treat-myself-if-ive-got-or-think-ive-got-coronavirus-134654
13	Coronavirus: loss of smell and taste reported as early symptoms of COVID-19	27/3/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-loss-of-smell-and-taste-reported-as-early-symptoms-of-covid-19-134564
14	Coronavirus FAQs: Can people without symptoms spread COVID-19? How long does it live on surfaces? What cleaning products kill the virus?	29/3/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-faqs-can-people-without-symptoms-spread-covid-19-how-long-does-it-live-on-surfaces-what-cleaning-products-kill-the-virus-134945
15	Predicting COVID-19: what applying a model in Kenya would look like	30/3/20	https://theconversation.com/predicting-covid-19-what-applying-a-model-in-kenya-would-look-like-134675
16	A small trial finds that hydroxychloroquine is not effective for treating coronavirus	3/4/20	https://theconversation.com/a-small-trial-finds-that-hydroxychloroquine-is-not-effective-for-treating-coronavirus-135484
17	Should everyone be wearing face masks? It's complicated	8/4/20	https://theconversation.com/should-everyone-be-wearing-face-masks-its-complicated-135548
18	Coronavirus: what causes a 'second wave' of disease outbreak, and could we see this in Australia?	9/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-what-causes-a-second-wave-of-disease-outbreak-and-could-we-see-this-in-australia-134125
19	Coronavirus: where do new viruses come from?	14/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-where-do-new-viruses-come-from-136105
20	Wildfire smoke worsens coronavirus risk, putting firefighters in extra danger	15/4/20	https://theconversation.com/wildfire-smoke-worsens-coronavirus-risk-putting-firefighters-in-extra-danger-136016
21	Coronavirus: could the pandemic be controlled using existing vaccines like MMR or BCG?	21/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-could-the-pandemic-be-controlled-using-existing-vaccines-like-mmr-or-bcg-136429
22	Blood sugar levels may influence vulnerability to coronavirus, and controlling them through conventional means might be protective	22/4/20	https://theconversation.com/blood-sugar-levels-may-influence-vulnerability-to-coronavirus-and-controlling-them-through-conventional-means-might-be-protective-136592

23	Coronavirus: are we underestimating how many people have had it? Sweden thinks so	23/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-are-we-underestimating-how-many-people-have-had-it-sweden-thinks-so-136893
24	Flushing is our next weapon against COVID-19, if you're happy to have your sewage scrutinised	24/4/20	https://theconversation.com/flushing-is-our-next-weapon-against-covid-19-if-youre-happy-to-have-your-sewage-scrutinised-136844
25	5 reasons it's safe for kids to go back to school	26/4/20	https://theconversation.com/5-reasons-its-safe-for-kids-to-go-back-to-school-137064
26	In search of coronavirus treatments—the opportunities and challenges of using existing drugs	27/4/20	https://theconversation.com/in-search-of-coronavirus-treatments-the-opportunities-and-challenges-of-using-existing-drugs-136899
27	The coronavirus genome is like a shipping label that lets epidemiologists track where it's been	27/4/20	https://theconversation.com/the-coronavirus-genome-is-like-a-shipping-label-that-lets-epidemiologists-track-where-its-been-136826
28	Evidence obesity is a risk factor for serious illness with coronavirus is mounting, even if you're young	28/4/20	https://theconversation.com/evidence-obesity-is-a-risk-factor-for-serious-illness-with-coronavirus-is-mounting-even-if-youre-young-137081
29	Infected with the coronavirus but not showing symptoms? A physician answers 5 questions about asymptomatic COVID-19	30/4/20	https://theconversation.com/infected-with-the-coronavirus-but-not-showing-symptoms-a-physician-answers-5-questions-about-asymptomatic-covid-19-137029
30	What you need to know about how coronavirus is changing science	5/5/20	https://theconversation.com/what-you-need-to-know-about-how-coronavirus-is-changing-science-137641
31	Coronavirus tests are pretty accurate, but far from perfect	6/5/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-tests-are-pretty-accurate-but-far-from-perfect-136671
32	Maybe coronavirus's aggressiveness could be changed by adding or subtracting sugar molecules from its spike protein	7/5/20	https://theconversation.com/maybe-coronaviruss-aggressiveness-could-be-changed-by-adding-or-subtracting-sugar-molecules-from-its-spike-protein-137388
33	As restrictions ease, here are 5 crucial ways for Australia to stay safely on top of COVID-19	12/5/20	https://theconversation.com/as-restrictions-ease-here-are-5-crucial-ways-for-australia-to-stay-safely-on-top-of-covid-19-138000

34	We designed an experimental AI tool to predict which COVID-19 patients are going to get the sickest	14/5/20	https://theconversation.com/we-designed-an-experimental-ai-tool-to-predict-which-covid-19-patients-are-going-to-get-the-sickest-136125
35	How do you stay safe now that states are reopening? An expert explains how to assess risk when reconnecting with friends and family	18/5/20	https://theconversation.com/how-do-you-stay-safe-now-that-states-are-reopening-an-expert-explains-how-to-assess-risk-when-reconnecting-with-friends-and-family-138518
36	Rapid home-based coronavirus tests are coming together in research labs, we're working on analyzing spit using advanced CRISPR gene editing techniques	20/5/20	https://theconversation.com/rapid-home-based-coronavirus-tests-are-coming-together-in-research-labs-were-working-on-analyzing-spit-using-advanced-crispr-gene-editing-techniques-138064
37	How to lower your coronavirus risk while eating out: Restaurant advice from an infectious disease expert	21/5/20	https://theconversation.com/how-to-lower-your-coronavirus-risk-while-eating-out-restaurant-advice-from-an-infectious-disease-expert-138925
38	How leadership in various countries has affected COVID-19 response effectiveness	27/5/20	https://theconversation.com/how-leadership-in-various-countries-has-affected-covid-19-response-effectiveness-138692
39	Coronavirus may wane this summer, but don't count on any seasonal variation to end the pandemic	15/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-may-wane-this-summer-but-dont-count-on-any-seasonal-variation-to-end-the-pandemic-136218
40	Coronavirus drifts through the air in microscopic droplets—here's the science of infectious aerosols	24/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-drifts-through-the-air-in-microscopic-droplets-heres-the-science-of-infectious-aerosols-136663?
41	Coronavirus: there's no one perfect model of the disease	3/4/20	https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-weve-had-imperial-oxford-and-many-more-models-but-none-can-have-all-the-answers-135137

Table 2. The full list of The Conversation titles and hyperlinks

Facebook Codes	Krippendorff's alpha
Facebook Space Type	0.948
Twitter Account Type	0.867
Facebook Space Actor Group	0.907
Twitter Account Actor Group	0.816

Table 3. Intercoder Reliability for Facebook and Twitter coding

Space Type	Likes			Reactions			Shares			Comments		
	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD
Group	5.74	2	22.69	9.25	1	28.88	2.32	0	9.63	5.84	0	18.78
Page	98.58	6	692.35	89.06	4	509.62	57.15	3	369.49	17	0	68.98
Public Profile	32.83	7	79.44	35.72	8.5	89.65	20.83	4.5	52.31	8.83	1	26.75
Unknown	16.75	2.5	33.59	27.83	2	56.36	19.5	2	38.04	4.83	0	9.56

Table 4. Engagement by Facebook Space Type

Account Type	Likes			Retweets			Replies		
	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD
Group	3.82	1.5	6.02	2.38	1	3.43	0.24	0	0.65
Individual	7.11	0	83.53	2.83	0	31.19	1.1	0	10.73
Unknown	0.87	0	3.09	0.37	0	1.99	0.45	0	0.82

Table 5. Engagement by Twitter Account Type

Actor Group	Likes			Reactions			Shares			Comments		
	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD
Academia	19.44	11	23.34	15.15	6	18.71	9.37	3	14.15	3.52	0	7.67
Business	1.33	0	2.31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Citizen	61.55	2	603.47	44.38	1	401.73	27.95	0	301.7	9.61	0	46.42
Civil Society Organisation	6.73	3	10.1	3.73	1	5.96	2	1	3.42	1	0	2.48
Healthcare	9	2.5	12.68	8.88	1	14.12	4.25	0	7.42	2.75	0	4.86
Media and Communication	26.59	8	48.04	45.66	6	106	22.18	4	43.83	18.67	0	60.96
Political Actor	126.33	5	432.59	208.93	4	705.27	132.13	2	445.88	27.2	0	88.95
Unknown	18.25	4	33.17	30.83	6.5	55.69	22.17	2	37.67	5	0	9.49

Table 6. Facebook engagement by actor group

Actor Group	Likes			Retweets			Replies		
	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD
Academia	9.68	1	31.82	4.62	0	16.03	0.8	0	2.42
Business	2.38	0	6.17	1.01	0	3.1	0.39	0	0.84
Citizen	1.11	0	4.04	0.34	0	1.45	0.4	0	0.75
Civil Society Organisation	2.15	1	3.75	1.52	1	2.78	0.19	0	0.48
Healthcare	1.93	0	3.09	0.69	0	1.03	0.4	0	0.83
Media and Communication	12.95	1	125.8	5.51	0	46.52	1.89	0	16.27
Political Actor	2.91	1	4.28	1.45	0	2.38	0.73	0	1.01
Unknown	0.77	0	2.71	0.28	0	1.42	0.4	0	0.78

Table 7. Twitter engagement across actor groups