



MONDAY
Politics

TUESDAY
Build the Change

WEDNESDAY
Sport

THURSDAY
Science

FRIDAY
Culture

THE DAY
Build a better world



NEWS DETECTIVES

TODAY'S BIG STORY

Fake facts about climate fooling TikTok users

Is social media helpful or harmful? An investigation has found that videos denying climate change are still racking up millions of views on TikTok.

Did you know that climate change is a **hoax** — or “the greatest fraud that has been perpetrated on mankind”?

Of course you did not. That is because it is not true.

But that did not stop millions of people on TikTok from seeing videos where people spread wild misinformation about the climate.

The Chinese social media giant banned climate denial from its platform in April. However, an investigation by reporters found that a video calling global warming “the greatest fraud” had been viewed more than nine million times.



Ticked off: The spread of false news on social media is not a new problem.

THE STORY SO FAR

Concern about misinformation and fake news became widespread in the media in the 2000s and 2010s as billions of people began to use social media.

Another video, of a popular **podcast**, discussed a completely made up theory that the Earth’s **magnetic poles** reverse every 6,500 years, “causing heating like we’ve never experienced”. It quickly gained more than 20 million views.

The scientific evidence that global warming is real is **overwhelming**.

Yet platforms like TikTok are flooded with people who deny this evidence, just as they deny evidence for vaccines or even the nonexistence of **Bigfoot**.

This has led many to demand ever tougher **measures** against misinformation. But Dr Doug McNeill, a scientist from the Met Office’s Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, wonders if this might be a losing battle.

“Maybe we should focus on promoting good climate science information,” he says, “rather than just removing the content that we perhaps don’t like.”

KEY WORDS

Hoax: Lie

Fraud: When someone makes something up for personal gain

Perpetrated: Committed, done

Podcast: A recorded discussion

Magnetic poles: Where the Earth’s magnetic field points

Overwhelming: Undeniable

Bigfoot: A mythical creature

Measures: Policies or actions



YOU DECIDE

Is social media helpful or harmful?

HELPFUL. More people come together to fight climate change on TikTok than to deny it. It helps.

HARMFUL. Social media wastes your time, even if you do not fall for false news.



THE DETECTIVE ZONE

Build THE Change



CREATE YOUR DESIGN

False news spreads easily online. In this challenge, you will design a poster or plan a short video to share some real facts about the environment or climate change.

STEP 1:

Think about your design! What is important to you? What do you want to tell people about? How will you make your poster or video as interesting as possible?

STEP 2:

Make your poster or write a plan for your video. If you have time, you could even work in groups to make the video or present your poster to the class.

Share your genius
Show your work to your class!



Upload a photo of your work to the **Build the Change** gallery by scanning the QR code and have your work displayed to inspire real-world change.



BUILDER OF THE WEEK

We've had so many brilliant ideas sent into our Build the Change Gallery so far this year we wanted to share them with you all. Every week we'll handpick one of the most inspirational designs to be our BUILDER OF THE WEEK.

If your photo is used, you'll be entered into a prize draw to win a huge box of LEGO® bricks. To be in with a chance of winning, get your grown up to photograph your creation and upload it to our Build the Change gallery, using the QR code above.



This week's winner is a huge, colourful 8ft x 4ft 'Wellbeing Wall' celebrating Diversity Week!

"GREAT WORK!"



Which country is the biggest user of TikTok?



- A) China
- B) US
- C) India
- D) Australia

Talking point

Are there some topics that cannot be fact checked?

Amaze someone

TikTok is not the only way that strange behaviours and beliefs spread. In Alsace, France, in 1518, a "plague" of dancing carried on for weeks.

In Tanzania in 1962, an epidemic of laughing broke out in a school, leaving 1,000 people laughing uncontrollably for days.

THE EXTRA PAGE

Social media stuck with climate lies

Earlier this year, TikTok vowed to clamp down on climate change denial. But a BBC investigation tracked one video that has been viewed millions of times — and found the company is struggling to stop false climate information from spreading across the platform.

If you searched for "climate change" on TikTok in recent months, you might have come across a video featuring Dan Peña, a self-styled "business success coach" with thousands of followers on social media.

The video shows a heated exchange between the American businessman and a member of the audience.

Asked what "the people with the money" will do about climate change, he replies: "The financial institutions and the banks know [climate change] is not going to happen."

He adds, without providing any credible evidence: "It's the greatest fraud that has been perpetrated on mankind this century."

Contacted by journalists, Mr Peña stood by these comments.

Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that human activity is leading to rapid climate change and threatening every aspect of human life.

But while Mr Peña's statements



Falling short: Social media policies on climate denial are not properly enforced.

conflict with that scientific evidence, this clip appears to have been edited and re-uploaded by other users dozens of times, racking up more than nine million views in the process.

Under new community guidelines unveiled by TikTok last April, for Earth Month, content that "undermines well-established scientific consensus" on climate change will not be allowed on the platform.

And yet the BBC identified 365 different videos in English denying the existence of man-made climate change.

In a statement to the BBC, TikTok said it is working "to empower informed climate discussions", and that it is working with fact-checkers to tackle misinformation.

After the BBC shared the findings of their investigation with TikTok, 65 accounts that had been posting

wrong information about climate change in breach of the platform's guidelines were permanently removed.

However, at the time of writing, several copies of the clip featuring Mr Peña describing climate change as the "greatest fraud" could still be found on the app.

Dr Doug McNeill, a scientist from the Met Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research welcomes TikTok's efforts against misinformation, but he questions whether this is a battle the company can win.

"Maybe we should focus on promoting good climate science information," he says, "rather than just removing the content that we perhaps don't like." ■

This is an edited version of a story from
© BBC News [30/06/2023]

Read more on this topic



Where the River runs Gold by Sita Bramachari

Hachette



Stuff by Maddy Moate and Paul Boston

Penguin

Answer to the puzzle

TikTok question

B) US which has over 138 million users

**Build
THE Change**

This week's challenge is part of the LEGO® Build the Change programme. It can be done at school or as homework, and parents can help upload photos of pupils' work to the online gallery.



Visit the gallery at <https://bit.ly/btcgallery> and feel free to use it as discussion point in class.