

Responding to COVID-19

Mozilla submission to the European Commission

February 2021

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1. Introduction

This document provides an overview of Mozilla’s ongoing product and policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU and more broadly. It has been compiled in the context of the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation, as per the request of Krisztina Stump, Head of Unit, Unit I4, European Commission DG CNECT.

Mozilla is the Corporation behind the Firefox web browser and the Pocket “read-it-later” application; products that are used by hundreds of millions of individuals around the world. Mozilla’s parent company is a not-for-profit foundation that focuses on fuelling the movement for a healthy internet. Mozilla is also a global community of thousands of contributors and developers who work together to keep the internet open and accessible for all.

Mozilla is a unique signatory to the Code of Practice on Disinformation, and that uniqueness is reflected in this updated submission. Most notably, Mozilla does not operate a content-focused social media platform - our primary product is the Firefox web browser. Our efforts to respond to disinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic have thus predominantly taken the form of security and privacy interventions; transparency initiatives; and interventions to help individuals make informed choices online. Many of these interventions fall outside the scope of the Commission's reporting framework.

In spite of the continued economic ramifications of the pandemic (that have impacted Mozilla both financially and in terms of headcount) we have nonetheless sought to sustain our efforts to support the response to COVID-19 in the ways that we can. We are acutely

aware that we do not have the resources or reach of others in the tech sector; but we are likewise mindful that every little bit helps. This report provides an overview of the efforts relevant to the Commission's reporting framework.

2. Our effort in numbers

5,800,000,000 impressions amongst Firefox users across the EU of our Pocked-curated authoritative content related to COVID-19.

50,000 pageviews of Pocket's curated collection of science journalist Ed Yong's Pandemic 'must reads', that focus on bringing authoritative information on everything from vaccines, to social distancing, to life in the new-normal.

89,000 pageviews (aggregate) of Pocket's pandemic-themed curated collections, that included 'Living through the pandemic' and 'How past plagues and pandemics have shaped human history'.

45,000 global views of our Mozilla Foundation 'Debates and Dialogues' series, that promoted authoritative information on pandemic disinformation and the US elections.

3. Promoting authoritative content and consumer awareness

Early in the pandemic we recognised the importance of quality and accurate information related to public health and broader crisis issues. To that end, we have continued to harness key consumer touch points in the Firefox web browser and our curated reader application Pocket. These interventions focused on elevating authoritative and useful public interest content related to the pandemic, to help consumers navigate through the information disorder that continue to pose challenges. Finally, the Mozilla Foundation continued to play an important convening role, bringing together key experts and stakeholders in a series of public virtual events to discuss and elevate authoritative information on key societal issues related to the pandemic.

1.1 Pocket

Throughout the second half of 2020, Pocket continued to invest heavily in its **flagship coronavirus hub**, a dynamic page featuring curated news, analysis and long reads about the pandemic from around the globe. Content on the coronavirus hub is updated on a daily basis. Between August and December 2020, the hub received more than 890,000 pageviews from more than 610,000 users around the globe.

In addition, Pocket published **curated collections on coronavirus** on the Pocket blog that proved hugely successful. For instance, in H2 2020 Pocket collaborated with esteemed science journalist Ed Yong of The Atlantic magazine to provide readers with authoritative, informative, and insightful content on the pandemic and what it means for individuals and society. Ed Yong’s collection for Pocket titled ‘[Must read stories of the pandemic](#)’ received over 50,000 pageviews. Other notable Pocket collections included ‘[Living through the Pandemic](#)’ (19,000 pageviews) and ‘[How past plagues and pandemics have shaped human history](#)’ (15,000 pageviews).

Pocket also harnessed the power of our Firefox web browser to bring this authoritative pandemic-related information and news directly to European citizens. **Via Firefox New Tab**, individuals from across the EU accessed relevant public interest information that they could trust.

The table below gives an overview of how many times this authoritative content was surfaced to individuals in the EU, and how often they accessed it.

Country	Impressions	Clicks
DE	5,425,272,747	52,225,042
AT	347,063,349	2,018,519
IE	39,426,506	166,734
NL	6,156,157	42,136
BE	5,809,168	43,179
FR	4,268,956	34,105
IT	3,148,501	30,709
ES	2,626,521	23,305
PL	2,192,328	11,634
DK	1,960,702	19,989

SE	1,697,275	11,952
RO	1,647,508	6,304
CZ	1,058,110	7,743
FI	861,559	3,818
PT	855,839	7,988
HU	777,565	4,612
BG	724,316	2,991
LU	634,458	4,396
HR	564,287	6,017
SK	536,508	1,948
LT	247,765	940
CY	186,763	1,243
LV	168,776	956
SI	159,679	1,318
EE	137,242	746

Ultimately, through these initiatives, Pocket has helped bring COVID-19 authoritative and public interest information directly to consumers.

1.2 Mozilla Foundation convening and advocacy

Throughout the pandemic, the Mozilla Foundation has sought to use its powerful voice and position as steward for the healthy internet movement to ensure authoritative and informative discourse around COVID-19 and the issues it raises.

This effort continued in the second half of 2020, most notably via the medium of the **Mozilla Foundation’s virtual [Dialogues and Debates series](#)**. Dialogues and Debates brings together experts from around the world to discuss the most pressing issues facing technology and society.

Following on from the three coronavirus-themed virtual events in the first half of 2020, the Foundation hosted [two more installments](#) in October and November 2020. The events

were dedicated to online misinformation around the US Presidential Election, for which COVID-19 misinformation is a regrettable feature.

The October and November 'Debates and Dialogues' event on misinformation amassed a viewership of 45,000 from around the globe.