infowars.com

A far-right website run by radio host Alex Jones that has reported that 9/11 was orchestrated by the U.S. government and the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School was a hoax, among other falsehoods.

Ownership and Financing
Infowars.com is owned by Free Speech Systems LLC, a limited liability company registered in Texas. State documents reveal Alex Jones as the company’s manager. Infowars finances itself by selling nutritional supplements and survival gear. A description of Jones on Infowars.com says that “Alex has never taken a loan and is not beholden to advertisers, investors or any other group that could censor or influence his position.”

Infowars.com runs advertisements for the products sold on Infowarsstore.com, which is also owned by Free Speech Systems LLC. On his talk show, which is broadcast on radio stations across the country and live-streamed on Infowars.com, Jones’ promotes and sells these same products. A former staffer told Buzzfeed in 2017 the system is “like QVC for conspiracy.” Facebook, Apple, YouTube, and Spotify have banned the InfoWars podcast.

NewsGuard sent three emails to an Infowars’ media contact email address, as well as messages to two editors through the site’s messaging system and a voicemail left on a media line phone number, seeking comment on the site’s business model. None of the emails or messages drew a response.

Content
Infowars.com is the online platform for Jones’ show, which runs six days a week, as well as the many videos he uploads to the internet. Infowars.com live-streams the show and publishes video clips and full episodes on its homepage.

The site publishes news articles on its homepage that are written by staff members. Next to those stories, it publishes stories from other news outlets. Infowars.com usually does this by republishing the first few paragraphs of the story from another website, and then providing a link to the original story.

News articles are published in sections including U.S. News, World News, Economy, World At War, Globalism, Science & Technology, and Health. Typical headlines have included “DEEP STATER UNMASKED: FBI AGENT FAULTED FOR ‘SIGNIFICANT ERRORS’ IN FISA REPORT IDENTIFIED,” “BIZARRE: 9-YEAR-OLD COMES OUT TO PETE BUTTIGIEG DURING CAMPAIGN RALLY,” “WHITE LIVES DON’T MATTER’ SIGNS APPEAR IN CANADIAN CITY, MEDIA IGNORES,” and “TOP INVESTOR ASKS FOR ADVICE ON STOCKPLUNGE FOOD.”

Buzzfeed reported in 2017 that Infowars routinely posts content without seeking the publisher’s permission, taking articles from more than a dozen outlets, including The New York Times, conservative site Breitbart, BBC, CNN, and Buzzfeed itself. Buzzfeed also reported that in the previous three years, Infowars copied more than 1,000 articles from RT, the Russian-sponsored propaganda site.

Two of the sites with stories published on Infowars told NewsGuard they had not given permission for their content to be shared on the site. Infowars did not reply to four emails seeking comment about this practice.

Credibility
Stories and videos on Infowars.com, including clips and episodes from Jones’ show, have claimed that 9/11 was orchestrated by the Bush administration, that the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary that left 20 children dead was a “giant hoax,” that NASA is sending child sex slaves to Mars, that Hillary Clinton is a literal “demon” and an “interdimensional invader” who ran a child sex ring out of a Washington pizza restaurant, that former President Barack Obama engineered Hurricane Sandy in order to help win the 2012 election, and that Bill Gates is attempting to “sterilize and destroy the third world through vaccinations.”

In February 2020, the site promoted the theory that the virus at the center of the 2019-20 coronavirus outbreak was a manufactured bioweapon. For example, a February 2020 article, headlined “FULL TRANSCRIPT OF ‘SMOKING GUN’ BOMBSHHELL INTERVIEW: PROF. FRANCES BOYLE EXPOSES THE BIOWEAPONS ORIGINS OF THE COVID-19 CORONARVIRUS,” transcribed an interview conducted by Jones. The article featured unquestioned assertions that the virus “was engineered,” that “China bought weaponized Wuhan Virus” from the U.S., and that “Wuhan was working with an institute in Australia to DNA genetically engineer a super bioweapon involving SARS and HIV.”

There is no evidence to back any of these claims. The World Health Organization has stated that the virus likely originated in bats. According to an article published by three epidemiologists in the New England Journal of Medicine, “RNA sequences closely resemble those of viruses that silently circulate in bats, and epidemiologic information implicates a bat-origin virus infecting unidentified animal species sold in China’s live-animal markets.”
In March 2020, Jones promoted what he called “nanosilver” products sold through Infowars.com as a treatment for the COVID-19 virus. “The patented nanosilver we have, the Pentagon has come out and documented and Homeland Security has said this stuff kills the whole SARS-corona family at point-blank range,” Jones said on the March 10, 2020, edition of The Alex Jones Show.

“Nanosilver,” also known as colloidal silver, is a liquid product containing silver particles. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, says on its website that “scientific evidence doesn’t support the use of colloidal silver dietary supplements for any disease or condition.” In a February 2020 article by The Associated Press, NCCIH director Helene Langevin said, “There are no complementary products, such as colloidal silver or herbal remedies, that have been proven effective in preventing or treating this disease (COVID-19), and colloidal silver can have serious side effects.”

On March 12, 2020, New York Attorney General Letitia James sent Jones a cease-and-desist letter stating that Jones’s promotion of silver and other products to cure or prevent COVID-19 violate New York’s consumer protection laws prohibiting “fraudulent and deceptive business practices and false advertising.”

In 2018, Alex Jones used Infowars.com to spread the theory that Anthony Bourdain, who took his own life in June 2018, may have been murdered because he “was planning to go public against the deep state.” Also in 2018, Infowars has helped spread the “Qanon” conspiracy theory, which holds that President Trump is planning to launch a massive purge of the “deep state” and celebrity pedophile rings, a belief based on the cryptic writings of an anonymous online poster who goes by “Q.” On July 5, 2018, Infowars published a post with the headline “Breaking: Democrats Plan To Launch Civil War On July 4th.” In the post, a clip of Jones warning about the civil war was titled “Democrats Announce America’s Last 4th of July.”

Because Infowars publishes false claims and debunked conspiracy theories, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false information and headlines and does not gather and present information responsibly.

Infowars did not respond to three emails asking if the site stood by these claims. NewsGuard also sent messages through the website to two editors, and left a voicemail on the Infowars media phone line. There was no response.

Jones and Infowars.com have retracted some stories and apologized for some claims, usually as a result of actual or threatened legal action. For example, in 2017, under the threat of legal action, Jones apologized to the owner of the Washington pizza restaurant after he implicated the establishment in a debunked pedophilia conspiracy involving Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. That same year, Jones apologized for saying yogurt company Chobani supported “migrant rapists,” as part of a legal settlement with the company.

In April 2018, families of the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting began suing Jones for defamation for claiming the massacre was a hoax. He has since acknowledged that the massacre took place. In December 2019, Jones was ordered by a Texas court to pay $100,000 to one of the plaintiffs. Most of the suits were pending.

In a child custody case, Jones’s lawyers argued in court that Jones is a “performance artist” and his public persona was not to be taken seriously, as he is “playing a character.”

According to the site’s Corrections page, as of February 2020, Infowars.com has corrected six stories in its history: in February 2017, when it misquoted Donald Trump; in February 2018, when it incorrectly identified the shooter who killed 17 people at Parkland High School; in June 2018, when it retracted a story claiming the Las Vegas sheriff had a “secret wife”; in August 2018, retracting a “third-party” news article that appeared on InfoWars that said the person suspected of killing two people at a video game tournament in Jacksonville, Florida, posted under a specific Reddit username; in March 2019, retracting a 2018 article claiming that Democratic National Committee staffer Seth Rich had been “involved in downloading and leaking emails from the DNC to WikiLeaks” and in December 2019, after it inaccurately reported that Matt Drudge was no longer the owner of the Drudge Report.

However, because much inaccurate information remains on the site despite being widely debunked, NewsGuard has determined that Infowars does not effectively publish corrections.

The site does not have a dedicated section for Opinion, although it does have a section labeled News, in which opinionated content frequently appears. For example, a February 2020 article, headlined “VIDEO: HILLARY CLINTON STILL BLAMES RUSSIA FOR HER LOSS TO TRUMP,” stated that “Despite a 3 year long investigation that turned up precisely nothing, and a failed impeachment show trial, Hillary Clinton is STILL adamant that she lost the 2016 election to President Trump because of Russian collusion.”

Another February 2020 article in the News section, titled “EU OFFICIALS REFUSE TO IMPLEMENT BORDER CONTROLS TO STOP CORONAVIRUS,” asked, “At what point does stopping an immensely dangerous and disruptive global pandemic become more important than the sacred, never to be questioned or curtailed ‘international flow of people’?”

Because Infowars.com publishes opinionated language in articles marked as News, NewsGuard has determined that Infowars does not responsibly distinguish news from opinion.

In 2018, social media, video and music streaming services suspended or terminated the accounts of infowars and Jones for violating the platforms’ terms of service. On
August 9, 2018, Apple confirmed it removed five of Infowars' six podcasts from iTunes and its podcast app, citing "hate speech." The next day, Facebook removed four of Jones' pages, including the Infowars page, for repeated offenses, including "glorifying violence" and "using dehumanizing language to describe people who are transgender, Muslims and immigrants, which violates our hate speech policies." Facebook said the violations were not related to "false news." YouTube and Spotify followed suit, kicking several Jones and InfoWars accounts off their platforms shortly thereafter.

Exactly a month later, on September 6, Twitter announced it permanently banned Jones and InfoWars for violating the company’s “abusive behavior policy.”

Transparency

The site states at the bottom of the page that “Infowars.com is a Free Speech Systems, LLC Company.”

Infowars.com generally names the writers of its original stories, with links to author biographies. It also hosts a page that lists its editors, correspondents, and reporters, along with biographies. Some of the staff members can be contacted through webforms.

The site features advertisements only for Infowars Store products, which are distinguishable from editorial content.

History

Infowars.com was founded in 1999. In late 2015, then presidential candidate Donald Trump appeared on Jones's show and praised the host's "amazing" reputation.

Corrections: A previous version of this label said that Alex Jones apologized for spreading the Pizzagate conspiracy. In fact, he apologized only for implicating the owner of the Comet Ping Pong restaurant in that conspiracy. A previous version of this label misstated the date that families of the Sandy Hook shooting victims sued Alex Jones; lawsuits were filed in April 2018. Finally, a previous version of this label misidentified the victims of the Parkland High School shooting: 17 people were killed, but not all of those individuals were students.

Editor's Note: This article was updated on March 13, 2020, to include a complaint against Jones filed by the New York Attorney General. Previously, the label was updated with new examples of conspiracies and other false content on the site.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: Click Here

Sources

Ownership and financing

https://opencorporates.com/companies/us_tx/0800898797

Content

https://www.infowars.com/top-investor-asks-for-advice-on-stockpiling-food/

Credibility

Sandy Hook suits
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-50960730

Coronavirus

Corrections
https://www.infowars.com/corrections/
https://www.infowars.com/jacksonville-madden-shooter-criticized-trumpards-on-reddit/