

Prank Mania Network

A network of prank websites that allow users to create made-up headlines to share on social media to trick others. Many false COVID-19 stories were made with the site's tools.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic standards of credibility and transparency.

Score: 20/100

Ownership and Financing

According to the site's Privacy Policy and Terms of Use pages, the site is owned by a Brazilian company called M1K Administration and Leases LTDA. Business registration documents indicate that M1K is owned by Anderson Maroski of Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The site runs advertisements.

Content

The Prank Mania network of websites consists of domains used to share false headlines on social media to trick others. NewsGuard found 19 domains in the network that are used by Prank Mania to share stories. Clicking on links from these domains redirects users to PrankMania.com, where a statement appears that the story is fake.

Prank Mania includes basic instructions on its homepage: "1. Create your prank in under 1 minute 2. Share on your social networks 3. Find out how many friends you can troll."

Prank Mania includes a section of "Top Pranksters," which lists the profiles of users whose pranks have the most views on the site, although users do not typically use their real name. Visitors can also search for pranks by topic or "prankster."

-  Does not repeatedly publish false content (22 points)
-  Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
-  Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
-  Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
-  Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
-  Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
-  Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
-  Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
-  The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

Credibility

Prank Mania allows anyone to create made-up headlines to share on social media. Users can select images to accompany headlines, giving them more of an air of authenticity. Once users click on a headline, they are taken to a page that reveals they have been pranked. The page also notes the number of times the page has been viewed and provides the options to share the prank, create a new prank, or report abuse.

Some have used Prank Mania to create false stories related to the COVID-19 global pandemic. For example, many links created on the site falsely announced bans on alcohol sales in various locations. One false headline stated: "Texas governor to stop all alcohol sales beginning Friday April 3rd." Other locations with untrue announcements of alcohol bans included Scotland, New York, Maryland, Indiana, and New Jersey.

Other false headlines announced bans on hunting and fishing Texas, Oklahoma, Michigan, and elsewhere. No such bans had been announced.

The site lists its "Most Shared Pranks" on the homepage, with the number of page views, according to the site. These include false claims that actor William H. Macy died of a heart attack, which was viewed 12 million times; that PepsiCo would soon stop making Mountain Dew, also with 12 million views; and that deceased rapper Tupac Shakur had "come out of hiding," with 9.5 million views. None of these reports are true.

The site's Frequently Asked Questions, which appear on the About page, states that "PrankMania is NOT fake news. On our website, the user is invited to create some humoristic headlines with no other reason but having fun...," the site added. "Right after a user gets pranked, it's displayed that the topic is a joke. We also maintain a Report Abuse system, where any user can report all the abusive jokes."

Clicking on the Report Abuse button below a prank takes readers to a page where they can report a prank for containing "Pornography," "Violence," "Personal Information" "Discrimination," and other categories. However, the page states that "The pranks from this website are created by the users, they are not the responsibility of the website owners."

Because PrankMania by its very nature is facilitating the creation of false information intended to fool people, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false content and headlines and that it does not gather and report information responsibly.

The site does not state which stories, if any, have been removed because they violated the site's standards. Because of this lack of disclosure, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not meet its standard for correcting errors in a transparent manner.

The site does not include opinion content.

NewsGuard sent two emails to Maroski, the owner of Prank Mania, to inquire about the site's publication of false information related to a global pandemic and whether the site has removed pranks from the site, but did not receive a response. NewsGuard also inquired about whether Maroski believes that these pranks could have negative consequences by misleading people, but did not receive a response.

Transparency

Prank Mania does not clearly disclose information about its owner. The Privacy Policy and Terms of Use include the name of the Brazilian company that owns the site, but this does not meet NewsGuard's standard for disclosing ownership in a user-friendly manner.

The site does not generally have editorial influence on the content that users create. However, the site claims to remove abusive content that is reported, but does not specify who makes determinations about what is removed. Therefore, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not reveal who is in charge.

Users can create a profile on the site with a photograph and personal information, but most profiles reviewed by NewsGuard did not include real names or biographical information. Therefore, the site does not meet the standard for disclosing information about content creators.

Advertising is distinguished from editorial content.

NewsGuard sent two emails to Maroski inquiring about the site's lack of transparency, but did not receive a response.

History

Prank Mania appears to have started in 2014 under the name FakeShare.com. A 2015 press release from the company stated that the site Prank.link, which is part of

the Prank Mania network, was created to produce April Fools jokes. The press release stated that “nobody owns the license on being able to have the last laugh when it comes to digital pranking.”

Written by: [Kendrick McDonald](#)

Edited by: [Eric Effron](#)

Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

Sources

Ownership and Financing

<https://prankmania.com/privacy-policy>
<https://prankmania.com/terms-of-use>
<https://opencorporates.com/companies/br/20928824000133>
<https://consultacnpj.com/cnpj/search-consultoria-e-pesquisas-ltda-11071668000146>
http://servicos.receita.fazenda.gov.br/Servicos/cnpjreva/Cnpjreva_Solicitacao.asp?cnpj=

Content

<https://prankmania.com/top-pranksters>
<https://prankmania.com/all-jokes>

Credibility

<https://prankmania.com/all-jokes?b=alcohol>
<https://prankmania.com/all-jokes?b=covid>
<https://checkyourfact.com/2020/03/31/fact-check-chicago-lori-lightfoot-ban-alcohol-sales-cook-county-april/>
<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/james-earl-jones-dead/>

Transparency

<https://prankmania.com/about-us>
<https://prankmania.com/contact-us>

History

<https://www.streetinsider.com/Press+Releases/Prank.Link+lets+you+create+the+best+April+Fools+Prank+and+share+it/10423625.html>
<https://whois.com/whois/fakeshare.com>
<https://whois.com/whois/prankmania.com>
<https://mynews1a.com/hollywood/2015/09/01/heres-how-james-earl-jones-and-justin-bieber-became-victims-of-death-hoaxes/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/06/16/beware-fakeshare-the-tricky-new-hoax-site-sowing-lies-in-your-facebook-feed/>
<https://metro.co.uk/2014/06/11/no-eastenders-isnt-being-axed-its-just-an-internet-prank-but-millions-of-you-were-fooled-4758264/>