

viralvirus.de

An anonymous news site that covers the COVID-19 pandemic and has published false information and conspiracy theories about the virus.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Score: 7.5/100

Ownership and Financing

The site's ownership and financing is unclear. The Imprint (Impressum) page lists its owner as "Chris S." from the fictional town "Satanien."

The site links to a private group on Facebook called Digital Congregation for Freedom in Germany (Digitale Versammlung für Freiheit in DE). The page's administrator is listed as Ayhan Pelteksiz from Günzburg, Bavaria. According to a report in regional newspaper Augsburg Allgemeine and county election records reviewed by NewsGuard, someone with that name ran for city councillor of Günzburg in 2008 for the Social Democratic Party. However, NewsGuard was unable to confirm that this person is connected to ViralVirus.de.

The site does not run advertisements or solicit donations.

Content

ViralVirus.de describes itself as "News about what the mainstream is hiding. We expose lies and shout them out into the world. Totally free and independent!" The site, which was launched in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020, mainly publishes content questioning the existence of the virus and accusing various elites and politicians of profiting from the pandemic. Content on the site is divided into sections including Corona, Fake News, Politics, Economics, Surveys, and Videos.

Typical articles have run under headlines including "China makes war: Corona finance fascism" ("China macht Krieg: Corona Finanz-Faschismus"); "Gates, China & Germany. The Corona puppet players" ("Gates, China & Deutschland. Die Corona-Puppenspieler"); and "The shutdown was unnecessary" ("Der Shutdown war unnötig").

The site has published little new content since spring 2020.

- ✗ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
- ✗ 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.](#)

ViralVirus.de draws content both from established media outlets such as Spiegel.de and The New York Times as well as from conspiracy-oriented websites, such as Watergate.tv. ViralVirus.de itself frequently publishes false and misleading claims, especially related to the 2020 coronavirus outbreak.

For example, an April 2020 article claimed that “The fact that Bill Gates is apparently one of the financiers and masterminds behind the outbreak of this coronavirus pandemic is currently being widely debated in the States and there is no question about it.” Although some of the Microsoft co-founder’s philanthropic work involves vaccines, there is no evidence that Gates “financed” or “masterminded” the COVID-19 pandemic.

A May 2020 article, titled “Is the coronavirus in truth a salmonella?” (“Ist das Coronavirus in Wahrheit eine Salmonelle?,” claimed that the COVID-19 virus is in reality a salmonella bacterial infection, and that the government is using the pandemic as a pretext to impose mandatory vaccinations. To back the claim that COVID-19 is a form of salmonella, the article pointed to a list of infectious diseases in the German Infection Protection Act, noting that “The pathogen SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV2 are directly classified under Salmonella. How can this be?” The article concluded: “What will the test show if it detects Salmonella? And what would be the consequence? Right, the vaccination of the entire population!”

In fact, COVID-19 is not a bacterial infection; it is caused by a virus, international health authorities say. For example, the World Health Organization states on its website that “The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a virus, NOT by bacteria.” The reason the German Infection Protection Act lists SARS-CoV-2 directly under Salmonella is because it is organized in alphabetical order, not because they are similar.

An April 2020 article, titled “5 things you didn't know about viruses” (“5 Dinge die du über Viren noch nicht wusstest”), claimed that the existence of “‘viruses’ [has] never been confirmed in the history of virology,” including the measles “virus.” According to the article, “One ‘virus’ was already brought to court and lost.”

The article was referring to a February 2016 lawsuit that resulted when German anti-vaccine activist Stefan Lanka promised a prize of 100,000 euros to anyone who could prove the existence of the measles virus by citing a published study. One medical practitioner, who claimed to have met the burden of proof, took Lanka to court over the prize. Lanka ultimately won the lawsuit, a result that ViralVirus.de claimed proved that published studies “could not prove the existence, size and pathogenic potential of the measles virus.”

In fact, the court did not draw any conclusions about the existence of the virus itself. Instead, the court found that the plaintiff did not meet the condition established by Lanka that the proof be contained in one study; the plaintiff had cited six studies. Moreover, the ruling stated that Lanka’s claim that the measles virus does not exist “contradicts the unanimous opinion of the scientific community.”

Indeed, more than 29,000 publications and studies in the scientific database PubMed, some dating to 1921, have confirmed the measles virus’ characteristics, genome, and origins.

Because ViralVirus.de has frequently published false or misleading claims about COVID-19, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false content and deceptive headlines, and that it does not gather and present information responsibly.

ViralVirus.de states that it provides “News about what the mainstream is hiding.” Although the site does not label any of its content as opinion, news articles frequently include opinionated content.

For example, an April 2020 article in the Economics section, titled “How health is used to stimulate the economy” (“Wie mit Gesundheit die Wirtschaft angekurbelt wird”), stated: “You think no government can be that perfidious? We show you how they make a virtue out of people's misery and thus keep an incurable system artificially alive.”

Another April 2020 article, titled “A fake police hunt against Corona sinners” (“Gefakte Polizei Hetzjagd gegen Coronasünder”) and published in the section called Fake News, stated that “So for obedient citizens, the Corona hunt must be proclaimed with our tax money. That is contradictory, isn't it?”

A third April 2020 article, titled “Obama financed lab in Wuhan” (“Obama finanzierte Labor in Wuhan”) and published in the Politics section, stated that “It is becoming increasingly clear how Western ‘democracy’ has sold itself for the benefit of capital under communist thinking for growth and prosperity of the rich. The victim, as always, is the stupid citizen who pays the bill.”

None of these articles was labeled opinion.

Because ViralVirus.de often includes opinion in news articles, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

ViralVirus.de does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find any corrections on the site.

Asked about the site’s reporting practices, including the stories cited above and the site’s approach to opinion and corrections, an unidentified representative reached via the general contact email address responded to NewsGuard: “I don’t know NewsGuard and don’t want to have anything to do with you. So please refrain from further contact with your incomprehensible demands!”

Transparency

ViralVirus.de does not disclose any information about its owners, editors, or content creators. Articles typically do not name the writer.

The Imprint (Impressum) page provides a general contact email address but no phone number.

The website does not run advertisements.

Asked about the site’s lack of transparency, an unidentified representative reached via the general contact email address responded that the site has no comment “for communists....”

History

According to domain records, the site was created in April 2020, nine days after the affiliated Facebook group was created.

Written by: [Elena Bernard](#)

Edited by: [Marie Richter](#), [Eric Efron](#), [Florian Meißner](#)

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

Sources

Ownership and
Financing

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Content

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Credibility

Sources:

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Opinion:

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<https://viralvirus.de/wirtschaft/wie-mit-gesundheit-die-wirtschaft-angekurbelt-wird/>

Transparency

<https://viralvirus.de/impressum/>

History

<https://www.denic.de/webwhois/?>

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