

prageru.com

A website that says it publishes videos “about the values that make America great” that has made unsubstantiated claims to advance conservative views, including about COVID-19.



Proceed with caution: This website fails to adhere to several basic journalistic standards.

Score: 57/100

Ownership and Financing

PragerU.com is owned by the Prager University Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Sherman Oaks, California. The foundation’s mission, according to its 2018 filing with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, is “production and promotion of online videos of an educational nature.” In 2018, the foundation reported \$18.5 million in revenue, \$17.9 million of which came from contributions or grants.

According to an August 2019 article published by the Los Angeles Times, the website’s donors have included Maccabee Task Force, a pro-Israel group funded by conservative megadonor Sheldon Adelson, and Dan and Farris Wilks, Texas billionaires who made a fortune in the fracking industry in the 2000s.









The site does not run advertisements. Donations from readers are accepted through its Ways to Give page.

Content

On An About Us Page, PragerU.com says, “Prager University is the world's only conservative nonprofit that is focused on changing minds through the creative use of digital media. Taking full advantage of today's technology and social media, we educate millions of Americans and young people about the values that make America great.”

On an FAQ page, PragerU.com says that PragerU “is not a university, nor do we claim to be. We do not offer degrees. However, we are the most influential online resource for explaining the concepts that have made America great.”

The site’s video content includes its 5-Minute Videos series, which the site’s Sponsorship Opportunities page describes as weekly video courses “featuring the best

-  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.](#)

conservative ideas from the best minds, in five focused minutes.” The videos feature a wide range of presenters, from Prager to podcaster Adam Carolla to Ben Shapiro, a conservative talk show host and co-founder of conservative website The Daily Wire. Topics covered in this section range from foreign affairs to religion to economics “Minimum Wage Cost Me My Job,” “Why I Love America,” and “Democratic Socialism Is Still Socialism.”

Other video features on the website include The Book Club, a monthly series on books that the site says “helped shape Western Civilization,” Americanos, an interview series with Latinos, and Prager’s weekly Fireside Chat series.

PragerU.com also publishes a Petition section, which features unsigned petitions such as one that asked users to protest censoring of PragerU content by Facebook. Another petition urged news organizations and corporations to sever ties with the Southern Poverty Law Center, a liberal advocacy group that pursues legal challenges to alleged civil-rights violations and identifies what it considers to be hate groups.

Credibility

Videos on PragerU.com have promoted false, misleading, and unsubstantiated claims, including about the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, in July 2020, the website shared a series of videos on an event called the “White Coat Summit,” organized and sponsored by the conservative group Tea Party Patriots, where a group called America’s Frontline Doctors promoted false claims about the use of the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19. A PragerU.com video titled “Dr. Stella Immanuel: We Don’t Need to Die. There Is a Treatment for COVID,” a Texas doctor falsely claimed that hydroxychloroquine was a proven cure for COVID-19.

“This virus has a cure, it’s called hydroxychloroquine, zinc, and Zithromax,” Immanuel said in the video. “You don’t need masks, there is a cure.”

Contrary to Immanuel's claim, multiple randomized clinical trials found that hydroxychloroquine did not provide beneficial effects to COVID-19 patients. For example, in June 2020, United Kingdom researchers ended the use of hydroxychloroquine in a large trial that had involved 4,600 patients. "We have concluded that there is no beneficial effect of hydroxychloroquine in patients hospitalised with COVID-19," according to a statement by researchers Martin Landray and Peter Horby of the RECOVERY trial. Another trial involving 400 patients, conducted at the University of Minnesota and published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, found that hydroxychloroquine did not decrease the severity of COVID-19 symptoms over 14 days any better than a placebo in patients who were not hospitalized.

In addition, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said at a July 2020 congressional hearing, "Any and all of the randomized, placebo-controlled trials -- which is the gold standard of determining if something is effective -- none of them have found any efficacy for hydroxychloroquine."

None of those published clinical trials is mentioned in PragerU.com's content promoting hydroxychloroquine. The text below the video on PragerU.com stated, "Dr. Stella Immanuel has successfully treated hundreds of COVID-19 patients using Hydroxychloroquine." While Immanuel has repeatedly asserted that she treated COVID-19 patients using hydroxychloroquine, neither she nor PragerU.com has provided any data or published study to back that claim.

In a May 2020 video titled "5 Things You Need to Know During COVID-19," PragerU host Will Wilt falsely claimed that children have not died from COVID-19. "One thing that people always talk about is that we're keeping us locked down because of the children, but children aren't actually dying from this virus," Wilt said. "They did a study with 150,000 people who had the virus and only 1.7 percent of them were between the ages of 0 and 18, and of that 1.7 percent, none of them died."

Wilt did not say who or what published the study that he cited. While it is true that children make up a small percentage of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19, Wilt's claim that children have not died from COVID-19 is inaccurate. According to a report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 13 COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. between Jan. 22 and May 30, 2020, of patients aged 9 and under, and another 33 deaths of patients between the ages of 10 and 19.

In a February 2018 video titled "What You Need to Know About Planned Parenthood," PragerU.com falsely claimed that Planned Parenthood does not provide ultrasound services to expectant mothers. The video's host, Lila Rose, president of the anti-abortion nonprofit Live Action, stated that Planned Parenthood "talk[s] about providing ultrasounds but the last thing they want to do is show a pregnant woman an image of her growing child. So they don't. The ultrasound is only for Planned Parenthood's use to better facilitate patients' abortions."

Contrary to PragerU's claim, ultrasounds are one of many non-abortion services offered at Planned Parenthood health clinics. Planned Parenthood's website states, "You can visit your local Planned Parenthood health center for free or low-cost ultrasounds, whether or not you have insurance."

The same video claimed that Planned Parenthood only rarely provides healthcare services, stating, "Planned Parenthood tells you it's one of the nation's leading women's healthcare providers, but it provides very little healthcare."

Annual reports published by Planned Parenthood detailing the organization's health care services show that the vast majority of the organization's work involves medical services besides abortion. The organization's 2019 annual report, which provided data from fiscal year 2018, showed that Planned Parenthood's health centers served 2.4 million patients and conducted 345,672 abortions. Using these numbers, only 14 percent of patients received abortions. Planned Parenthood's other services, including breast exams,

pap tests, contraception, and STI testing and treatment treatment, account for the vast majority of its services provided to patients.

Because PragerU.com's videos have advanced false, misleading, and unsubstantiated claims, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not gather and present information responsibly.

The website does not post a policy for correcting errors. NewsGuard could not find examples where inaccurate information in a PragerU video was corrected.

PragerU.com discloses its conservative perspective on its About Us page, identifying Prager University as a "conservative nonprofit." On its FAQ page, under the heading "Does PragerU have an ideology?," the site states, "Every person and every organization has a value system and a set of beliefs. PragerU is no different. We believe in the principles that have made America great. We believe in economic and religious freedom, a strong military that protects our allies, and in the religious values that inform Western civilization, also known as Judeo-Christian values."

The website's videos are not labeled as news or opinion. Because the site discloses its conservative perspective and does not purport to publish straight news, NewsGuard has determined that it does not handle the difference between news and opinion irresponsibly.

Headlines on the site's videos generally accurately reflect content. Videos that include misleading claims generally do not repeat those claims in the headline.

NewsGuard did not receive a response to a phone call and two emails sent to PragerU.com's general email address, seeking comment on the website's editorial practices and its approach to corrections.

Transparency

The site's FAQ page identifies it as a nonprofit organization. However, the site does not provide any information on its major donors, which does not meet NewsGuard's standard for nonprofits' disclosure of financing.

The Presenters page provides biographical information for people speaking in videos on PragerU.com. However, the site does not centrally disclose who is in charge of its content. The Contact Us page provides a general email address, phone number, and mailing address.

The site does not run advertisements.

NewsGuard did not receive a response to a phone call and two emails sent to PragerU.com's general email address, seeking comment on the website's failure to disclose information about its donors, and failure to identify who is in charge of its content.

History PragerU.com was founded in 2009, according to a January 2020 article in The New York Times.

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

Sources

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<https://www.prageru.com/video/democratic-socialism-is-still-socialism/>
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<https://www.prageru.com/series/fireside-chats/>
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<https://www.prageru.com/spic/>
<https://www.prageru.com/petition/facebook/>
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Credibility

America's Frontline Doctors #1:
<https://archive.vn/IHGGM>
AFD #2: <https://archive.vn/eTleE>
AFD #3: <https://archive.vn/LPFIR>
AFD #4: <https://archive.vn/o1Mn9>
Annals study:
<https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M20-4207>
<https://twin-cities.umn.edu/news-events/early-treatment-mild-covid-19-university-minnesota-trial-shows-hydroxychloroquine-has-no>
Recovery trial:
<https://www.recoverytrial.net/news/statement-from-the-chief-investigators-of-the-randomised-evaluation-of-covid-19-therapy-recovery-trial-on-hydroxychloroquine-5-june-2020-no-clinical-benefit-from-use-of-hydroxychloroquine-in-hospitalised-patients-with-covid-19>
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2016638>
Fauci comments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDjVwXM8ESE>
AFD petition: <https://archive.vn/wip/UgNWj>
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<https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/AAP%20and%20CHA%20-%20Children%20and%20COVID-19%20State%20Data%20Report%207.30.20%20FINAL.pdf>
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PNAS study:

<https://www.pnas.org/content/114/41/10870.full>

HBR article with more context:

<https://hbr.org/2017/10/hiring-discrimination-against-black-americans-hasnt-declined-in-25-years>

Climate change video #1:

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Climate change video #2:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200613155812/https://www.prageru.com/video/polar-bear-expert-refutes-fact-checkers/>

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Planned Parenthood video:

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<https://web.archive.org/web/20200831162121/https://www.prageru.com/press-release/prageru-exposes-planned-parenthood-deception/>

PP annual report:

https://www.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer_public/2e/da/2eda3f50-82aa-4ddb-acce-c2854c4ea80b/2018-2019_annual_report.pdf

PP ultrasound page:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/pregnancy/prenatal-care/whats-ultrasound>

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Transparency

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