



## Beware the “New Google” (And Much More)



*Christopher  
Kenneally*

Grapefruit peel and lemon peel simmered slowly in water to extract the maximum quinine and vitamin C. It’s not a recipe for a trendy homemade energy drink, but a DIY prescription for hydroxychloroquine and touted online as a cure for COVID-19.

You can find phony pharmaceutical on the world’s most popular website. No, not Google – the new Google, TikTok.

In growing numbers, people take questions about healthcare, politics, or finding the best restaurants not to Google, but to TikTok, the short-form video platform. This month, a NewsGuard investigation revealed that such TikTok searches consistently feed false and misleading claims to users, most of whom are teens and young adults.

“For example, when our analyst did a search for COVID vaccine, which is a kind of search that a young person might very well do to learn more about it, TikTok suggested that the search be for COVID vaccine injury or COVID vaccine truths or COVID vaccine exposed, COVID vaccine HIV, and COVID vaccine warning – in other words, highlighting the alarmist and often false claims about the COVID vaccine,” says Gordon Crovitz, NewsGuard co-founder.

NewsGuard is a journalism and technology tool that rates the credibility of news and information websites and tracks online misinformation for search engines, social media apps, and advertisers.

Of the 8,000 news and information sites NewsGuard has rated, close to 40% receive a “red” rating, categorizing them as untrustworthy. The NewsGuard assessments, says Steven Brill, also a NewsGuard co-founder, are grounded in well-established principles of best journalistic practices.

“It’s a scrupulous, careful, multi-person look at how every one of these websites scores against nine specific criteria. Does it have a transparent policy to make a correction when they realize they’ve made a mistake? Do they mix news and opinion in a way that people can’t tell if it’s news and opinion? The basics that

any journalist learns and adheres to,” explains Brill, who founded *The American Lawyer* in 1979 and started Court-TV in 1989.

A WBENC and Disability:IN certified diverse company with more than 30 years experience in corporate information contract management, Couranto serves clients globally with strategic programs that maximize the value of information portfolios by reducing costs while improving access to licensed content, data resources, intellectual property, corporate memberships and related contracts. Couranto’s Discovery and Clarity platforms provide custom-configured end-to-end information access, budget planning and license management tools. Built on deep expertise and a long history of client successes, Couranto solutions add value to your information and help drive innovation throughout your organization, creating enduring impact.

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**Christopher Kenneally** hosts CCC's Velocity of Content podcast series, which debuted in 2006 and is the longest continuously running podcast covering the publishing industry. As CCC's Senior Director, Marketing, he is responsible for organizing and hosting programs that address the business needs of all stakeholders in publishing and research. His reporting has appeared in the New York Times, Boston Globe, Los Angeles Times, The Independent (London), WBUR-FM, NPR, and WGBH-TV.