

Appendix 1: Codebook “Surfing the COVID-19 waves”

1. General information

- a. Title press release: Copy the title of the press release in the Excel file.
- b. Date press release: Write the date the press release was sent out in the Excel file (DD/MM/JJJJ).

2. COVID-19 coding

- a. Code whether the press release mentions COVID(-19)/corona(virus)/SARS-CoV-2/pandemic in the text (0/1).

0 = No mention of COVID-19 (or synonyms)

1 = Mention of COVID-19 (or synonyms)

If the press release mentions COVID-19 (or synonyms), then copy said press release to the COVID-19 Excel tab.

If the press release does not mention COVID-19 (or synonyms), then copy said press release to the Not_COVID-19 Excel tab.

These aforementioned tabs were named after coding. When coding, different press releases were put in different tabs if they differed from each other. The names were chosen afterwards. We have put them in this codebook to be more transparent towards reviewers who also have access to our Excel file with the respective press releases.

3. Research coding

- a. Code whether the press release entails research (0/1).

0 = Press release does not have research as the main focus

1 = Press release does have research as the main focus

Research is understood as the scientific inquiry to gather knowledge about both the natural (i.e. exact sciences) and social (i.e. social sciences and humanities) world. This category (1) includes press releases that have results of research or plans for future research as the main focus, often also signaled by the words ‘(scientific) research’.

The remaining press releases (i.e. ‘not research’) (0) are categorized as ‘institutional communication’, if they do not talk about concrete research and/or results, but rather focus on the inner working and activities of the institute.

If the press release entails research, then copy said press release to the relevant subcategory within the Excel file (either COVID-19_Research or Not_COVID-19_Research).

If the press release does not entail research, then copy said press release to the relevant subcategory within the Excel file (Either COVID-19_NotResearch or

Not_COVID-19_NotResearch).

These aforementioned tabs were named after coding. When coding, different press releases were put in different tabs if they differed from each other. The names were chosen afterwards. We have put them in this codebook to be more transparent towards reviewers who also have access to our Excel file with the respective press releases.

4. *Research subcategories (only for research related press releases)*

- a. Code (i.e. fill in the column of ‘coding press release’) the subcategories of the research subset (both COVID-19 and Not_COVID-19): published research, non-published research and announcements of research.

Published research: Code a press release as ‘published research’ if it specifically mentions that said research is published in an academic book or journal.

Examples:

“An article about their research is published in the scientific journal Lancet Psychiatry” (own translation) (Source: *Vaccinatiestrategieën negeren patiënten met ernstige psychiatrische aandoeningen, ondanks hoger risico – COVID-19_Research*)

“The results will be published in the renowned scientific journal Science Advances” (own translation) (Source: *De Schreeuw zal voortaan beter bewaard worden – Not_COVID-19_Research*)

Announcements of research: Code a press release as ‘announcements of research’ if the main focus of the release was the recruitment of participants or communication about research that was about to start/being worked on/for which funding was obtained.

Examples:

“UAntwerp is looking for volunteers with a newly diagnosed COVID-19 infection to test microbiome therapy.” (own translation) (Source: *Keelspray kan coronasymptomen mogelijk verlichten – COVID-19_Research*)

“Limiting our calorie intake slows down the aging process of our brain. With this observation in mind, Prof. Georgios Keliris (UAntwerp) conducts research into dementia. The Alzheimer Research Foundation supports the scientist with a grant of 250,000 euros.” (own translation) (Source: *Calorierestictie kan rol spelen in strijd tegen dementie – COVID-19_Research*)

“UAntwerp is looking for citizens to go on a scientific expedition in their own garden.” (own translation) (Source: *Hang de vlag uit en ga op tekenjacht – Not_COVID-19_Research*)

Non-published research: Code a press release as ‘non-published research’ if the press release entails research that is finished and where no mention is made of it being published in an academic journal/book.

Examples:

“In a UAntwerp survey, nurses indicate that there is still insufficient material.” (own translation) (Source: *Bijna één zorgverlener op vijf heeft te weinig FFP-maskers – COVID-19_Research*)

“UAntwerp, Water-Link and the Flemish Water Knowledge Center investigated why we drink bottled water en masse.” (Source: *Vlaming vindt kraantjeswater ongezonder en minder lekker – Not_COVID-19_Research*)

EXTRA FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS OF RESEARCH AND NON-PUBLISHED RESEARCH: Specifically code when ‘*The Great Coronastudy*’ is mentioned within both the announcement of research and the non-published research category. If this is the case, write this in the ‘coding press release’ column.

Examples:

“On February 9, the thirtieth Great Corona Study will ask, among other things, your vaccine preference.” (own translation) (example of announcement) (Source: *Heb jij al een afspraak bij de kapper? – COVID-19_Research*)

“Only one in five participants in the Great Corona Study believes that the world will return to the way it used to be.” (own translation) (example of non-published) (Source: *Jong én oud is voorstander ruimer gebruik Covid Safe Ticket – COVID-19_Research*)

ATTENTION: These subcategories were developed based on inductive coding. These were not available in this manner at the time of coding. The main author of this paper created these categories by repeatedly reading the press releases and noticing differences between the research related press releases. These categories thus emerged from the data. We have put them here to offer more transparency and examples for future coding.

5. *Science discipline coding (only for research related press releases)*

- a. Code the science discipline to which the research belongs. Start from the text and deduct the main discipline. When in doubt, search the mentioned actors (e.g. researchers, professors, research groups) on the internet.
- b. After a first coding of the specific discipline, group them in their higher order groups (i.e. Exact sciences, social sciences and humanities). Do so based on the Faculties of the UAntwerp and the descriptions of the different fields.

Example:

“Bogaerts leads the research group at the University of Antwerp PLASMAN, specialized in plasma technology for sustainable chemistry. “Plasma is very promising and sustainable,” says the chemistry professor. “Plasma technology is very interesting for the ‘electrification’ of chemical processes, one of the major challenges of this century, to put a stop to further global warming..” (own translation) (example of a) ‘Chemistry’, b) Exact sciences) (Source: *Nieuwe plasmareactor kan chemie veel groener maken – Not_COVID-19_Research*)

This coding was performed, but eventually left out in the final paper after a first round of review. The authors of this paper deemed it to be less relevant for the focus of this research. The data have however been saved in an Excel file.

6. *Not_research subcategories (only for non-research related press releases)*
 - a. Code (i.e. fill in the column of ‘coding press release’) the subcategories of the non-research subset (both COVID-19 and Not_COVID-19): organization of event and announcement by institution.

Organization of event: Code a press release as ‘organization of event’ if it entails (crowdfunding) events that happen on UAntwerp campuses or events where the university is a partner, with the inclusion of conferences and symposia.

Examples:

“Already 750 Flemish academics support the solidarity action 1000x1000. In this way, they also support the demand for a new social contract. And that is necessary, because the figures show that corona is causing many people financial problems.” (own translation) (Source: *Al 750 academici staan stuk loon afvoor solidariteitsactie 1000x1000 – COVID-19_NotResearch*)

“Prospective students can really get to know their future campus again before deciding which course they will follow. On Saturday, June 26, they can go to the information day of the University of Antwerp. This will happen with an eye-catching treasure hunt and a real escape room: will you free the dean from the clutches of a criminal gang?” (own translation) (Source: *Studiekiezers kunnen opnieuw campussfeer opsnuiven – Not_COVID-19_Not_Research*)

Announcement by institution: Code a press release as ‘announcement by institution’ if it entails announcements by the UAntwerp, such as investments in buildings/new courses/human resources/etc.

Examples:

“The exam period is still in full swing, but UAntwerp is already

thoroughly preparing the start of the new academic year. “We are going for a mix of online education and intensive education on campus,” says rector Herman Van Goethem. “With a lot of attention for the first-year students: they must be able to develop a network.” (own translation) (Source: *We zullen lesgeven op de campus – COVID-19_NotResearch*)

“Accept that you will often get stuck,” says author Tom Naegels. “And you don't just write behind the computer, but also in a café.” With these messages, among other things, he appeals to the students of language and literature at UAntwerp. At his alma mater, Naegels becomes a teacher of the new subject Creative Writing.” (Source: *Schrijven is een kwestie van oefenen – Not_COVID-19_Not_Research*)

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7. Coding ‘surfing the news wave’

- a. Code surfing the news wave when a press release mentions COVID-19 (or synonyms) but where the main focus is something else. See if COVID-19 is used as a stepping stone for a different topic. This is related to ‘newsjacking’, see below.

More info regarding newsjacking from the literature review: newsjacking essentially means “taking advantage of a prominent news story by finding connections to your organization in a timely fashion” (Flowers & Sterbenk, 2016, p. 230), where an organization exploits certain angles related to current news events to obtain media attention (Scott, 2011).

Examples:

“Work is being done worldwide on vaccines against corona, but other viruses also claim victims. Consider, for example, the human papillomavirus (HPV). They come in different types and are the most common sexually transmitted viruses in the world.” (own translation) (Source: *HPV-infecties zijn belangrijke risicofactor in ontstaan hoofd- en halskankers – COVID-19_Research*)

“Vaccine hesitancy was recognized as one of the main threats to global health even before the COVID-19 outbreak, but was mainly documented in high-income countries such as France or the US,” said co-author Dr. Jean-Francois Maystadt, associate professor of economics at the Lancaster University and UCLouvain. “Our quantitative analysis shows that institutional mistrust is a major barrier to achieving universal childhood immunization in Africa and poses a significant risk to vaccination campaigns – which are now more important than ever.””

(own translation) (Source: *Wantrouwen in instellingen is grote belemmering voor vooruitgang kindervaccinatie in Afrika – COVID-19_Research*)