

Pandemic PSAs: Raising Awareness on COVID-19 through Street Art

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The first months of 2020 have seen a worldwide influx of public service announcements (PSAs) informing people on how to stay safe from the coronavirus. Many of these PSAs are online, as accessing a computer or mobile device that is connected to the internet, especially in developed countries, is usually assumed.

However, having access to the internet, even in urban areas, is not always the case. This was seen in Toronto, Canada, where educational administrators struggled to provide devices with internet service to a large number of children and youth at home when schools were closed abruptly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Rushowy, 2020). Other examples include Australia, where 2.5 million people do not have internet in the home (Hunter, 2020), and in the United States, where approximately 25% of households do not have access to digital services (Piatak, Dietz, & McKeever, 2019).

A lack of online connectivity can impact the effectiveness of public health messages; an issue that is even more pressing when it comes to the dissemination of information during a pandemic. I am proposing a presentation that will discuss how pieces of street art, dedicated to sharing information on how to stay safe from COVID-19, are functioning as PSAs by filling some of the gaps that official announcements are not covering. Furthermore, I will discuss examples of street art that are communicating vital information to communities with low literacy through visuals and minimal text.

References

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