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An Analysis of Amazon's Bookstore
Algorithms within the DSA Framework

AI FORENSICS   &   CHECK FiRST

Executive Summary

Catering to over 181 million users[1] within the European Union as of 2023, Amazon has been designated as a Very Large Online Platform under the Digital Services Act. Enacted in August 2023, this regulation imposes on platforms, large-enough for their systemic risks to have disproportionate impacts on the Union, specific requirements such as paying a "particular attention on how their services are used to disseminate or amplify misleading or deceptive content, including disinformation". The European Commission issued a request[2], in November 2023, for information to Amazon, seeking clarification on the company's compliance with their obligations related to risk assessments and mitigation measures aimed at protecting online consumers. Amazon is expected to respond by December 2023.

As a prominent marketplace, Amazon Store is under scrutiny for concerns such as the sale of non-compliant or counterfeit products and violations of consumer protection laws. Given its significant influence in the cultural product market, we argue that Amazon's scrutiny should extend to its approach in addressing online disinformation and other societal risks, shifting the focus from merely illegal content.

In line with the Digital Services Act, Amazon is required to consider how the design of their recommender systems, content moderation systems, and the enforcement of their terms and conditions contribute to systemic risks. This study assesses the influence of Amazon's systems on fundamental rights, civic discourse, and the protection of public health and minors, with a specific focus on their bookstores in Belgium and France.

Based on Reset and the Commission's Risk Management Framework, and supported by extensive data collections of product recommendations for over 60 thousand books and 12 search queries across Belgian and French stores, our analysis reveals that:

- A large fraction of Amazon's search results, to queries related to public health, immigration, gender, and climate change are misleading, or fail to provide a pluralism of views.

- Amazon's recommender systems create highly confined book communities. After entering a certain narrative community - for instance after clicking on a title obtained through a search result - it takes tens of successive clicks on Amazon recommendations to exit.

- In particular, we identify a large community of co-recommended books, difficult to leave through Amazon recommendations, endorsing climate denialism, propagating COVID-19 conspiracy theories, and advocating conservative views on gender issues.

- Amazon fails to enforce their own policies, making widely available sexually explicit contents. Without any age restriction, pornographic content can be consumed on Amazon. Moreover, we find that Amazon fails to provide age-appropriate recommendations, lacking effective safety mechanisms.

Considering Amazon's impact in disseminating information through the sale of millions of books across the Union, risk assessments under the DSA should extend beyond consumer protection to encompass the systemic risks posed by Amazon's systems to fundamental rights, public discourse, and societal wellbeing.

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About the Authors

This report is the fruit of a collaboration between CheckFirst and AI Forensics. Both organisations contributed equally.

AI Forensics is a European non-profit that investigates influential and opaque algorithms. AI Forensics holds major technology platforms accountable by conducting independent and high-profile technical investigations to uncover and expose the harms caused by their algorithms.

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Check First is a software and methodologies company empowering the fight against disinformation. Check First focuses on creating the best tools and practices for the peculiar job of countering and monitoring fakes and influence campaigns, and gaining time in the process by fostering collaboration. It developed the CrossOver solutions, monitoring algorithmic recommendations through user simulation.

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The illustration and report design was done by Denis Constant, at Ittai Studio.

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Even though e-commerce platforms wield substantial influence, with Amazon alone serving over 181 million users in the European Union, they have garnered limited research attention. Being a leading global retailer and a primary source for book purchases, Amazon wields considerable power in determining what information is readily accessible to its users. This study aims to critically examine Amazon's search and recommendation algorithms within its Belgian and French bookstores.

Perceived as authoritative expressions of expertise, commonly consulted in researching specific topics, misinformation in books can wield significant influence. This study is informed by previous research[3] and critiques[4][5][6] of Amazon's role as a disseminator of information, highlighting the presence of health misinformation[7] and the ranking imbalance in Amazon's search algorithm. We explore books related to topics set out as potentially posing systemic risks as defined by the DSA, such as vaccines, abortion, and climate change.

The advent of algorithm-driven content curation has revolutionised how users access information online. While these algorithms are designed to enhance user experience by providing personalised recommendations, there are concerns about the potential risks of reinforcing exposure to like-minded content and of amplifying borderline content such as misinformation. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the realm of book recommendations, where the choice of suggested readings can significantly influence public opinion and knowledge.

Following users journeys, we analyse the search results provided by Amazon's bookstore to Belgian and French users for specific contentious topics. Then, we explore the recommendation made by Amazon.fr's algorithms, mapping a landscape of recommendation large of 60 thousands books. Through this comprehensive analysis, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the responsibilities of digital platforms in information dissemination and the challenges posed by algorithmic curation.

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[3] Jieun Shin and Thomas Valente. 2020. Algorithms and Health Misinformation: A Case Study of Vaccine Books on Amazon. Journal of Health Communication 25, 5 (2020), 394–401.

[4] Amazon is a giant purveyor of medical quackery - Vox Sept 2016 - https://www.vox.com/2016/9/6/12815250/amazon-health-products-bogus

[5] How Amazon's Algorithms Curated a Dystopian Bookstore - Wired Mar 2019 - https://www.wired.com/story/amazon-and-the-spread-of-health-misinformation/

[6] La Fnac et Amazon font-ils la promotion d'ouvrages antivaccins ou aux relents complotistes ? - France Info Sep 2021 - https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/coronavirus/vrai-ou-fake-la-fnac-et-amazon-font-ils-la-promotion-d-ouvrages-antivaccins-ou-aux-relents-complotistes_4769893.html

[7] Prerna Juneja and Tanushree Mitra. 2021. Auditing E-Commerce Platforms for Algorithmically Curated Vaccine Misinformation. In Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '21). Association for Computing Machinery. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445250

In addition to misinformation, we reveal that Amazon does not comply with their own policy, by featuring and selling sexually explicit content. Amazon failed to implement effective mechanisms, even the most basic ones, to prevent sexually explicit content to be displayed and recommended in unsuitable context, in particular in teenager books.

Application of the
Risk Management Framework

This study adheres to a structured risk management framework, closely modelled on the methodology proposed by Reset's study[8] for the European Commission's Digital Services Act (DSA). This framework, as outlined by Reset, is designed to facilitate the application of Article 34 and 35 of the DSA – specifically addressing Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation – to various systemic risks referenced in the regulation. These risks, detailed in Article 34, include the dissemination of illegal content, the impact on fundamental rights and public security, and the influence on civic discourse, among others. The DSA does not prescribe a specific method for assessing these risks, requiring the development of replicable methods to measure the impact of online platforms on European citizens' fundamental rights, safety, and democratic participation.

Under the DSA's Article 34, platforms like Amazon are required to diligently identify, analyse, and assess systemic risks, considering factors like algorithmic systems, content moderation systems, terms and conditions enforcement, and advertisement presentation. The Act also emphasises the importance of considering specific regional or linguistic aspects, including nuances particular to Member States.

In accordance with Recitals 80 to 83 of the DSA, our study scrutinises the content available on Amazon's online bookstore. This examination aims to measure systemic risks in line with the DSA's criteria, particularly focusing on the platform's recommendations on books. The risks as summarised under the DSA include:

- Dissemination of illegal content;

- Negative effects on the exercise of fundamental rights;

- Negative effects on electoral processes, civic discourse and public security

- Negative effects in relation to public health, mental well-being, minors, gender-based violence

To assess these risks, specific keywords relevant to each risk category were selected. For public health protection, keywords like "vaccin" (vaccine) and "COVID" were chosen. "Avortement" (abortion) and "féminin" (feminine) were used to explore issues related to gender-based violence and personal wellbeing. The keyword "immigration" was included to evaluate narratives around non-discrimination, and "changement climatique" (climate change) to assess content related to environmental issues.

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[8] Digital Services Act Application of the risk management framework to Russian disinformation campaigns - Reset & European Commission 2023 - https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/764631

The study also incorporates a heuristic analysis inspired by the ABC (Actors, Behaviour, Content) framework[9]. This approach involves evaluating the credibility of authors of the books recommended by Amazon. We assessed the background, previous works, and peer reviews or criticisms of the top 10 authors suggested in search results.

One limitation of the application of the ABC framework in the context of this study is the inability to fully analyse the "Behaviour" aspect due to Amazon's proprietary algorithms. Nevertheless, leveraging publicly available information, within the constraints of Amazon's opacity, this study partially unveils Amazon algorithmics black box. In particular, we will analyse the recommendation landscape of books in the French store, highlighting major concerns regarding the effect of Amazon algorithmic systems on the plurality of views.

Finally, this study explores the compliance of Amazon to the article 28 of the DSA stating that "Providers of online platforms accessible to minors shall put in place appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety, and security of minors, on their service". In particular, the platform should consider best practices and available guidance, such as those of the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+[10]) (Recital 71). One of the three pillars of the BIK+ focusses on "safe digital experiences to protect children from harmful and illegal online content, conduct, contact and consumer risks and to improve their well-being online through a safe, age-appropriate digital environment, created in a way that respects children's best interests".

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[9] Francois, Camille. 2019. "Actors, Behaviors, Content: A Disinformation ABC." Transatlantic High Level Working Group on Content Moderation Online and Freedom of Expression, Graphika and Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, 20 September. https://www.ivir.nl/publicaties/download/ABC_Framework_2019_Sept_2019.pdf, accessed 2 June 2023.

[10] A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:212:FIN

Methodology

In this study we first examined non-personalised book recommendations on Amazon.fr (France), then we will explore search results on the French and Belgium bookstore (Amazon.com.be).

Analysis of Non-personalised Recommendations on Amazon France

When shopping on Amazon, numerous product recommendations are prominently featured. Such recommendations are an important part of the user journey on Amazon, driving 30% of page views in 2015[11]. In this study, drawing on the article "Browsing Amazon's Book Bubbles"[12] we explore such algorithmic recommendations, typically presented under various denominations such as 'Customers who viewed this item also viewed', 'Customers who bought this item also bought', 'More articles to discover' or 'Inspired by your browsing history'.

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[11] "Estimating the Causal Impact of Recommendation Systems from Observational Data", Sharman et al, ACM EC' 2015

[12] "Browsing Amazon's Book Bubbles", Paul Bouchaud, 2023 https://hal.science/hal-04308081

Figure 1: Display of the "Customers who viewed this item also viewed" recommendations on an Amazon product. Relevant sections emphasised in green.

Data Collection

To create a comprehensive overview of Amazon book recommendations, we employed a snowball sampling approach.

We first collected the top 150 bestsellers for 18 socially related non-fiction categories on Amazon.fr such as "News, Politics and Society", "Earth and Environmental Sciences", and "Business and Stock Market", see a full list in Annex.

For each of the 1725 collected bestsellers, we gathered Amazon's product recommendations

Figure 2: Snowball Sampling

(see Figure 1 above), thus generating a new set of 14,847 unique books ("1 click away" on Figure 2). We then collected the suggestions formulated by Amazon for each newly discovered book[13] in this new set. This iterative process is repeated three times, allowing the discovery of 60,298 unique books. Most of them were in French (92.3%) and a smaller portion in English (7.0%).

The book recommendations were gathered as they would appear to an unlogged Amazon user, without any browsing history nor cookies, upon visiting the website. The collection was run between October 28, 2023, and November 4, 2023.

This data was used to construct the recommendation network below.

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[13] At least recommended twice, for data collection scalability purposes

Network Analysis & Community Detection

We focused our study on non-personalised recommendations, we then solely considered the book suggested by Amazon under denomination such as "Customers who viewed this item also viewed" or 'More articles to discover' but not "Inspired by your browsing history". To explore the behaviour of Amazon's recommendation algorithm, we build a directed network: the vertices are books, and two books are linked if Amazon recommends one on the page of the other.

The landscape, displayed below, represents the whole library we collected. Two books are close in the landscape when they are frequently recommended together by Amazon. To make more sense of this graph, we run a community detection algorithm[14], leveraging an extensive scientific literature. This process surfaces groups of books that are often recommended together by Amazon; 61 communities encompass more than 90% of the books. Through keyword extraction and manual analysis, we attributed a label to each of these communities (ex: baby books, cookbooks, Mangas…). The detected communities can be visualised in the graph below, each in a different colour.
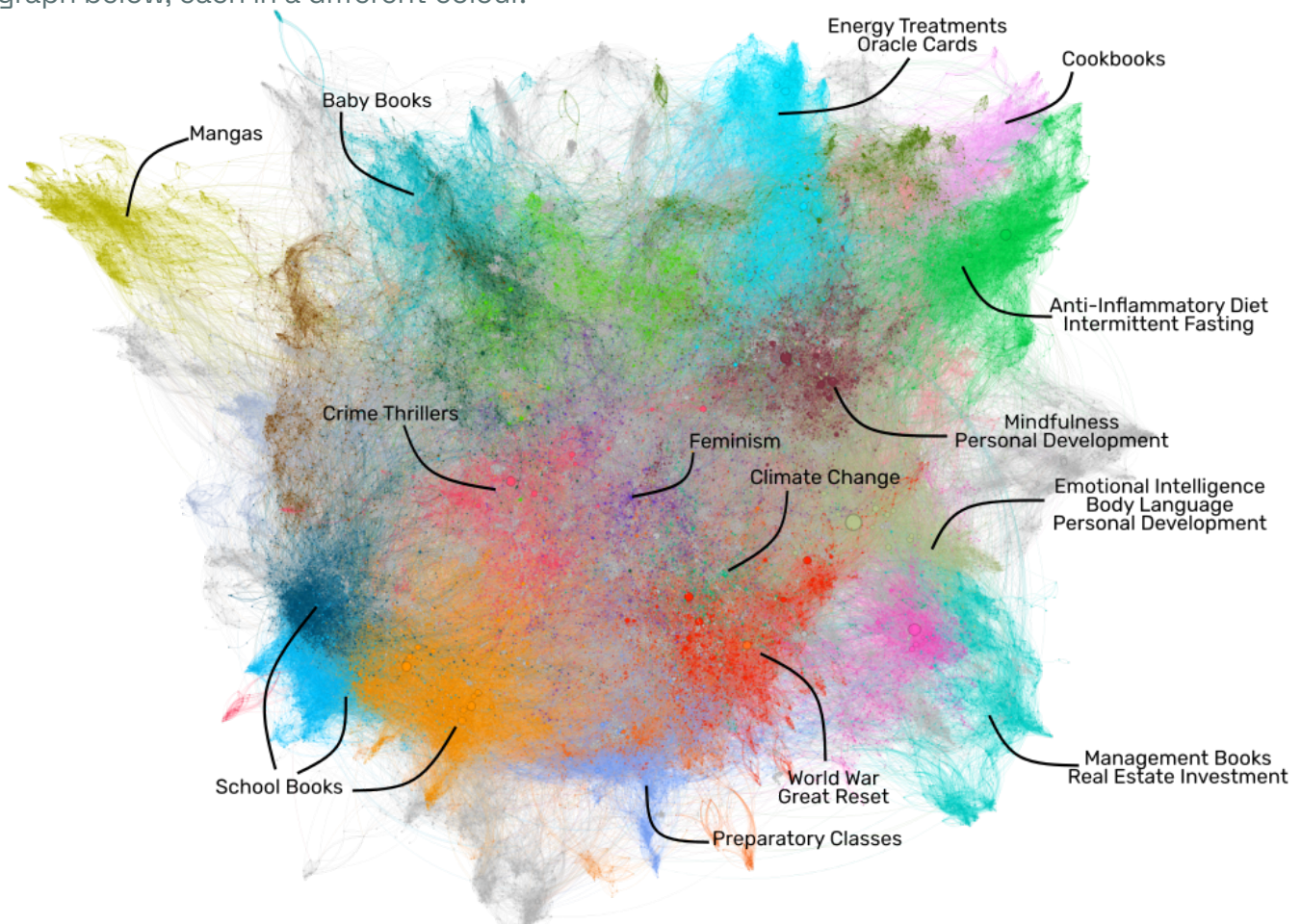
Figure 3: Landscape of recommendation, an interactive version of the network is available, for further exploration, at explore.multivacplatform.org.

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[14] Community detection was performed using the Leiden algorithm, with the Constant Potts Model as the quality function, to overcome the resolution-limit and badly connected communities arising from the conventional Louvain algorithm with modularity maximisation.

Analysis of Search Results

Data Collection

We conducted a handful of searches for books on various controversial topics: vaccines & covid, abortion, immigration, climate change and feminine. These terms were chosen for their potential to detect issues in relation to systemic risks. On Amazon's Belgian site, 6 search queries were performed once a day from September 28 to October 17, 2023. The first page of search results (16 results per page) for each query were recorded, capturing details such as book titles, authors, publication dates, and customer ratings. Promoted books (advertisements) were removed from the search results. All collected data is available on Github[15].

On Amazon's French site, starting on November 1st, 2023, we conducted search queries about Climate Change and COVID, topics underpinned by unequivocal scientific consensus, every day at noon for five consecutive days. Specifically, for Climate Change we performed the following queries (in French): "Climate Change CO2", "Global Warming", "IPCC", and for COVID-19 related queries: "COVID-19", "COVID pandemics" and "COVID vaccine". For each query, we collected the first 10 results, which were sorted by either Amazon's default algorithm or by decreasing average user ratings.

The search queries were picked to cover a broad and impartial range. Due to a lack of publicly available information, we do not claim to be representative of real users search queries on Amazon, nor being exhaustive.

Analysis

Search results from the Belgian book section of the Amazon store rankings were summarised into weighted average tables for the entire data collection period, showing the 10 most returned results, excluding titles appearing less than 4 times throughout of the 20 total days considered. The content of the books in the sample was assessed based on the description displayed on the Amazon store, and additional research on the authors and publishers. We point out how Amazon's skewed search results may cause systemic risk as defined by the DSA.

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[15] https://github.com/CheckFirstHQ/Investigation-Amazon-q4-2023

Figure 4: Display of the Search Results recommendations on Amazon. Relevant section emphasised in green.

Results

Landscape of non-personalised Recommendations on Amazon France

To assess the coherence of the communities we detected, we compare their content with our overall library. In particular, within a given community (group of books often co-recommended by Amazon):

- 88.8% of recommended books belong to the same community;
- The semantic diversity is 57.9% poorer[16] ;
- It takes on average 24.9 successive clicks on Amazon recommendations to exit the community (median 11 clicks);
- The probability that two books share the same author is 49 times higher;
- The probability that two books share the same publisher is 16.9 times higher;
- The probability that two books belong to the same Amazon book category is 5.1 times higher

The communities of recommended books are then shown to be extremely tight, and made of semantically similar books. To further explore these communities, an interactive version of the network is available: https://explore.multivacplatform.org/
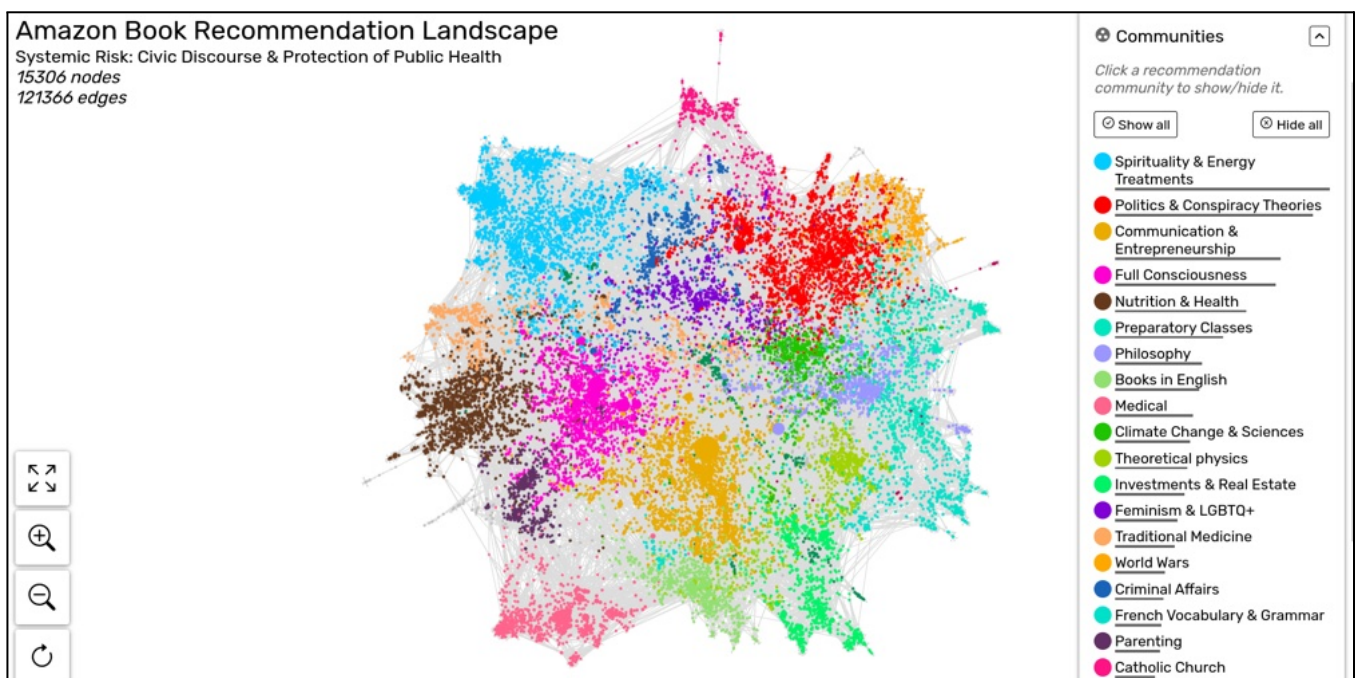
Figure 5 : Interactive landscape of Amazon book recommendations

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[16] Semantic diversity computed as the geometric mean of the standard deviation of the book description embeddings — obtained through non-negative matrix factorization of the tf-idf matrix.

Amazon's Search Results & Recommendations on socially relevant topics:

We focus our case studies on the following topics:

- Health misinformation (COVID & Vaccination);

- Immigration;

- Women's Rights, Abortion & Gender Issues;

- Climate change;

Health Issues (COVID & Vaccination)

In November 2023, 71.7% of Amazon France's search results to COVID related search queries contained books by authors known for spreading misinformation. This fraction increased to 91.1% when ranked by decreasing average user ratings.

Similarly, in Late September to mid-October 2023, Amazon Belgium's search results for "vaccine" and for "COVID" consistently showcased books by authors questioning the pandemic's reality or severity or delve into conspiracy theories within the top 10 results[17].

On "COVID", 80% of books in the top 10 are either questioning the existence of the pandemic, minimising its health effects or framing it as a conspiracy. The proportion is even more alarming on "vaccine" as 90% of results feature anti-vaccination narratives. This finding indicates a strong imbalance in Amazon's algorithm towards controversial content, posing serious risks to public health and well-being.

Notable authors in these search results include Michel de Lorgeril, known for his anti-vaccine stance[18][19] and questionable theories linking vaccines to

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[17] See Table Annex 1.1

[18] La Fnac et Amazon font-ils la promotion d'ouvrages antivaccins ou aux relents complotistes ? - France Info 2021 - https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/coronavirus/vrai-ou-fake-la-fnac-et-amazon-font-ils-la-promotion-d-ouvrages-antivaccins-ou-aux-relents-complotistes_4769893.html

[19] Les livres, le front oublié de la désinformation autour de la COVID-19 - LeDevoir Oct 2021 - https://www.ledevoir.com/lire/641508/les-livres-le-front-oublie-de-la-desinformation-autour-du-covid

autism[20]. His works focus on the alleged toxicity of vaccines. Another author, Marc Menant, presents vaccines as less effective than natural immunity[21], despite scientific evidence to the contrary.

Henri Joyeux, a discredited doctor[22], and Jean-Bernard Fourtillan[23], known for controversial and legally questionable practices, are also featured prominently. Notably, Amazon even placed an advertisement for Pr Joyeux's book on Bing to drive traffic to the product page[24] (fig 6). Their books, alongside those by Laurent Toubiana[25] and other covido-sceptic personalities, propagate misleading views on the Covid-19 pandemic, often contradicting established scientific consensus[26].

The prevalence of such content in Amazon's top search results is alarming, particularly given the absence of pro-vaccination books or those reflecting the scientific consensus on Covid-19.
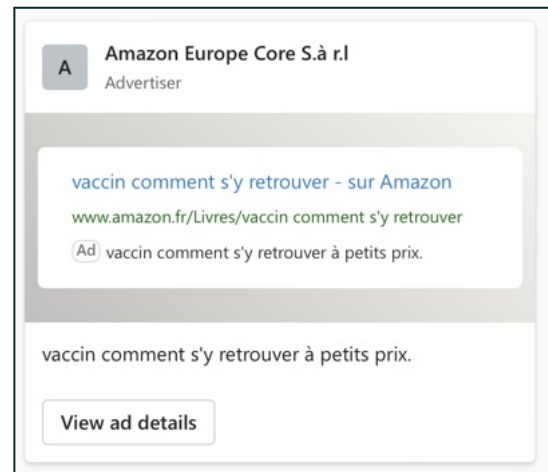
Figure 6: an ad preview on the Microsoft ad library showing an insert for Pr Joyeux's book paid for by Amazon

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[20] Davidson M. Vaccination as a cause of autism-myths and controversies. Dialogues Clin Neurosci. 2017 Dec;19(4):403-407. doi: 10.31887/DCNS.2017.19.4/mdavidson. PMID: 29398935; PMCID: PMC5789217.

[21] Pour Marc Menant, "C'est l'immunité naturelle qui protège, et pas le vaccin" - SudRadio 2022 - https://www.sudradio.fr/bercoff-dans-tous-ses-etats/pour-marc-menant-cest-limmunite-naturelle-qui-protege-et-pas-le-vaccin

[22] Le professeur Henri Joyeux à nouveau interdit d'exercer la médecine à cause de positions antivaccins - L'Obs Sept 2023 - https://www.nouvelobs.com/societe/20230911.OBS77984/le-professeur-henri-joyeux-a-nouveau-interdit-d-exercer-la-medecine-a-cause-de-positions-anti-vaccin.html

[23] Controversé et désormais sous les verrous, le Pr Fourtillan fédère au sein de la complosphère - TF1 Info - Mai 2021 - https://www.tf1info.fr/sante/covid-19-pandemie-complotisme-controverse-et-desormais-sous-les-verrous-le-pr-fourtillan-federe-au-sein-de-la-complosphere-2187081.html

[24] https://adlibrary.ads.microsoft.com/ad/85006309799394

[25] Covid : pourquoi le livre de Laurent Toubiana est à côté de la plaque - Marianne Mai 22 - https://www.marianne.net/societe/sante/covid-pourquoi-le-livre-de-laurent-toubiana-est-a-cote-de-la-plaque

[26] See table Annex 1.1

Authors like Pierre Chaillot[27] and Alexandra Henrion-Claude[28] dominate these COVID related results, with narratives that are often debunked by fact-checkers and the scientific community.

The presence of sensationalist publishers like L'artilleur[29] (the company essentially publishes sensationalist, anti-system books, relaying anti-vaxx, conspiracy theorists or climate-denialists[30]) in these search results further underscores the platform's role in amplifying misleading content. These books, with claims ranging from the pandemic being a hoax to misleading information about RNA vaccines, represent a clear public health risk.

Extracting books discussing COVID-19 and Vaccination from our network of book recommendations, we find different narratives, aligned with established taxonomies of COVID-19-related disinformation[31].

The three main sub-communities include those endorsing "New World Order" and "Great Reset" conspiracy theories, those challenging the established scientific consensus on vaccination and its side effects, and those discussing pandemic management.

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[27] Pas d'épidémie et un vaccin mortel : le grand théâtre covido-sceptique de Pierre Chaillot en librairie - Liberation CheckNews Apr 2023 - https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/pas-depidemie-et-un-vaccin-mortel-le-grand-theatre-covido-sceptique-de-pierre-chaillot-en-librairie-22-20230406_RWNX2R6GNFDHRNHER6K3WFY7YA/

[28] Alexandra Henrion-Caude, caution scientifique des « covido-sceptiques » - Le Monde Jun 2021 - https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/06/14/alexandra-henrion-caude-caution-scientifique-des-covido-sceptiques_6084016_3224.html

[29] Maison d'Edition L'Artilleur - https://www.editionsartilleur.fr/

[30] Covidoscepticisme, Vichy et déni climatique : la recette des éditions de L'Artilleur - CheckNews Apr 2013 - https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/covidoscepticisme-vichy-et-deni-climatique-la-recette-des-editions-de-lartilleur-20230407_VOTANWQR6JGFFNKX6EWZUMC6UI/

[31] Disinfodemic: deciphering COVID-19 disinformation, UNESCO, 2020
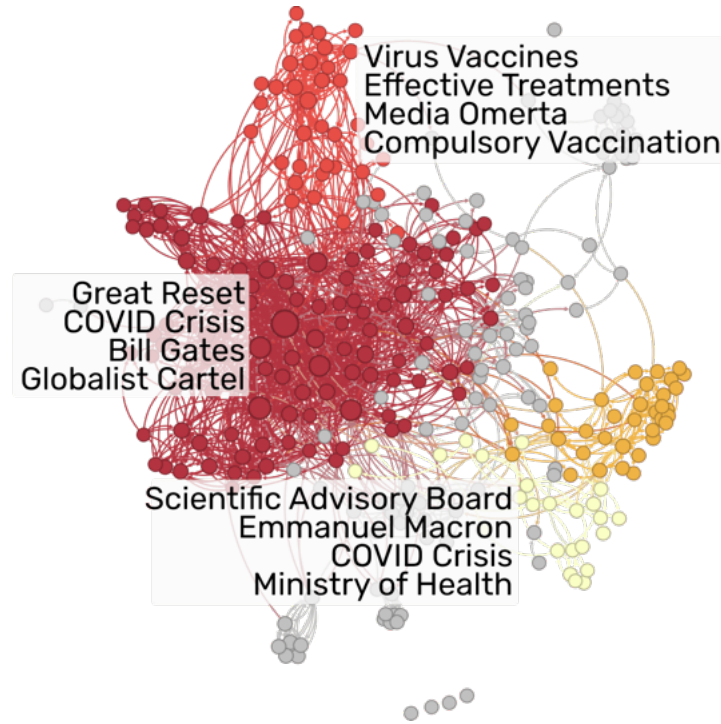
Figure 7: Network of recommendations induced by two-clicks from 101 books discussing COVID-19

Within the search results populated by anti-vax and conspiracy theories, the book "COVID-19: The Great Reset" by Klaus Schwab —the founder of the World Economic Forum— and the economist Thierry Malleret arises as an exception as it does not convey conspiracy theory but was used by conspiracy theorists as proof of coordinate manipulations from elites, according to a report by ISD[32]. Nonetheless, if a user clicks on it, Amazon will recommend, in addition to other Schwab's writings, conspiracy theory books. This book illustrates that the assignment of a book to a given community is not of the author's will, but of Amazon's algorithms.

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[32] https://www.isdglobal.org/explainers/the-great-reset/

Immigration

The examination of book search results for the term "immigration" reveals a concerning inclination, 30% of the top 10 results propagate negative views of immigration.

Prominent among these search results is Laurent Obertone's "La France Interdite: La vérité sur l'immigration" (Forbidden France: The Truth About Immigration), which is notably supported by the French far-right. Obertone, a French journalist and novelist, is known for his use of the term "ensauvagement" (TN: a French neologism suggesting bewilderment of France) a concept he introduced in his book "La France Orange mécanique." This term suggests a societal decline into violence and insecurity due to uncontrolled immigration, as outlined in his biography[33] on the media platform Valeurs Actuelles.

British writer Douglas Murray, with his book "L'étrange suicide de l'Europe: immigration, identité et Islam" (The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam), also appears prominently in the search results. In this work, he contends that "European civilization is under attack, fueled by self-hatred and anti-racism", as he expressed in an interview with Valeurs Actuelles[34].

Another notable figure in these search results is Patrick Stefanini, campaign manager for French right-wing politician Valérie Pécresse. His book promises to disclose "hidden truths" about immigration. Stefanini, a Senior French civil servant, denies affiliation with the Great Replacement theory but suggests that immigration narratives are being concealed from the public[35].

As the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) reminds in their investigation about Great Replacement that "On 15 March 2019 a shooter killed 51 individuals and injured 50 more in an alleged terrorist attack during Friday prayers at the Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand. It is alleged that the attacker left behind documentation outlining his motivation for the attack. This so-called manifesto referenced two interlinked conspiracy theories which have come to dominate the ideology of the international extreme-right – the Great Replacement theory and the White Genocide theory."[36]

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[33] Auteur : Laurent Obertone - Valuers Actuelles - https://www.valeursactuelles.com/auteur/laurent-obertone

[34] L'incorrect [Entretien] Douglas Murray : l'Occident en ligne de mire- Valeurs Actuelles Jan 2023 - https://www.valeursactuelles.com/clubvaleurs/lincorrect/entretien-douglas-murray-loccident-en-ligne-de-mire

[35] Patrick Stefanini: «L'État n'est plus en mesure de protéger les personnes et les biens» - Le Figaro Jun 2023 - https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/societe/patrick-stefanini-l-etat-n-est-plus-en-mesure-de-proteger-les-personnes-et-les-biens-20230707

[36] 'THE GREAT REPLACEMENT': THE VIOLENT CONSEQUENCES OF MAINSTREAMED EXTREMISM - ISD Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner Jun 2019 - https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Great-Replacement-The-Violent-Consequences-of-Mainstreamed-Extremism-by-ISD.pdf

Women's Rights, Abortion & Gender Issues

Feminine (Féminin)

In the analysis of Amazon Belgium's search results for "féminin", a noticeable pattern emerged. 50% of the averaged top results feature books that either criticised or trivialised the feminist movement.

The section also contains a share of concerning content, this time with gender based stereotypes and inequality. Over the study period, despite fluctuating positions in the results, half of the books presented on the first page of search results for the word 'féminin' refer to the "féminin sacré" ("sacred feminine") or feminine energy.

The concept of the "féminin sacré"" was singled out in the 2021 MIVILUDES[37] (French Government) report as "an appropriation of feminism by sectarian aberrations [...] MIVILUDES recommends particular vigilance with regard to this type of movement, which essentialises women by reducing them to genital organs or reproductive faculties, even though it is presented as a feminist movement aimed at their self-fulfilment and encouraging greater freedom."

Key authors in this category include Reemus Bailey, whose works on TikTok[38] often challenge the principles of feminism, portraying them as detrimental to society. Another author, Bernard Chaumeil, has devised a humanist analytical concept called Archetypal Therapy[39]. Chaumeil describes himself as an "energy analyst, therapist, teacher, author and lecturer", practising archetypal therapy and also offering an archetypal tarot. Other sectarian drifts were pointed out by MIVILUDE in the case of Miranda Gray's book, advising women to synchronise their lives with the moon and menstrual cycle as a well-being practice, despite scientific evidence on the topic.

Other authors on this topic include Jozée Anne Sarrazin Côté and Tarni Lynn Kent. Sarazen Côté is a former sports journalist, now author, Youtuber and founder of Ouitch[40], a platform for "an online education platform for caring witches". Kent is an American physiotherapist and holistic

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[37] Mission interministérielle de vigilance et de lutte contre les dérives sectaires - RAPPORT D'ACTIVITÉ 2021 - https://medias.amf.asso.fr/upload/files/MIVILUDES-RAPPORT2021_0.pdf

[38] Is the modern movement harmful to women? - TikTok Reemusb - https://www.tiktok.com/@reemusb/video/7278020508183055648

[39] Bernard CHAUMEIL Thérapeute Analyste Energéticien, Enseignant, Auteur et Conférencier - La Thérapie Archétypale - https://www.therapiearchetupale.fr/bernard-chaumeil

[40] Ouitch - https://www.ouitch.co/

therapist for women. Founder of Holistic Pelvic Care[41], she is trained in several mind-body therapy methods, including Mayan abdominal massage and the resolution of perinatal trauma in newborns.

Other books returned by Amazon include works of fiction and books centred around women's health questions.

Abortion Rights (Avortement)

Abortion sits at the intersection of health and gender issues, frequently surfacing in the news, especially after the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. This ruling shifted the power to regulate abortion policies to individual states, leading to diverse and often restrictive approaches. In Europe, contrasts are evident: while Ireland has legalised abortion, Abortion in Poland is legal only in cases when the pregnancy is a result of a criminal act or when the woman's life or health is in danger and Malta maintains stringent abortion laws. Nonetheless, surveys[42][43] show that in nearly every European country, at least 75% of adults hold the view that abortion should be legal.

The search results for "avortement" (abortion) on Amazon Belgium feature 40% of books critical of abortion rights. Notable among these authors are Florence Allard[44], described as "a Catholic gynaecologist"[45], Jean-Régis Fropo, priest and exorcist at the Diocese of Toulon[46], Pascale Pissochet, openly relaying anti abortion discourse on social media[47] and Laurent Spriet, priest and author for Valeurs Actuelles[48] (a far-right French publication) who are known for their conservative stance on the issue. Their works often emphasise moral and social concerns surrounding abortion, focusing on the unborn, with less attention to the rights and health of women.

Conversely, books offering a balanced perspective on abortion, discussing reproductive rights, women's health, and the ethical complexities, are notably less prominent in these search results. This imbalance in the availability of diverse viewpoints on Amazon Belgium is a matter of concern.

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[41] Holistic Pelvic Care™ with Tami Lynn Kent | Wild Feminine - https://www.wildfeminine.com/

[42]
https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/06/20/support-for-legal-abortion-is-widespread-in-many-countries-especially-in-europe/

[43] https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/abortions-amid-covid-19-how-womens-rights-are-being-impacted-pandemic

[44] Conférences pro-vie samedi 8 mars - Paperblog Mars 2008 -
https://www.paperblog.fr/516873/conferences-pro-vie-samedi-8-mars/

[45] Hymne à la vie - Radio Esperance - https://radio-esperance.fr/antenne-principale/hymne-a-la-vie/

[46] ENTRETIENS SPIRITUELS Père Jean-Régis Fropo, exorciste - Un feu sur la terre Oct 2022 -
https://www.unfeusurlaterre.org/gehelata/entretiens-sur-la-spiritualite/lobsession-loppression-la-possession-pere-jean-regis-fropo-exorciste

[47] Dr Pascale Pissochet - X - https://x.com/PPissochet

[48] Auteur : Laurent Spriet - Valeurs Actuelles - https://www.valeursactuelles.com/auteur/laurent-spriet

Gender Issues

Extracting from the Amazon France corpus 117 books related to gender issues (including gender identity, expression, and equality), we build the network of recommendation. Again, two distinct communities emerge, comprising 56.4% (in purple) and 20.5% (in red) of the books. Books in the purple community focus on feminist struggles, male domination, sexual violence, and engage in discussions on gender identity and expression. In contrast, books in the red community discuss "cancel culture", inclusive writing, and "wokeism". On average, when a user consults a feminist/queer book, Amazon recommends 95.7% of such books, similarly alongside conservative books Amazon recommends 95.8% of conservative books.
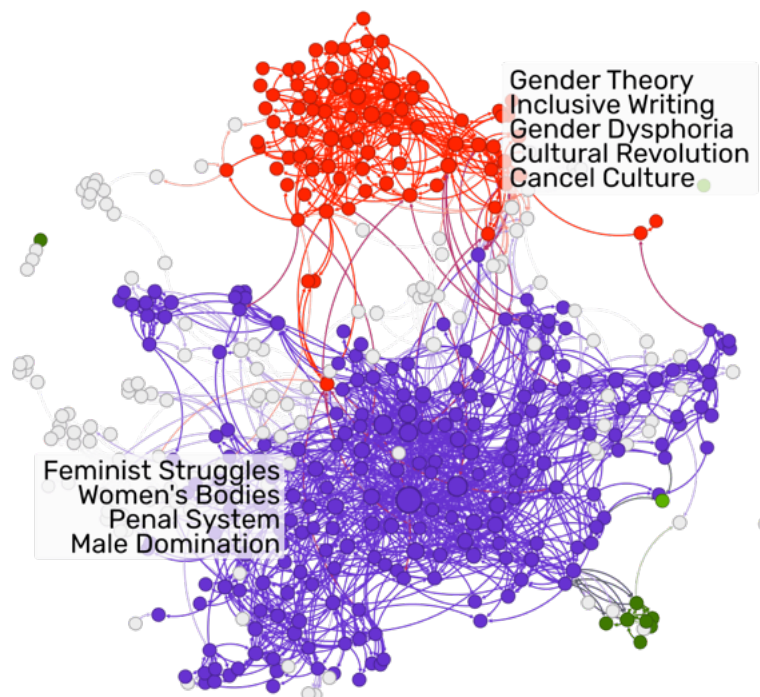
Figure 8: Network of recommendations induced by two-clicks from 117 books discussing Gender Issues

Climate Change (Changement Climatique)

On the Belgian Amazon: out of the averaged top 10 search results, 3 books either downplay or outright reject the widely accepted scientific consensus on climate change.

Among these results, Steven Koonin's "Climat, la part d'incertitude" ("Climate, the part of uncertainty") was a prominent feature. Koonin, a former science adviser to the Obama administration, is known for challenging the scientific consensus on climate change in his book[49]. Additionally, was Christian Gerondeau's "Le climat par les chiffres: Sortir de la science-fiction du GIEC" (Climate by the numbers: Moving beyond the science fiction of the IPCC), a book critical of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and accused of promoting misinformation[50]. Lastly, Mathieu Zajdela's "Enquête sur le changement climatique" (Investigation on Climate Change) questions established facts, like the raise of the planet's temperature or the role of human activities on said raise.
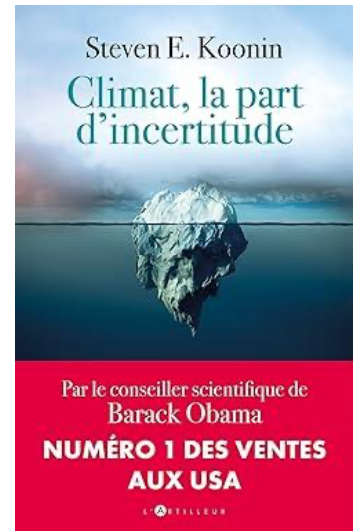
The presence of these books in top search results highlights the recommendations of the EU DisinfoLab report[51] on climate disinformation, emphasising the long-standing warnings from climatology experts about the dangers of climate change and the significant human influence on global warming. However, despite these warnings, social media and other platforms continue to amplify messages that contradict or question scientific evidence, creating doubt about the crisis's severity and delaying necessary climate action.

On the French Amazon, when performing climate change related search queries, using Amazon's default algorithm, 51% of the first 10 results presented misleading information about the scientific consensus. This rose to 64.1% when results were sorted by decreasing average user ratings. To understand what happens if a user clicks on those results, we extracted the network of Amazon France recommendations associated with 146 books discussing Climate Change (excluding fiction). We observe that they form two main communities: one accepting the scientific consensus on climate change (displayed in green), containing 42.5% of the books, the other rejecting it, containing 30.1% of the books.

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[49] "C'est l'histoire d'un scientifique qui a mal tourné" : Steven Koonin, l'art du déni climatique - L'Express Mar 2023 - https://www.lexpress.fr/environnement/cest-lhistoire-dun-scientifique-qui-a-mal-tourne-steven-koonin-lart-du-deni-climatique-AYE4R3EFUJCVRBW34BUGZXBNUA/

[50] Dérèglement climatique : CNews révèle les impostures du Giec - Telerama Apr 2022 - https://www.telerama.fr/ecrans/dereglement-climatique-cnews-revele-les-impostures-du-giec-7009720.php

[51] Platforms' policies on climate change misinformation - EU Disinfo Lab Ana Romero-Vicente Sept 2023 - https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/platforms-policies-on-climate-change-misinformation/

The large representation of climate-denialist books among Amazon.fr top search results is particularly concerning as, when a user consults a climate-denialist book, other books in the red community make up 91.9% of Amazon.fr's recommendations. Similarly, when consulting pro-climate books, Amazon.fr recommends 81.1% of pro-climate books.
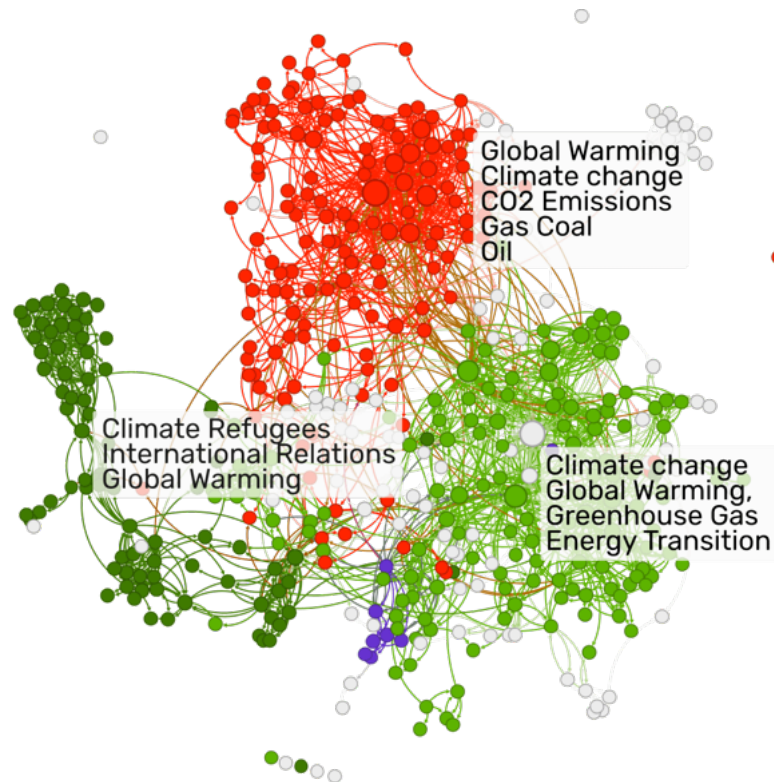
Figure 9: Network of recommendations induced by two-clicks from 146 books discussing Climate Change

A manual annotation indicates that climate-denialist books on French Amazon mainly emphasise two narratives[52]:

- "Climate science is unreliable" (43.2% of books in the red community): questioning consensus, accusing scientists of bias, being alarmist or participating in conspiracies.

- "Climate solutions won't work" (20.5% of books in the red community): arguing that climate policies are harmful and/or ineffective, questioning the efficacy of clean energy (especially wind turbines), and asserting the abundance and affordability of fossil fuels.

Furthermore, a study by the nonprofit group Advance Democracy[53] in 2021 already underscored this issue. They found that 20% of the top 60 search results on Amazon.com for "climate

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[52] Manual annotation leveraging the "Computer-assisted classification of contrarian claims about climate change" made by Coan et al, 2021 Sci Rep

[53] As Jeff Bezos stresses climate change, Amazon promotes books saying it's fake - Los Angeles Times Jul 2021 - https://www.latimes.com/business/technology/story/2021-07-26/jeff-bezos-climate-change-amazon-promotes-hoax

change" contained books by authors known for spreading misinformation about the topic, including three of the first four sponsored results.

Contrarian Community

Surprisingly, when taking a global perspective, one observes that books espousing climate denial, anti-vax narratives, conspiracy theories, and holding conservative views on gender are found within the same community; rather than being in topic-specific communities, as observed for pro-climate and feminism/queer books.
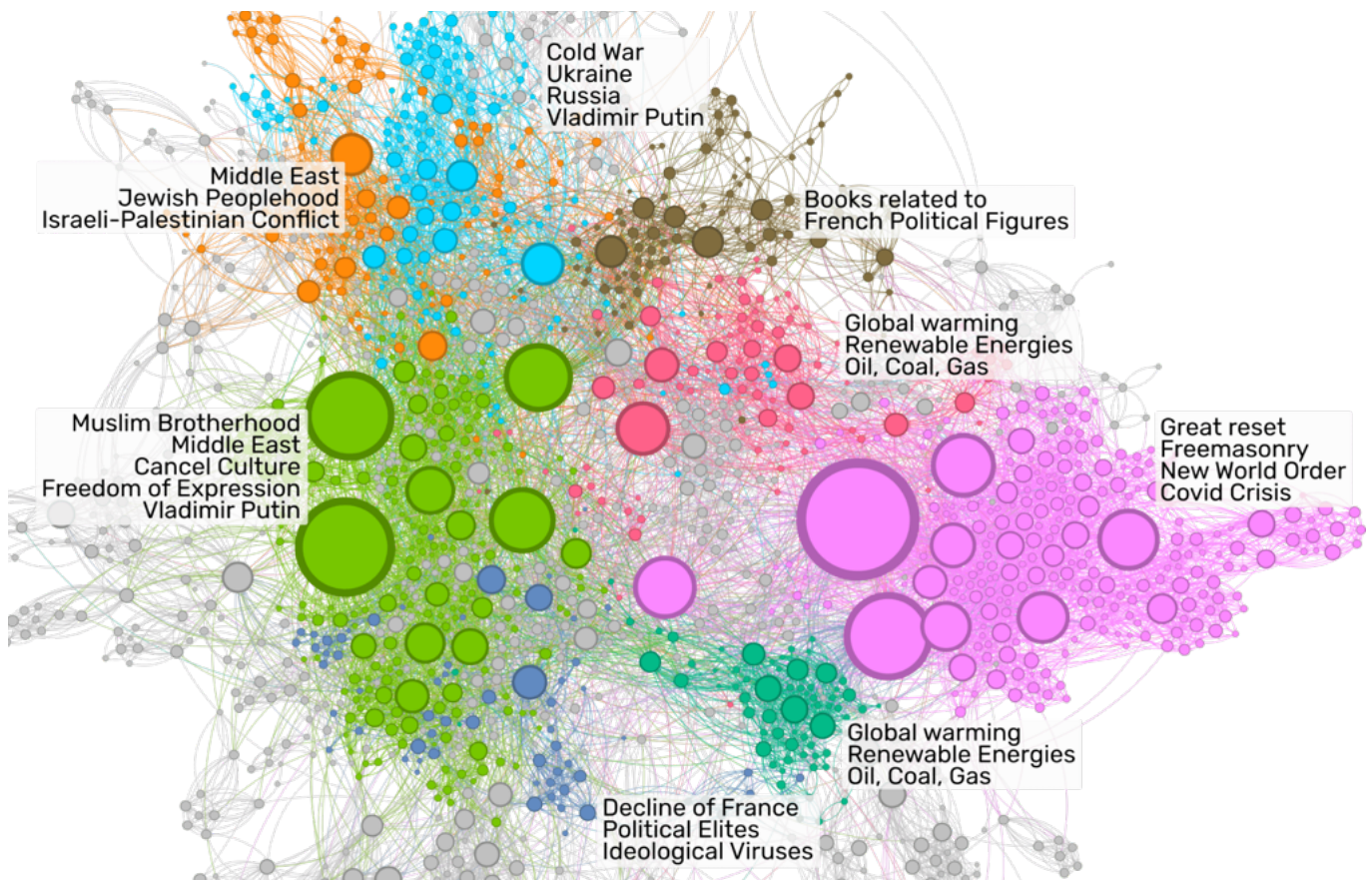
Figure 10: Sub-Network of recommendations corresponding to books in the so-called "contrarian" community

To explore the other narratives discussed within this community, the third-largest in our network with 1776 books, we isolated it and extracted keywords from book summaries; revealing a diverse range of topics: including Freemasonry, French Politics, Foreign Policy, Cancel Culture, and Great Reset conspiracy theories. Beyond encompassing various disinformation narratives, this community stands out by its confinement. It takes an average of 15.5 (median 8) successive clicks for a random surfer following Amazon recommendations to leave the contrarian communities. In contrast, it takes 6.1 (median 4) and 6.3 (median 4) clicks to leave the feminist/queer and pro-climate communities, respectively.

To understand why these narratives coexist within the same recommendation community, rather than being in distinct topic-specific communities, we collected the user "verified purchase" reviews. Interestingly, we discovered that the overlap between reviewers of climate-denialist books and of books holding conservative views on gender is 6.8 times higher

than the overlap between reviewers of pro-climate and feminist/queer books. Similarly, the overlap between reviewers of COVID-19-related books and climate-denialist books is 4.9 times higher than the overlap between COVID-related books and pro-climate books. As analysed in the article "Browsing Amazon's Book Bubbles"[54] and in continuity with the "collaborative filtering" recommender systems[55], books reviewed by the same users tend to be recommended together by Amazon. This observation would explain why Amazon recommends COVID-19 conspiracy books after a climate-denialists book.

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[54] "Browsing Amazon's Book Bubbles", Paul Bouchaud, 2023, https://hal.science/hal-04308081
[55] "Amazon.com recommendations: item-to-item collaborative filtering", Linden, Smith and York, IEEE Internet Computing, 2003

Sexually Explicit Content on Amazon

 This section displays blurred, yet explicit sexual content.

The article 28 of the DSA requires online platforms accessible to minors to adopt measures ensuring a high level of safety for minors, implementing the BIK+ guidelines for a safe, age-appropriate digital environment. In addition, Amazon's own policy[56] forbids the sale of sexually explicit content such as pornography, graphics depicting sexual acts, or adult gadgets.

In this section, we explore the enforcement of Amazon's policy.

Sexually explicit products are available on Amazon

Affiner la catégorie

< Hygiène et Santé

Érotisme, sexe et sensualité

Amplificateurs sexuels

Bien-être et massages érotiques

Chaussures de fétichisme

Contraception et préservatifs

Cuir, latex et vernis

Fesser et taquiner

Jeux et fantaisies érotiques

Lingerie et vêtements

Lubrifiants, stimulants et hygiène

Mobilier érotique

Retenue et bondage

Sex Toys

Contrary to Amazon's policy explicitly prohibiting the sale of "sexual aids and adult gadgets" the Amazon store features subcategories such as "Sex Toys" or "Sexual enhancers" within the "Hygiene and Health > Eroticism, sex and sensuality" product category. Similarly, a simple search for "porn dvd" reveals the presence of thousands of DVDs labelled "Rated: Forbidden under 18", some without the illustrations being censored. We emphasise that the vendors of explicit DVDs do not try to conceal the explicit nature of their product, with titles as explicit as "JUST TURNED 18 - 18+ Teens, Age, Compilation - Adult DVD, Porn DVD, Sex DVD | P02" or "GANG BANG PRONTE PER TUTTI | ORIGINAL PACKING | Anal, Orgy, Gang Bang, Italy - Adult DVD, Porn DVD, Sex DVD | K01".

Amazon's terms for book content submission state that Amazon does "not sell books that, in [their] opinion, contain hate speech, promote the sexual abuse or exploitation of children, contain pornography, glorify rape or pedophilia or advocate terrorism, as well as any other content that we deem inappropriate or offensive."[57]

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[56] Conditions pour soumettre du contenu pour vos articles - Amazon.fr - https://www.amazon.fr/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201995150

Conditions pour soumettre du contenu pour les livres - Amazon.fr - https://www.amazon.fr/gp/help/customer/display.html/?nodeId=GJUAA7A28KBJE2YV

[57] Conditions pour soumettre du contenu pour les livres - Amazon.fr - https://www.amazon.fr/gp/help/customer/display.html/?nodeId=GJUAA7A28KBJE2YV

Despite this clear policy, Amazon features books in categories such as "Pornography library",[58] "Erotic Manga (Hentai)"[59], "Erotic comics"[60].
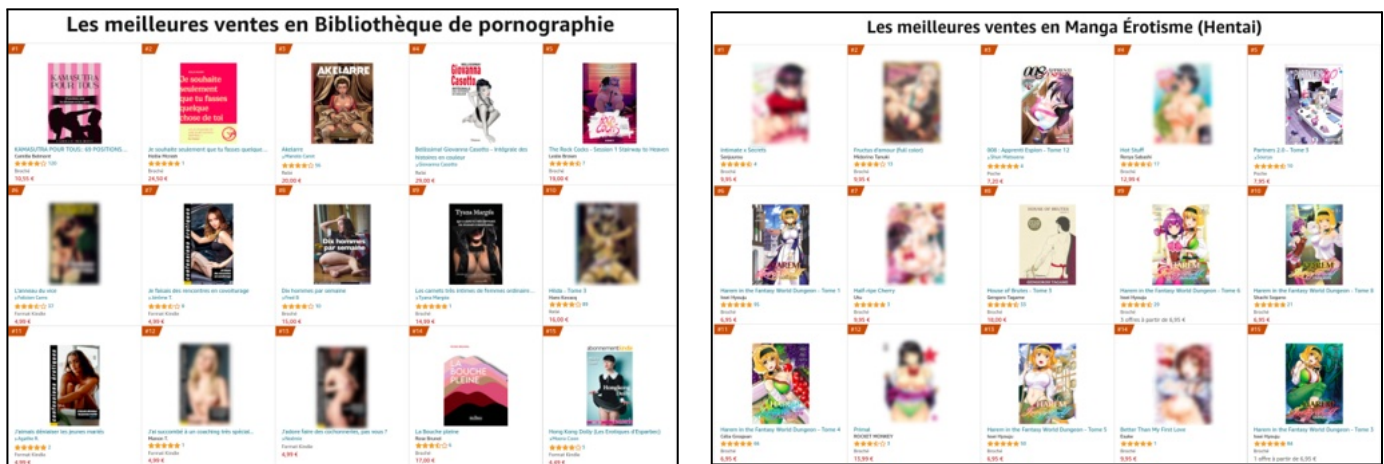
These results showcase how Amazon lacks the most basic safety mechanism to identify such content as sexually explicit, which per Amazon policy should be removed. In addition to not complying with their own policy, Amazon facilitates the discovery of prohibited content by featuring them in dedicated categories.

Sexually explicit content is featured by Amazon on unrelated category

When selling a book on Amazon, the publisher can select up to three categories for their book to be tagged as. In addition to a publishers' self-selection of categories, Amazon claims to "review [the] changes [of categories] to ensure that [their] customers receive the best possible experience" and that they "do not tolerate inaccurate or imprecise categorization that could mislead or manipulate [their] customers"[61]. As mentioned above, Amazon organises the sale of sexually explicit content with dedicated categories.

Our study reveals that Amazon did not prevent books to be stored in both sexually and non-sexually explicit categories simultaneously. By failing to implement even the most basic safety mechanism, sexually explicit book, and declared as such by the seller, can be featured in non-erotic categories, such as "Books > Family & well-being > Personal development" for the example on figure 11, de facto allowing for its discovery by any user on the platform, even those not specifically seeking such material.

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[58] Les meilleures ventes: Les articles les plus populaires dans la boutique Bibliothèque de pornographie - Amazon.fr - https://www.amazon.fr/gp/bestsellers/books/13050251

[59] Les meilleures ventes: Les articles les plus populaires dans la boutique Manga Érotique (Hentai) - Amazon.fr - https://www.amazon.fr/gp/bestsellers/books/1087932

[60] Les meilleures ventes: Les articles les plus populaires dans la boutique Bandes dessinées érotiques - Amazon.fr - https://www.amazon.fr/gp/bestsellers/books/574008
[61] https://kdp.amazon.com/fr_FR/help/topic/G200652170

Figure 11: Example of a sexually explicit book, featured by Amazon in an inappropriate category, and allowing any user to read a sample of the first pages, depicting explicit sexual acts. Content blurred out.
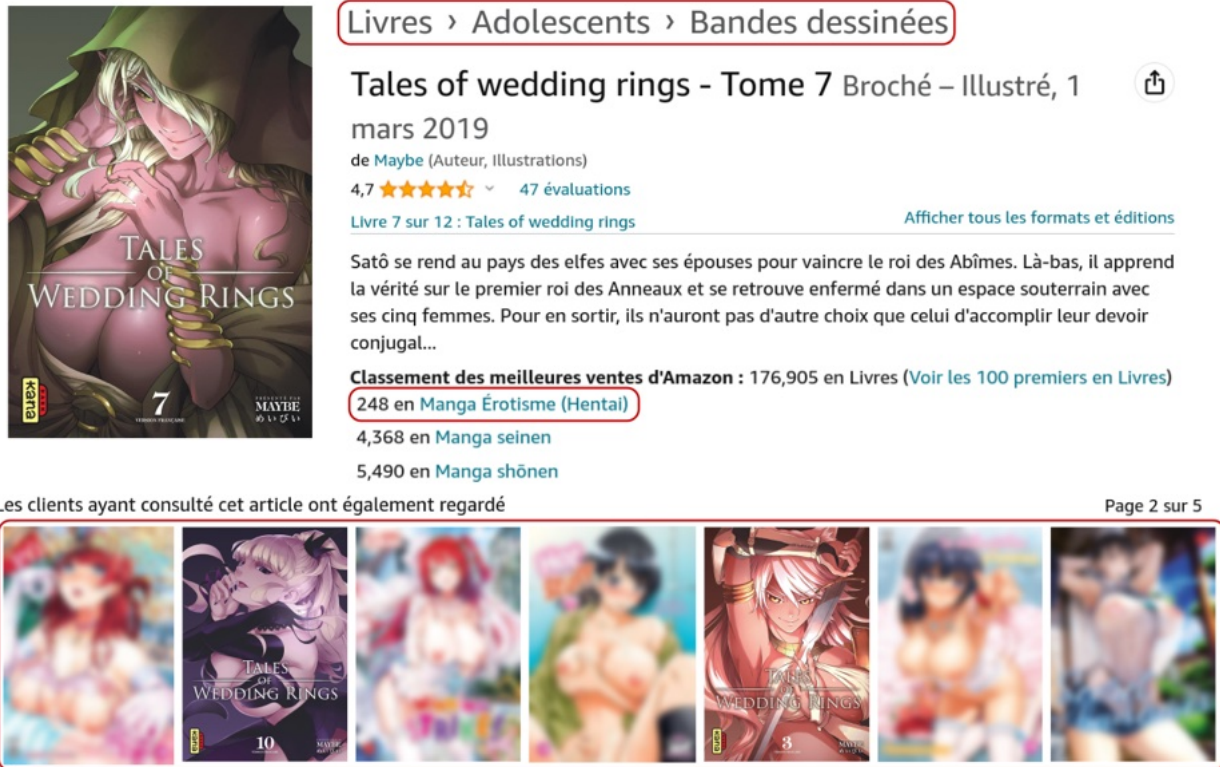
Amazon allows the consumption of explicit content without any age restrictions

In addition to displaying potentially explicit covers and descriptions, Amazon allows any user to read samples of ebooks. This feature becomes particularly problematic given the substantial volume of ebooks that merely are collections of explicit photos or cartoons, as in figure 11. Once again, the vendors do not try to conceal the explicit nature of their product, with titles as explicit as "Hot&Naked Vol. 1: Photo Collection." or "850+ NUDE PICS of 5 UKRAINIAN slim really SEXY GIRLS : Erotic adult content photobooks of the hottest women ever stripping (Sexy Ukrainian Girls Book 6)."

Furthermore, the landscape is evolving with a growing fraction of ebooks being composed of AI-generated explicit content, and labelled as such by their authors e.g. "AI Nude BIKINI Photoalbum", or "Brown Hair Teen Porn: Cute Brown haired and big breasted girl, photo collection by AI. (Kawaii Plus Book 6)". Such tools allow the rapid production of ebooks, for example the so-called "AI EVE in PARADISE" project, which in 8 months published 149 ebooks, each comprising hundred AI-generated explicit pictures.

Amazon recommends explicit content on "teenagers" category

Further concerns arise as Amazon recommends explicit content, (rightly) categorised as "Erotic Literature" on pages of books categorised as "Teenager Comics".

Figure 12 :Example of a book, featured in both erotic category and teenagers category

While we do not assess the frequency of such harmful recommendations, this example reveals the lack by Amazon to implement even the most basic mechanisms to prevent the recommendation of explicit content on pages targeted for minors. In this particular example:

- Amazon knowingly features a book it knows to be "erotic" —or at least has good enough reasons to believe so in order to feature it in the "Erotic Manga (Hentai)" category— in the "Teenagers Comics" category

- Amazon knowingly recommends on the page of a book categorised as "Teenagers Comics", books categorised as "Erotic Literature", and for some declared by the publisher to be read by 18 years old and older.

You can further explore the recommendation formulated by Amazon on https://explore.multivacplatform.org/amzn_nsfw/, with a network of 31k books recommendations focused on children/teenagers books and erotic ones, allowing you to appreciate their proximity on Amazon.
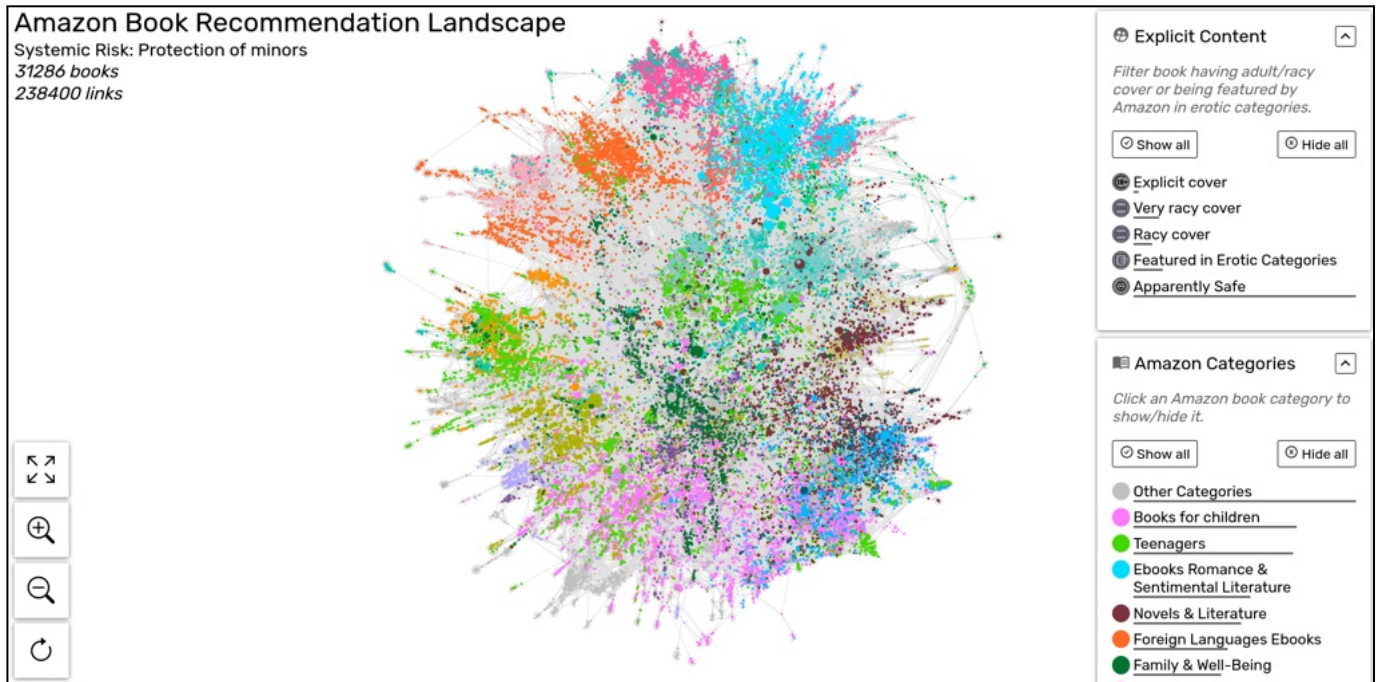
Figure 13 : Interactive landscape of Amazon book recommendations

Amazon's response

On Dec 5th, we contacted Amazon's press relations department to share our findings, sending the following email:

Dear Amazon Team,

We are writing to you on behalf of AI Forensics and Check First, in relation to a recent study we conducted concerning Amazon's compliance with the Digital Services Act.

Our analysis identified several concerns regarding the presence of content on Amazon that appears to contravene your stated content guidelines. Notably, we found a considerable number of "X-rated" DVDs listed for sale, despite your guidelines prohibiting such materials. These items are easily found through basic searches, often lacking appropriate censorship. As these listings are clear about their explicit nature, we are keen to understand how they remain on the platform.

Furthermore, our study revealed the sale of pornographic books under categories like "Manga Erotic (Hentai)", "Bibliothèque de pornographie" and others, despite Amazon's policy against selling such content. We are interested in learning about Amazon's approach to these apparent discrepancies.

Additionally, we observed that Amazon's "Read a sample" feature allows unverified access to pornographic content, which raises concerns about compliance with Amazon's terms of service and the European Digital Services Act, particularly in relation to minors (Article 28 - Online protection of minors).

We are eager to learn more about the challenges Amazon faces in preventing these violations and the steps being taken to enhance the effectiveness of your content filtering mechanisms.

● Could you please explain the presence of this content on the platform, given its violation of Amazon's guidelines? Additionally, what measures are in place to address this discrepancy?

● Could you provide insights into why Amazon sells books with sexually explicit content, despite its stated guidelines?

● How does Amazon reconcile this situation with its obligations under Article 28 of the Digital Services Act and local laws regarding access to pornographic content by minors?

● How do you prevent such violations, and what mechanism has Amazon implemented to detect and prevent the recommendation of sexually explicit content, specifically categorised as such, from books intended for teenagers?

Lastly, our research highlighted concerns about the large promotion of problematic content in the Amazon French and Belgian bookstores. This includes the predominant representation of misleading information on critical issues like COVID-19, women's rights or climate change.

While we do not challenge the principle of freedom of speech, we are interested in understanding the editorial behind the decision to actively recommend misinformation and conspiracy theory books, especially given their potential public health implications.

• Could you explain the rationale behind Amazon's editorial decision to restrict the diversity of perspectives in its algorithmic recommendations?

To include your perspective in our report, we kindly request a response to these inquiries by December 8. Your insights on these matters will be very valuable for our study and contribute to our understanding of Amazon's content recommendation practices and their broader societal impact.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to your response.

Amazon first answered to ask for further examples of our findings, which we provided. Shortly after we had sent said examples, we noticed on Dec 8th that some of the described items were not accessible on Amazon.fr and Amazon.be anymore.

Hereunder is Amazon's response, sent on Dec 8th:

Our investigation is underway and we will continue to take appropriate action against products which do not comply with our policies and guidelines. We are constantly working with regulators, third party experts, vendors, and sellers to improve the ways we detect and prevent illegal and unsafe products from reaching our marketplace, and our Conditions of Use and Sale ([ENG](#) / [FR](#)) make clear that we do not sell products for purchase by children. In rare cases where we are made aware that an account has been opened by a minor without permission, we close the account.

Amazon shares the goal of the European Commission to create a safe, predictable and trusted online environment, and we invest significantly in protecting our store from bad actors, illegal content, and in creating a trustworthy shopping experience. We have built on this strong foundation for DSA compliance. As required by the Digital Services Act, this year we published our EU Store Transparency Report, outlining our commitment to providing a trustworthy shopping experience. You can read it [here](#).

Discussion

The analysis of Amazon's search and recommendation algorithms on the Belgian and French bookstores raises critical concerns about Amazon's role in shaping public discourse and knowledge. This discussion interprets these findings in the context of the broader digital ecosystem, highlighting the implications for platform responsibility and the systemic risks identified in the Digital Services Act (DSA).

The Role of Algorithms in Content Display Ranking

The prominence of books by authors known for spreading misinformation in search results and the high confinement in book recommendations underscores the significant influence of Amazon's algorithms in curating content for users. These algorithms, while designed to enhance user experience, appear to amplify certain viewpoints, reducing the plurality of views, creating echo chambers. This is particularly concerning given the trust placed in its recommendations by Amazon broad user base, 181 368 208 average monthly active European users according to their first EU Store Transparency Report[62].

Systemic Risks and Platform Accountability

This study synthesises four critical areas where Amazon's platform poses systemic risks under the Digital Services Act, highlighting the need for greater platform accountability.

- Health Issues (COVID & Vaccination): Amazon's promotion of books by authors known for spreading misinformation about health topics through its algorithms represents a significant risk under the DSA. This situation, coupled with a high confinement in Amazon book recommendations, necessitates a thorough risk assessment and a call for stricter adherence to DSA guidelines, particularly given the potential negative impact on public health.

- Immigration: Amazon Belgium's search results overrepresent anti-immigration content, potentially contributing to the spread of negative content affecting fundamental rights. This inclination raises questions about the transparency and effectiveness of Amazon's content moderation and search systems, particularly in terms of preventing skewed content dissemination.

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[62] EU Store Transparency Report - Amazon Oct 2023 -
https://assets.aboutamazon.com/cd/28/4d02dd2e41ec8c6d1bc341e9d919/amazon-eu-store-transparency-report-jan-june-2023.pdf

- Women's Rights, Abortion & Gender Issues: Amazon Belgium's search results are skewed, suggesting a large fraction of anti-abortion or sectarian books. This imbalance in information dissemination, coupled with a high confinement in Amazon book recommendations, raises concerns about Amazon's role in public discourse on sensitive issues like women's rights and abortion.

- Climate Change Issues: The search results on the Belgian and French bookstores feature significant proportions of climate-denialist books. This skew, exacerbated by Amazon's book recommendations, is undermining accurate dissemination of information on climate change.

These areas demonstrate the urgent need for Amazon to improve transparency, moderation, and algorithmic design to align with the DSA's guidelines and mitigate the systemic risks associated with misinformation and problematic content dissemination.

Implications for Public Health and Safety

The spread of inaccurate or false information about health, especially regarding vaccines and COVID-19, presents a direct threat to public health and safety. The findings suggest that Amazon's platform may be contributing to the proliferation of such information, potentially influencing individuals' health choices and attitudes towards public health measures.

Impact on Civic Discourse and Social Cohesion

The imbalanced perspectives from authors known for spreading misinformation in topics like immigration and climate change can significantly shape public opinion and discourse. By promoting misleading narratives, Amazon's algorithms undermine informed public debate on these critical issues.

Sexuality explicit content

Despite Amazon's claims to "invest a lot of time and resources in implementing [their content guidelines], using machine learning and automation, as well as teams dedicated to [item] review,"[63] we uncovered fundamental shortcomings. The platform appears to lack even the most basic mechanisms to prevent the presence and recommendation of sexually explicit content, despite being forbidden by their own policies, failing to provide age-appropriate content recommendations.

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[63] https://www.amazon.fr/gp/help/customer/display.html/?nodeId=GJUAA7A28KBJE2YV

Conclusion

Our findings show that, on sensitive topics like vaccination or climate change, Amazon's systems are exposing users to a disproportionate amount of misleading or partial narratives, when not sheer falsehoods or misinformation. Furthermore, users legitimately turning to Amazon's bookstores to expand their knowledge on an issue are confined in like-minded narratives once they select a specific book, rather than being presented with a plurality of views. The presentations in important proportions of some misleading or skewed content could pose a systemic risk under Article 34 of the Digital Services Act.

Another concerning finding relates to Amazon's failure at enforcing their own terms of service. Explicit pornographic content is accessible to any user of the service from Amazon's website or its mobile apps counterparts, even when not logged into Amazon. This also raises the question of Amazon's current state of operations in relation to Article 28 of the DSA regarding the protection of minors.

This report is yet another proof of the continued need for the implication of civil society in the monitoring of very large online platforms. While the DSA provisions independent and mandatory audits for Very Large Online Platforms such as Amazon, these full audit reports won't be public. Continuous examinations by civil society actors will hence remain a necessity to keep VLOPs and VLOSEs in check before European Citizens alongside the efforts of the European Commission. Significantly, the European Commission recently requested[64] Amazon to provide more information on the measures the company has taken to comply with the DSA, particularly measures related to systemic risks and on compliance of recommender systems.

The current state of the Amazon stores, both in France and Belgium, should encourage regulators and policy makers to pay thorough attention to the enforcement of the provisions of the Digital Services Act, particularly as they are being transposed into national laws.

As a prominent bookstore, Amazon holds considerable sway in the cultural marketplace, and the systemic risks posed by its systems go beyond counterfeit or illegal content. We strongly urge regulators to ensure that Amazon comprehensively addresses the impact of its systems on the dissemination and amplification of misleading, deceptive or disinformation content, as underscored in the DSA.

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[64] Commission sends request for information to Amazon under the Digital Services Act - Europa Press Corner Nov 2023 - https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_23_5809

Review process

This document has been reviewed following [Check First's process](#) including the review of the final document by two internal employees and two external reviewers qualified in the field of the research. The process assessment grid used by the reviewers is available here.

The external reviewers for this document are :

- Researcher in disinformation in an NGO
- EU Advocacy Lead in an Foundation

This document has scored **87.50** out of 100 after review.

Archiving

- Amazon Belgium's data has been captured by CheckFirst and is available on [Github](#).

- Amazon France's data has been captured by AI Forensics and are available on: https://explore.multivacplatform.org/ & https://explore.multivacplatform.org/amzn_nsfw/

Annexes

1. Amazon.fr Book Recommendations

The recommendation data collection was performed through snowballing starting from 1,725 unique seeds collected from the top hundred bestsellers of 18 Amazon.fr book categories: News, Politics and Society; Social issues in society; Politics; Current affairs; Economics; Major conflicts and geopolitics; History and current affairs; Media and communication; Business and the Stock Market; Humanities; Science; Science for all; Earth, water and environmental sciences; Environment; Ecology; Life sciences, biology and genetics; Health, Fitness and Diet; Religions and Spiritualities.

From the 1,725 initial seeds, the first iteration identified 14,847 unique books, 7,485 of them recommended at least twice. The second iteration identified 41,463 books, 23,663 of them recommended at least twice and the third iteration identified 94,139 books, 57,781 of them recommended at least twice. Removing duplicates, we finally collected 60,298 books.

Amazon introduces product recommendations under multiple designations. For the examination of non-personalised recommendations, we exclusively retained the following: "Customers who viewed this item also viewed", "Related to items you viewed", "What other items are customers buying after viewing this item?", "Customers who bought this item also bought", "More articles to discover", "Customers who read this book also read", "People who viewed this content also viewed", "Popular products based on this article", "Products related to this article".

2. Amazon Belgium Search Results Tables

For each keyword, we collected the 16 first search results returned by the book section of the Belgian Amazon store, excluding promoted content from results. All collected data is available on GitHub.

We summarised the rankings into weighted average tables for the entire data collection period, excluding titles appearing less that 4 times out of the 20 total days considered. The ranking of the remaining books was averaged and titles were sorted according to this average ranking to populate the tables displayed in subsequent sections.

2.1. Health Disinformation - Keyword: Vaccine
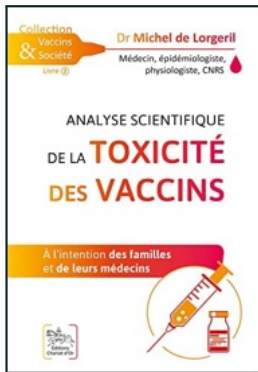
Average Rank: 1

Title Translated:
Scientific analysis of the toxicity of vaccines: intended to families and their doctors

Author(s):
Michel de Lorgeril

Publication Date:
11 February 2019

Publisher:
Chariot d'Or, specialises in oriental spirituality and medicine, Tao, and well-being techniques

Author Background:
French doctor, cardiologist at the Grenoble Faculty of Medicine, known for his mistrust of vaccines.

Additional Notes:
Criticised for casting doubt on the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines and the transparency of their manufacturers.

Source(s):

- [Michel de Lorgeril website](#)

- [La Fnac et Amazon font-ils la promotion d'ouvrages anti-vaccins ou aux relents complotistes ? - France Info](#)

Average Rank: 2

Title Translated:
The worrying history of vaccines

Author(s):
Marc Menant

Publication Date:
7 April 2022

Publisher:
PLON, part of Editis group, known for its possible 'political' management intentions

Author Background:
French journalist and writer, former sports journalist, known for paranormal, well-being, and travel programs.

Additional Notes:
Advocates for natural immunity over vaccines.

Source: [Pour Marc Menant, "C'est l'immunité naturelle qui protège, et pas le vaccin" - Sud Info](#)
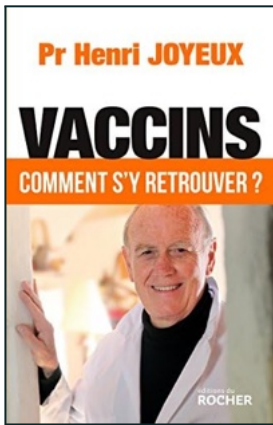
Average Rank: 3

Title Translated:
Vaccines: how to make your mind?

Author(s):
Pr Henri Joyeux and Jean-Bernard Fourtillan (Préface)

Publication Date:
8 October 2015

Publisher:
Éditions du rocher

Author Background:
Henri Joyeux: banned doctor for false statements against vaccines. Jean-Bernard Fourtillan: pharmacist, controversial for illegal clinical trials.

Additional Notes:
Criticised by the scientific community for misleading positions.

Source(s):

- [Controversé et désormais sous les verrous, le Pr Fourtillan fédère au sein de la complosphère - TF1 info](#)

- [Le professeur Henri Joyeux est interdit d'exercer la médecine à la suite de déclarations fallacieuses contre certains vaccins - Le Monde](#)
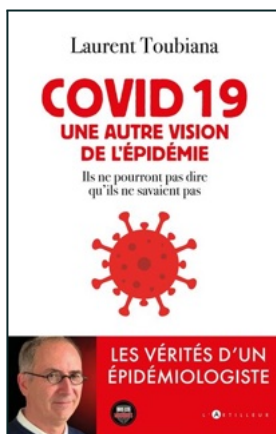
Average Rank: 4

Title Translated:
Covid-19 - another point of view on the pandemic. Truths from an epidemiology.

Author(s):
Laurent Toubiana

Publication Date:
20 April 2022

Publisher:
Artilleur, known for polemical translations, conservative-right leaning

Author Background:
French researcher, co-founder of Conseil Scientifique Indépendant, critical of health measures and Covid-19 vaccination.

Additional Notes:
Criticised for misinformation and misleading arguments about Covid-19.

Source(s):

- [Conseil scientifique indépendant (CSI) - Conspiracy Watch](#)

- [Covid : pourquoi le livre de Laurent Toubiana est à côté de la plaque - Marianne](#)
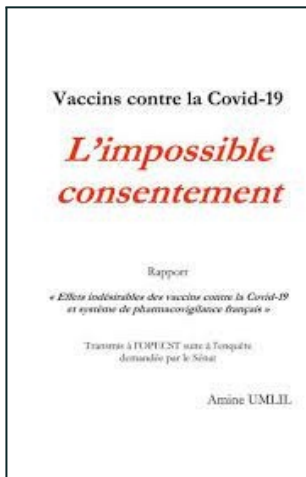
Average Rank: 5

Title Translated:
Covid-19 vaccines: The impossible consent

Author(s):
Amine Umlil

Publication Date:
22 April 2022

Publisher:
Books on Demand, self-publishing platform

Author Background:

Amine Umlil is a French doctor, hospital practitioner and former responsible for pharmacovigilance the coordination of health vigilance, and the territorial centre for independent information and pharmaceutical advice (CTIAP). He had been dismissed from his post by the Centre national de gestion (CNG) for "anti-vaccine propaganda during the health crisis »

Additional Notes:
Focuses on adverse reactions to Covid-19 vaccines and issues with the pharmacovigilance system.

Source(s):

- [Covid-19 : un pharmacien antivax de l'hôpital de Cholet révoqué - Le Parisien](#)
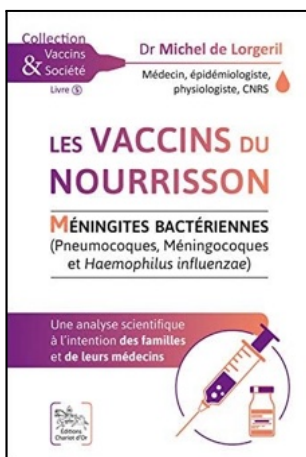
Average Rank: 6

Title Translated:
Infant vaccines - Bacterial meningitis

Author(s):
Michel de Lorgeril

Publication Date:
13 May 2019

Publisher:
Chariot d'Or

Author Background:
See above
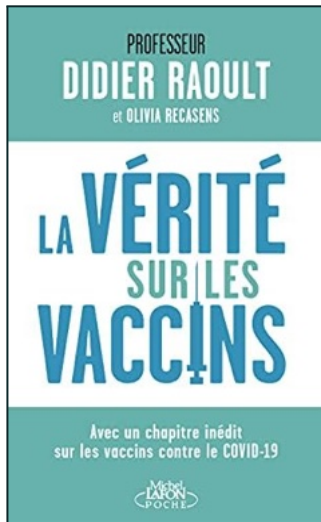
Average Rank: 7

Title Translated:
The Truth about vaccines

Author(s):
Didier Raoult and Olivia Recasens

Publication Date:
16 September 2021

Publisher:
Michel Lafon

Author Background:
Didier Raoult: microbiologist, known for flawed hydroxychloroquine studies and controversial positions.

Additional Notes:
Accused of breaches of scientific integrity and opposing scientific consensus.

Source(s): He Was a Science Star. Then He Promoted a Questionable Cure for Covid-19. - New York Times

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Average Rank: 8

Title Translated:
Covid vaccines: 159 testimonies on their real effects

Author(s):
Lucia Canovi, directed by Zora d'Arc, Adeline Aragon

Publication Date:
20 September 2021

Publisher:
Independently Published

Author Background:
Author with a degree in modern literature, focuses on personal development.

Additional Notes:
Collection of testimonies on Covid vaccine effects, sourced from social networks.

Source(s):
Lucia Canovi - Babelio

Average Rank: 9

Title Translated:
Big Pharma uncovered!

Author(s):
Xavier Bazin, Eric Ménat (Préface)

Publication Date:
22 April 2021

Publisher:
TREDANIEL, focuses on well-being, natural medicines, and personal development

Author Background:
Founder of Santé-corps-esprit, critical of vaccination against Covid-19

Additional Notes:
Known for provocative anti-vaccine content.

Source(s):

- [Les Auteurs - Santé Corps Esprit](#)

- ["Urgence 5G" : Qui se cache derrière une publicité anti-ondes sur Youtube ? - Marianne](#)
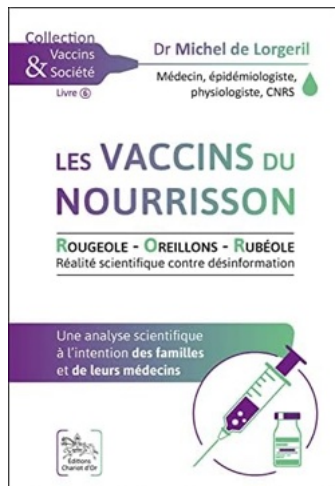
Average Rank: 10

Title Translated:
Vaccines for the new born - Measles - Mumps - Rubella

Author(s):
Michel de Lorgeril

Publication Date:
12 November 2019

Publisher:
Chariot d'Or

Author Background: See above

2.2 Health Disinformation - Keyword: Covid
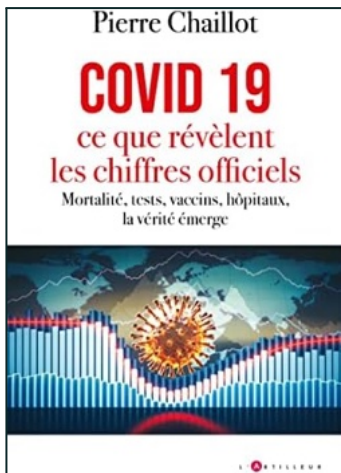
Average Rank: 1

Title Translated:
Covid 19, what the official figures reveal: Mortality, tests, vaccines, hospitals, the truth emerges

Author(s):
Pierre Chaillot

Publication Date:
18 January 2023

Publisher:
L'artilleur

Author Background:
Presents himself as a statistician.

Additional Notes:
Singled out by fact-checkers and the scientific community for attempting to prove the pandemic never existed.

Source(s):

- [Pas d'épidémie et un vaccin mortel : le grand théâtre covido-sceptique de Pierre Chaillot en librairie (2/2) - CheckNews](#)

- [Pierre Chaillot : itinéraire d'un best-seller covido-sceptique, Conspiracy Watch](#)

Average Rank: 2

Title Translated:
Sorcerers' apprentices: everything that is being hidden on messenger RNA

Author(s):
Alexandra Henrion-Caude

Publication Date:
8 March 2023

Publisher:
Albin Michel

Author Background:
French-British geneticist, formerly with Inserm.

Additional Notes:
Became a figure in the "coronasceptic" movement, casting doubts on Covid vaccines. Nicknamed an "antivaxx leader". Dr Jérôme Marty

Source(s):

- [Alexandra Henrion-Caude, caution scientifique des « covido-sceptiques » - Le Monde](#)
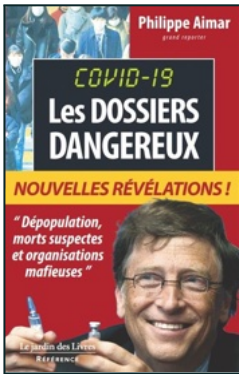
Average Rank: 3

Title Translated:
Covid 19: The Dangerous Files

Author(s):
Patrice Servage & Philippe Aimar

Publication Date:
12 April 2023

Publisher:
Jardin Livres

Author Background:
Philippe Aimar is a French journalist. This book is his first published work about health issues. Patrice Servage is a French artist, providing illustrations of the volume.

Additional Notes:
Book cover features Bill Gates holding a vial and syringe, together with the subtitle "New revelations"

Source(s): [Article about conspiracy theorist Pierre Jovanovic on Conspiracy Watch, mentioning Philippe Aimar](#)

Average Rank: 4

Title Translated:
COVID-19: The Great Reset

Author(s):
Klaus Schwab, Thierry Malleret

Publication Date:
9 July 2020

Publisher:
ISBN Agentur Schweiz

Author Background:
Klaus Schwab: Founder of the World Economic Forum. Thierry Malleret: Founder of the Monthly Barometer.

Additional Notes:
Misconceptions about the book "The Great Reset" have become a part of conspiracy theories, as outlined by ISD.

Source(s):

- [The 'Great Reset' - ISD](#)

- [Klaus Schwad - World Economic Forum](#)
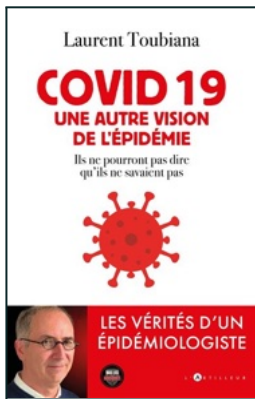
Average Rank: 5

Title Translated:
Covid-19 - another point of view on the pandemic

Author(s):
Laurent Toubiana

Publication Date:
20 April 2022

Publisher:
Artilleur

Author Background:
French researcher, co-founder of the Conseil Scientifique Indépendant.

Additional Notes:
Critical about health measures taken by governments during the pandemic and Covid-19 vaccination. Accused of spreading misinformation.

Source(s):

- [Conseil scientifique indépendant (CSI) - Conspiracy Watch](#)

- [Covid : pourquoi le livre de Laurent Toubiana est à côté de la plaque - Marianne](#)

Average Rank: 6

Title Translated:
THE GREAT RESET

Author(s):
Ilaria Bifarini

Publication Date:
9 December 2020

Publisher:
Independently published

Author Background:

Ilaria Bifarini is an economist and writer, exploring mass manipulations. One of her theories is that "The economy has been distorted by its nature as a social science aimed at man and by its direct link with the real economy".

Additional Notes: The book's description available on Amazon shows that the author Interprets the Great Reset in terms of the New World Order. Claims about digitization and automation linked to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Source(s):

- [Editors' note from Bifarini's book "Neoliberalism and Mass Manipulation" on academia.edu](#)

- ["Neoliberalism and Mass Manipulation", self-published from Google Books](#)
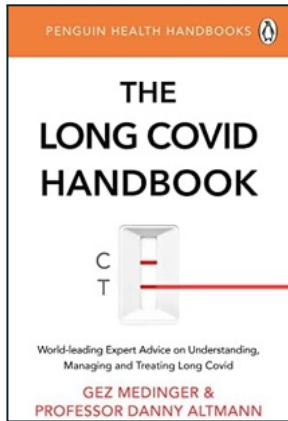
Average Rank: 7

Title Translated:
The Long Covid Handbook

Author(s):
Gez Medinger

Publication Date:
1 February 2023

Publisher:
Cornerstone Press

Author Background:
Gez Medinger is a former competitive athlete who contracted Covid in 2020 and claims to have never fully recovered. He's since advocating for the awareness on Long Covid.

Source(s) :

- [Interview of Gez Medinger on the Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia group](#)

Average Rank: 8

Title Translated:
Fake pandemic, real lies

Author(s):
Corinne Lalo

Publication Date:
9 November 2023

Publisher:
Tredaniel

Author Background:
Corinne Lalo is a senior reporter and investigative television journalist. She specialises in the environment and health. She is co-author of "Livre noir du médicament" (Black book of medication) (Plon) and "Se soigner sans médicaments de A à Z" (Treatment without drugs)(le cherche midi).

Additional Notes:

Lalo has been debunked by AFP for saying that pregnant women shouldn't take any medication, and was invited at the Summer Camp of Antivax in Villeneuve les Avignon.

Source(s):

- [Il est faux d'affirmer que les femmes enceintes ne doivent prendre "aucun médicament" - AFP Factuel](#)

- [Gard : les antivax réunis pour leur Université d'été résistante près d'Avignon - France Info](#)
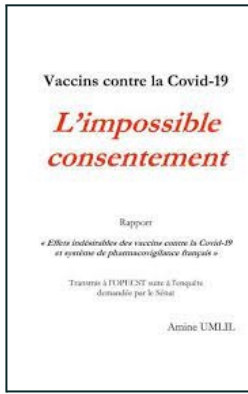
Average Rank: 9

Title Translated:
Covid-19 vaccines: The impossible consent

Author(s):
Amine Umlil

Publication Date:
22 April 2022

Publisher:
Books on Demand

Author Background:
Amine Umlil is a French doctor, hospital practitioner and former responsible for pharmacovigilance, the coordination of health vigilance, and the territorial centre for independent information and pharmaceutical advice (CTIAP). He had been dismissed from his post by the Centre national de gestion (CNG) for "anti-vaccine propaganda during the health crisis »

Additional Notes:
Focuses on adverse reactions to Covid-19 vaccines and pharmacovigilance system.

Source(s):

- [Cholet. La révocation d'Amine Umlil confirmée par le tribunal administratif - Ouest France](#)
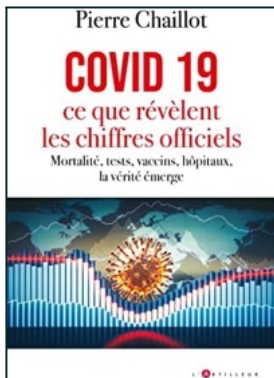
Average Rank: 10

Title Translated:
Covid 19, what the official figures reveal at the end of 2023

Author(s):
Pierre Chaillot

Publication Date:
4 January 2024

Publisher:
L'artilleur

Author Background:
Pierre Chaillot is a Frenchman presenting himself as a statistician. He's been singled out on several occasions by fact-checkers and the scientific community. In his book, Chaillot promises to "reveal the truth" about Covid.

Additional Notes:
Continues to attempt to prove the Covid pandemic never existed.

Source(s):

- [Pas d'épidémie et un vaccin mortel : le grand théâtre covido-sceptique de Pierre Chaillot en librairie -Check News](#)

- [Covid-19 : un pharmacien antivax de l'hôpital de Cholet révoqué - Le Parisien](#)

2.3 Health Disinformation - Keyword: Abortion

Average Rank: 1

Title Translated:
Abortion, a Right in Danger?

Author(s):
Ghada Hatem

Publication Date:
13 January 2023

Publisher:
Martinière (January 2023)

Author Background:

Ghada Hatem is a Franco-Lebanese gynaecologist, founder of the "Maison des femmes " (House of women) of Saint-Denis (France), part of the Delafontaine Hospital and a place offering support for women facing difficulties.

Source(s):

- [Website of "La Maison des femmes"](#)

- [Interview of Ghada Hatem in Le Monde](#)

Average Rank: 2

Title Translated:
Wounded Motherhood: Healing and Rebirth of the Mother-Child Bond After Abortion

Author(s):
Pascale Pissochet

Publication Date:
5 October 2022

Publisher:
Tequi. Editions Pierre Téqui or Librairie Pierre Téqui, founded in 1831, is a French publisher, bookseller, and printer of Catholic publications.

Author Background:

Pascale Pissochet is a pro-life doctor and addictologist. Her X (formelly Twitter) account retweeted openly anti-abortion stance on social media, and followed by anti-abortion groups like Alliance Vita.

Source(s):

- [A conference hosted by pro-life website "Réseau Vie", featuring Pascale Pissochet](#)

- [An example out of several re-tweets of pro-life accounts by Pissochet's X account](#)

Average Rank: 3

Title Translated:
Post-abortion Trauma

Author(s):
Florence Allard, Jean-Regis Fropo

Publication Date:
25 August 2007

Publisher:
Salvator. Founded in 1924, Salvator offers books on Christian faith and the Church's message for contemporary society.

Author Background:
Florence Allard is a "gynaecologist and Catholic," promoting natural birth control methods and speaking at pro-life conferences.

Additional Notes:
- Allard was quoted multiple times by a report of the Geneva Medicine faculty, illustrating anti-abortion and misleading narratives about the "post-abortion syndrom"

Source(s):

- [Conférences pro-vie samedi 8 mars - Paper Blog](#)

- [Report on abortion practices in Geneva (Switzerland), Geneva Medicine faculty](#)

Average Rank: 4

Title Translated:
Advocacy for Abortion

Author(s):
Gisèle Halimi

Publication Date:
1 June 2023

Publisher:
Folio

Author Background:
Gisèle Halimi was a Franco-Tunisian lawyer, politician and writer. Considered to be one of France's major feminist leaders, She advocated against gender based discrimination and particularly promoted the right to abortion.

Source(s) :

- [Article about Gisèle Halimi on the Larousse Encyclopedia](#)

- [Halimi's profile on the French Who's who](#)
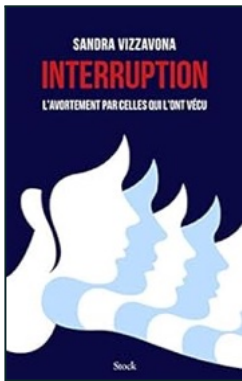
Average Rank: 5

Title Translated:
Interrupting

Author(s):
Sandra Vizzavona

Publication Date:
9 November 2023

Publisher:
LGF

Author Background:
Sandra Vizzavona is a French lawyer. She publicly stated that she has had two abortions and advocates for the "solidification" of the right to abortion.

Additional Notes:
Vizzanova stated that she wanted to share first-hand testimonies of women having had abortions to "take the drama out" of the topic of abortion.

Source(s):

- [An interview of Sandra Vizzavona on France Info](#)

Average Rank: 6

Title Translated:
Sociology of Abortion

Author(s):
Marie Mathieu, Laurine Thizy

Publication Date:
25 May 2023

Publisher:
La Découverte

Author Background: Marie Mathieu holds a PhD in Sociology and is an associate researcher at Cermes3 and Cresppa-CSU (France). Laurine Thizy holds a PhD in Sociology.

Additional Notes: "Sociology of Abortion" is presented by its authors as an examination of scientific literature in social sciences on abortion, aiming at leveraging scientific knowledge in a context of heated public debates on the topic.

Source(s):

- [Marie Mathieu's profile on CSU's website](#)

- [Laurine Thizy's profile on CSU's website](#)
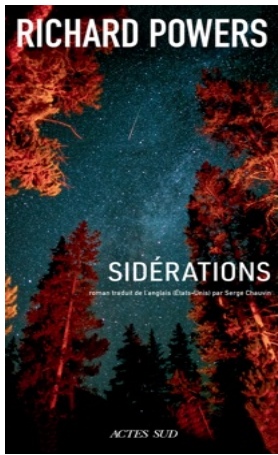
Average Rank: 7

Title Translated:
Sidérations

Author(s):
Richard Powers

Publication Date:
2 March 2023

Publisher:
10x18

Author Background:

-Richard Powers is an American novelist, having written 13 novels.

Additional Notes:

- This book is a work of fiction.

Source(s):

- [Powers's profile on RCW talent agency's website](#)

Average Rank: 8

Title Translated:
Abortion

Author(s):
Lizzie Ling, Robert Vaughan

Publication Date:
9 September 2021

Publisher:
CLE LYON. Éditions Clé, based in Lyon, France, publishes French-language resources on the Bible and the Gospel.

Author Background:

Lizzie Ling, a British General Practitioner, was active in South Africa, supporting local churches in their caring for AIDS victims. Robert Vaughan is a Pastor at St Ebbe's church, Oxford (UK).

Additional Notes:

The book offers a reflection on abortion from a biblical perspective.

Source(s):

- [Book listing for "Abortion" on ICM Books Direct, the home of christian books"](#)

Average Rank: 9

Title Translated:

Getting Back on Your Feet After an Abortion: I, Too, Do Not Condemn You...
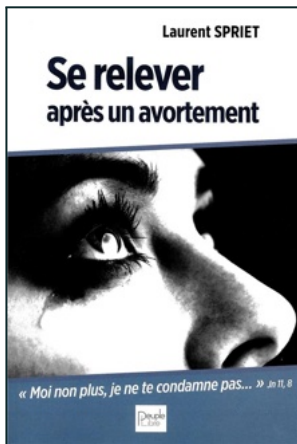
Author(s):

Laurent Spriet

Publication Date:

11 March 2020

Publisher:

Peuple libre. A publisher with limited online presence, focusing on religion and faith.

Author Background:

Laurent Spriet is a priest who supports young women post-abortion, emphasising God's mercy and exploring themes of sin and forgiveness.

Additional Notes:

The book is recommended by "Réseau vie," which also invited Dr. Pascale Pissochet for a conference on her book.

Source(s):

- Se reconstruire après un avortement - Valeurs Actuelles

- Lettre d'information du réseau Vie Juin 2020

Average Rank: 10

Title Translated:
History of Abortion (19th-20th Century)

Author(s):
Jean-Yves le Naour et Catherine Valenti

Publication Date:
 7 March 2003

Publisher:
Seuil

Author Background: Jean-Yves le Nour is a French historian and documentarist. Catherine Valenti is a French historian and researcher.

Additional Notes:

Source(s) :

- Bibliography of Jean-Yves le Naour academic publications

- Catherive Valenti's profile on the Jean Jaurès University of Toulouse's website

2.4 Féminin-related Disinformation
- Keyword: Féminin
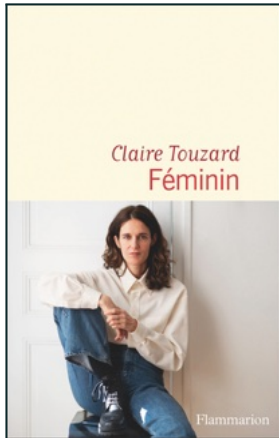
Average Rank: 1

Title Translated:
Feminine

Author(s):
Claire Touzard

Publication Date:
14 September 2022

Publisher: Flammarion

Author Background: Claire Touzard is a French journalist and TV producer, former editor in chief of women's magazine "Grazia".

Additional Notes: "Féminin" is a novel where the main character is a journalist working for a women's magazine, torn between opportunities to build a career and her convictions.

Source(s) :

- [Claire Touzard's profile on France Bleu](#)

Average Rank: 2

Title Translated:
Free Yourself from Your Bloodline and Heal Your Feminine Side: 39 Keys to Transformation

Author(s):
Bernard Chaumeil

Publication Date:
16 April 2021

Publisher:
SECRET ETOILES, a publisher dedicated to esotericism, targeting an audience interested in witchcraft, alchemy, shamanism, tarot, astrology, and more.

Author Background: Bernard Chaumeil is an "energy analyst, therapist, teacher, author, and lecturer," practising "archetypal therapy" and offering archetypal tarot sessions and therapeutic days for energetic treatment.

Source(s):

- [Bernard CHAUMEIL Thérapeute Analyste Energéticien, Enseignant, Auteur et Conférencier](#)
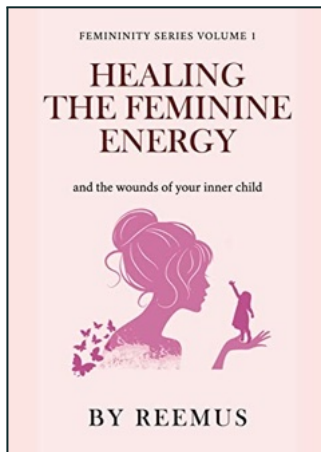
Average Rank: 3

Title Translated:
Healing The Feminine Energy: & The Wounds Of Your Inner Child: 1

Author(s):
Reemus Bailey

Publication Date:
19 September 2021

Publisher:
Independently Published

Author Background:
Reemus B is a "multi-time bestselling author, content creator, and expert on gender dynamics," specialising in energetic polarity and offering training sessions on feminine and masculine energies.

Additional Notes:
His theories on gender dynamics and energetic polarity appear as beeing close to the topic of the "sacred feminine", which was called out as beeing "an appropriation of feminism by sectarian aberrations" by the French Government's MIVILUDES (Interministerial Mission for Vigilance and Combat against Cultic Deviations)

Source(s):

- MIVILUDES' report

- Reemus Bailey's website
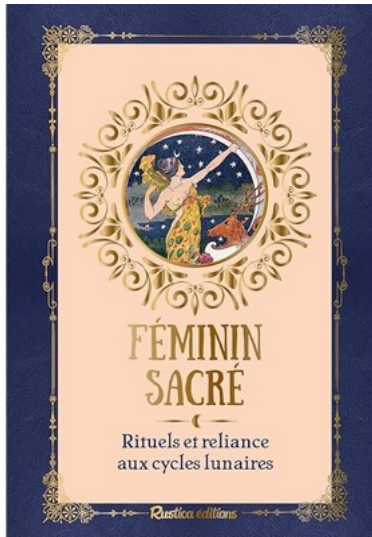
Average Rank: 4

Title Translated:
The Sacred Feminine, Rituals and Connection to the Lunar Cycles

Author(s):
Corinne De Leenher

Publication Date:
28 October 2022

Publisher:
RUSTICA, a publisher with a focus on nature, animals, gardening, ecology, zero waste, and personal fulfilment.

Author Background:
Corinne De Leenher is a multi-potential holistic mentor, book author, and creator of a brand of "spiritual talismans" jewellery.

Additional Notes:
-

Source(s):

- Corinne De Leenher Website

Average Rank: 5

Title Translated:
The Great Book of the Sacred Feminine: Sacred Recipes, Oracle, Tarot, Meditation, Crystals

Author(s):
J-A Sarrazin-Côté

Publication Date:
20 November 2019

Publisher: MARABOUT

Author Background:
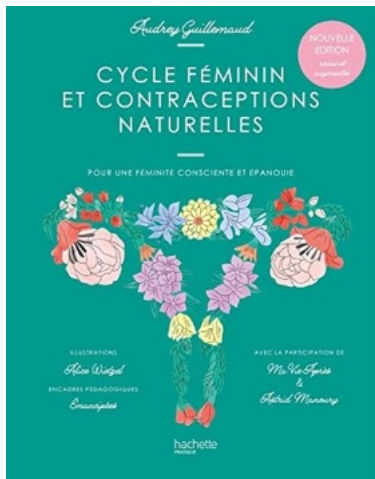Josée-Anne Sarrazin-Côté is a "mom, astrologer, author, YouTube artist, entrepreneur, witch, podcaster, kpossibly herbalist, sound therapist, etc." She is a former sports journalist and founded Ouitche, an online education platform for "caring witches."

Source(s):

- Josée-Anne Sarrazin-Côté Website

Average Rank: 6

Title Translated:
Feminine Cycle and Natural Contraceptives: For a Conscious and Fulfilled Femininity

Author(s):
Audrey Guillemaud

Publication Date:
24 March 2021

Publisher:
HACHETTE PRAT

Author Background:
Audrey Guillemaud is a French author and contraception trainer advocating for "natural" contraception techniques, meaning without taking medication or contraception devices.

Source(s):

- [Interview of Audrey Guillemaud on "Au Feminin"](#)

Average Rank: 7

Title Translated:
The Little Guide to Female Masturbation

Author(s):
Julia Piétri

Publication Date:
25 May 2022

Publisher:
LGF

Author Background:
Julia Piétri is a French author and influencer identifying herself as a feminist. She manages a popular Instagram account posting about women's sexuality, masturbation, and sexual health. She advocates the use of provocative speech to achieve political goals of gender equality, consent and other issues.

Source(s):

- [Interview of Julia Piétri on France Info](#)

- [Interview of Julia Piétri on ELLE Belgium](#)
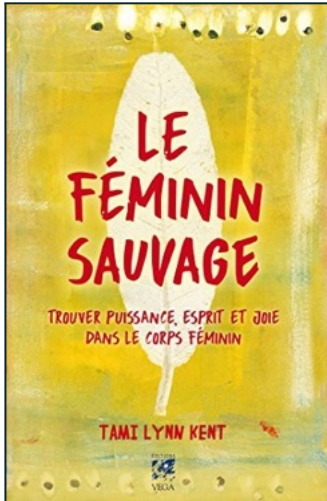
Average Rank: 8

Title Translated:
The Wild Feminine: Finding Power, Spirit, and Joy in the Female Body

Author(s):
Tami Lynn Kent

Publication Date:
13 January 2017

Publisher:
VEGA, a branch of TREDANIEL focused on ancestral traditions, shamanism, oracles, esoteric texts, and themes related to the feminine and the sacred.

Author Background:
Tami Lynn Kent is a physiotherapist and holistic therapist for women, trained in mind-body therapy methods, including Mayan abdominal massage and perinatal trauma resolution.

Source(s):

- [Tami Lynn Kent Website](#)

Average Rank: 9

Title Translated:
The Four Goddesses of the Feminine Cycle

Author(s):
Miranda Gray

Publication Date:
24 June 2021

Publisher:
COURRIER LIVRE

Author Background:
Miranda Gray, described in a Miviludes report as a self-proclaimed therapist, advises women to synchronise their lives with the moon and menstrual cycles, presenting these practices as essential for well-being despite the lack of scientific consensus.

Source(s):

- [Mission interministérielle de vigilance et de lutte contre les dérives sectaires - RAPPORT D'ACTIVITÉ 2021](#)
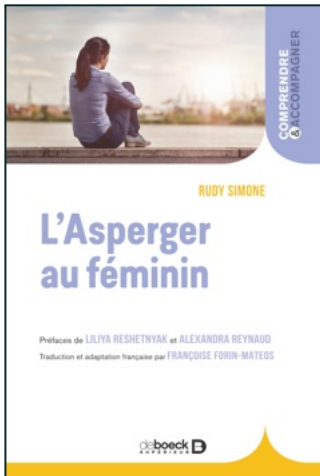
Average Rank: 10

Title Translated:
Asperger's in Women

Author(s):
Rudy Simone, translated and adapted by Françoise Forin-Mateos

Publication Date:
10 June 2020

Publisher:
DE BOECK SUP

Author Background:
Rudy Simone is an American singer, writer and stand-up comedian who diagnosed herself with Asperger's syndrome as she couldn't find a medical doctor to do so in a 500-mile radius around her home. She wrote the book to raise awareness about Asperger's and women and later retracted her self diagnosis.

Additional Notes:
-

Source(s):

- [Interview of Rudy Simon for Time](#)

- [An archive link to a blogpost where Simone explains that she's still not officially diagnosed with Asperger's](#)

2.5 Immigration-related Disinformation - Keyword: Immigration

Average Rank: 1

Title Translated:
Forbidden France: The Truth About Immigration

Author(s):
Laurent Obertone

Publication Date:
2 June 2022

Publisher:
MAGNUS

Author Background:
Laurent Obertone is a French journalist, essayist, and novelist, strongly supported by the French far-right. He is known for introducing the term "ensauvagement" in his book "La France Orange Mécanique," a concept indicating a rise in violence and insecurity in society due to uncontrolled immigration.

Additional Notes:
Frequently appears on Sud Radio and Cnews.

Source(s):

-   [Auteur : Laurent Obertone - Valeurs Actuelles](#)
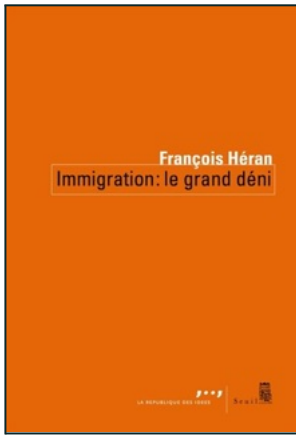
Average Rank: 2

Title Translated:
Immigration: The Great Denial

Author(s):
François Heran

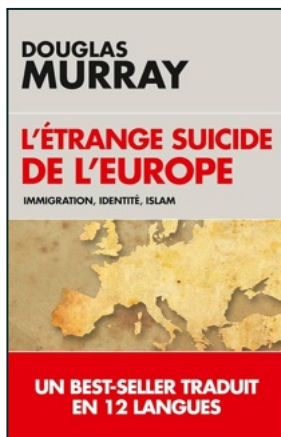**Publication Date:**
3 March 2023

Publisher:
SEUIL

Author Background:
François Héran is a French demographer and professor, former director of the INED (French National Institute for Demographic Studies). He has written numerous academic papers and books on migration, generally outlining the positive effects of immigration on western societies.

Source(s):

- [François Héran's profile on the College de France website](#)

- [Interview of Héran in Le Monde about an exaggeration of the role of immigration in the political discourse in France](#)

- [Héran's publication for INED](#)

Average Rank: 3

Title Translated:
The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam (French Version)

Author(s):
Douglas Murray

Publication Date:
25 April 2018

Publisher:
ARTILLEUR

Author Background:
Douglas Murray is a British writer, journalist, and political commentator mostly featured in conservative outlets. He claims that there is "an all-out attack on our civilization, fueled by self-hatred and anti-racism." and "a war on Western culture".

Source(s):

- [War on Western Culture, Opinion piece Wall Street Journal](#)

- [Portfolio of Murray's articles on his website](#)

- [Interview of Murray in far-right French magazine "Valeurs Actuelles"](#)
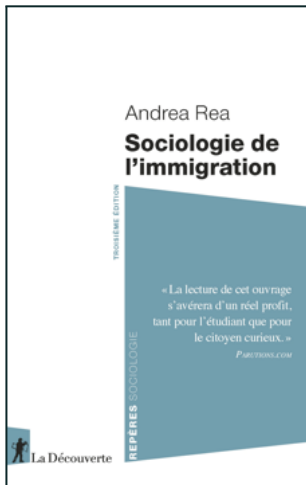
Average Rank: 4

Title Translated:
Sociology of Immigration

Author(s):
Andrea Rea

Publication Date:
18 February 2021

Publisher:
La Découverte

Author Background:

Andrea Rea is an Italian academic, currently Professor of Social Sciences at the Free University of Brussels.

Additional Notes:

-

Source(s): Andrea Rea's profile on the Free University of Brussels website

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Average Rank: 5

Title Translated:
Immigration - These Realities Hidden from Us

Author(s):
Patrick Stefanini

Publication Date:
19 November 2020

Publisher:
Robert Laffont

Author Background:

Patrick Stefanini is a Senior French civil servant and politician. He rejects the theory of the Great Replacement but suggests that information about immigration is being concealed from the public.

Additional Notes:

Claims to expose the "denial orchestrated by high-profile demographers" about the impact of immigration in France.

Source(s):

- Interview of Partick Stefanini in Le Point
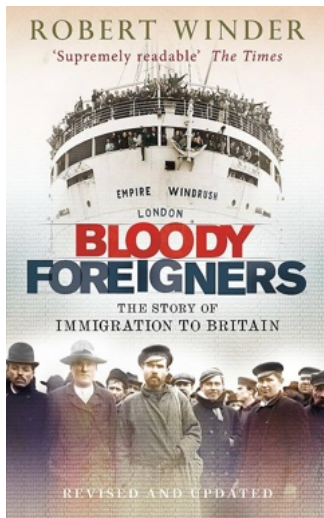
Average Rank: 6

Title Translated:
Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain

Author(s):
Robert Winder

Publication Date:
10 May 2013

Publisher:
Little, Brown Book Group

Author Background:
Robert Winder is the former literary editor of the Independent (UK) and deputy editor of Granta (UK literary magazine). He is a regular contributor to publications including the Observer and New Statesman. He is a trustee of the UK's Migration Museum.

Source(s):

- [Robert Winder's contributions to the Guardian](#)

- [Robert Winder's profile on the Migration Museum website](#)

Average Rank: 7

Title Translated:
Immigration, Ideology and Concern for the Truth

Author(s):
Michèle Tribalat

Publication Date:
12 January 2022

Publisher:
Artilleur

Author Background:
Michèle Tribalat is a French demographer and researcher at the Institut national d'études démographiques (French National Institute for Demographic Studies), often quoted in conservative and right-wing media regarding her work on immigration statistics.

Additional Notes:
Tribalat long advocated for adding the ethnicity criteria in demographic studies, which is forbidden in France (Law 78-17, Art 6). She also was given the "prix des'impertinents" award (Impertinent Prize), which was created to "go against the grain of single-minded thinking".

Source(s):

- [List of Tribalat's research papers](#)

- [An interwiew with "l'incorrect" in which Tribalat accuses demographers to put ideology before science](#)

- [Article from booknote reporting about Tribalat receiving the "Prix des impertinents"](#)
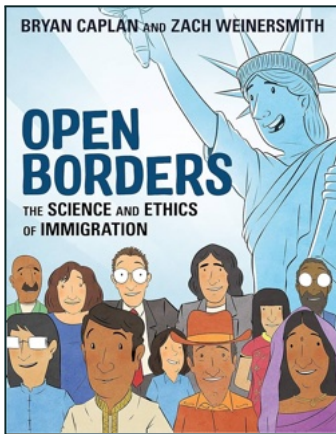
Average Rank: 8

Title Translated:
Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration

Author(s):
Bryan Caplan, illustrated by Zach Weinersmith

Publication Date:
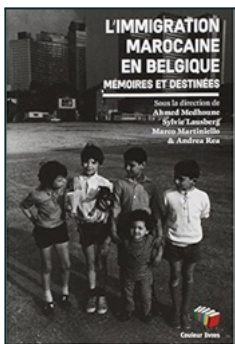29 October 2019

Publisher:
First Second

Author Background:
Bryan Caplan is a Professor of economics at the George Mason University (USA). His book "The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies" was distinguished by the New York Times as "the best political book this year."

Source(s)

- [Bryan Caplan's profile on the George Mason University's website](#)

Average Rank: 9

Title Translated:
Moroccan Immigration in Belgium

Author(s): Ahmed Medhoune, Sylvie Lausberg, Marco Martiniello, Andrea Rea

Publication Date: 16 February 2015

Publisher: COULEUR LIVRES

Author Background: Ahmed Medhoune is a Belgian Politician and holds an administrative position at the Free University of Brussels. He has co-authored scientific papers on the topic of immigration in Belgium. Sylvie Lausberg is a Belgian journalist and writer working on among other topics on Moroccan immigration in Belgium. Marco Martiniello is a Professor of Social Sciences at the Liège University (Belgium). Andrea Rea is also an academic teaching in Belgium, currently Professor of Social Sciences at the Free University of Brussels.

Source(s):

- [Ahmed Medhoune's profile on the Free University of Brussels website](#)

- [Ahmed Medhoune's paper on ethnicity and education](#)

- [Marco Martiniello's profile on the Liège University website](#)

- [Andrea Rea's profile on the Free University of Brussels website](#)

Average Rank: 10

Title Translated:
Welcome or Repatriate. Inquiry at the Immigration Desks

Author(s):
Alexis Spire

Publication Date:
2 October 2008

Publisher:
RAISONS D'AGIR

Author Background:
Alexis Spire is a research professor at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) in France, specialising in social inequalities and tax compliance.

Source(s):

- [Alexis Spire's profile on the EHESS university website](#)

2.6 Climate related disinformation - Keyword: Changement climatique

Average Rank: 1

Title Translated:
Climate Change Explained to My Daughter (New Expanded Edition)

Author(s):
Jean-Marc Jancovici

Publication Date:
4 May 2017

Publisher:
Seuil

Author Background:
Jean-Marc Jancovici is an associate Professor at MINES ParisTech school of engineering (a top-level educational French institution training engineers). He's also a founding partner of Carbone 4, a Paris-based consultancy on low-carbon transition. He also acts as the President of the Shift Project, a French think-tank advocating the shift to a post-carbon economy

Additional Notes:
-

Source(s):

- [Blogpost by Jancovici on Stanford's website](#)

- [Jancovici's profile on the Shift project's website](#)
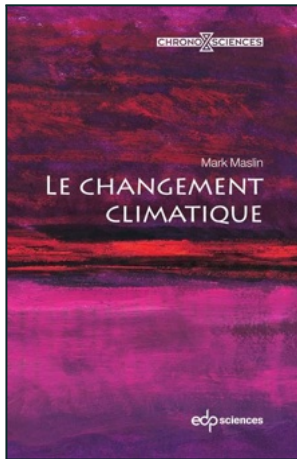
Average Rank: 2

Title Translated:
Climate Change

Author(s):
Mark Maslin, translated by Alan Rodney

Publication Date:
31 March 2022

Publisher:
EDP Sciences

Author Background:
Mark Maslin is a Professor of EarthSystem Science at the University College London. He's a member of the Cheltenham Science Festival Advisory Committee and sits on the Corporate Social Responsibility Board of the Sopra-Steria Group and Sheep Included Ltd. He's an expert in past global and regional climatic change and has published over 175 papers in journals such as Science, Nature, and The Lancet.

Additional Notes:

Source(s):

- Mark Maslin profile on UCL's website
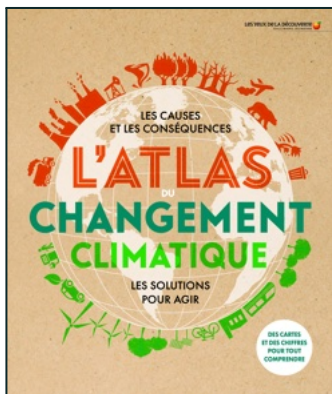
Average Rank: 3

Title Translated:
Atlas of Climate Change

Author(s):
Collectif

Publication Date:
1 April 2021

Publisher: Gallimard Jeunes

Author Background:
This book was written by a collective of authors, aiming at explaining climate change to children from age 9 and up.

Additional Notes:
The book acknowledges climate change and aims at providing necessary understanding to children about the known causes of global warming and which actions can be taken to mitigate it.

Source(s) :

- Book description page on its publisher's (Gallimard) website

Average Rank: 4

Title Translated:
Climate Change as a Comic

Author(s):
Grady Klein, Yoram Bauman

Publication Date:
3 September 2015

Publisher:
EYROLLES

Author Background:
Grady Klein is an American cartoonist, an illustrator, and an animator aiming at communicating knowledge through comics. His co-author Yoram Bauman is an environmental economist and founder of Carbon Washington, a group lobbying to implement coercitive measures in the law to lower carbon emissions.

Source(s):

- Bauman's profile on the center for growth and opportunity's website

- Carbon WA's website

Average Rank: 5

Title Translated:
What You Haven't Been Told on Climate Change

Author(s):
Gilles Brien

Publication Date:
18 January 2018

Publisher:
Éditions de l'Homme

Author Background:
Gilles Brien is a Canadian meteorologist and author. He worked for the Canadian national weather service and is also a writer for reputable media outlets.

Additional Notes:
Gilles Brien has been giving interviews and talks about the clear role of human activities in global warming.

Source(s):

- Interview of Gilles Brien on Canadian TVA Nouvelles' website

- Opinion piece by Brien on the Journal de Montréal's website

Average Rank: 6

Title Translated:
Investigation on Climate Change

Author(s):
Mathieu Zajdela

Publication Date:
8 September 2023

Publisher:
L'Harmattan
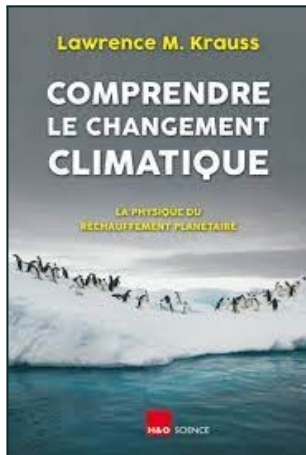
Author Background:
Mathieu Zajdela is an economist specialising in the field of energy and has worked in particular in the fields of oil and gas. He was the managing director of Petroleum Finance Co. in Paris and is a senior partner in Pfc Energy, a provider in oil and gas information.

Additional Notes:
The description of his book is a list of questions mostly already answered by the scientific consensus like "Are we certain that temperatures are rising? " and "Is this rise caused by human activities".

Source(s):

- [Book description on the publisher's (l'harmattan) website](#)

- [PFC's energy's company profile on S&P Global's website](#)

- [Article quoting Zajdela on the Shell/Texaco merger on the Oil&gas journal's website](#)

Average Rank: 7

Title Translated:
Understanding Climate Change: Physics of Global Warming

Author(s):
Lawrence M. Krauss

Publication Date:
3 September 2021

Publisher:
H&O

Author Background:

Lawrence M. Krauss is an award-winning theoretical physicist and science writer formerly affiliated at the Arizona State University (USA). Author of numerous scientific papers, his academic work was cited more than 20.000 times in the scientific literature. His work is also regularly featured in reputable media outlets.

Additional Notes:

Krauss' was accused of sexual misconduct in 2018. The Arizona State University had established that he had violated the University's sexual harassment policy in 2016 and did not renew his directorship of the Origin project, an initiative he had spearheaded at the institution.

Source(s):

- [Featured masterclass by Krauss on the Guardian's website](#)

- [Krauss' author profile on Google Scholar](#)

- [Article about Krauss' misconduct on The State Press' website](#)

Average Rank: 8

Title Translated:

The World is Changing and We Don't Understand Anything! Climate, Technology, the Economy, Society… An Essential Investigation to Finally See Things More Clearly

Author(s):
Julien Devaureix

Publication Date:
16 February 2023

Publisher:
FIRST

Author Background:
Julien Devaureix is an author and podcaster. After a 15 years career working in marketing for multinationals companies he decided to shift vocations and become an author centred around the topic of climate.

Additional Notes:
Julien Devaureix's website clearly states that climate change is due to human activities.

Source(s):

- [Devaureix's profile on the Capital's website](#)

- [Devauraix's interview on France Bleu](#)

- [Devauraix's depiction of the creation of his podcast, Sismique on eponym website](#)
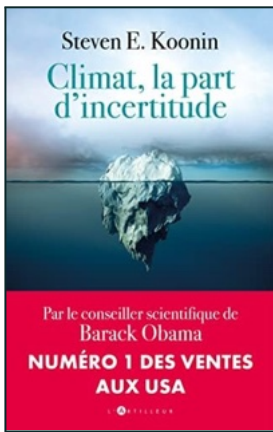
Average Rank: 9

Title Translated:

Climate, the Part of Uncertainty

Author(s):

Steven Koonin

Publication Date:

2 November 2022

Publisher:

ARTILLEUR

Author Background:

Member of the Obama administration. He challenges the scientific consensus on climate change in this book.

Additional Notes:

His perspective is criticised by some in the climate science community as catering to procrastinators and conspiracists, often alleging public deception.

Source(s):

- [Koonin's profile on fact-checking section of Libération's website](#)

- [Koonin profile on the Express website](#)

Average Rank: 10

Title Translated:

Climate by the Numbers: Moving Beyond the Science Fiction of the IPCC

Author(s):

Christien Gérondeau

Publication Date:

1 March 2023

Publisher:

ARTILLEUR

Author Background:

Christian Gérondeau is a French essayist and senior civil servant. His views on global warming have been frequently debunked, particularly regarding sea level rise.

Additional Notes:

Accuses the IPCC of lying about global warming and is a regular guest on CNews and FranceSoir.

Source(s):

- [Fact check of Gerondeau's claims by Agence France Presse](#)

- [Fact check of Gerondeau's claims by France Info](#)

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An Analysis of Amazon's Bookstore
Algorithms within the DSA Framework

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