

Hoax Whatsapp COVID-19 message doing rounds again



A new, or rather re-worked WhatsApp hoax message has been doing the rounds again. This time, it is warning WhatsApp users not to open a supposed video being sent around that is said to hack your phone within ten seconds.

The hoax message reads:

“Just a heads up....They are going to start circulating a video on WhatsApp that shows how the COVID-19 curve is flattening in Argentina. The file is called “Argentina is doing it”, do not open it or see it, it hacks your phone in 10 seconds and it cannot be stopped in any way. Pass the information on to your family and friends. Now they also said it on CNN.”

There is no CNN article regarding this hoax and it is in fact just a reworked version of the same kind of message trick that has been floating around since 2017, according to [News18](#).

This kind of message is related to the “Martinelli” hoax, which has the same format of warning users that some sort of video is a trap to help malware be installed on your phone. The name comes from what is considered the possible first iteration of this hoax which warned of the “Martinelli” video which would hack your phone.

In 2018, fact-checking site Snopes [debunked](#) this message and assured WhatsApp users that their phone and data was safe.

How to make sure you’re not passing on a viral hoax message:

Viral hoax messages may seem harmless but they cause panic and sew seeds of distrust in possible important warnings and so passing them on is harmful. Avoiding being fooled and looking foolish is easy.

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- Always question a message that is being forwarded to you, especially if you get it from more than one person
- Do a quick Google search to find out if there is any more information on this message before passing it on. In this case they claim it is on CNN, a quick search on the news site will prove this to be false.
- Be especially weary of messages forwarded on WhatsApp that have a double arrow, this means the message has been forwarded through a chain of five or more chats. This is a key indicator of a false story.
- Consider the validity of the argument, spelling and punctuation. Often viral hoax or fake news messages have poor spelling and grammar. The content is also quite far-fetched or poorly considered.

References

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