

On March 15, the St. Louis Park school system announced its intent to close its schools for two weeks to prepare for distance learning. At the time, we did not know that we wouldn't be returning to the school building at all for the remainder of the year. My school's newspaper, Echo, shifted all of its energies to its digital presence, since the print issues were no longer a possibility. As a print design editor, this meant I would need to find a way to use my skill set in a new way. Since we were all under quarantine, it became a lot harder to go get pictures for our continued news coverage — this meant an increase in the art on our website. I have made digital art pieces to accompany stories since I joined the staff, but under quarantine I took this role to a new level. I devoted much of my time to ensuring the art on our website had a cohesive appearance.

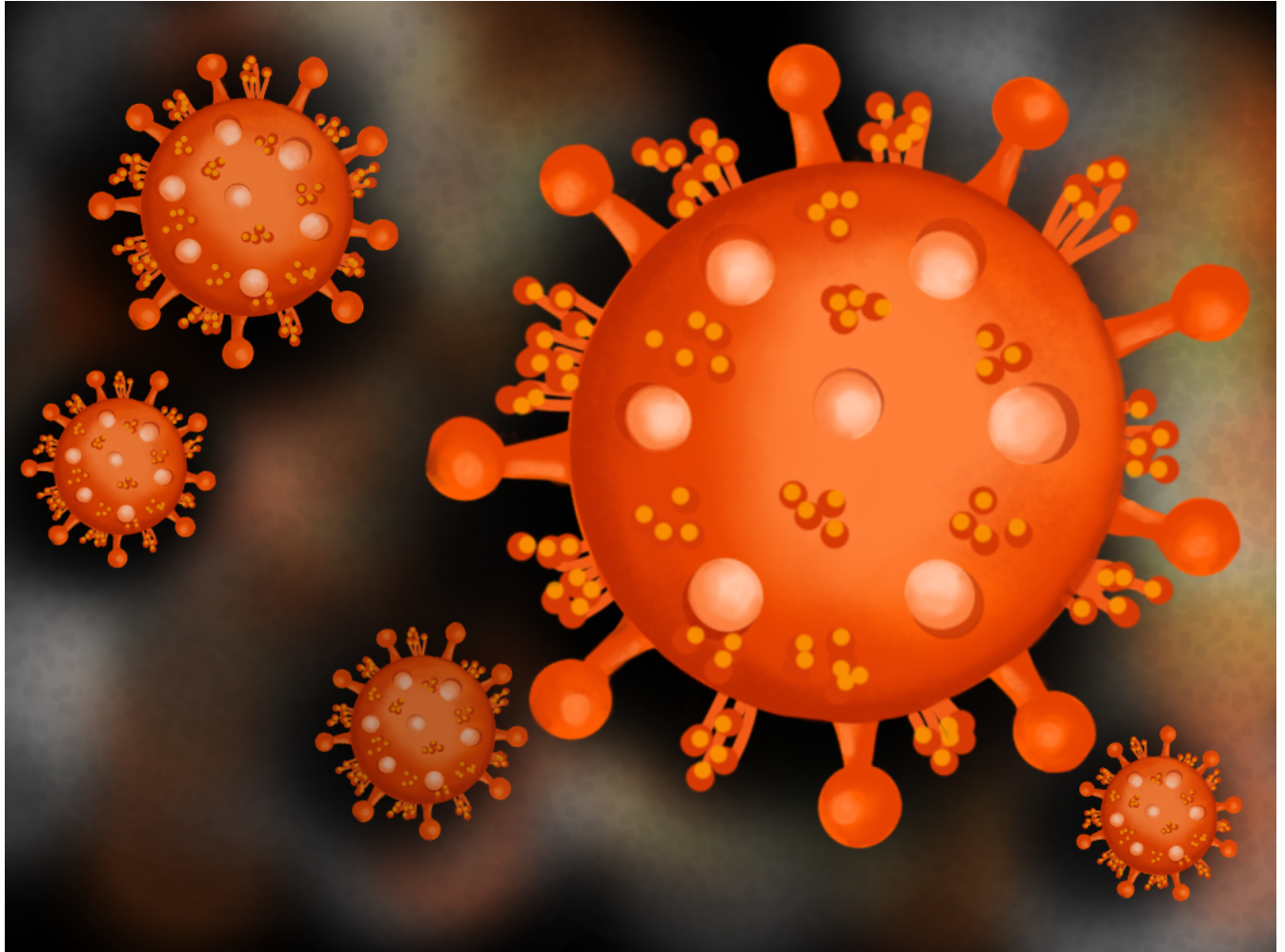
Typically my art only goes with opinion stories, since there are opportunities to get pictures for news and sports coverage. But, under quarantine, the bulk of our coverage became breaking news for which we could not take pictures. The signature colors of our paper, Echo, just like our school, are orange and black. Because of this, I decided to have all of the art contain orange tones to match the logo. This began with the piece I made for the story "St. Louis Park Public Schools announce school closure March 17 through March 27," in which I drew a detailed depiction of the Coronavirus. Similarly, I used the orange color scheme in the staff editorial "Pass-no credit system's value unclear."

There was suddenly a lot more foot traffic on our website, and I learned that the stories that had clean, cohesive art attracted the most attention from readers. This showed me how important it is to stick to the branding of the paper, as it creates an overall experience for the viewer and increases recognizability for the paper.

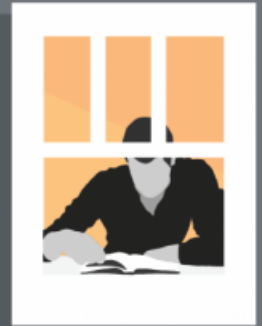
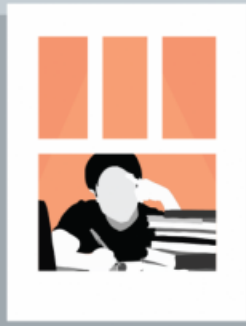
Before the paper went fully digital, I put a large emphasis on merging art with design. The assignment "Social media camouflaged as news" was a great exercise in making art functional, rather than decorative. In this design, I used the art as a way to give the reader more information in the form of an infographic. When first looking at the page, the eyes are drawn to the top left corner, where the art gives data from a survey we conducted. This gives the reader a little bit of context and base information before reading the full story. One of the main things I have learned when it comes to center spreads is the importance of catching the readers' eye and directing it towards the story. Additionally, more people will read the story if they can tell what the page is about right when they look at it — that is what I tried to do with this art.

"Vaping can lead to serious pulmonary illnesses" was one of my favorite assignments I've gotten. I was able to write a story, create a visual and design a page to help inform my peers about a topic I am passionate about. As I am hoping to pursue a career in healthcare, I was very interested in the opportunity to cover a healthcare issue that is relevant to teens. When all the cases of pulmonary illnesses were becoming more common, many of my peers at school were skeptical about the issue's validity and not researching the effects their vaping habit could have on them. I was hoping that my art and page design could help catch the attention of my peers and inform them of the issue's importance. The art depicts the visual differences between healthy lungs and those affected by vaping; oftentimes such abstract concepts can be hard to understand in words, so I did heavy research to ensure I was creating an accurate and helpful representation of the phenomenon.

While this year presented me with many opportunities to explore the world of news art, my bread and butter as a journalistic artist is opinion art. Recently, I did a piece for an opinion story following the death of Ahmaud Arbery, titled "Being black in America cost Ahmaud Arbery his life." I truly believe that all journalistic art is meant to amplify the message of the story it is with, which for this story meant to show the injustice of the fear that black men in America feel doing simple things, like going on a jog. I decided to keep the aesthetic of the art simple — using black and white in sharp contrast and a small pop of red, the color of fear, suffering and danger. I depicted Ahmaud Arbery running, but kept him as a simple silhouette to imply that any black man could be put in that situation because of his skin color. Similarly, Arbery's attackers are shown as a shadow because the threat of an attack can come from anyone, and the effects of racism stretch far and cast a shadow over every aspect of the lives of people of color.



In this piece I choose to depict a model of what scientists report a coronavirus looks like. COVID-19 is labeled as a “novel coronavirus,” but COVID-19 is not the first coronavirus. SARS in 2003 and MERS in 2012 are other coronaviruses that have had significant outbreaks before COVID-19. In keeping with the color theme established for the coronavirus art this piece is mostly orange and black.



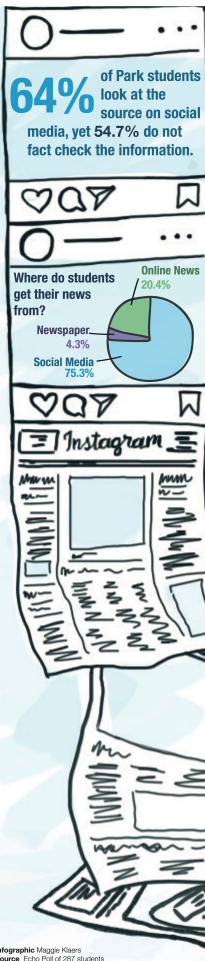


Park administration announced May 1 the high school would switch to a pass-fail grading system for the rest of the semester. In response to this decision Echo published a staff editorial describing the positives and negatives of this new system. This piece is meant to show students studying in distance learning and continues the color theme of orange and black for COVID-19 coverage.

“I think (social media) is a horrible place to get your news from. The bias is inevitable on every social media page.”  
Sam Baudhuin, junior



“I mostly get my news from the internet and sometimes the newspapers.”  
Thor Anderson, junior



# Social media posts camouflaged as news

## Online sources allow for rampant spread of misinformation

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### Evolution of news

Communications and journalism professor at the University of Minnesota Chris Ison said the modernized media has replaced reliable news from trained journalists with posts from online bloggers. Journalists used to be the gatekeepers. Those were the folks who decided what the news was. Today, while (different journalists) might have slightly different interpretations of the news, generally everyone was hearing and seeing the same (things), Ison said. “Today everyone can publish their revision of what they call ‘news.’”

“Because teenagers use social media so much, they tend to start to use that as a crutch in place of new sources.”  
Donnel Probst, NAMLE

Many students re-post politicians to show what they believe in said junior Elle Grasley.

“A lot of people, especially in the younger generation, think it is really important that everyone knows what’s going on because it’s a part of our everyday life,” Grasley said.

High school librarian Ellen George said social media has allowed for the spread of false news and recommends students look elsewhere for information.

“We have had a lot of bad experiences in this country with social media and the ability to pass on false news without anyone making sure that something is correct before it gets spread,” George said.

According to Ison, politicians skip the fact checking of mainstream media by using social media for communication.

“Anybody can get news out there and it can get picked up and swept around really quickly,” Ison said. “Politicians among them are able to bypass legitimate news organizations to get their message out.”

Grasley said politics have become increasingly inclusive through the direct communication of officials and supporters on social media, however, many fail to check the reliability of sources.

“I think this election, politicians using social media is a really big thing, everyone running for president has an Instagram and is using it as a platform to reach young people,” Grasley said. “I think it is very important for politicians to use social media.”

Associate Director for the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) Donnel Probst said social media is more appealing than a news site because it is more straightforward making it more convenient.

“Because teenagers use social media so much, they tend to start to use that as a crutch in place of new sources,” Probst said. “As they get older and start

to get involved in civic engagement, rather than reading a news story or a longer story, they will rely on their feed in order to inform themselves about what is happening in the world with politics and what’s relevant.”

Students fail to do their own research, leading them to repost and believe in fake news, which in turn can confuse their followers, according to Grasley.

“There are some things that people put on their stories where they didn’t look thoroughly enough or research it enough where it may not be true,” Grasley said. “I think (in) those cases people can be misinformed and people need to check that what they are putting out there is true and not fake.”

Freelance Manny Shesaye said it is more effective for students to post their own opinions rather than blindly following potentially misleading sources.

“People see (a post) and they agree with it a lot and decide to share it. It’s annoying that they never write anything on their own,” Shesaye said. “Some Instagram accounts can post (false information) and then if you repost it people might not know where it is from.”

According to sophomore Abby Tuxton, students are reposting stories in order to impress others in the mix of becoming popular.

“I think people post for likes and popularity because if the person they are reposting is popular and agrees with something, they can get popular for liking the same thing,” Tuxton said.

Reposting intentionally

Ison said it is the responsibility of the audience to check the reliability of what they are reading.

“What we are all talking about these days is the need for more media literacy in the public. It’s hard work being well informed these days,” Ison said. “The audience needs to work harder.”

According to Probst, the reader has to evaluate every part of the information before believing it.

“Students need to be very mindful about how they are using social media so that they can ensure that when they are posting things they are not stretching reality,” Probst said. “Really understand how to look at your sources. Critically analyzing every piece of information you come across.”

According to George, there are many fact-checking sources available to high school students on the school website.

“We have the online Britannica through the state library access. I have a lot of reference books,” George said. “We have on the high school website the database Symbolis.”

What really matters when getting your news is who is producing the story not the medium from which you get it, according to Ison.

“Social media is just a vehicle for information. It doesn’t really matter whether you’re getting it from social media or regular media, the question is who is originating the information,” Ison said.

Grasley said when she reposts something to her Instagram story, she double-checks to make sure everything is current and accurate.

“Whenever I put something on my story, I usually look it up first and make sure it’s true and it’s not fake. Usually, it’s about something that’s happening currently,” Grasley said. “I think it’s important to check your resources.”

There are many reliable sources, but it is essential that students are aware of any possible bias, according to George.

“Are there any red flags? Did it come from a reputable journalistic source like The New York Times, The Washington Post?” George said. “We’ve got lots of resources here for you. Ask your teacher, ask the librarian.”

## Learning to navigate

According to NAMLE, people should ask these questions when analyzing posts from social media:

- Who** made this?
- Why** was it made?
- What** is missing from this message?
- How** might different people interpret this message?
- Who** might benefit from this message?
- Who** might be harmed by this message?

## Analyzing real tweets

**Affects Park**

**Donald J. Trump**  
@realDonaldTrump

**No source**

The Pledge of Allegiance to our great Country, in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, is under siege. That is why I am going to win the Great State of Minnesota in the 2020 Election. People are sick and tired of this stupidity and disloyalty to our wonderful USA!

July 11, 2019

**Unsupported claims**

**Interpreted by some as anti-Semitic**

**Iran Omar**  
@IranOmar

Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel. #Gaza #Palestine #Israel

Nov. 16, 2012

**Fails to back up claim**

**Credible publication**

**The New York Times**  
@nytimes

Thousands of migrants are trying to reach the U.S. from Mexico. As more are blocked at the border by new immigration policies, many are using riskier tactics to get in. “It is a question of stress, of despair,” a Mexican aid worker said.

Sept. 29, 2019

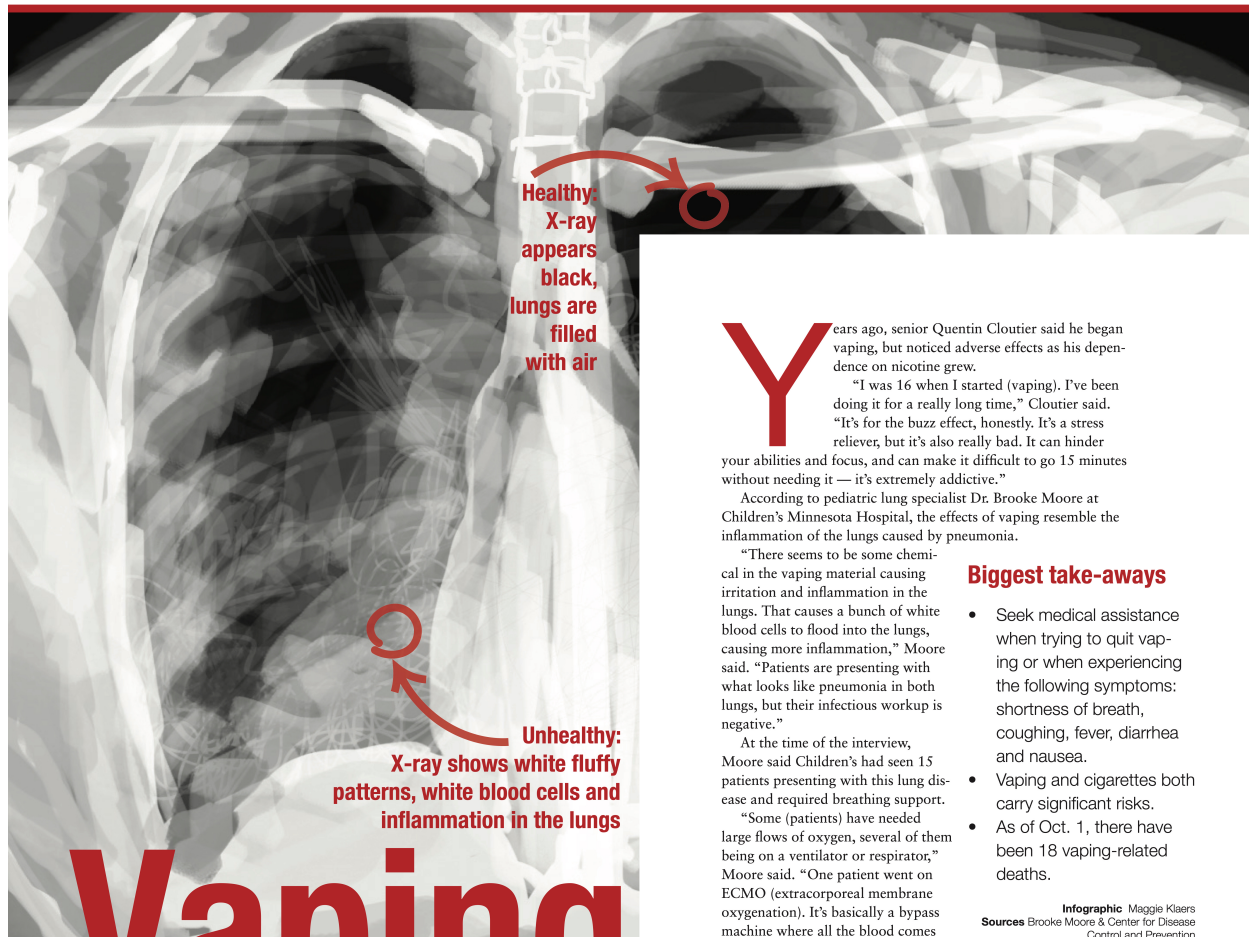
**Source**

This piece was created with the intent of being a spread design and is meant to direct the readers eyes first to an infographic, and then to the beginning of the story. It was important for readers to know that, according to an Echo survey, 64% of Park students look at the source on social media, yet 54.7% do not fact check the information, so this information was featured in the top left corner within the art itself. Additionally, the color scheme was kept monochromatic for visual appeal.



“It’s messed up teenagers nowadays need to vape for no reason. The addiction to nicotine is crazy. It’s easy to get any type of e-cigarettes or any type of tobacco.”

Kevin Garcia, junior



Healthy:  
X-ray  
appears  
black,  
lungs are  
filled  
with air

Unhealthy:  
X-ray shows white fluffy  
patterns, white blood cells and  
inflammation in the lungs

# Vaping

## can lead to serious pulmonary illnesses

Over 1,000 reported cases of vaping-related diseases

Maggie Klaers  
maggieklaers@slpecho.com

**Y**ears ago, senior Quentin Cloutier said he began vaping, but noticed adverse effects as his dependence on nicotine grew.

“I was 16 when I started (vaping). I’ve been doing it for a really long time,” Cloutier said.

“It’s for the buzz effect, honestly. It’s a stress reliever, but it’s also really bad. It can hinder

your abilities and focus, and can make it difficult to go 15 minutes without needing it — it’s extremely addictive.”

According to pediatric lung specialist Dr. Brooke Moore at Children’s Minnesota Hospital, the effects of vaping resemble the inflammation of the lungs caused by pneumonia.

“There seems to be some chemical in the vaping material causing irritation and inflammation in the lungs. That causes a bunch of white blood cells to flood into the lungs, causing more inflammation,” Moore said. “Patients are presenting with what looks like pneumonia in both lungs, but their infectious workup is negative.”

At the time of the interview, Moore said Children’s had seen 15 patients presenting with this lung disease and required breathing support.

“Some (patients) have needed large flows of oxygen, several of them being on a ventilator or respirator,” Moore said. “One patient went on ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation). It’s basically a bypass machine where all the blood comes out of your body, goes into an oxygenator and then goes back into your body because the lungs are so sick,” Moore said.

According to Moore, the variety of chemicals vape users consume make it difficult to nail down the cause of the illness.

“The problem is (vape products) don’t all contain the same substances,” Moore said. “Commercially based nicotine products are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, but they still have different substances in them, depending on what the flavor is.”

Cloutier said temptations have challenged his efforts to quit vaping, but he has learned how to overcome these difficulties.

“I’ve been trying to (quit) for the last week. I’ve been working really hard on it, but once you’re hooked, you’re hooked,” Cloutier said. “There’s been times where I’ve just wanted to (vape), but I can’t. I rub my palm with my thumb and twist it. Deep breaths help, so does trying to focus on something other than the thing that’s bugging you at the moment.”

For those attempting to quit, Moore suggests users speak with their physician.

“If people are using nicotine-based products, in addition to the marijuana-based products, there can be a pretty high level addiction. They may need to seek medical support to quit without having significant nicotine withdrawal,” Moore said.

Moore said it is a misconception that vaping is a harmless replacement for cigarettes.

“When e-cigarettes came on the market, there was a sense they would help people quit using tobacco products and were touted as a safe alternative,” Moore said. “The problem is, they’ve only been on the market for less than 10 years. Just because there’s no data prior to the last few months of adverse effects, doesn’t mean they’re not bad — it just means we didn’t have any data.”

It is important, Cloutier said, to recognize the dangers of vaping.

“For people who are currently vaping, see what it’s doing to your health, and for people who are trying to quit, good (for) you,” Cloutier said. “If you’re going to vape, at least understand that you have the possibility of dying.”

### Biggest take-aways

- Seek medical assistance when trying to quit vaping or when experiencing the following symptoms: shortness of breath, coughing, fever, diarrhea and nausea.
- Vaping and cigarettes both carry significant risks.
- As of Oct. 1, there have been 18 vaping-related deaths.

**Infographic:** Maggie Klaers  
**Sources:** Brooke Moore & Center for Disease Control and Prevention

I choose to visibly display the differences between healthy lungs and those affected by vaping in this piece. According to pediatric lung specialist Dr. Brooke Moore, when looking at an x-ray of healthy lungs, the lungs should appear dark black, as they are filled with air. However vaping-related illnesses have caused otherwise healthy teens to present with white fluffy clouds on inflammation instead of the normal dark color.



This piece is a simplistic depiction of the scene that unfolded when Ahmaud Arbery was shot Feb. 23 in Satilla Shores, Georgia. However the composition and color symbolism of the piece was left simple to convey that this situation could have happened to any one.