

Twitter Thread by Tom Zeller Jr.



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Thread: A look back at the top 10 most-read @undarkmag stories published in 2020, starting with...

#10: I had not personally heard of the Voynich manuscript — a cryptic, centuries old “text” that still baffles researchers — until super-smart @jillianefoley brought this story idea to us. If you don’t know about this puzzle, prepare to be fascinated:
<https://t.co/ZNEBudrssi>

#9: A riveting review by @Svobodster of @jameshamblin's book "Clean" and our collective obsession with "surface notions of cleanliness."
<https://t.co/KR1xW0qt8H>

#8: My personal favorite headline of the year, which I continue to argue contains a gift to any budding garage band looking for a name. (You’re welcome). Story by the always excellent @DianeEPeters
<https://t.co/6jx7sEptGB>

#7: Written all the way back on April 16th, @kategammon's smart look at the anti-vaxx community’s then-percolating suspicions around the hunt for a Covid-19 vaccine seems eerily prescient as vaccine roll-outs get underway now.
<https://t.co/ZzLihsMtaQ>

#6: She started writing for us almost three years ago, and since then, @Inkfish has become one of our most reliable and thought-provoking contributors. Here she tackles the science on Covid-19 in breast milk, finding it is “not a fluid to fear.”
<https://t.co/SKbk0dAagj>

#5: Contributing editor Michael Schulson (not on Twitter) was one of the first journalists to examine the backlash against Stanford's John Ioannidis (also not on Twitter). It’s a measured look at a scientific debate that still ruffles feathers.
<https://t.co/U8gNoGY5KB>

#4: This October entry from Johannesburg-based journalist @EdStoddardZA proved so popular with readers that we’ve considered establishing a chinchilla vertical at Undark. (Not really.) Good stuff on a pressing issue:
<https://t.co/XnPyBckR0V>

#3: From our opinion silo: As the full breadth and threat of the Covid-19 pandemic was becoming clear last March, epidemiologist and long-running head of [@OSHA_DOL](#), [@drdavidmichaels](#), took a cudgel to the [@GOP](#) and its history of science denialism.

<https://t.co/JqjXpqjmlt>

#2: The headline on [@elaberwarren](#)'s highly-trafficked piece from August poses a potent scientific question that continues to puzzle researchers — and one that will surely do so long after Covid-19 is a thing of the past.

<https://t.co/NiaXrDO485>

And #1: This probing profile of coronavirus specialists who, over the last decades, watched helplessly as research funding went toward other threats is, simply put, a must-read. Story by the very excellent and very Twitter-shy journalist, Charles Schmidt.

<https://t.co/Osh0NX7Zkl>

PS #1: I'd like to emphasize that this is by no means a list of Undark's "best" work, but rather its most highly trafficked, which is a measure of ... something — but as we all know, not everything.

PS #2: I'm both proud of and humbled by the sheer amount of very excellent journalism that our small team — and our vast network of contributors — manages to produce week in and week out.

PS #3: I cannot conjure enough thanks for our brilliant and unflappable deputy editor, [@J_Roberts8](#), nor for our swashbuckling audience engagement editor [@frankieschembri](#), who truly make the Undark world go 'round each day.

PS #4: Endless gratitude to [@ashleythesmart](#) who cultivates some of the best opinion pieces you'll read anywhere; [@betty_the_nah](#) for keeping our bills (and our writers) paid; and [@LucasAndersH](#) who does a little bit of everything at both Undark and its publisher, [@KSJatMIT](#).

PS #5: To our core team of story wizards, including: articles editor [@brookeborel](#), senior editors [@Sara_Talpos](#) & Scott Veale; formidable podcast producer [@lydiachain](#); whip-smart production editor [@AmandaGrennell](#); and tireless fact-checkers [@mahohnoes](#) & [@erikakarlson](#): THANK YOU!

PS #6: And finally, special and ultimate gratitude goes to veteran journalist [@deborahblum](#), who came to [@KSJatMIT](#) in 2015 and shook things up like a hurricane, turning an already-excellent fellowship program into a world-class incubator of vital science journalism.

PS #7: Her innovations are too many to count (just visit the shiny new <https://t.co/mhnYsKXJjH> website for a sampling), but giving rise to [@undarkmag](#) is one of them.

PS #8: Our modest publication will mark its 5-year anniversary next month. It's non-profit science journalism undertaken very truly in the public interest, with the intersection where science mingles — or collides — with politics, economics, and culture as its special focus.

PS #9: If you haven't already checked us out, doing so in 2021 would make for a very solid resolution (I say humbly).

<https://t.co/Hp0GgmXPSU>

PS#10 (and fin!): Happy New Year, and thanks again to everyone who helps to make [@undarkmag](#) happen.