



Q: What ideas are common in the U.S.'s depiction of cybercriminals in popular news articles? What do these ideas reveal about the U.S's biases towards knowledge about cybercrime?

INTRODUCTION

- Since COVID-19, cybercrime has increased, yet people generally remain uninformed, leading to a knowledge gap between experts and the public
- Popular media bridges this gap, but may include biases or misinformation
- These biases can negatively impact people's understanding of cybercrime
- **Goal:** increase public awareness in the knowledge gap and the contributions of popular news media outlets to the gap, to better keep people safe and informed

DEFINITIONS

- **Cybercrime:** an act committed with the explicit intention to cause harm to an entity, and where computer technology is integral to the execution
- **Popular media:** focused on informing the general public, as opposed to cybercrime experts
- **Liberal/Left-wing:** political philosophy based on freedom
- **Conservative/Right-wing:** political philosophy based on preserving what was established
- **Independent:** does not majorly lean towards liberalism or conservatism

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Criteria

We selected 40 articles based on the above definitions and the following criteria:

- Must be from a news outlet considered popular media
- Central topic must be cybercrime
- Written in 2023-2024
- Written and published in the U.S.

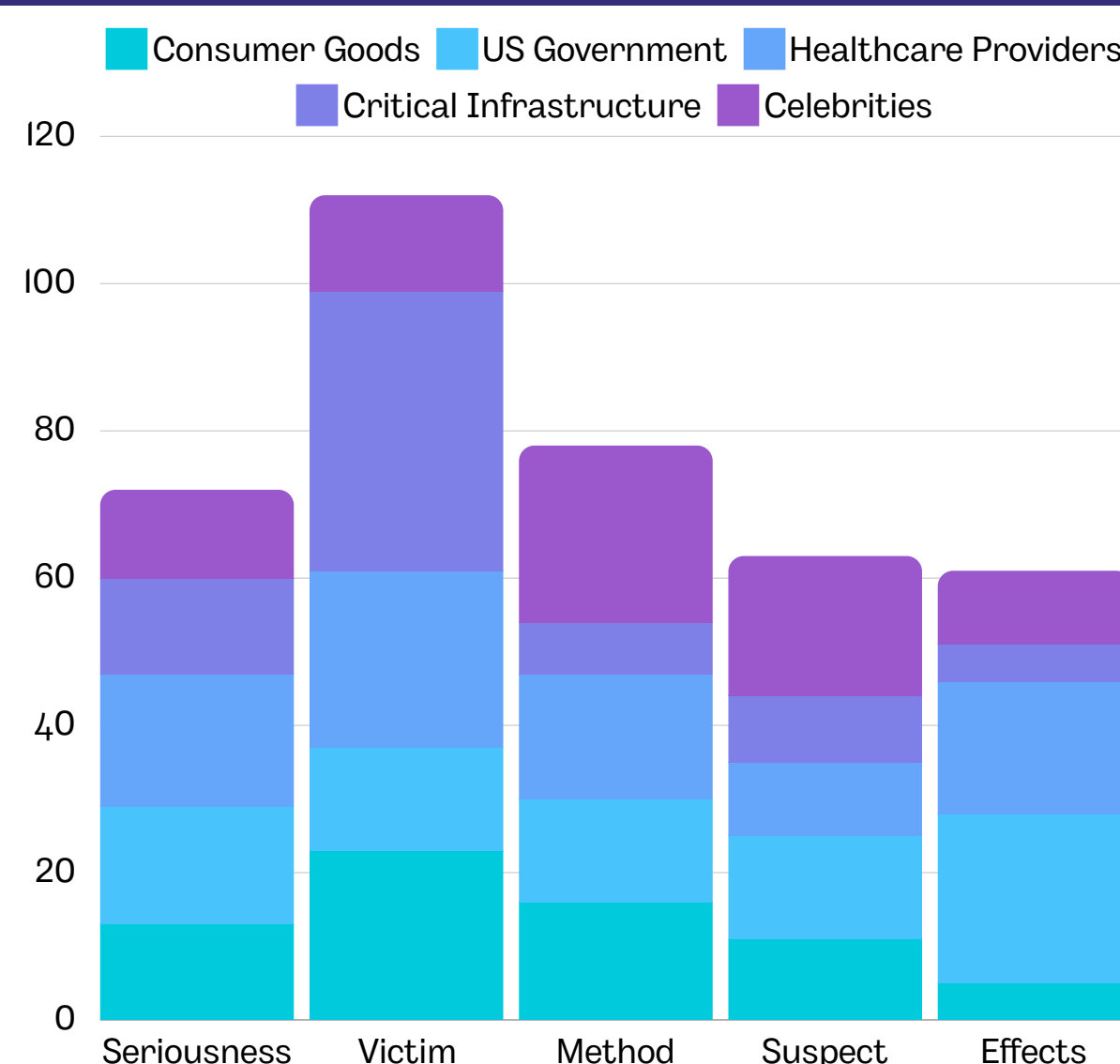
Due to time constraints, we limited the number of news channels and articles by selecting the most well-known channel from each political category (CNN, Fox News, ABC News, TechCrunch) and then randomly selected 10 articles from each of those channels based on the total articles we had gathered.

Statistical Tests

- **Qualitative coding**
 - Developed codebook by working together to decide which aspects of each article would be coded and which aspects would not, and possible criteria for coding.
 - Coded articles based on determined codebook.
 - These codes were used for the following tests:
- **Latent Class Analysis (LCA)**
 - To determine themes using the codes we collected.
 - To confirm both hypotheses on themes we identified while coding and to explore new themes that may result from the analysis.
- **Chi-square tests**
 - To determine which factors in journalism are correlated with these themes.
 - Ran Chi-square tests on collected codes.
 - In order to run a Chi-square test, there must be at least five observations in each variable's overlap, so we only ran Chi-square tests on datasets that fulfilled this requirement.

RESULTS

- **Significant correlation** between what news articles emphasize and the article's suspect ($p = 2.37 \times 10^{-7}$), victim ($p = 5.64 \times 10^{-6}$), and political alignment ($p = 0.023$)
- Reporting is **generally accurate**, and provides basic details of the crime
- News had **contradictory seriousness** and reported mostly on issues of state and national security interests



CONCLUSION

Limitations

- Possible bias within qualitative coding
- Could better tune coding scheme for more specific results
- Unable to verify codes due to small sample size
- Only able to find correlation, not causation

Recommendations for Cyber Journalism

- Decrease contradictory tone
- Focus more on investigative journalism
- Diversify writing teams

