





**HEY EVERYONE!**

**I AM HUI-AN! I AM A JOURNALIST WHO WORKS ON THE SPREAD OF FALSE INFO AND HATE SPEECH - THE TOPICS OF THIS SERIES.**



Like the rest of the world, East Asia is no stranger to social media.



**SOUTH KOREA**



**JAPAN**



**TAIWAN**



**HONG KONG**

Quite the opposite actually: East Asian countries are home to so-called 'super apps' that combine many uses - like messaging, paying and using public transport.

But do you know which platforms are used and what role they play in disseminating information?

**LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT WHERE THE "TRAIL OF RUMOURS" TAKES US!**





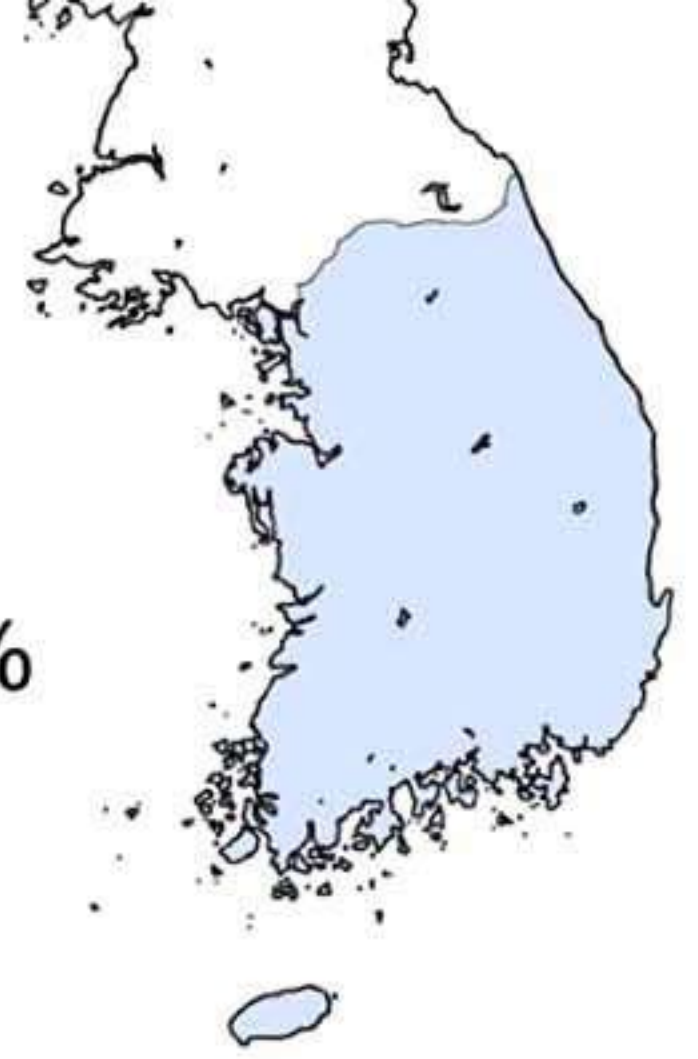
# South Korea

Population: 52.1 Million

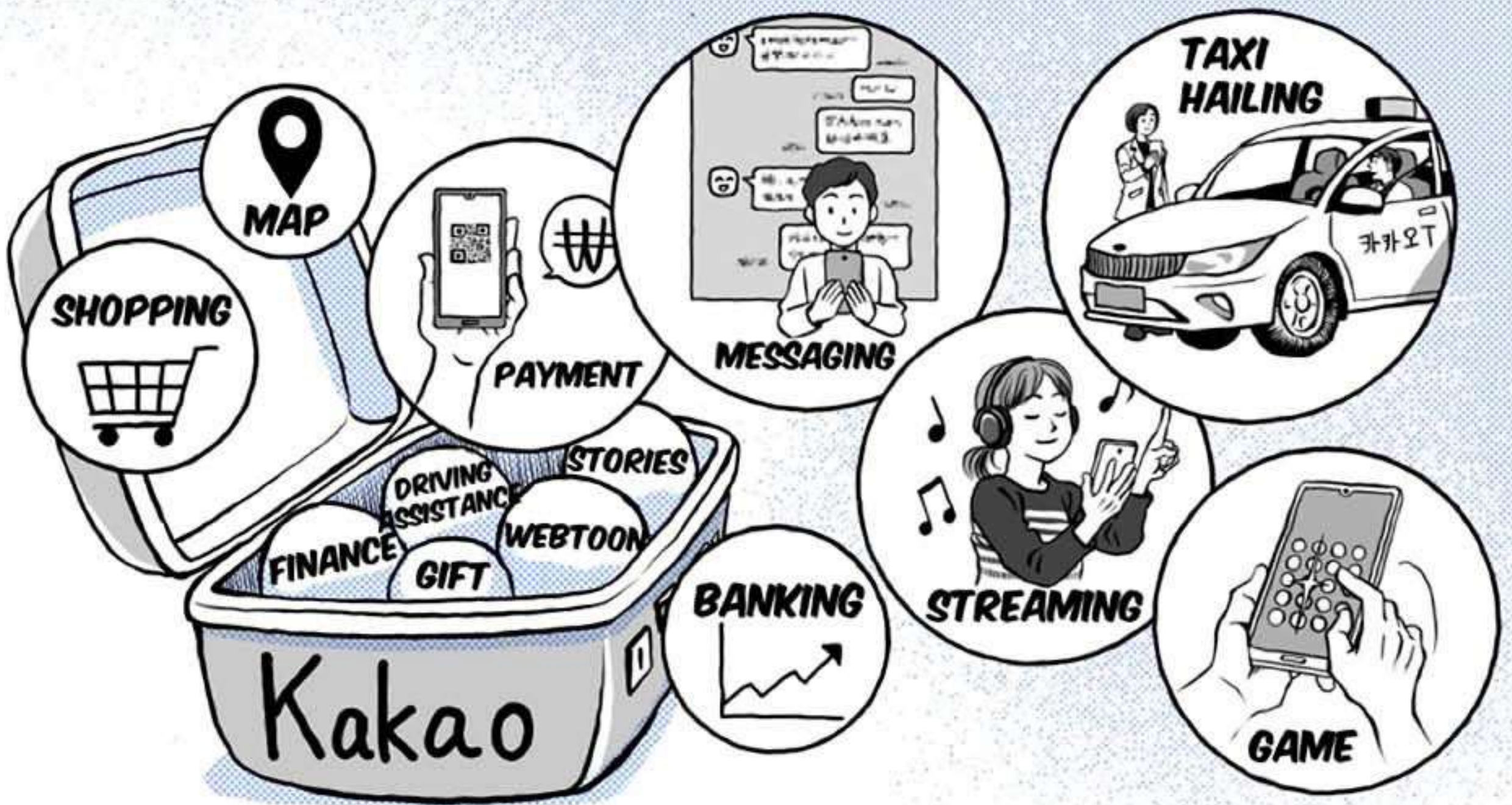
Estimated internet penetration: 97.6%

Most popular platforms:

KakaoTalk, Instagram, Facebook



KakaoTalk is the leading messaging platform, used by 87% of the population. It's part of a super app offering a range of services, from messaging and payments to gaming and more.



These services are deeply embedded into people's lives.

This can be problematic at times: When a fire broke out at a Kakao Data Center in 2022, there were countrywide disruptions while the systems were down.





# Japan

Population: 123.2 Million

Estimated internet penetration: 82.9%

Most popular platforms:  
X (Twitter), LINE, Instagram



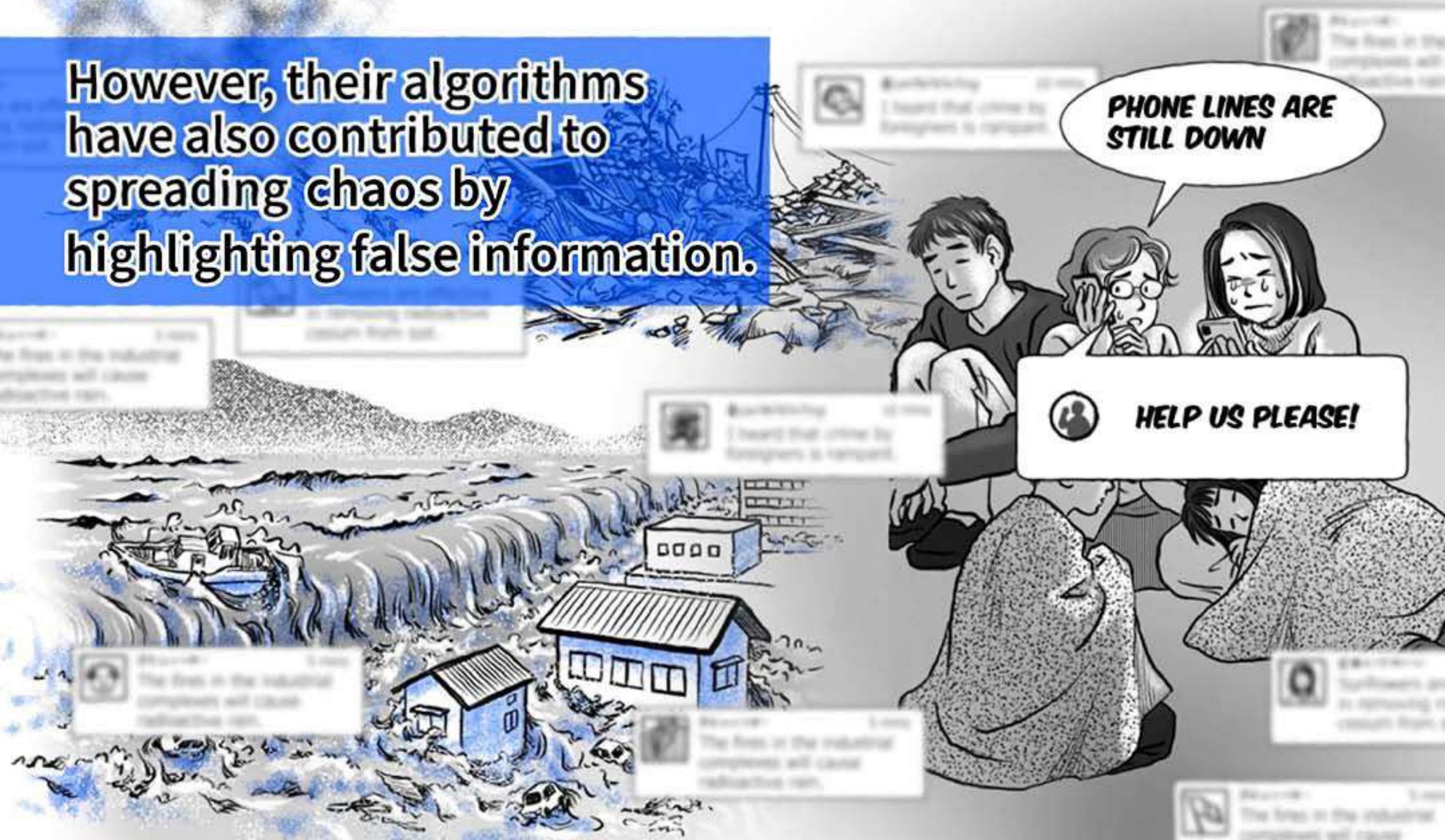
In Japan, about 81% of the population is active on various platforms.

A very important one is X (formerly Twitter). With more than 60 million users Japan is the second largest market for the platform after the US.



Since Japan is prone to natural disasters because of its location, messaging platforms play a key role in disseminating helpful information during and after such events.

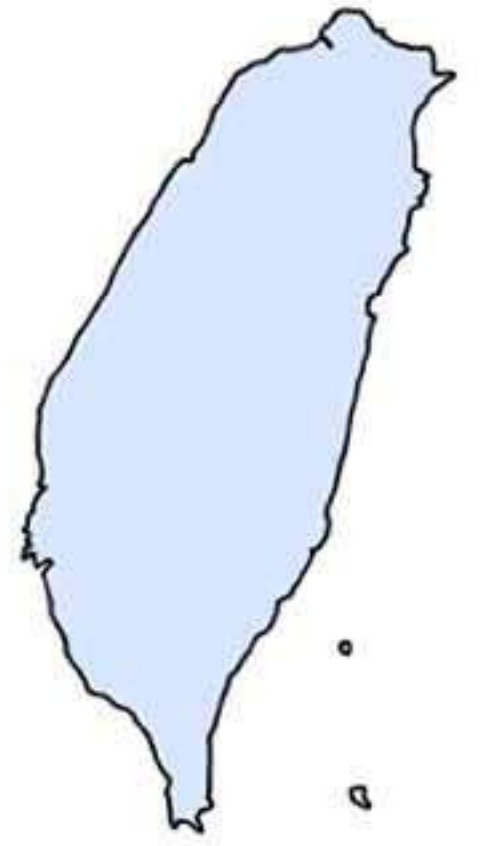
However, their algorithms have also contributed to spreading chaos by highlighting false information.





# Taiwan

Population: 23.6 Million  
Estimated internet penetration: 90.7%  
Most popular platforms:  
LINE, Instagram, Facebook

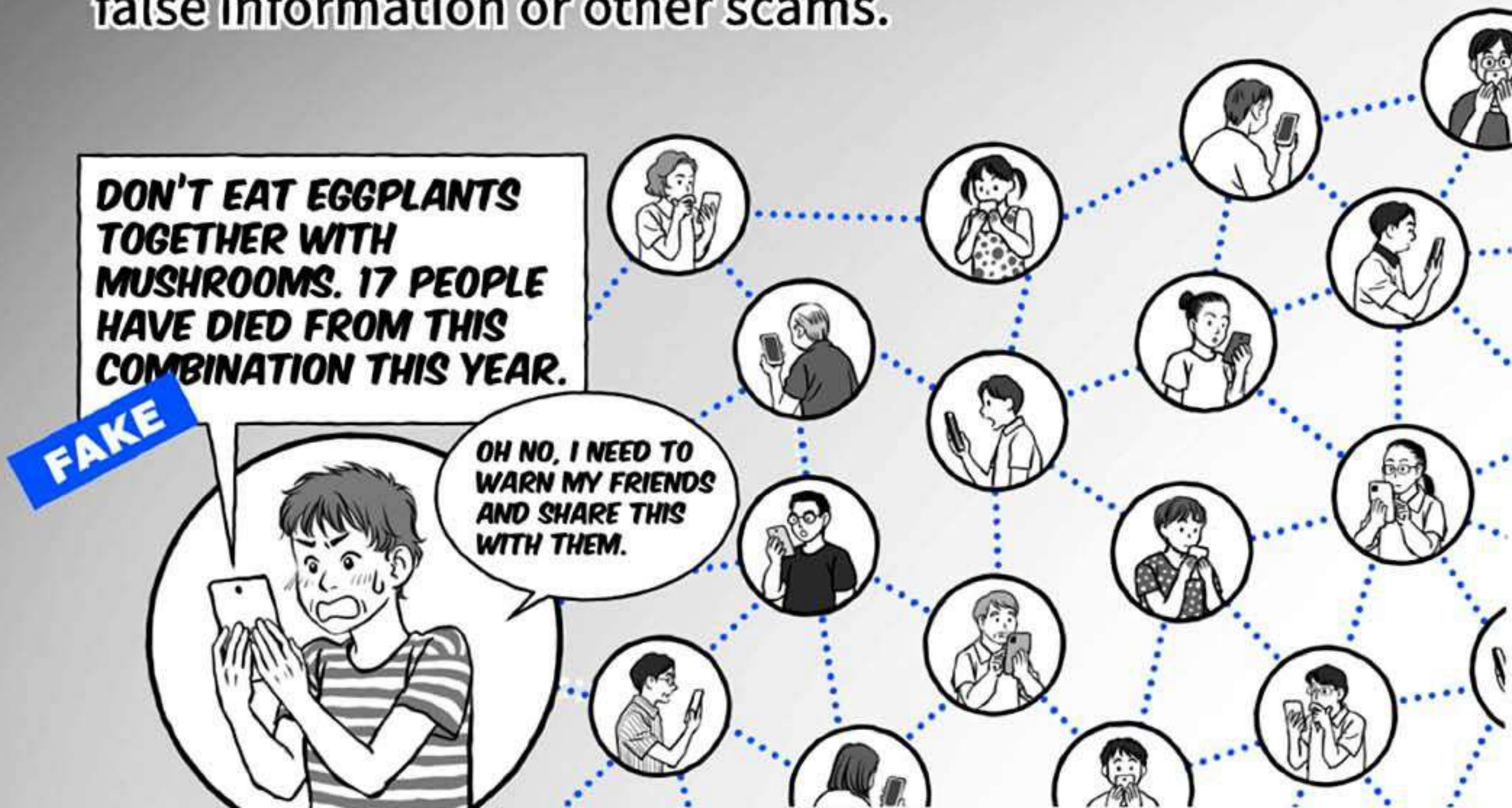


LINE (developed by a Korean company, run by a Japanese company) boasts 22 million users in Taiwan. In a 23.6 million-person country this means almost every Taiwanese uses LINE.



Just like Kakao in South Korea, LINE has built an extensive ecosystem in Taiwan, providing various services.

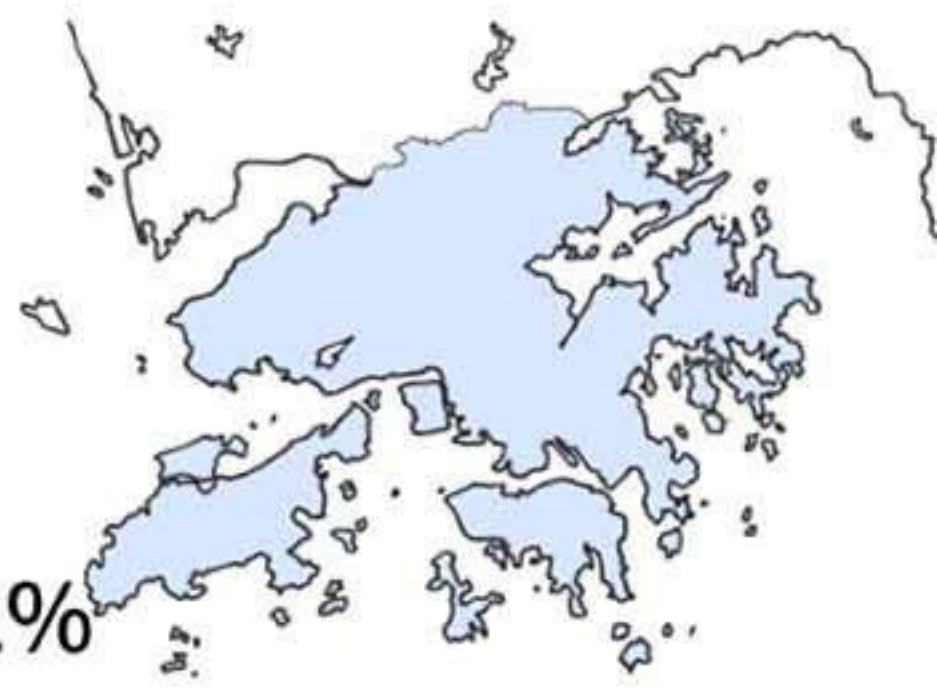
Messengers, so embedded in people's everyday lives, also challenge societies with the spread of rumours, false information or other scams.





# Hong Kong

Population: 7.3 Million  
Estimated internet penetration: 93.1%  
Most popular platforms:  
WhatsApp, WeChat, LINE



Hong Kong is a special place for platforms both from the West and East. As a former British colony and a global financial hub, it has long been a place with thriving digital services.

However, the situation has changed.

Since 2020 China has tightened its control over Hong Kong, which has a different political system than the mainland.



Concerns over privacy led many people to reflect on the safety of their messaging apps.

A shift can be also seen in the emergence of new platforms: Despite being owned by the same parent company, the platform TikTok, widely used in the West, was replaced by its Chinese version Douyin.





The widespread use of social media and the way technology and the internet have been evolving pose the question: How do journalists, educators and researchers tackle the issue of disinformation, rumours and hate speech?

**LET'S FIND OUT TOGETHER AND GET INSPIRED!**

[bpb.de](http://bpb.de) On the trail of rumours

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