

Ebola is not threat to U.S.



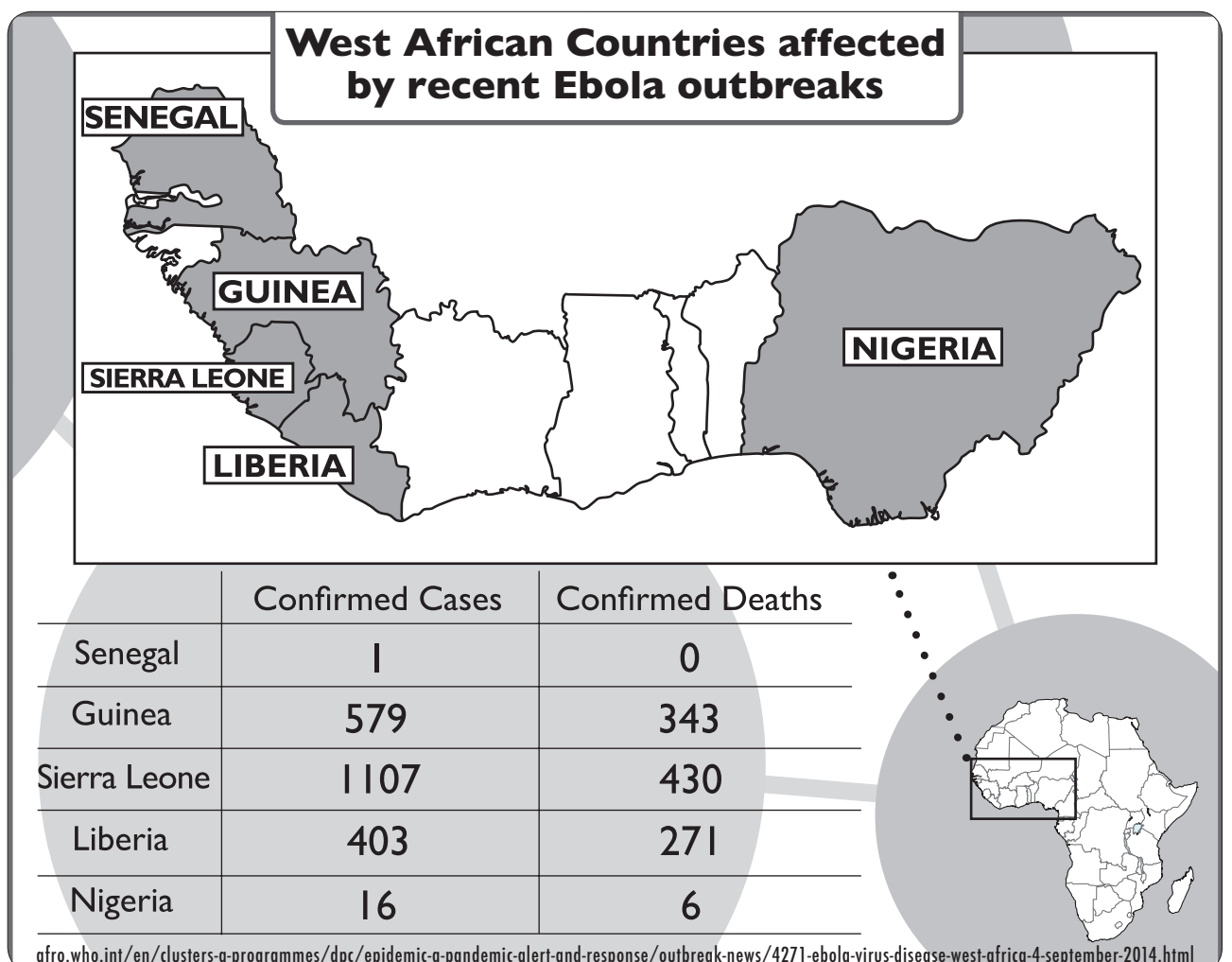
Elias Garcia

What started as just another small outbreak of Ebola, a rare but highly deadly disease, has turned into an international emergency, as non-governmental organizations and countries alike spring into action in an attempt to limit its spread and impact. With its far-reaching capabilities, could Ebola reach a city like Kirksville?

The World Health Organization declared in a press conference that more than 2,400 individuals have died already as a result of this virus, according to Reuters on Sept. 12. Worse yet, according to the WHO, there is a large discrepancy in the number of confirmed cases and the number of possible cases, meaning this could be an underestimate.

In West Africa, nations hit by the disease are overwhelmed by the number of reported cases and are at maximum capacity with treatment facilities. World governments are watching as West Africa's stability and ability to control crises are tested. Western nations slowly are beginning to fear Ebola could come overseas. Professional estimates being financed by the United States Federal Government claim the predicted deaths and time span of the endemic are greater than U.N. estimates, according to a Sept. 12 New York Times article. Even Peter Piot, the director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and one of the individuals to originally discover and classify Ebola, has called for a 'quasi-military intervention' to stop Ebola's spread, according to a Sept. 11 Guardian report. In short, people are beginning to panic about Ebola. The question then becomes "should we?"

Although the WHO claims we are safe, according to a July 30 "Nature" article, Ebola, while a horrific disease that should be stopped as quickly as possible, will not be the end of the



world. Why? Because Ebola is extremely hard to catch. According to the article, to catch Ebola, "a person's mucous membranes, or an area of broken skin, must come into contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person, such as blood, urine, saliva, semen or stools, or materials contaminated with these fluids such as soiled clothing or bed linen." The reason Ebola has been spreading quickly so far is because of the geography and infrastructure of Western Africa. Poor sanitation, close proximity to animal carriers, poor health care systems and delayed government responses primarily are to blame.

Additionally, Ebola is not airborne, meaning the speed of its transmission is extremely limited when compared to the likes of influenza, according to the "Nature" article. If more reassurance is needed, the Center for Disease Control, the federal agency in charge of handling any major health related crises, declared July 28 that Ebola poses little risk to the United States and is unlikely to spread beyond the current infected region.

Additionally, because of the urgency of this outbreak, red tape has been cut for pharmaceutical industries all around the world to create a vaccine for Ebola as quickly as possible. There are several major groups now working on expediting prototype vaccines into direct production once basic minimum testing has been completed, according to the Sept. 13 "Economist." While this might sound scary, holding back on creating a vaccine

for a disease like Ebola because of redundant safety regulations will cost more lives than safety testing will save. Continuing with the "Economist" article, governments and NGOs alike have decided that these companies should be able to produce a viable vaccine as quickly as possible for doctors working on site, which could encourage more doctors to help fight this endemic, and eventually to provide directly to civilians. There are multiple promising medicines in the works as this article is written, according to the "Economist," which is encouraging to say the least.

As terrifying as Ebola might be, for those of us here in Kirksville, we are more than safe. In fact, the Center for Disease Control already has published a press release stating "The outbreak does not pose a significant risk to the United States," on Aug. 31. Why is this the case? Access to sanitized equipment, rubber gloves, aprons and specialized facilities ensure any cases that might end up here would be treated promptly and efficiently. It looks like the Truman State Department of Public Safety can wait on the quarantine tape for now.

Elias Garcia is a sophomore economics and computer science major from Independence, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

What do you think about Twitter?

I stopped using it. I'm trying to move away from social media.

Aaron Gershman
Junior



I'm not interested in looking at other people's stuff online if it's not interesting.

Rosie Adams
Senior



Lots of people are using it, so it must be useful for something.

Francis Afzal
Senior



It's short and succinct, and has more meaningful content than Facebook.

Tim Hudson
Freshman



Don't dismiss Twitter as an art form



Conor Gearin

Wondering whether Twitter can have literary value is either a dumb question or beside the point, depending on who you ask. But does literature not seek to consume the entire world, beautiful, ugly and strange alike? Here I will argue for the potential, if not the existence, of the literary Tweet.

First, I want to point out that a Tweet's 140-character length does not disqualify it as literature — otherwise, we would have to throw out countless short poems that have shaped our view of the world.

"The apparition of these faces in the crowd: / petals on a wet, black bough." Ezra Pound's Imagist poem, "In a Station of the Metro," would fit inside a tweet — title, extra spaces and all. William Carlos

Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow" fits too, as do many of Emily Dickinson's works and almost anything by classic haiku writers Buson, Basho or Issa. Poetry embraces spare, brief poems as well as expansive, sprawling epics. The short story experienced its heyday during the 19th century when commuters needed something to read during brief train rides.

"New Year's morning — / everything is in blossom! / I feel about average," wrote Issa, as translated by Robert Hass. Issa's work is brief, humorous and conversational, and in some poems, he is playfully vulgar. Was he writing Tweets during 18th-century Japan?

Perhaps part of Twitter's charm is its unapologetic vulgarity and extravagance. Even though Twitter has existed since 2006, it still retains some of its harsh frontier image, unlike Facebook. "They tell me you are wicked and I believe them," wrote Carl Sandburg in "Chicago," his celebration of the American industrial city in its prime during the early 20th century. "Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning," the poem continues.

I am not saying Twitter is our

day's equivalent to the bustle of new industry, but instead that writers always are claiming new subjects that once were thought too noisy or ugly for art.

Chris Vognar, critic for the Dallas Morning News, was a Twitter skeptic at first. He wrote that he was won over when he found himself working hard to write the perfect Tweet, striving to craft "good, lean prose, the happy marriage between voice and format."

If it is not the length of a Tweet that is the problem, perhaps it is the chaos of the Twitter feed. Before I created an account this August, I assumed Twitter was an overrun marketplace full of shouts, murmurs, giggles and curses. I looked down on it like the monarchs of old Europe looked down on the notion of democracy as a system doomed to disorder and ruin.

I did not realize, however, that since I can choose who to follow, I can avoid many Tweets that do not interest me. Besides my friends, I follow a lean group of journalists, activists and politicians that update me more quickly on local and world news than any other medium. I can consume expert reporters' works in bite-size chunks, or else use the feed

to find links to the most interesting articles they have written. Citizen reporters get the chance to show their skills.

However, if a Tweet is literature, it has to outlast current events. I believe this is the test that Tweets have not yet passed. I have never seen a writer publish a book entitled "New and Selected Tweets." I have to admit I am a bit doubtful I would read such a book.

Tweets typically are situational and tied to current events. For a Tweet to be literature, something worth passing down, it would have to say something about human experience using language comprehensible to a future society that would not understand #yolo, #tswift or #GameofThronesSeason5. Or more likely, the writer would show, in 140 characters or less, what something from our current popular culture says about human experience in general, and be able to do this consistently. Since literature always is shape-shifting into new and unexpected forms, I think it is only a matter of time.

Conor Gearin is a senior biology and English major from St. Louis, Mo.