

Bill Gates on Elon Musk's controversial coronavirus comments: Stick with electric cars and rockets

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Shawn Langlois

'Elon's positioning is to maintain a high level of outrageous comments, He's not much involved in vaccines. He makes a great electric car. And his rockets work well. So he's allowed to say these things. I hope that he doesn't confuse areas he's not involved in too much.'

That's Microsoft [MSFT, +0.54%](#) co-founder Bill Gates [explaining to CNBC](#) why Tesla [TSLA, -3.81%](#) boss Elon Musk should perhaps focus on his job and let the experts focus on theirs.

Musk has courted controversy ever since the coronavirus first broke out across the U.S., having suggested deaths have been overcounted and lockdowns were unnecessary. He also called California's approach to combatting coronavirus "fascist" and [drew an F-bomb from a politician](#).

Gates pointed out that facts travel slowly across social media compared with misinformation, which poses a challenge to Facebook [FB, +8.17%](#) and Twitter [TWTR, -0.87%](#).

"When you let people communicate, you have to deal with the fact that certain incorrect things that are very titillating can spread very rapidly compared to the truth. And we've always seen that with vaccines," Gates, who's been the [subject of conspiracy theories](#), told CNBC. "To the degree to which these media companies can see what's being said on their platform and take things that are absolutely wrong and get rid of those things or slow those things down, that's very tough."

Meanwhile, the [number of U.S. cases rose to 4.29 million and the death toll hit 148,056](#). Texas became the fourth state with more than 400,000 cases, joining California, Florida and New York. The global tally for confirmed cases of COVID-19 climbed to 16.5 million on Tuesday, according to data aggregated by Johns Hopkins University, while the death toll rose to 654,327.

However, Gates offered up an optimistic take in the interview.

"You can see the therapeutic benefit faster than the protective benefit," he said "So I think there's a good chance we'll have substantial death-rate reduction by the end of the year."

He did, however, admit he's "worried" the public is concerned about the safety of the first vaccine.

“Hopefully they’ll look to the facts, understand the values of the people that they’re thinking about and understand that we’re in this together and we need to protect each other with masks and eventually probably with herd immunity with a vaccine,” he said