**Project**
Stop AAPI Hate

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**Project URL**
https://stopaapihate.org/

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**Project Overview**

Russell Jeung and Aggie Yellow Horse

Stop AAPI Hate (SAH) is a website that collects firsthand accounts of anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. A partnership between San Francisco State University Asian American Studies, Chinese for Affirmative Action, and the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, it launched in March 2020 and immediately received hundreds of responses. Using this digital data, SAH issued reports that framed anti-Asian hate in the context of the historic Yellow Peril stereotype of Asians as threatening foreigners. Since then, SAH has emerged as one of the leading voices of a global movement for racial justice.

SAH has combined quantitative analyses with qualitative reports that amplify the voices of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). With our data, we have identified consistent trends in the types of discrimination that AAPIs have faced, including the pattern of women being harassed twice as much as men. We have also been able to survey our respondents on their mental health, with a key finding that 1 out of 5 now report racial trauma — three or more long-term symptoms of trauma.

The qualitative data, in which respondents self-describe their experiences of racism, have also been useful in specifying sources of the issue. For example, by coding the rhetoric employed by perpetrators, SAH uncovered five types of Sinophobic language, including anti-immigrant sentiment.

Given our findings, we also formulate evidence-based policies and promising practices for elected officials. Our reports are aimed primarily for policy-makers, foundations, and community-based organizations, with the goals of identifying and framing the issue of anti-Asian hate, documenting trends, and recommending solutions directed at the roots of racism. Many of our reports are collaborations between academics, staff of community-
based organizations, and community members. For instance, our youth report was youth-led and youth-written, with consultation from experts in Asian American Studies and youth service providers.

Academic researchers, journalists, and community groups have cited SAH’s reports as providing primary source data on the surging rise in anti-Asian hate. Since its inception, through its research and policy advocacy, SAH has received recognition as “Social Movement of the Year” for the 2021 Webby Awards and in TIME’s 100 Most Influential Persons for 2021 feature.

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**Project Review**

Anne Cong-Huyen

The Stop AAPI Hate (SAH) site is a public scholarship project based on a collaboration between the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON), Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), and the Asian American Studies Department of San Francisco State University. Launched in 2020, the project tracks incidents of “hate, violence, harassment, discrimination, shunning, and child bullying against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States.” SAH began in 2019 as a rapid response initiative when U.S. news media started reporting a dramatic increase in such incidents, attributed to then-President Trump’s racist use of phrases such as “Kung Flu” or “Chinese Flu” in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial site was set up to collect reports of incidents from both victims and observers bearing witness to these incidents.

SAH highlights issues of anti-Asian racism, situating them within the larger context of U.S. racism and white supremacy. It has been an invaluable and reliable resource for journalists, researchers, educators, and students as it bridges academic methods with easy-to-access reports and community-oriented resources. For example, their extensive collection of easy-to-remember safety tips — which includes five tips for those experiencing or witnessing hate — are offered in 18 different Asian languages. These tips are offered in textual form and as visual posters appropriate for posting in public spaces. The amount of care and labor that goes into developing resources like these is immense and worth recognizing.

The website is built in WordPress and uses an embedded tool by Typeform to collect incident reports. As there are no visualizations and the site does not use custom PHP, the contents are easily preserved. The site is easy to navigate through tabs, with text presented in high contrast and large legible fonts for accessibility. One opportunity for improvement, however, is around the use of visuals. Many of the visuals, namely Asian American faces on the homepage, are presented for aesthetic value and are missing captions and alt-text. Improving this aspect would encourage better use by those with visual impairment. Overall, even with this limitation, the site’s numerous resources are machine-readable and largely accessible.

One of the great accomplishments of this project is the wealth of data collection done through the project website and the reports published using that data. Since March 2020, the project has published some twenty
reviews, which have grown more detailed and complex over time. For each report, SAH offers textual summaries and machine-readable full PDFs, processed with optical character recognition (OCR), available for download. The reports themselves include representation and light analysis of self-reported data, with some examination of longitudinal data within specific regions or around certain behaviors (e.g., anti-Chinese rhetoric). Some include analysis of social media rhetoric. Many vary between national and specific or regional concerns. These reports have made great use of their unique data set. Several feature collaborations with Asian American scholars from across the U.S. — a feat in itself that highlights the importance of this work for scholars across this community.

It would be useful for the project to clarify its stance regarding data collection, preservation, and access. There is some opacity about the handling of submitted data, where it is stored, and how it is preserved. Considering the importance of it, I would be interested in knowing more about their plans to further anonymize and preserve this in a repository so it can be used in other forms of research and critical creative production. It could be deposited in a repository, but I did not see this mentioned on their site. Typeform, the third-party survey and submission tool, also has its own “Data Processing Agreement” that would require additional attention as well, though they assure folks that “We do not share personal identifying information with law enforcement or any third party without expressed consent,” and consent can be withdrawn at any time.

For many of the reports, the data used for analysis comes directly from individually-made reports to their form, which presents some limitations regarding the representative nature of the data. On the other hand, their latest national report for November 2021 was a partnership with Edelman Data & Intelligence (DXI), the data science and AI arm of the international public relations firm, which describes itself as “a global, multidisciplinary research, analytics, and data consultancy with a distinctly human mission.” Setting aside controversies linked to the Edelman group, including its associations with for-profit private prisons, TransCanada, and the Keystone XL Pipeline, it is unclear to what extent the SAH collective worked with the Edelman group and how that relationship was managed or negotiated. Additional details would assist users in aligning their own values to those of this project.

One resource mentioned in their study, co-authored with DXI, that perhaps could be further highlighted on the SAH site, but that I could not find from a simple search, is the Documenting Anti-AAPI Hate Codebook, which was co-developed by the SAH coalition and The Asian American Foundation. This is an incredibly helpful resource and example of developing shared definitions and language to analyze culturally specific research. I could also see this being expanded to identify relevant metadata that can further make this research discoverable and reusable.

Additionally, the citational practices within the project could be improved. The main project site identifies the project leads and funding organizations. Individual reports have bylines that include the contributors and authors of the reports, but it is unclear who else comprises the project team and how they contributed to the project. Are students also engaged in this project and receiving mentorship, pay, or course credit? Are there
developers or communications leads who are maintaining the site and updating content? Who manages the email? Ethical and equitable labor practices are an ongoing challenge in digital humanities projects. When it comes to projects that start as community-centered projects, sustaining the work can be a real hardship. I would like to see that careful work represented on this site.

These observations do not, however, diminish the important contribution of this project in drawing attention to the racialized experience of Asian Americans, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It does the important work of further disaggregating data of Asian American identity and experience, and provides easily shared and digestible content that drives home the stakes of this work on real people and their communities.