

# ClearStory International COVID-19 Tech Trend Report

Issue 1, 2020



The agency for globally ambitious scaleups and startups

**ClearStory**  
International

# About ClearStory International

ClearStory International specialises in delivering global recognition for determined technology companies through our global network of media contacts and editorial talent.

With a laser focus on the challenges facing globally ambitious early stage and scaling companies, we understand the growth journey. From seed to post-Series A stage companies, we grow with our clients to provide the services and expertise required to help them scale and manage their reputation and credibility.

With multilingual capabilities and a network of global event partners across North America, Europe, Middle East, and Southeast Asia, we have established a network of media contacts from trade, national and international outlets across more than 80 countries.



We have a network of media contacts across 80+ countries offering unrivaled media access

# Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted entire industries as governments, companies and societies scramble to adjust to a new reality.

As COVID-19 has unfolded, journalists from around the world have been meticulously analysing public response and keeping track of how companies are adapting by using technology to overcome a wave of unprecedented challenges.

Technologies that were largely seen as complementary have now become essential to business continuity while others have been rapidly deemed surplus to requirements as budget cuts bring business needs into focus. The sudden impact of the crisis and its effects on the world have shaken public sentiment across politics, technology and business, rather like an earthquake posing long term ramifications.

ClearStory International has provisionally analysed recent tech trends across the UK, Ireland, Hong Kong and Singapore to assess the immediacy of the crisis and identify which tech sectors quickly found themselves in the spotlight.

This report covers the period from 2nd December 2019 to 5th April 2020. It includes seven identified tech trends which have dominated the media and plots their course over that period monitored. This is a provisional report and we plan to release a wider analysis covering more than 15 countries from June to December 2020 as the crisis unfolds.

We hope this study will be of use to industry stakeholders, journalists and others in providing insights for crisis preparedness and response across the communications industry into the future.



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**James McCann**  
Managing Director  
ClearStory International

# Analysis

## Overview

This is a provisional report on emerging trends across four key markets to ascertain early trends in the tech sector.

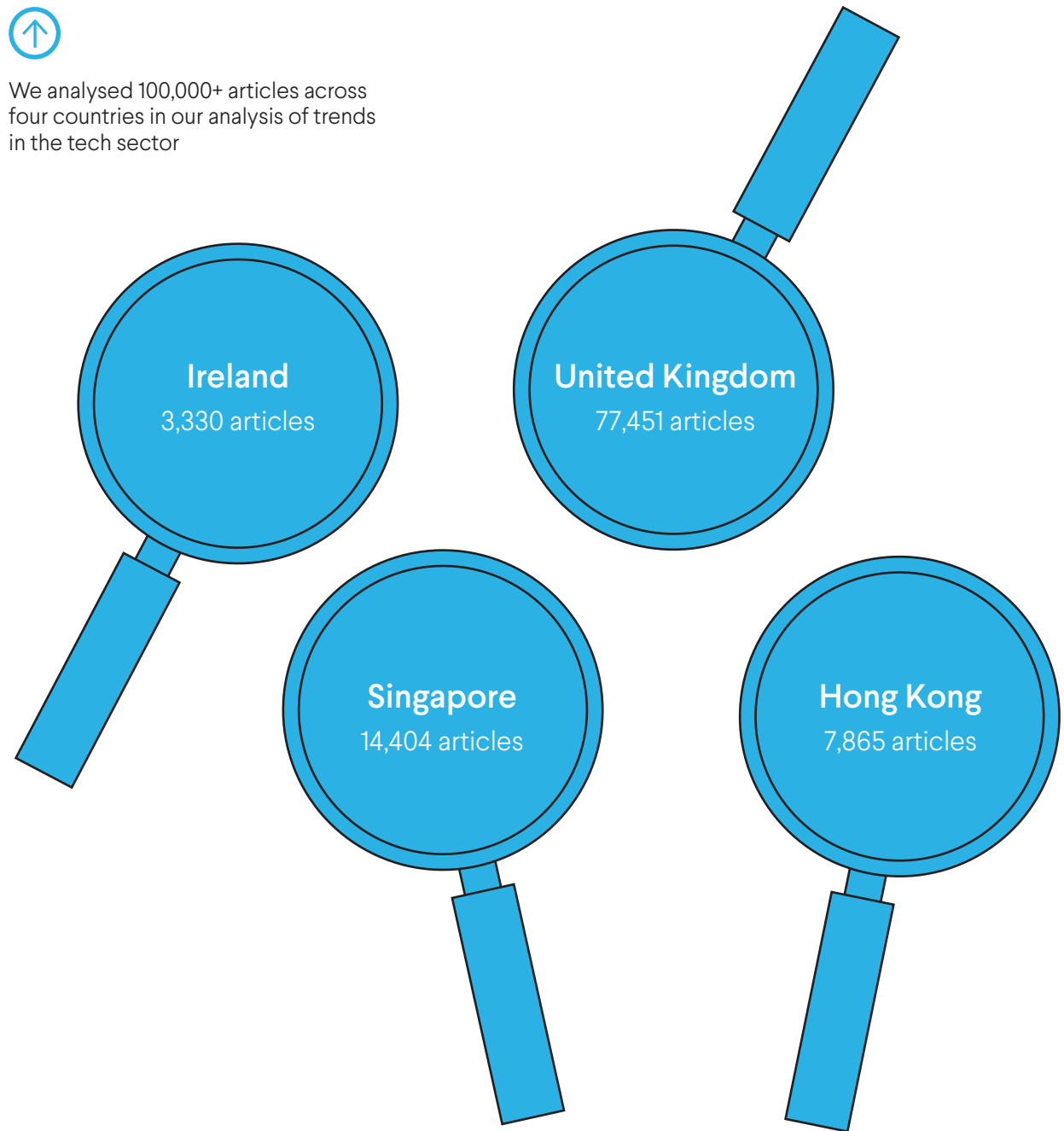
We assessed media mentions of key tech trends from 2nd December 2019 to 5th April 2020 to establish the negative or positive impact that COVID-19 is having on those sectors.

We identified seven key trends that have seen peaks over the period across four provisional countries in Europe and Southeast Asia and plotted the mentions over a weekly basis to track volume of mentions.

Each sample country has seen different trends and peaks as their response to COVID-19 differs and the news and analysis of happenings has shifted over the period.



We analysed 100,000+ articles across four countries in our analysis of trends in the tech sector



## Global

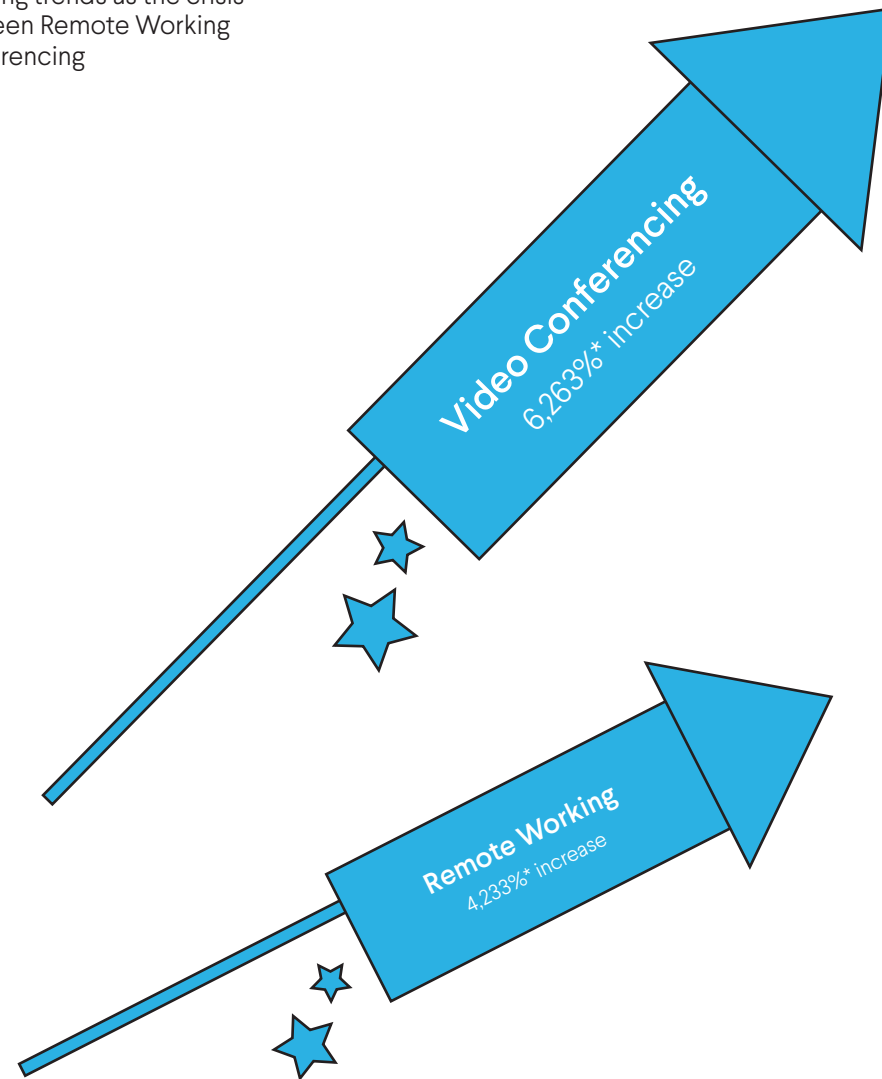
Interest in Remote Working and Video Conferencing has surged globally in recent weeks as the COVID-19 crisis continues, recording a surge of coverage of 14,000% and 17,500%, respectively on average. The two tech trends lead across the board except in Hong Kong where E-commerce and Bio/MedTech are leading trends at the moment.

The Gig Economy has seen an increase of coverage (averaging 1,500% globally) but has largely slipped in recent weeks except in the UK (up 3,300%) where debate continues as it is a key underliner of the wider economy, especially in London. E-commerce as a whole has largely remained stagnant compared to other trends, recording an average increase of coverage of 261% globally.

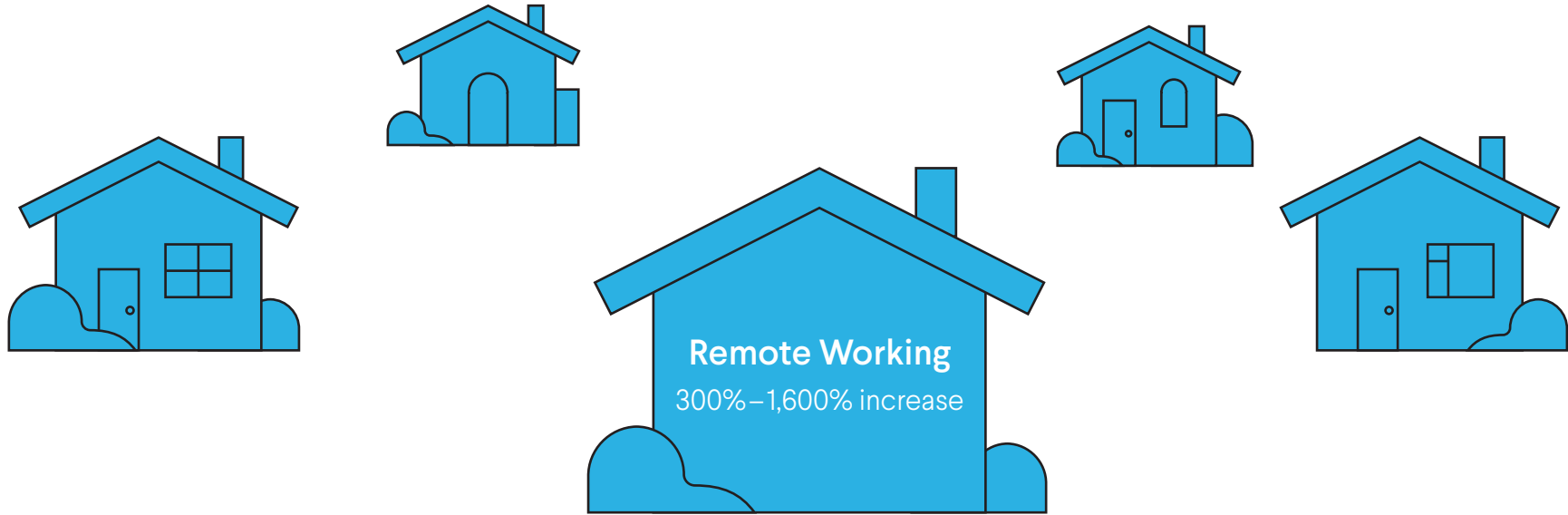
Virtual Conferencing and events have not turned into the trend many had hoped for based on volume of coverage, despite some high profile pivots by some key organisers and the E-learning/Remote Teaching revolution doesn't appear to have taken hold, with coverage of the trend focusing largely on news announcements of school and university closures and have been quickly reversed.



The fastest growing trends as the crisis unfolded have been Remote Working and Video Conferencing



\*Average increase in coverage across all countries between December to March



## Ireland

Remote Working was a topic that received regular coverage in Ireland, averaging approximately 20 pieces per week until the COVID-19 crisis. Since then, at its peak in the middle of March, Remote Working surged more than 1,600% before dropping back to 300% above average by the beginning of April. Video Conferencing and calling received almost no attention in the run up to the COVID-19 crisis but has since seen interest grow to more than 140 pieces on a weekly basis and rising as awareness of platforms like Zoom and Houseparty continue to climb.

While Virtual Events and Video conferencing/calling have seen some interest with several companies pivoting, it has not generated significant traction to date. Remote Learning and Edtech have seen a surge as universities and schools have made the transition from teaching from home while E-commerce and online shopping has remained steady in interest throughout the crisis.

Surprisingly for Ireland, the Gig Economy and the impact of COVID-19 on the sector has barely factored in coverage so far.



Since the crisis Remote Working has seen a huge increase in coverage in Ireland between December to March



## United Kingdom

The UK has seen Video Conferencing/calling become the topic of focus since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. A virtual unknown topic to the British public, it has surged more than 42,000% from its lowest point in December to a height of close to 7,000 in mid March and remains the most popular tech topic at the moment.

Remote Working has also been plucked from relative obscurity from 50 articles per week to more than 2,000 per week since early March. While Medtech related coverage has doubled over the period from a higher

base of approx 600 articles per week, it still lags significantly behind Remote Working and Video Calling. Virtual Events saw a rapid spike of interest in mid-March recording the highest surge across all topics of 100,000% but has since slipped back. News related to E-learning/Remote Teaching peaked in late March as students from universities and schools were sent home. Concerns over Gig Economy workers has led to a consistent period of interest in the sector since early March with E-commerce remaining steady due to its high coverage base already over 1,000 pieces per week.



Video Conferencing has had an enormous growth in articles since the beginning of the crisis in December

## Singapore

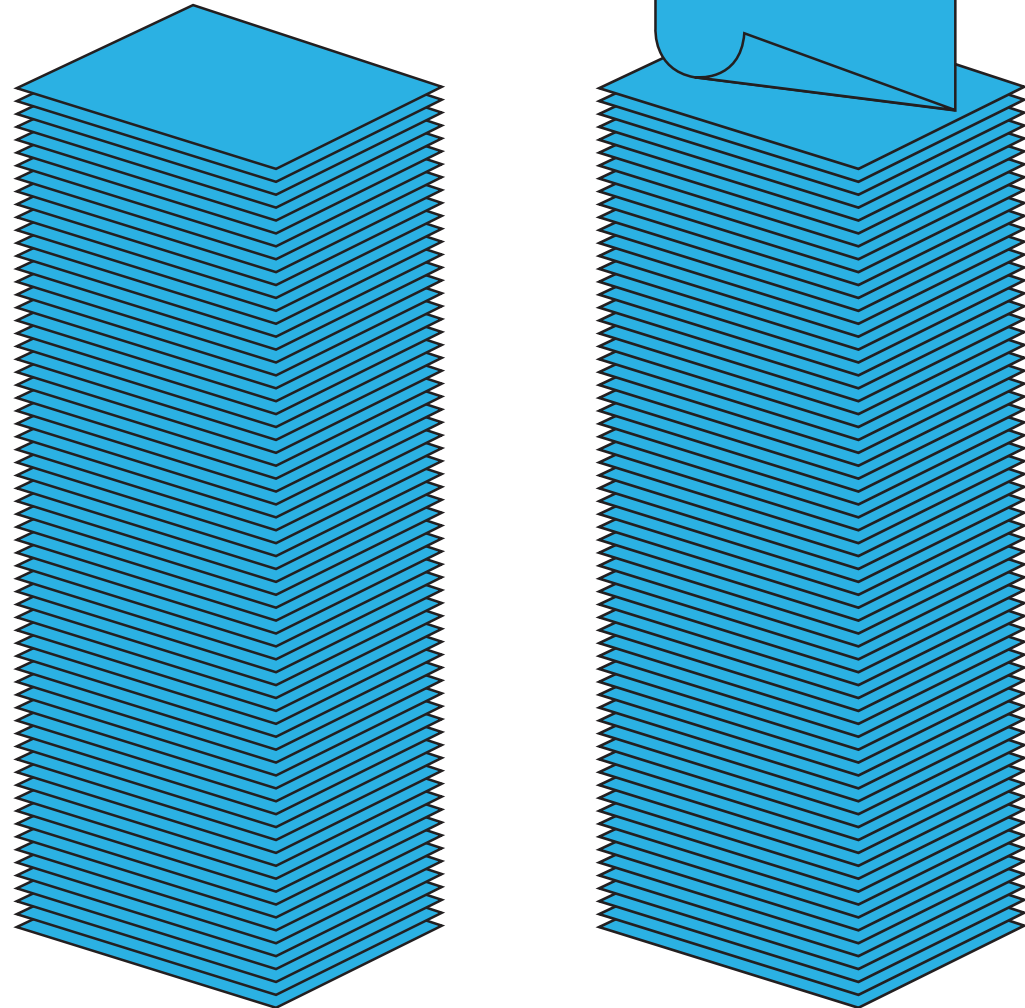
Similar to the UK, Singapore has seen a boom in interest in Remote Working and Video Conferencing/calling since early March from a low base of interest previously. While the volume of coverage doesn't reflect the levels in the UK and Ireland, the percentage increase for both topics surged by 14,800% and 11,300% respectively. From a regular base of between 5-10 articles per week, the average for both is now at 200+ articles per week.

Virtual Events and conferencing has seen some interest, surging more than 1,300% which is far less than would be expected given Singapore's position as a leader in conferencing across the Southeast Asia region while Medtech related news has only seen a slight increase in coverage over the period, up 251%.

E-commerce has remained largely unchanged as a trend while the Gig Economy has doubled in terms of coverage due to analysis around COVID-19's impact on the sector with Edtech recording a 720% increase in coverage over the period.



Due to the region's interest in the sector, Gig Economy saw a doubling of articles in the period monitored





## Hong Kong

While Remote Working certainly had a boost in terms of coverage in Hong Kong in mid March up by 10,600%, it has fallen back again, whereas Biotech/Medtech has benefited most in terms of coverage from the COVID-19 crisis based on volume to date, recording a 377% increase in coverage.

Video Conferencing/calling has also boomed, remaining a hot topic even in the week where workers have begun heading back to the office peaking at 4,733% from its lowest points in December/January.

Separately, Edtech and Virtual Conferencing have seen relatively little pick up in actual volume from the crisis compared with E-commerce which, starting at a high base, has seen its coverage increase by 222% into late March/early April. Mentions of the Gig Economy picked up around the impact of the sector but nothing significant in terms of volume. However, it did equate to a 575% increase in coverage from the norm.



So far to date, Biotech/Medtech has had the most positive benefit during the crisis over the months monitored

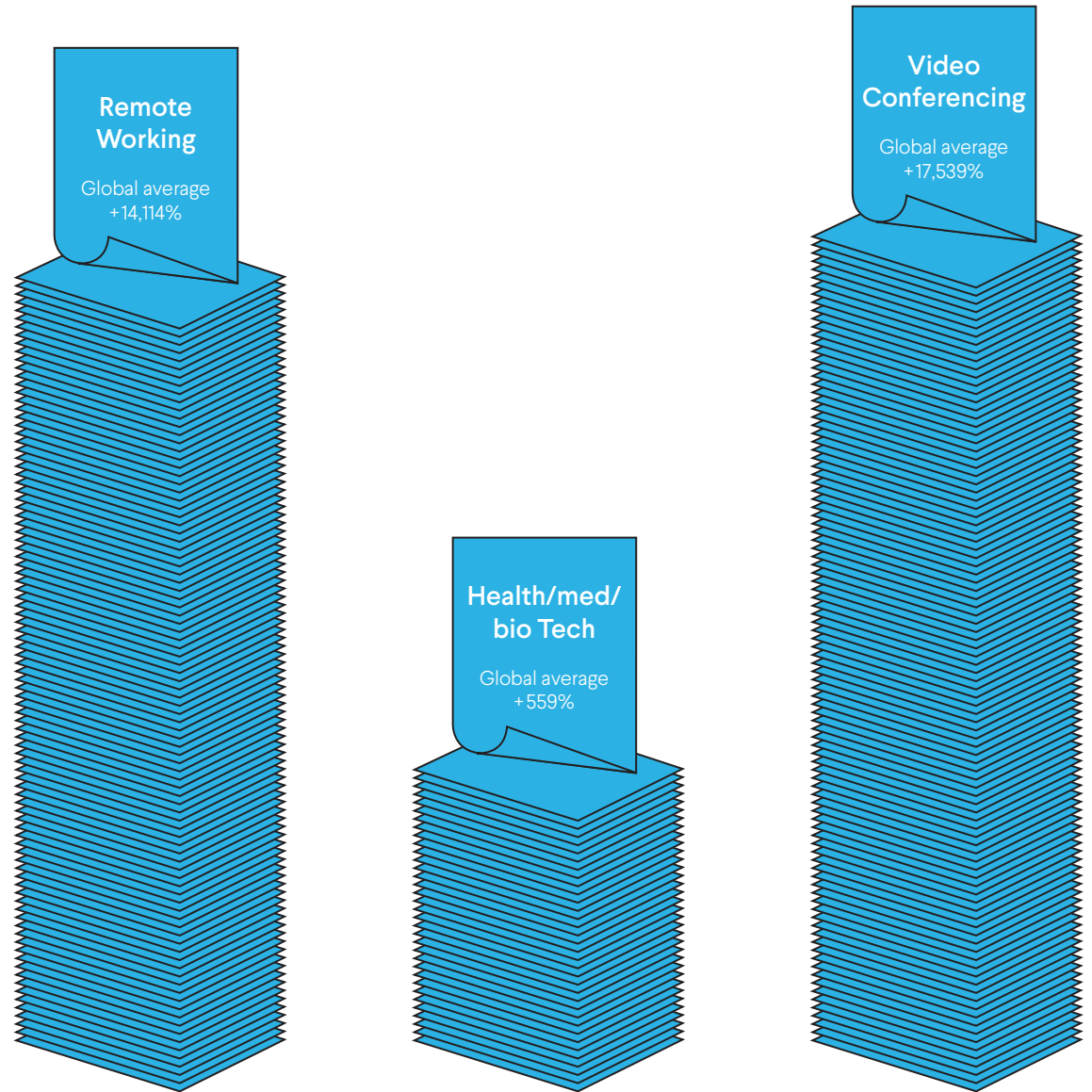




UK saw the highest surge by over 100,000%, all in less than a week, on the topic of Virtual Conferencing

## The COVID-19 Surge Effect

Taking coverage of topics from their lows across December and January to their peak during March and April, there is a clear COVID-19 surge effect visible across all topics and countries. The highest recorded surge was seen in the UK on the topic of Virtual Conferencing which surged by 100,000% from near obscurity to national prominence in less than a week and just as quickly vanished again. The lowest surge that was recorded was in Singapore on the topic of E-Commerce which surged by 185%. Below, we've outlined our findings on the surge effect across all topics and countries.



**Surge Index:** Percentage increase from lowest point in December 2019 to highest point in March 2020

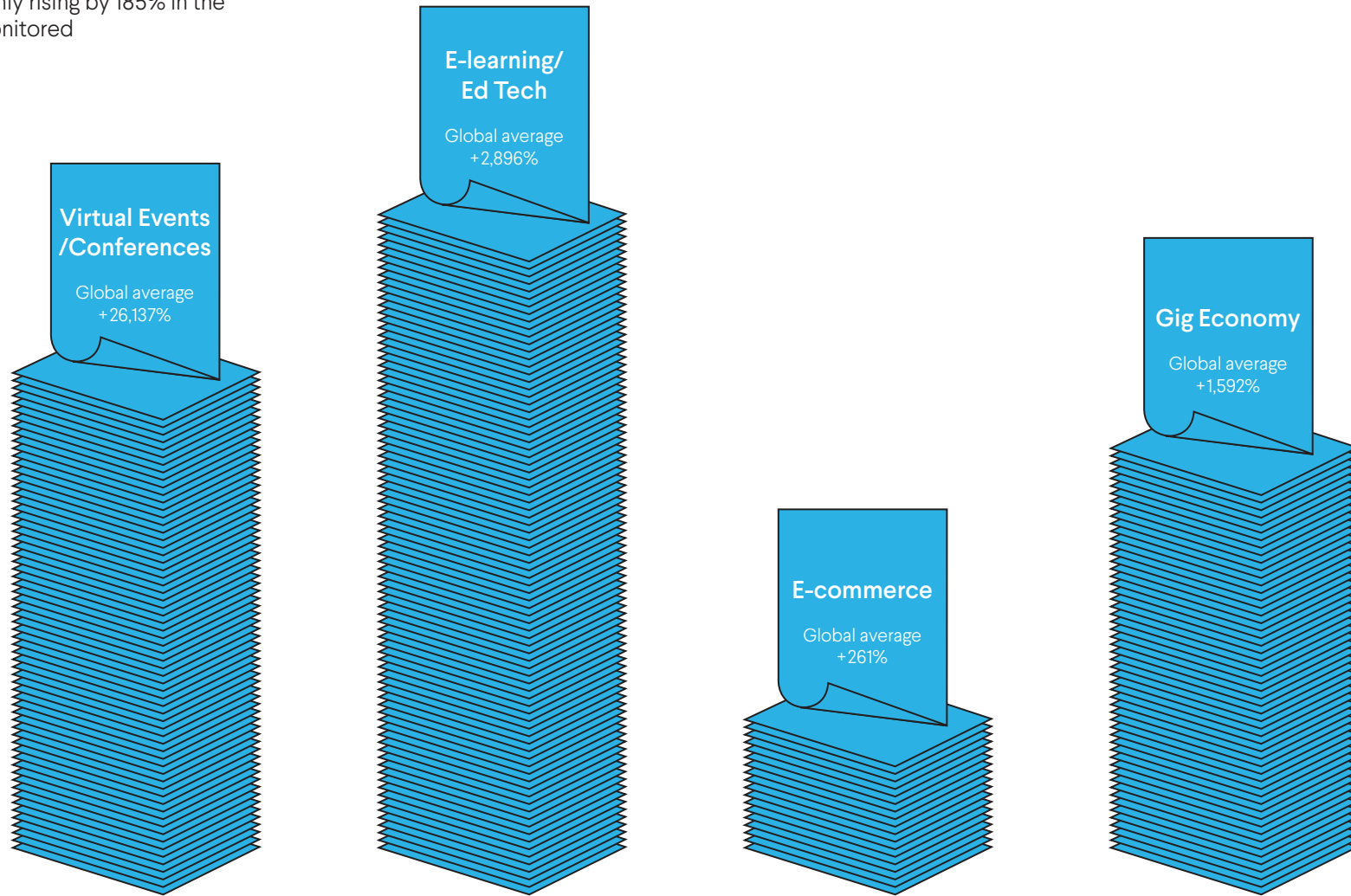
**Remote Working**  
 11,750% (IRL) 19,307% (UK)  
 14,800% (SG) 10,600% (HK)

**Health/med/bio Tech**  
 850% (IRL) 758% (UK)  
 251% (SG) 377% (HK)

**Video Conferencing**  
 11,500% (IRL) 42,625% (UK)  
 11,300% (SG) 4,733% (HK)



Singapore saw the lowest surge with E-commerce only rising by 185% in the time period monitored



**Surge Index** continued

**Virtual Events/Conferences**

2,100% (IRL) 100,000% (UK)  
1,350% (SG) 1,100% (HK)

**E-learning/Ed Tech**

5,900% (IRL) 3,766% (UK)  
720% (SG) 1,200% (HK)

**E-commerce**

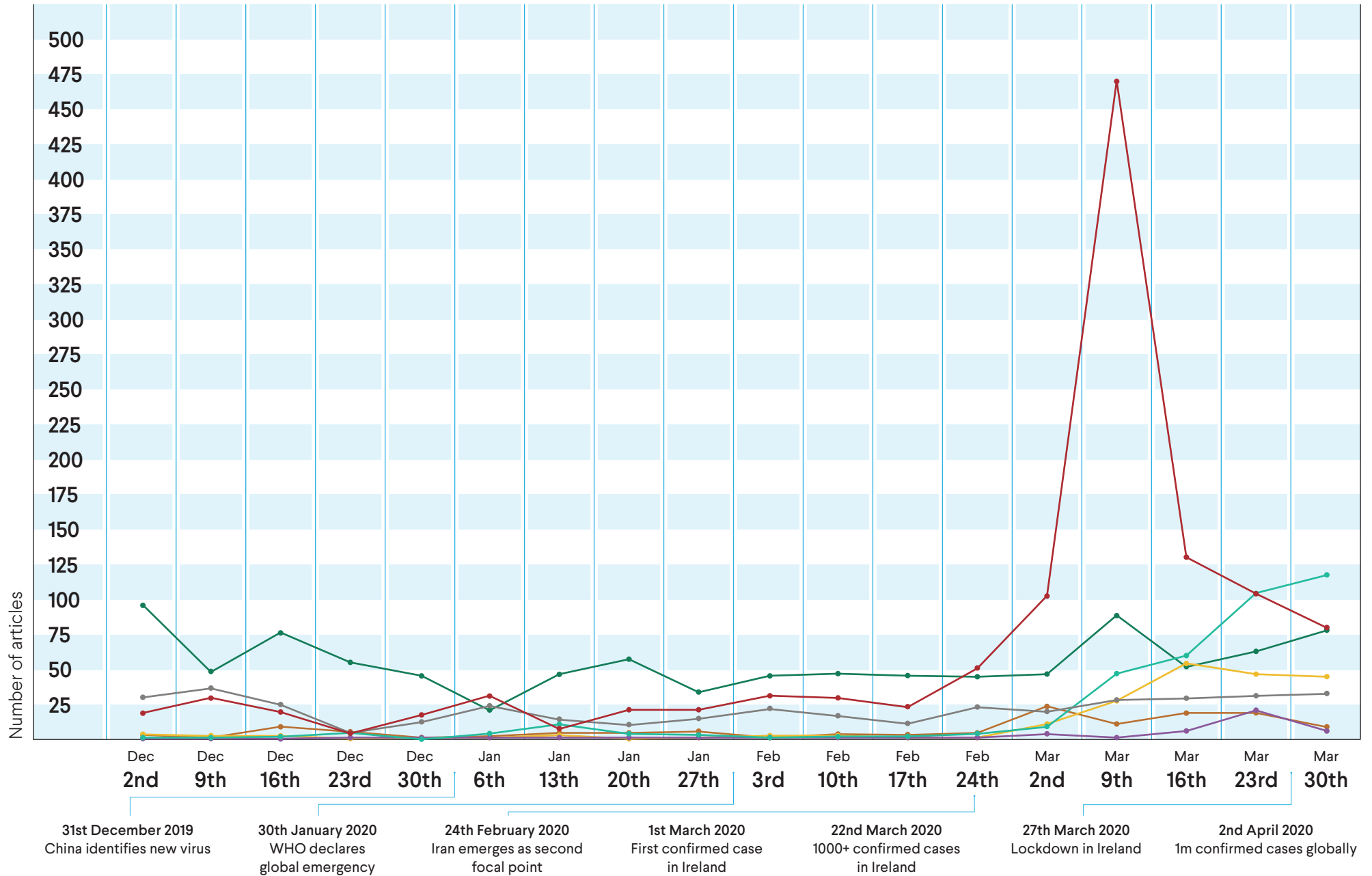
414% (IRL) 224% (UK)  
185% (SG) 222% (HK)

**Gig Economy**

1,800% (IRL) 3,305% (UK)  
692% (SG) 575% (HK)

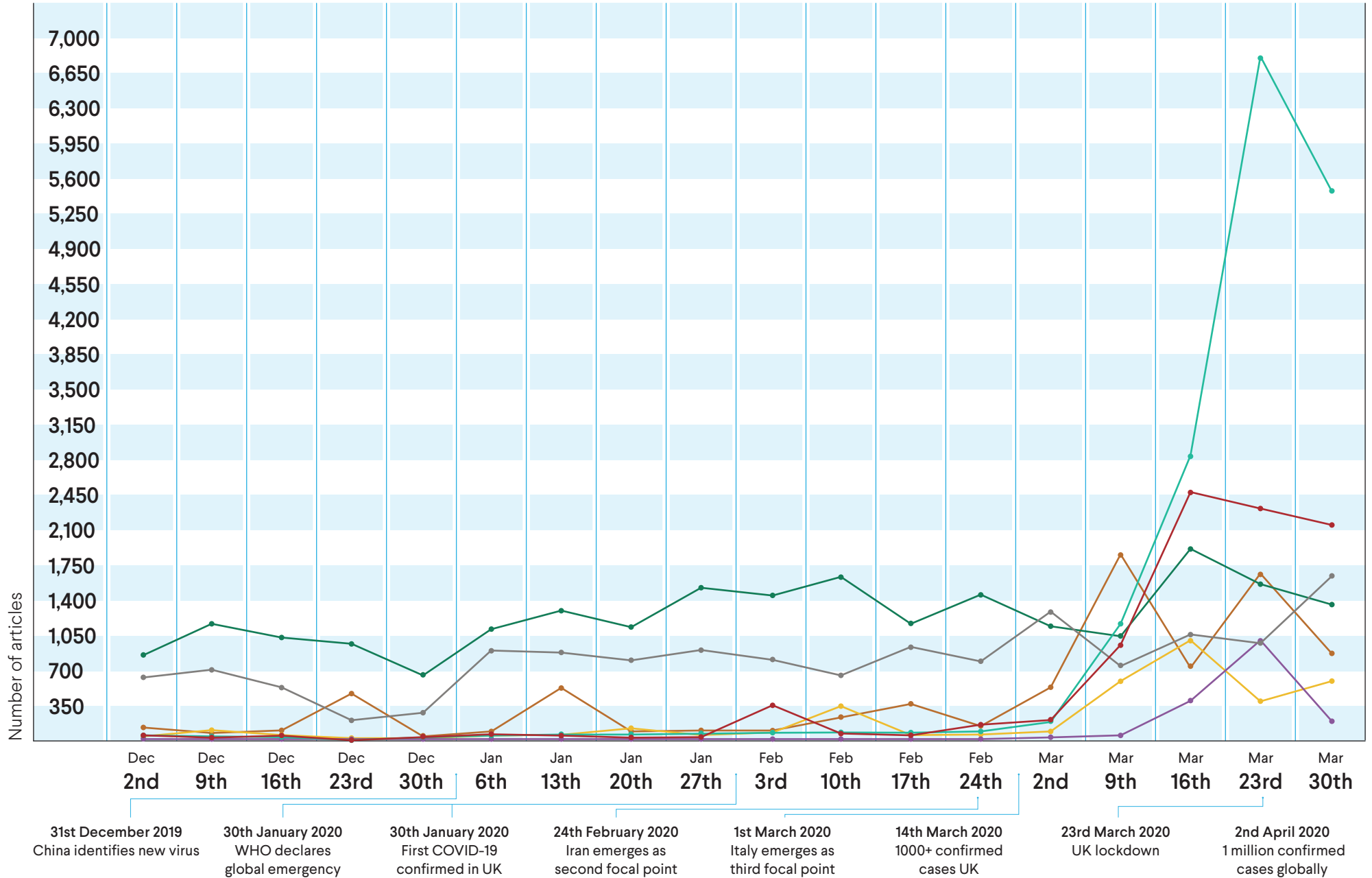
# Ireland

Remote Working Health/med/bio Tech Video Conferencing Virtual Events/Conferences E-learning/EdTech E-commerce Gig Economy



# United Kingdom

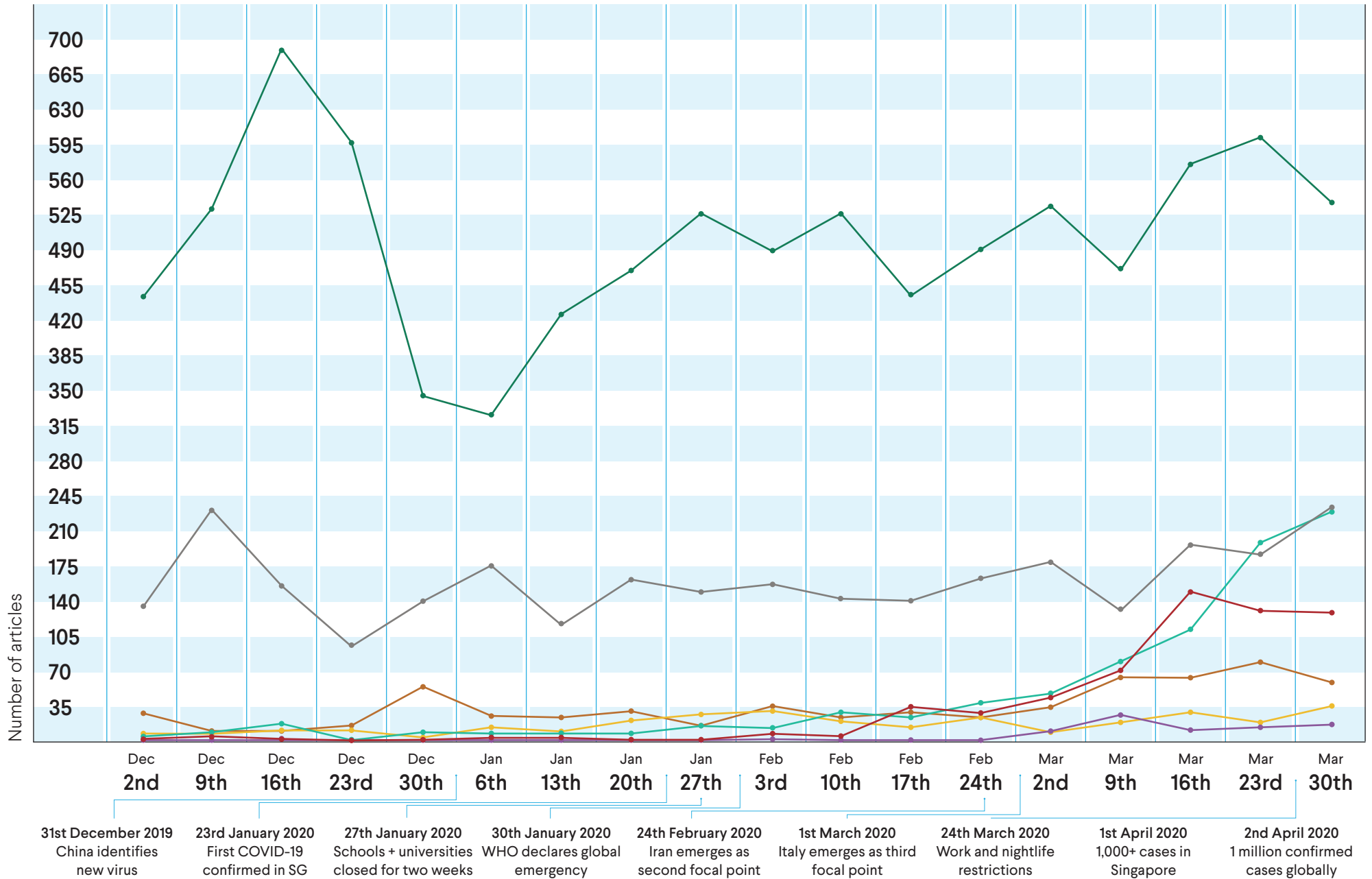
Remote Working   Health/med/bio Tech   Video Conferencing   Virtual Events/Conferences   E-learning/EdTech   E-commerce   Gig Economy



# Singapore

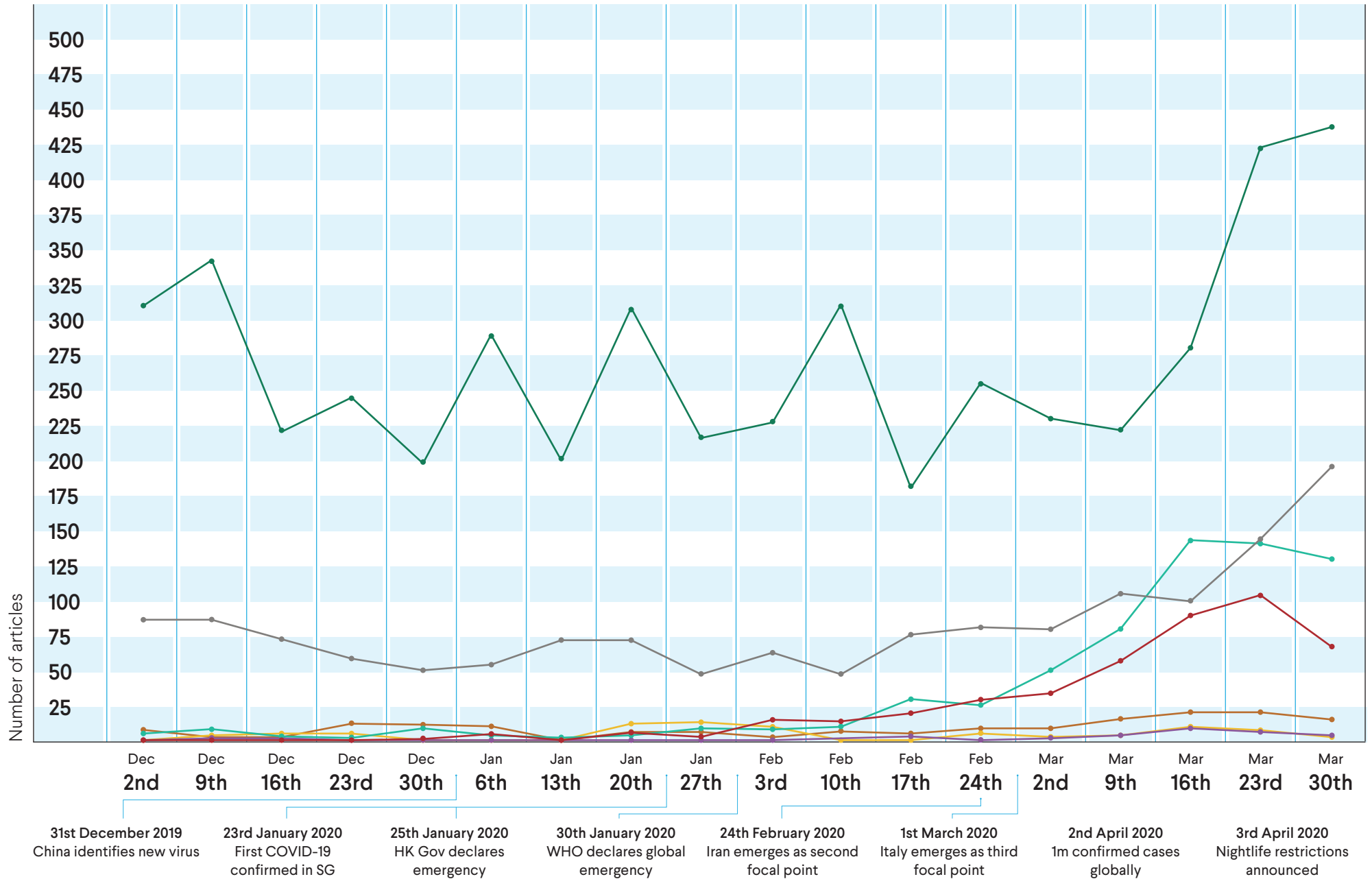
Remote Working Health/med/bio Tech Video Conferencing Virtual Events/Conferences E-learning/EdTech E-commerce Gig Economy

COVID-19 Tech Trend Report Issue 1



# Hong Kong

Remote Working Health/med/bio Tech Video Conferencing Virtual Events/Conferences E-learning/EdTech E-commerce Gig Economy



# Article Numbers

Number of Media Articles & Mentions

	Remote Working				Health/med/bio Tech				Video Conferencing				Virtual Events/Conferences			
2nd December	21	51	3	1	29	622	135	87	1	62	7	7	0	3	0	0
9th December	30	45	6	2	34	702	227	87	1	58	11	9	0	0	0	1
16th December	24	51	3	2	25	503	154	72	2	44	19	4	0	1	0	1
23rd December	4	13	1	0	4	215	94	60	5	16	2	3	2	0	0	0
30th December	18	47	2	1	13	284	140	52	0	43	11	9	0	0	0	0
6th January	31	68	4	6	24	884	176	55	4	58	8	5	0	0	0	0
13th January	8	52	4	1	14	873	122	72	11	60	8	3	0	1	0	0
20th January	22	40	2	7	11	809	159	72	4	62	9	5	0	1	0	0
27th January	22	42	3	4	15	890	148	48	3	68	17	9	0	1	0	0
3rd February	31	357	8	16	22	793	156	67	1	77	14	8	0	11	3	0
10th February	27	73	6	15	17	665	142	49	2	83	30	12	0	1	2	1
17th February	24	58	35	21	11	965	141	77	2	81	25	31	0	18	2	2
24th February	51	161	28	31	23	763	163	82	4	99	39	27	0	10	2	0
2nd March	103	210	44	40	20	1,239	183	80	9	193	48	51	4	42	12	1
9th March	470	948	71	58	28	739	128	105	46	1,160	82	81	1	58	27	5
16th March	129	2,510	148	89	29	1,070	194	100	60	2,840	112	142	6	410	13	11
23rd March	119	2,350	128	106	32	971	185	145	104	6,820	196	140	21	1,000	15	7
30th March	79	2,120	126	65	34	1,630	236	196	115	5,490	226	131	6	202	17	6
<b>Surge Index*</b>	11,750%	19,307%	14,800%	10,600%	850%	758%	251%	377%	11,500%	42,625%	11,300%	4,733%	2,100%	100,000%	1,350%	1,100%



Number of Media Articles & Mentions

	E-learning/EdTech	E-commerce	Gig Economy
	3 58 9 2	95 851 441 312	3 139 28 8
	2 115 8 5	48 1,160 531 340	1 96 12 4
	2 68 13 6	77 1,020 689 221	9 119 13 4
	0 30 11 6	56 953 567 243	6 478 17 13
	1 44 5 2	44 651 345 197	2 57 54 12
	1 57 15 1	21 1,090 325 290	3 87 26 11
	3 66 11 2	46 1,290 425 201	5 512 25 1
	0 127 23 13	57 1,130 466 311	5 106 32 7
	1 69 27 14	33 1,520 528 216	6 109 17 7
	3 99 32 12	45 1,450 489 227	2 109 36 4
	3 349 21 2	47 1,610 528 312	4 240 25 7
	1 62 15 2	43 1,130 444 178	3 362 31 6
	1 65 24 7	40 1,470 490 255	5 153 24 8
	11 100 9 4	43 1,170 533 230	24 511 35 8
	28 602 20 5	87 1,050 465 222	12 1,844 63 17
	59 1,130 31 12	52 1,910 573 280	18 726 62 23
	46 384 21 8	61 1,570 600 424	18 1,640 83 23
	45 608 36 3	78 1,360 534 438	9 830 55 16
	5,900% 3,766% 720% 1,200%	414% 224% 185% 222%	1,800% 3,305% 692% 575%

Legend

- Ireland
- United Kingdom
- Singapore
- Hong Kong

If you would like more information on our Startup Trend Report series, please get in touch:

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Managing Director

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Data curated by ClearStory International Ltd.

**Source:** Meltwater Editorial Media Monitoring, Accessed December 2019 to April 2020

\***Surge Index** is the percentage increase from low point in December 2019 to high point in March 2020



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