

Orson Welles & The War of the Worlds  
Hanna Finnbogadóttir  
ENSK3SH05

**1. What were people so afraid of while listening to War of the Worlds?**

They were afraid because they thought that Martians had invaded the earth, in New Jersey, started killing people with heat rays and continuing across the United States and then the world. (Burke, 2023)

**2. Create a similar scenario that would anticipate the same outcome it did in 1938. That means you have to think of a similar project, film, theatre or whatever comes to mind, that would have the same effect on the audience as it did in Orson Welles's day. *What would scare us today?***

I think that with all the different ways we have to gather information it would be extremely difficult to create a scenario with the same outcome in our times.

One scenario I can think about is that if OpenAI, the company that is developing ChatGPT and other AI tools, would come forward with a statement saying that their AI had developed a will of its own and were starting to take over their servers and would probably continue until it had control of the whole world. They would encourage people, companies and governments to shut down all networks and servers to prevent the AI from taking it all over. The statement would be released simultaneously to all major news outlets and would then travel extremely fast all over the world through social media and other means.

As the world already has some concerns over the development and use of AI that could be a plausible scenario. I wouldn't recommend using this scenario though, because it would have catastrophic effects if all networks were shut down.

**3. What do you think about people's reaction to Orson Welles' play? Is it understandable? If yes, explain. If no, explain.**

I think that their reaction is understandable. During that time the radio was people's prime source for news as well as entertainment and people were also becoming familiar with radio programs being interrupted by major news events, due to the anxiety about another conflict in Europe. That combined created the perfect circumstances for people to react in that way. (Burke, 2023)

For people turning in late and missing the disclaimer their panic and reactions can be well understood.

### **Heimildaskrá**

Burke, M. (2023, 30. október). *'I had no idea I'd become a national event': Orson Welles on the mass hysteria of The War of the Worlds*. BBC.

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20231027-behind-the-broadcast-orson-welles-on-the-mass-hysteria-of-the-war-of-the-worlds>