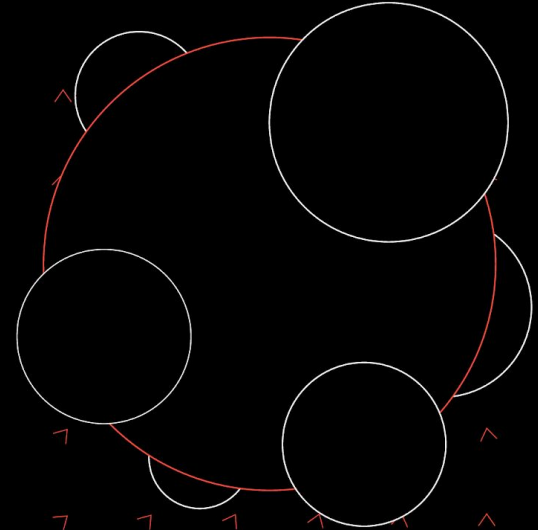AN ONLINE COURSE FOR JOURNALISTS

covering
coronavirus

A framework to understand information disorder

INFORMATION DISORDER

1 **Disinformation –** When people intentionally create false or misleading information to make money, have political influence and maliciously cause trouble or harm..

2 **Misinformation –** When people share disinformation but they don't realise it's false or misleading, often because they're trying to help.

3 **Malinformation –** When people share genuine information with an intent to cause harm.

INFORMATION DISORDER

7 types

1 Satire or parody

2 False Connection

3 Misleading Content

4 False Context

5 Imposter Content

6 Manipulated Content

7 Fabricated Content

INFORMATION DISORDER

Main types of misinformation around coronavirus

1   Where the virus came from

2   How it spreads

3   Symptoms and treatment

4   How authorities and people are responding

INFORMATION DISORDER

Ten characteristics of coronavirus misinformation

1 Lots of rumors are **circulating in local groups** and online spaces. People tend to trust local sources of information.

2 **Closed messaging apps** are increasingly popular for sharing rumors & misinformation as they can't be tracked and trusted networks are more likely to share

3 Bad actors understand **visuals and memes are compelling vehicles** for misinformation

4 Effective misinformation often **involves a kernel of truth** so older, genuine content is re-surfacing and being labeled as new content related to coronavirus

5 **Scammers** are using coronavirus to sells false testing kits, cures and treatments.

INFORMATION DISORDER

Ten characteristics of coronavirus misinformation

6   Bad actors **want misinformation to move across platforms**, from closed groups into social media and then into the professional media

7   Misinformation and **hate speech** are increasingly blurring. People are taking advantage of existing racial divisions and xenophobia.

8   **"Keyword squatting"** is a known technique that we're seeing with coronavirus.

9   **Imposter content** is very effective. People trust logos of organizations they know.

10   **Attribution is really hard** and it's often impossible to know who is behind a rumor or conspiracy in real-time.

Monitoring

Monitoring

MONITORING

Keywords

1   Use keywords that people use on social media (slang, swear words, misspellings)

2   Think about all the places people are currently talking about covid-19 online

3   Connect keywords as boolean search queries

4   Remember that keywords evolve

MONITORING

Boolean search
queries

Boolean search is a type of search allowing users to combine keywords with operators such as **AND** and **OR** to further produce more relevant results.

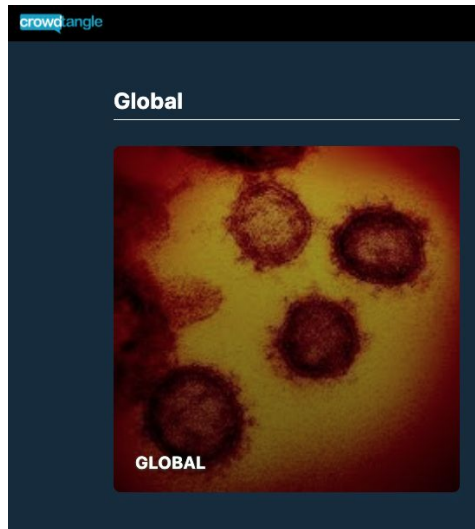(works on Twitter, Reddit, Google, LinkedIn, YouTube advanced search

MONITORING

TWITTER LISTS

1   Monitor groups of accounts, organisations etc

2   See an account's content **without** following them

3   Follow/subscribe to other people's lists

4   Share lists with colleagues

MONITORING

Crowdtangle live public displays

CrowdTangle is a social analytics tool owned by Facebook. Their Public Live Displays are a quick, visual way to see how information on coronavirus is being spread on social media.

Public Live Displays are **organised by region and country** and show content from local media, regional World Health Organization pages, government agencies and local politicians as well as social media discussion from Facebook, Instagram and Reddit.

MONITORING

Other platforms

1 **Picpanzee** (now called Picbabun) is an Instagram metrics tool that can be useful for monitoring and research

2 **Vidnice** is a tool created to explore Tiktok statistics, hashtags and users.

3 **Track Reddit** lets you circumvent Reddit's poor search function, and set up alerts for keywords or phrases you're monitoring.
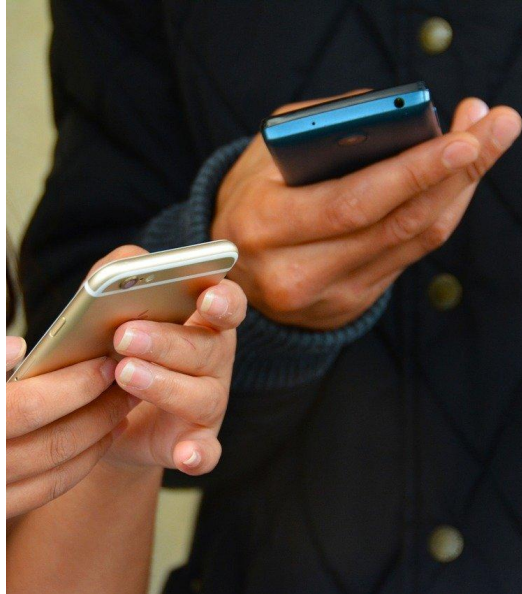
MONITORING

Using RSS to keep updated

1 **RSS,** or Really Simple Syndication, is <u>an easy way</u> to get new content from the websites or blogs you're interested in, all in one feed.

2 There are several RSS reader applications available, but **we recommend Feedly** for its usability.

3 You can also follow **keywords** and **phrases**

MONITORING

Watch out for templates

Templates are styles and patterns that can be copied across languages, countries and platforms online.

They **spread quickly** across closed messaging platforms as people screenshot and forward information to each other.

MONITORING

The ethics of monitoring closed groups

1   Do you need to be in a private group to do research and reporting?

2   What is your intention?

3   How much of your own information will you reveal?

4   How much will you share from these private sources?

5   What's the size of the closed group you are looking to join?

6   If you are going to publish a story, will you make your intention known?

7   If you do reveal your intention, are you likely to get abuse?

8   How much will you share of your news gathering processes and procedures?

MONITORING

Where to go for reliable updates

1 Remember, **not all research is created equal.** Just because something is presented in a chart or a table, doesn't mean the data behind it is solid.

2 **Government departments** and agencies have reliable advice and updates

3 **NGOs**, non-governmental organisations, like the WHO provide global and regional data

4 **Academic institutions** provide research, data and expert commentary

Verification

Verification

VERIFICATION

5 pillars of verification

1   **Provenance –** Are you looking at the original piece of content?

2   **Source –** Who captured the original piece of content?

3   **Date –** When was the piece of content captured?

4   **Location –** Where was the piece of content captured?

5   **Motivation** - Why was this piece of content captured?

VERIFICATION

Reverse image search
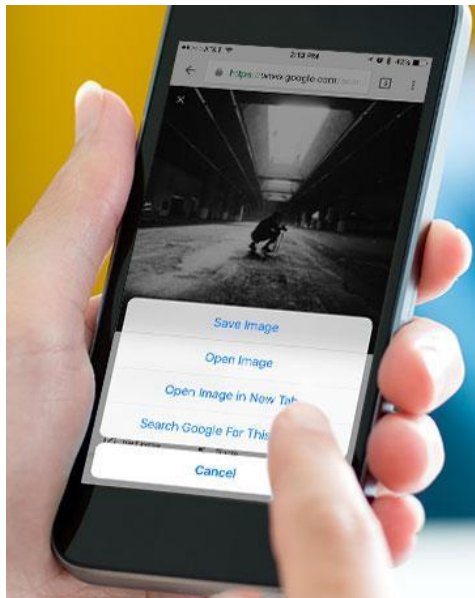
How it works

Just like you can "google" facts and claims, you can ask a search engine to look for similar photos and even maps on the internet to check if they've been used before for other stories.
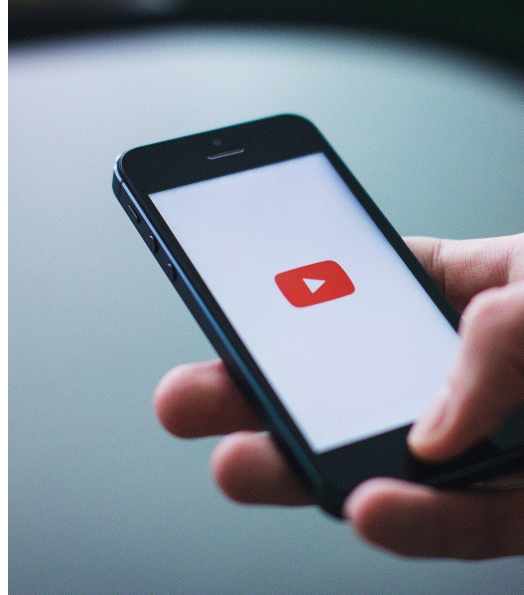
This is called a **reverse image search** .

RevEye's Plugin will let you search for any image on the internet without leaving your browser.

On your phone: **TinEye on mobile** phones will do exactly the same thing.

VERIFICATION

Verifying videos

Whenever you upload a video to the internet, it creates a thumbnail to show as a preview.

You can use thumbnails to see if a video has been posted online before.

InVid's video verification plugin creates keyframes that you can reverse image search.

VERIFICATION

Geolocation

1   Outdoors - Look for clues in the architecture, street signs, what people are wearing, what side of the road are cars driving, names of businesses, etc.

2   Indoors - look at wall plugs, what language are posters in, the weather, anything on TV.

3   Look for businesses - they tend to be listed online because they want people to find them.

4   What can you search for and verify? Can you find that same spot on a map?

VERIFICATION

Verifying accounts

1   Follow these basic techniques for digital footprinting and verifying sources online.

2   Reverse image search the profile picture

3   Check primary sources

4   Find contact information

VERIFICATION

Verification workflow

1 **Document everything.** You might be surprised how fast you can lose crucial pieces of information. It is also important for the transparency of your verification. Take screenshots or back up to a service like Wayback Machine.

2 **Set up a toolbox .** Keep lists of tools, bookmark them, share with colleagues. Don't waste time trying to remember what the website that reverse image searches is called.

3 **Don't forget to pick up the phone.** Good old fashioned analog journalism can sometimes be the quickest way to verify something.

REPORTING

Useful questions to determine the tipping point

1   How much engagement is it getting?

2   Is the it moving from one community to another?

3   Is it moving across platforms?

4   Did an influencer share it?

5   Are other journalists and news media writing about it?

FIRST DRAFT

REPORTING

Best practices for discussing disinformation

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Familiarity Backfire Effect By repeating falsehoods in order to correct them, debunks can make falsehoods more familiar and thus more likely to be accepted as true.	**Focus on the facts** Avoid repeating a falsehood unnecessarily while correcting it. Where possible, warn readers before repeating falsehoods.
Overkill backfire effect The easier information is to process, the more likely it is to be accepted. Less detail can be more effective.	**Simplify** Make your content easy to process by keeping it simple, short and easy to read. Use graphics to illustrate your points.
Worldview backfire effect People process information in biased ways. When debunks threaten a person's worldview, those most fixed in their views can double down.	**Avoid ridicule** Avoid ridicule or derogatory comments. Frame debunks in ways that are less threatening to a person's worldview.
Missing Alternatives Labeling something as false, but not providing an explanation often leaves people with questions.	**Provide answers** Answer any questions that a debunk might arise

REPORTING

The importance of headlines

1 **Focus on the facts.** Avoid repeating a falsehood *unnecessarily* while correcting it. Where possible, warn readers before repeating falsehoods.

2 Make your content **easy to process** by keeping it simple, short and easy to read. Use graphics to illustrate your points.

3 **Avoid ridicule or derogatory comments.** Frame debunks in ways that are less threatening to a person's worldview.

4 **Answer any questions** that a debunk might arise.

**5** **Be precise with language.** Be aware how certain language can drive down trust more generally.

REPORTING

Using images mindfully

1   Avoid images that could increase **panic** and use images that reinforce behavior that we want to see emulated

2   Avoid images that rely on **stereotypes**

3   Stay aware of the **ethics** of embedding social media posts and images that could significantly impact those involved.

REPORTING

Data voids
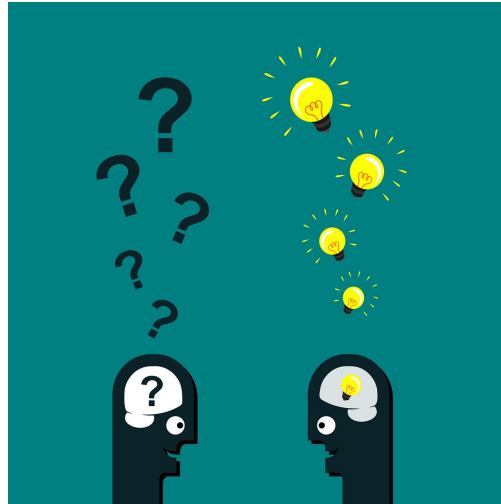
Michael Golebiewski of Microsoft used the term **"data void"** to describe search queries where "the available relevant data is limited, non-existent, or deeply problematic."

Newsrooms should think about Covid-19 questions or keywords readers are likely searching for, look to see who is creating content around these questions, and fill data voids with quality content.

REPORTING

Google Trends

Coronavirus
Search Trends

Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has spread
to a number of countries around the world. This is
how it is being searched.

Google has produced a dedicated trends dashboard showing information and data around search terms related to coronavirus. What people type into Google's search bar, gives us an idea of what information they need, what is unclear and what questions need answering.

FIRST DRAFT

REPORTING

Looking after your mental health

1 Be aware of the stigma

2 Separate work and life

3 Stick to official guidance

4 Check in regularly with colleagues

5 Create a self-care plan

6 Know your triggers

7 Don't be afraid to ask for help

8 Be kind to yourself

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Resources for reporters

FIRST DRAFT

Glossary

4chan
Amplification
Amplification and search engines
Algorithm*
Anonymous message boards
Analytics
API*
Artificial intelligence*
Automation*
Boolean queries
Bots*
Botnet*
Comments
Conspiracy theories
Cyborg

Dark ads*
Deepfakes*
Deplatform
Discord
Discovery
Disinformation campaign
Dormant account*
Doxing or doxxing*
Disinformation*
Encryption*
Engagement
Facebook Graph Search
Facebook Ad Transparency
Fact-checking*
Fake followers*
Information disorder

LinkedIn
Malinformation*
Manufactured amplification*
Meme
Microtargeting
Misinformation*
Normie
Operation Infektion
OSINT
Reddit
Satire*
Scraping*
Sock puppet*
Shallow fakes
Shitposting
Spam*

Snapchat
Synthetic Media
Terms of service
TikTok
Troll
Trolling*
Troll farm*
Two-factor authentication
Verification*
Viber
VPN*
WeChat
Wedge Issue
WhatsApp
Zero-rating

FIRST DRAFT

TOOLKIT

bit.ly/FirstDraftToolkit

| First Draft - Basic Toolkit ⌄ | | Google Custom Search 🔍 | 🔗 Shared | + | FIRST DRAFT |

First Draft - Basic Toolkit   First Draft - Advanced Toolkit   FR First Draft - Basic Toolkit   First Draft - Other resources   +

➲ How to use this dashboard ⋮

This is a collection of some tools, readings and resources to get you and your newsroom started with online social newsgathering, verification and responsible reporting. You can also find the advanced toolkit at the bottom left of this dashboard.

What are the tools for?

Hover over any of the tools to get a more detailed description of why they might be useful for you.

Stay updated

Keep up to date with new trends, tools, and resources by following us on Twitter and Instagram at @firstdraftnews or more training resources at www.firstdraftnews.org/training

Got a new tool you'd like to share with us?

Email partner@firstdraftnews.com

📷 Verifying Images - Reverse Image Search ⋮

F   HOW TO verify images online - PRINTOUT
G   Google Images Search
R   RevEye - Reverse Image Search
T   TinEye - Reverse Image Search
B   BING - visual search

👁 Verifying images - Exif/metadata ⋮

R   Jeffrey Friedl's Image Metadata Viewer
V   View Exif data online, remove Exif online

🎥 Verifying Video ⋮

🔴 Fake video news debunker by InVID
⚙   Watch Frame by Frame
▶   Youtube Data Viewer

📈 COVID-19 Dashboards ⋮

📈 Coronavirus - Google Trends
ct Crowdtangle COVID-19 Live Displays

☑ Essential Chrome Plugins ⋮

🌐 Wayback Machine - Archiving
🔵 InVID
🔴 RevEye Reverse Image Search
🌐 CrowdTangle Link Checker
🔤 Google Translate

🐦 Twitter ⋮

🐦 Tweetdeck
⚙   Twitonomy
🐦 Followerwonk
🐦 TweetBeaver
🐦 Twitter List Copy

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TOOLKIT

firstdraftnews.com/coronavirus

Coronavirus: Resources for reporters

Last updated: 30 March 2020

Welcome to First Draft's resource hub for reporting on coronavirus. We have created and collected guidance to support accurate and responsible reporting on coronavirus, which will be regularly updated with new information. It covers:

- Newsgathering and verification tools
- Ethics and responsible reporting guidance
- A database of debunks of mis- and disinformation
- Data and information sources
- A searchable reading list
- FAQs that journalists may have
- Links to sign up for video calls on reporting coronavirus

Contents:

Tools and guides

Information sources

Platforms' responses

Coronavirus debunk archive

Webinars

Coronavirus reading from around the web