How to trace sources

Important steps to remember when searching for sources and verifying profiles and bios online.
Definitions and Metrics

Bot
Social media accounts operated entirely by computer programs, designed to generate posts and content.

Cyborg
Accounts that are run by both bots and people.

Sock puppet
An online account that uses a false identity to spread disinformation to a mass audience.

Troll(ing)
Referring to any person harassing or insulting others online.
Information disorder: how to spot a bot

**Account**
- Was it created recently?
- Is there a lack of personal information?
- Are there divisive words, hashtags, URLs or emojis in the bio?

**Network**
- Are the followers and following numbers high and almost identical?
- Is it following a suspicious mix of sources?

**Activity**
- Is there a high volume of tweets? (more than 100 a day)
- Is there a high percentage of retweets? (more than 80 per cent)
- Is it posting day and night?

**Content**
- Is it tweeting in more than one language?
- Are there any signs of hashtag spamming?
- Are there any awkward turns of phrase?
Using boolean search queries, you can search for content within a specific URL.

Use normal boolean operators like AND, OR and NOT, quotation searches and more to make these searches specific and incredibly powerful.

- **site:tiktok.com (vaccine OR vaccinations) AND (UK OR “United Kingdom”)** searches for posts that use a combination of these words within TikTok

- **site:facebook.com/pages “vaccine choice”** searches for this exact phrase within groups on Facebook
How to verify accounts

Watch a tutorial on how to check if someone is who they claim to be through their social media profile.

How Twitonomy can be used to identify suspicious online behavior

Learn how to use Twitonomy to spot the signs of automation.

The not-so-simple science of social media ‘bots’

Learn about the difficulties and complexities of understanding online automation.

How to spot a bot (or not): The main indicators of online automation, coordination, and inauthentic activity

Discover the indicators that might suggest automated activity online.
With the ability to build your own syllabus, live interpretation in your language and on-demand lesson recaps, this highly customizable course is designed for busy schedules and varied levels of knowledge and experience.

Learn more at firstdraftnews.org/vaccineinsights/#training

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Up next:
How to avoid amplifying misinformation