

#MuralInAction

SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY GUIDE



FAITH MATTERS

WORKING GLOBALLY, IMPACTING LOCALLY

Faith Matters (www.faith-matter.org) launched in 2006 as a vehicle to enable faith communities to reduce conflict using conflict resolution tools. Faith Matters works on integration, cohesion, hate crime and countering extremism projects.

Faith Matters was one of six organisations working together to address the increase in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe by supporting tolerance and respect for different faiths, religious beliefs and ethnicities within MURAL ('mutual understanding, respect and learning'), a project that ran from 2018-2019 in six European countries – Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

The MURAL project was led by the British Council. It promoted the principles of pluralistic and democratic societies. It aimed to foster transnational cooperation, exchange of knowledge and exchange of best practice to encourage tolerance and counter attitudes that contribute towards acts of hatred and discrimination.

MURAL partners brought together an empowered network of social activists and key stakeholders who became agents of positive change in their communities. The project harnessed people's power for advocacy and their desire for social change to creatively engage the people they live and work with.

Some of the MURAL social action projects led by Faith Matters UK participants were around improving critical thinking and social media literacy skills that can help counter extremist, hateful, and racist narratives online, assist in identifying bots and cyborgs, and provide practical ways to resist and counter extremist narratives.

As part of this, Faith Matters UK participants have developed this series of toolkits to provide practical and legal information around discrimination and hate crimes.

This guide is designed to help activists make better use of social media, improve their critical thinking skills, and learn a few tips and tricks to use social media to their advantage: as researchers, to better identify bots or cyborg accounts (we will get to that later), what to share and what *not* to share during a crisis, and to build networks of solidarity and support.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

There is no singular definition but it is widely considered to be a way of thinking that is a reflective form of reasoning which helps a person to decide what to think and do.¹ Others define it as the disciplined process in which a person evaluates and conceptualises the information gathered.² It is about having an *active, enquiring* mind.

¹ Ennis, Robert H. "A logical basis for measuring critical thinking skills." *Educational leadership* 43, no. 2 (1985): 44-48.

² Snyder, Lisa Gueldenzoph, and Mark J. Snyder. "Teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills." *The Journal of Research in Business Education* 50, no. 2 (2008): 90.

Twitter

With around 500 million tweets sent per day, or, almost 6,000 tweets per hour, information moves fast on Twitter, but the platform provides the tools to help users navigate, and these tips below provide searches with the focus required.

Advanced search Search

From these accounts

Example: @Twitter · sent from @Twitter

To these accounts

Example: @Twitter · sent in reply to @Twitter

Mentioning these accounts

Example: @SFBART @Caltrain · mentions @SFBART or mentions @Caltrain

Dates

From

Month Day Year

To

Month Day Year

The highlighted text above directs from <https://twitter.com/search-advanced>, and by focusing on how to search for words or emojis from accounts, we will show how advanced searches are even more straightforward.

For example, a search of BBC News for the word “crisis” brings up lots of varied responses.



The larger circle on this image is the search query Twitter used to resolve that search query. The smaller highlighted circle demonstrates how keywords are bolded when found.

The search term is simple - "**Crisis**" (from:BBCNEWS) (my emphasis).

Another way to do it is "**from:BBCNews crisis**".

We can make the search more advanced with a few tricks.

The following search result has been altered to remove the word "housing" and to search for tweets mentioning the word crisis between August 1, 2012, and August 30, 2013.



The larger circle (coloured red) looks almost identical to the previous search but for one subtle and essential difference: the word we do not want Twitter to search for has a minus sign, in this case, -Housing. Our search term **always remains** in quotation marks.

Whereas, the smaller circles (coloured green), are the search terms needed to search for tweets by particular dates. It may seem somewhat confusing but to filter begins, in this example, **until:2013-08-30** and ends **since:2012-08-01**. It sounds confusing, but the date search is reversed and works on an Americanised date format (yyyy-mm-dd).

"search term" -unwanted search term (from:account) until: yyyy-mm-dd since: yyyy-mm-dd

from:account "search term" -unwanted search term until:end date since:start date

Twitter's advanced search function is multilingual. The example below is searching for tweets in Spanish, but examples of other language codes for other countries will follow.



The circled text (coloured red) filters for language – the search term is two letters; in this example, Spanish is **es**. If, however, we wanted election information in Polish, we search for the word “wybory”, and the language filter is **lang:pl**.

Other language codes include German (de), Italian (it), Portuguese (pt), Arabic (ar), Russian (ru), and Urdu (ur).³

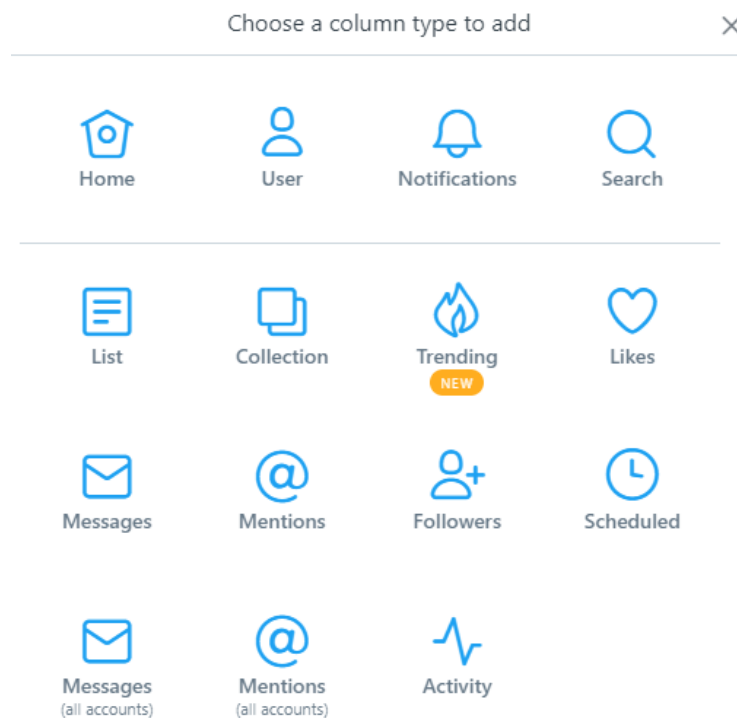
Getting the most out of Tweetdeck

Tweetdeck is the official dashboard interface which allows users to schedule content, but an understated function of the platform concerns precise, advanced location searches that can localise search results in two particular ways: through geocodes and Tweetdeck’s built-in search function.

For now, we turn to geocoded search results.

To begin: open Tweetdeck on a web browser and click “add column” found on the left side of the screen and this will pop-up.

³ Twitter. “Twitter for Websites Supported Languages.” Developer. <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-for-websites/twitter-for-websites-supported-languages/overview>.



Click "Search" and a box will appear on the left side of the screen. Now, before we go further, what exactly is a geocode? It concerns converting addresses and locations into coordinates (like latitude and longitude).⁴

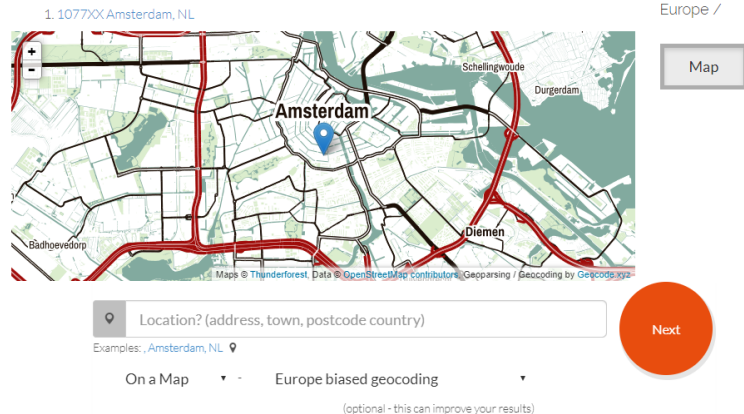
In this example, we are going to use the English city of Bristol, which, according to <https://geocode.xyz>, coded as **51.47160,-2.56564**.

This website is not without error, but it does allow for global searches.

⁴ Designmodo. "Geocode API Review: Scalable and Reliable Geocoding & Geoparsing." Designmodo. <https://designmodo.com/geocode/>.

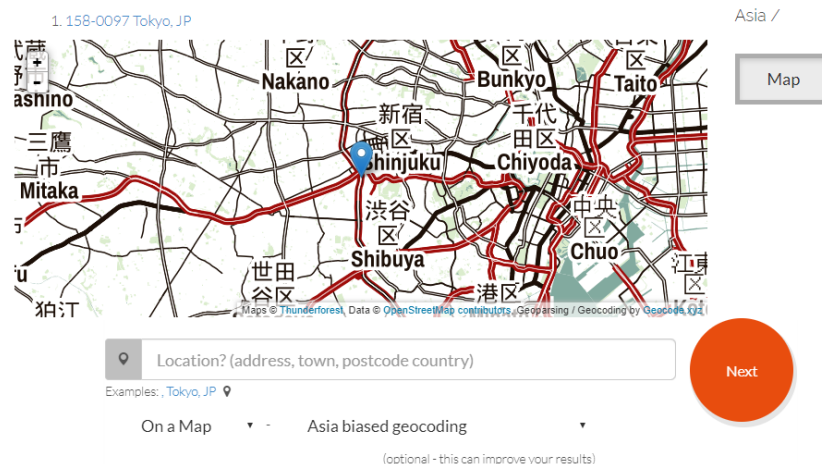
Netherlands x,y z: 52.36106,4.89414 ▲ m

Amsterdam, NL Netherlands / 1077XX / Confidence Score: 0.90



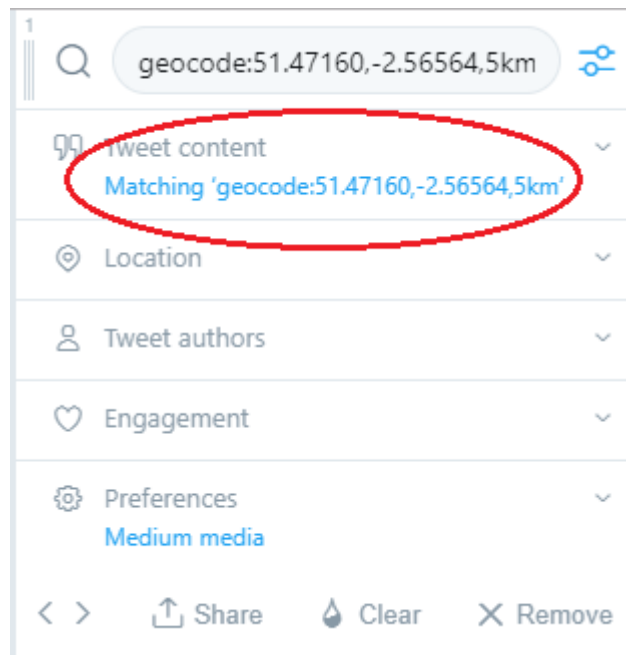
Japan x,y z: 35.68052,139.68872 ▲ m

Tokyo, JP Japan / 158-0097 / Confidence Score: 0.3

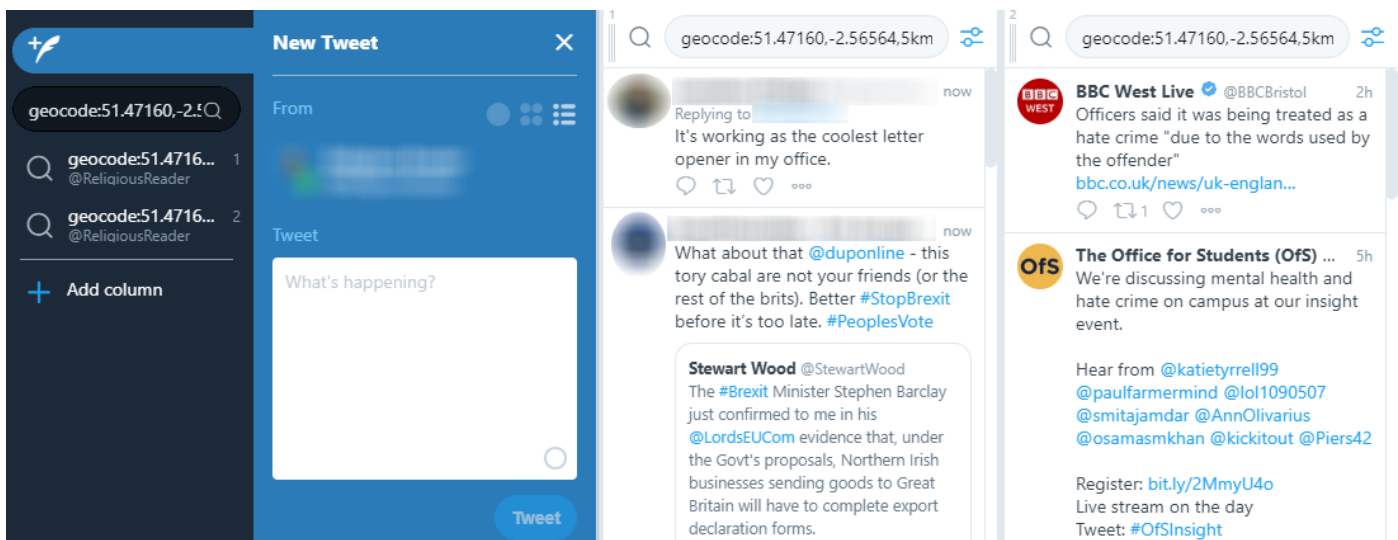


Tweetdeck allows users to search outside of any geographic area and include a keyword.

Begin the search with **"geocode:51.47160,-2.56564,5km"**. The bolded text refers to the geographic distance of the search parameter. In this example, the search has a five-kilometre radius. It is vital to make sure there are **no gaps** between the search terms. Therefore, the search should appear as found in the image below.



The next image has two columns, in this example, the geocoding information remains as above, but the filter is now searching for tweets with the terms “hate crime”.



The right-hand column in our Tweetdeck example reveals our completed enquiry about hate crime-related tweets in this geographic area.

In the next example, however, we are going to do something a little bit different with our third Tweetdeck column, and not use geocoding, but rather, the geographic function built-in to Tweetdeck.



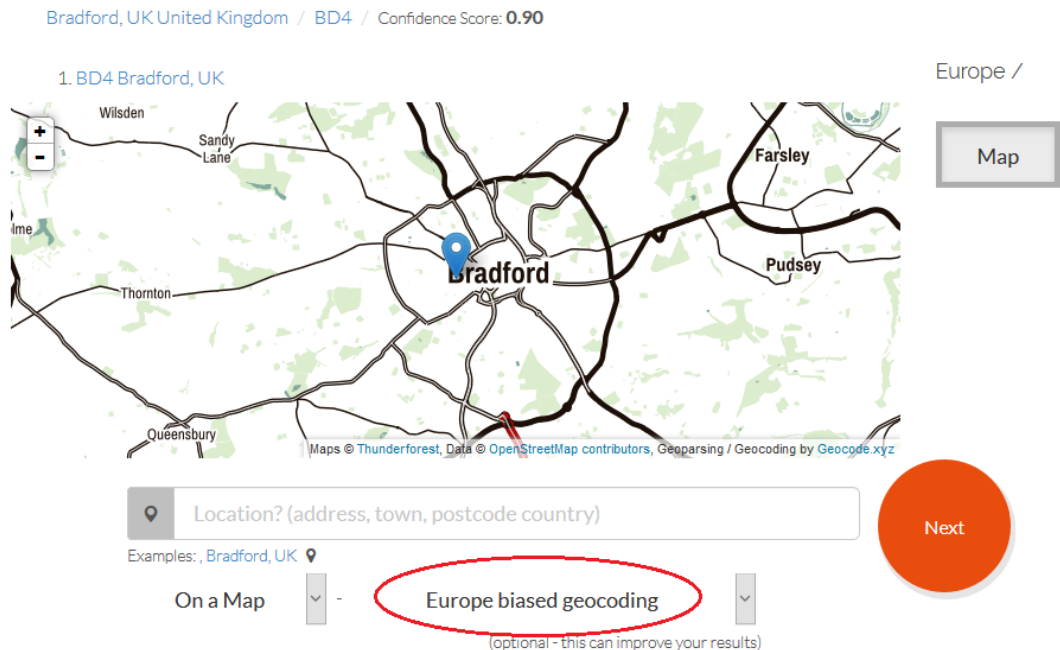
The first image on the left is filtering tweets based on a 20km radius of Hamburg, Germany, as our keyword is Flüchtling (refugee). In the second image, the function to filter tweets by popularity – from retweets to likes, to replies is possible. Now, the higher number in either category does not equate to factual, but it can help activists and others get a better grasp of the interface.

Note: Expanding the search radius in both formats will likely improve the quality of any search since there are some questions about how precise location data from Twitter is.

From a visual perspective, websites like <http://qtrtweets.com/twitter/> use mapping interface from Google to help visualise localised tweets (caveats like that above do remain).

Advanced use of Tweetdeck allows users to geocode searches for images. Taking what we know, there are a few tweaks to make this fifth column return image-only results.

United Kingdom x,y z: 53.79303,-1.76447 ▲ m



This example focuses on the English city of Bradford. As the above shows, it is necessary to ensure that Europe biased geocoding is selected to avoid results for Bradford, Ontario, for example.

With the correct geocode **53.79303,-1.76447**, we are again going to add a geographic distance of 10km, which makes the text read as follows: **53.79303,-1.76447,10km**. To complete our Twitter enquiry complete add **filter:images then geocode:53.79303,-1.76447,10km** (ensure that there is no gap between the colon and numerical figures).

As discussed earlier, the search parameters were further extended, filtering for image-based tweets which had at least five retweets (see below).




Improve the search results by including and excluding keywords. For example, this search, "**book** **-online** **filter:images** **geocode:53.79303,-1.76447,10km**" would give you image-based results in Bradford, includes the word book but excludes the word online.

MAKING USE OF TWITTER LISTS

Twitter allows users to create and subscribe to lists. To find a list of interests, use the search term `site:twitter.com/*/lists` on Google, adding the keyword needed. In this example, the search is for journalists. Now, the search result is `site:twitter.com/*/lists "journalists"`.

[←](#) **List info**

 **Tim Shipman** @ShippersUnbound
Political Journalists

People

Members	267 >
Subscribers	246 >

[Subscribe](#)

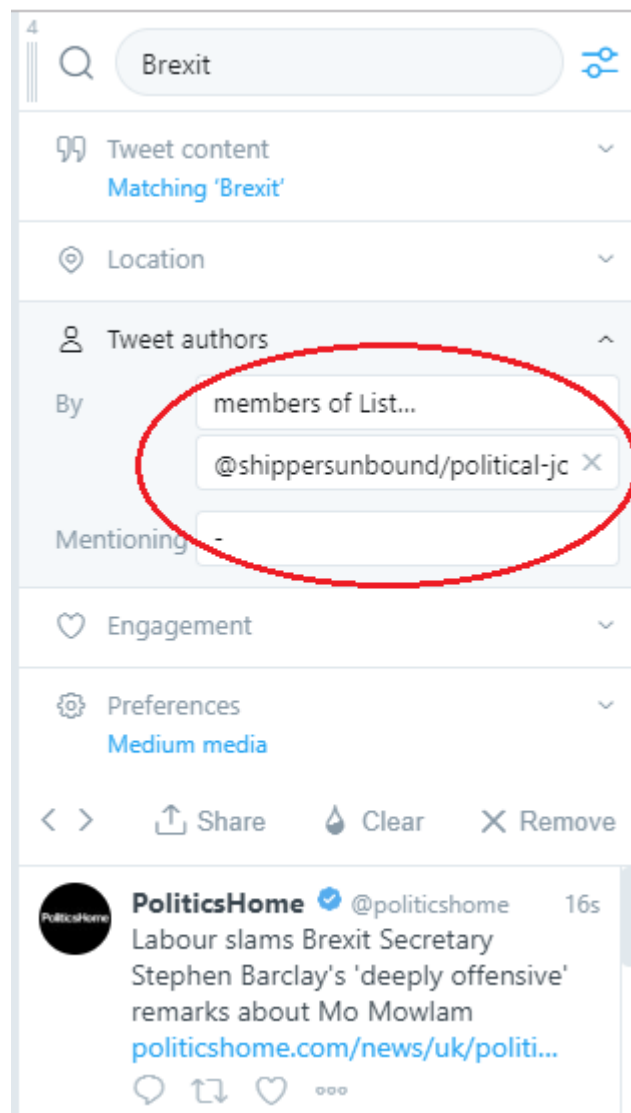
In this example, Tim Shipman, Political Editor of The Sunday Times newspaper, has created a list of 267 journalists, which, if followed or subscribed, allows for users to see a timeline of tweets from that select number, and offers a great way to cross-reference and check information from reliable sources.

Now, with that in mind, a fourth column has been added to our Tweetdeck. In this example, this list will be used to filter tweets concerning the topic of Brexit.

The third column down on the advanced filtering references "Tweet authors" and a drop-down menu appears – filter to the final choice "members of List...". There is a slight alteration to the text to make this

enquiry work without error. Now, in the box below that, the example inputted “@shippersunbound/political-journalists”.

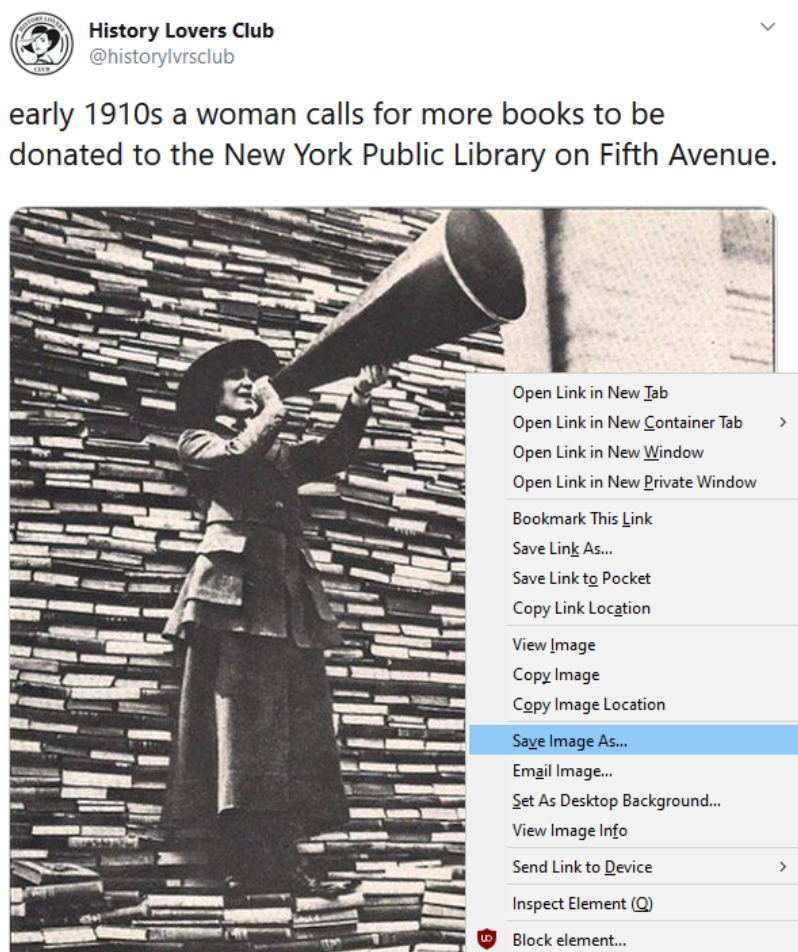
That is [@username/list-name](#).



REVERSE IMAGE SEARCHING

Faking photographs, manipulating images or manipulating public sentiment has arguably intensified by the ease in which Twitter (and other platforms) allow images to spread. Verification is essential, even on banal images removed from newsworthy events.

Image search queries assist with finding related photos or allow a person to double-check the origins of such photos. The example below will provide a step-by-step guide through the stages of how to reverse image search.



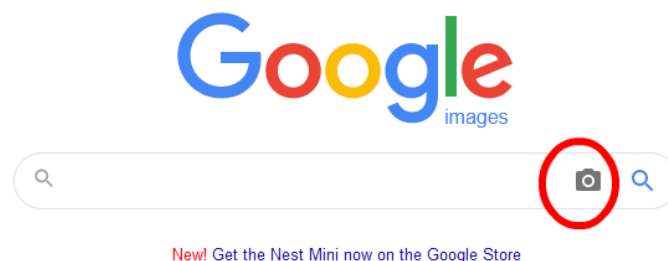
In this example, we are going to test the veracity of this claim, namely, that, "early 1910s a woman calls for more books to be donated to the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue".

The Twitter account @historylvrsclub boasts over 500k followers, but it does not mean that the account is not immune from promoting falsehoods.

In the above image, using a web browser (in this example, Firefox), click into the tweet or right-hand click over the image (not the text), and select "Save Image As...".

Google Images, TinEye, and Yandex are some of the major websites that allow for reverse image searches.

However, for this example, we will use Google, so, head over to images.google.com



Click the camera highlighted above, and the interface will request that upload the saved image.



JPG x

library in war



Pages that include matching images

Library War Service, 1917-1920 – Connecticut Digital ...

<https://ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org> › 2018/03 › library-war-service-1917... ▼



814 × 1024 - 15 Mar 2018 - The **Library War** Service was originally coordinated under the leadership of the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA), an arm of the ...

Books in the War: The Romance of Library War Service ...

<https://www.abebooks.com> › blog › 2012/10/19 › books-in-the-war-the-ro... ▼



494 × 626 - 19 Oct 2012 - Book Patrol has a post up about the tremendous effort put forth during WWI by the American **Library** Association to collect books and send them ...

library war service – Darth Kendra Research

<https://darthkendraresearch.wordpress.com> › tag › library-war-service-2 ▼



494 × 626 - Posts about **library war** service written by dathkendra.

Google provides a list of results and URLs that provide the actual source of the image.


It confirms that the claim “early 1910s a woman calls for more books to be donated to the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue” is certifiably false. Not one statement in that paragraph is correct.

SO, WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

The Library War Service, formed by the Library of Congress and the American Library Association (ALA), created a national system to collect and distribute books to troops at home and abroad during and after the war. Between 1917 and 1920, the Library War Service distributed approximately 7-10 million books and magazines.⁵

We gained this information from the first link provided to us by Google.

TinEye provides over eighty image results, and the first of which, takes users to the stock image platform Alamy, confirming that the photo was taken in 1917, not in the 'early 1910s'.



82 results
Searched over **38.3 billion images** in 7.8 seconds for: **D99HQboWwAA4hPE.jpg**


Using TinEye is private. **We do not save your search images.** TinEye is free to use for non-commercial purposes. For business solutions, [learn about our technology.](#)

Show only stock and collection results:
☐ **6 results found in stock.**

Sort by most changed ▼

Filter by domain/collection

< 1 of 9 >



STOCK • SPONSORED
www.alamy.com
1918-american-library-association-campaigns-ala... - First found on Feb 09, 2019

⁵ Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project. "Library War Service, 1917-1920." Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project – Preserving Connecticut's History. <https://ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org/2018/03/library-war-service-1917-1920/>.

There are various websites and social media accounts dedicated to countering online fakery and misleading content:

- Social Media Hoax Slayer (@SMHoaxSlayer)
- PicPedant (@PicPedant)
- HoaxEye (@HoaxEye)
- Fake History Hunter (@Fakehistoryhunt)
- Snopes.com (@Snopes)
- Full Fact (@FullFact)

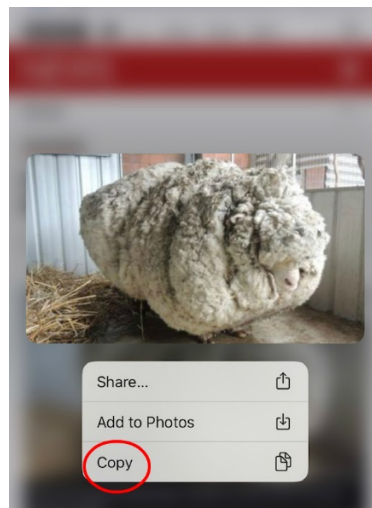
Other mainstream media outlets run dedicated fact-checking micro-sites, including Agence France-Presse (AFP - <https://factcheck.afp.com/>), as the BBC has its Reality Check Team.

The website <https://factcheckeu.info> fact checks news and election-based content in Europe during the recent elections. It is available in various languages – German, Portuguese, Danish, Swedish, Italian, and Spanish. Moreover, it is a project of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN).

Conversely, the German Federal Foreign Office created a campaign with the hashtag #rumoursaboutgermany (<https://rumoursaboutgermany.info/>) to counter-narratives refugees may have heard about the country before seeking entry. The website is available in various languages, including English, French, and Arabic.

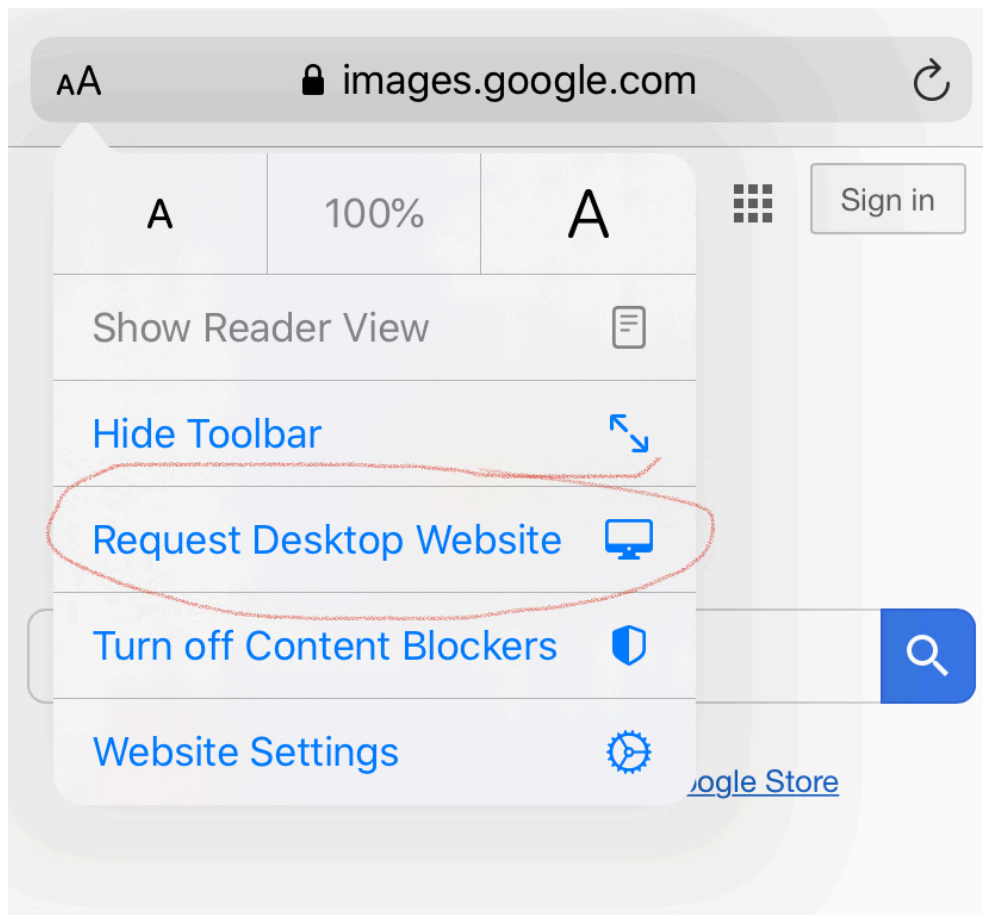
REVERSE IMAGE SEARCHING ON MOBILES

In this example, using an iPhone operating on iOS 13, using the default Safari or Firefox browser, it allows users to select the open to copy the image URL by holding down either a finger or thumb over any image, then select Copy. Take the URL link and paste it into Google Images and hit search; it will then provide the option to search by image (see below). This trick is great for phones with smaller internal memory or for those who do not want to install the standalone Google Lens app.



For users who have installed Google, allowing access to personal photos can also be beneficial in reverse image searching (though are privacy concerns and such privileges can be revoked in the app settings).

There is a shortcut for iOS users using the Safari browser, as, on the left-hand side of the toolbar is AA which allows users to 'Request Desktop Website' and upload photos through the browser to reverse image search (see below).



For users of the Chrome browser, it is possible to request the desktop version of any webpage by clicking the ellipses and selecting the desktop option from the pop-up menu. If that fails, a user can find the image URL by clicking the 'Open Image in New Tab' tab and then copying the text in the new tab.

The free apps Reversee (available on iOS)⁶ and Search By Image⁷ integrate existing image search engines (Google, Bing, Yandex).

⁶ Rocha, Eduardo. "Reversee: Reverse Image Search." App Store. <https://apps.apple.com/app/reversee-reverse-image-search/id875678494?ct=6df1ba80-da3a-48c3-8dfb-9a508e9cd46e>.

⁷ PALM TEAM. "Search By Image - Apps on Google Play." Google Play. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.palmteam.imagesearch>.

IDENTIFYING BOTS AND HOW TO REPORT THEM

The use of bots on Twitter varies from the manipulative to the mundane, with millions of potential bots, how do users understand how best to identify them? The tips below will draw from experts and free-to-use resources to improve Twitter literacy skills.

Not all bot accounts are intrinsically harmful, but some have been used to influence elections.⁸⁹¹⁰ Some bots do function as a legitimate means to engage audiences or are known more broadly as 'social bots' – from automated news accounts to bots promoting fashion brands.¹¹ This type of bot relies upon an algorithm to produce 'content' and 'interact' with individual accounts in an automated manner¹²; spambots are another excellent example of automation.¹³ A cyborg account, however, will demonstrate elements of human activity and algorithmic text.¹⁴ Other malicious forms of bots include accounts designed to induce users into paying for premium-click advertising (pay bots), and influence bots, designed to influence online discussions through the amplification of specific content.¹⁵ Academics have documented how a small group of users can manipulate traffic on the platform, involving individual accounts, bots (which, when connected to a large group, are referred to as a botnet), and cyborgs.¹⁶ A way researchers identify such manipulation concerns the levels of retweets in the traffic flow (which is easy to

⁸ Bessi, Alessandro, and Emilio Ferrara. "Social bots distort the 2016 US Presidential election online discussion." *First Monday* 21, no. 11-7 (2016).

⁹ Cabañes, Jayson, and Jayeel Cornelio. "The rise of trolls in the Philippines (and what we can do about it)." *A Duterte Reader: Critical Essays on Rodrigo Duterte's Early Presidency* (2017): 231-250.

¹⁰ Kollanyi, Bence, and Philip N. Howard. "Junk news and bots during the German parliamentary election: What are German voters sharing over Twitter?" (2017).

¹¹ Davis, C.A., Varol, O., Ferrara, O., Flammini, A. and Menczer, F. 'Botornot: A system to evaluate social bots.' In *Proceedings of the 25th International Conference Companion on World Wide Web, International World Wide Web Conferences Steering Committee*, 2016, pp. 273-274.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Chu, Z., Gianvecchio, S., Wang, H., and Jajodia, S. 'Who is tweeting on Twitter: human, bot, or cyborg?'. In *Proceedings of the 26th annual computer security applications conference*, p21. ACM, 2010.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁵ Subrahmanian, V. S., Amos Azaria, Skylar Durst, Vadim Kagan, Aram Galstyan, Kristina Lerman, Linhong Zhu, Emilio Ferrara, Alessandro Flammini, and Filippo Menczer. "The DARPA Twitter bot challenge." *Computer* 49, no. 6 (2016): 38-46.

¹⁶ Nimmo, B. *Measuring Traffic Manipulation on Twitter*. Working Paper 2019.1. Oxford, UK: Project on Computational Propaganda. compop. oii. ox. ac. uk, 2019. Pp 7-8.

manipulate by setting botnets to retweet content at a far greater scale than its organic reach).¹⁷

According to the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, which studies fake and malicious Twitter account, produced an excellent guide in spotting bot and cyborg accounts.¹⁸

Three essential and ways to identify a bot include:

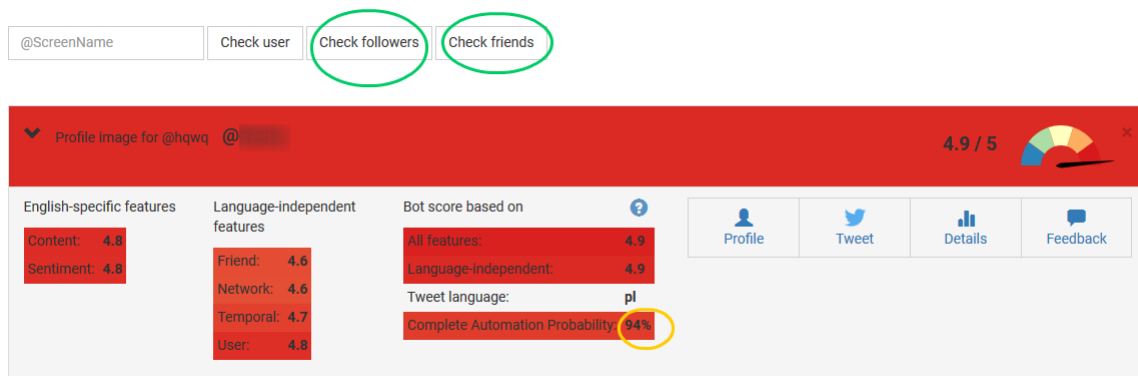
- 1) Excessive Twitter activity, for example, an account which makes 705 posts a day, is not regular human activity.
- 2) Privacy, particularly online, is vital, but the less an account gives in terms of personal information, it does increase the likelihood of potential bot activity.
- 3) Spamming, including a constant stream of retweets and exact quotes of news headlines, devoid of any comment or human activity can indicate bot activity.

Botometer, a joint project of the Network Science Institute (IUNI), the Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research (CNetS) at Indiana University, helps users identify if Twitter accounts are bots, using a scoring system. To use the software requires a Twitter account which authorises the use of the API. In short, the scoring system works "on a 0-to-5 scale with zero being most human-like and five being the most bot-like".¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid, 8.

¹⁸ @DFRLab. "#BotSpot: Twelve Ways to Spot a Bot." Medium. Last modified September 15, 2017. <https://medium.com/dfrlab/botspot-twelve-ways-to-spot-a-bot-aedc7d9c110c>.

¹⁹ OSoMe. "FAQ." Botometer by OSoMe. <https://botometer.iuni.iu.edu/#!/faq#which-score>.



This example shows an example of an account with a 94% probability of being a bot, and is helpfully coloured red, and scored 4.9 out of 5. The green circles in the image show how the API can run checks on the followers and friends of the account for automation.

Twitter does allow users to report such malicious activity – e.g. the extreme use of retweet and favouriting of content. Aggressive retweeting content is considered a form of spam. To report an account for this activity, click the ellipses on their account header (see below), and Twitter will present various options, Click “It’s suspicious or spam”.



Twitter will present various options, including the option to report that the account is either fake, linking to harmful or malicious websites, posting spam to trend or spread a hashtag. However, for this example, the focus on disproportionate retweeting as spam.

Twitter also allows users to report hateful conduct which targets individuals based on protected characteristics like ethnicity, faith, gender identity, disability. In July, Twitter revised and expanded its hateful conduct, to include a clampdown on accounts which spread dehumanising content about religious groups and religious individuals.²⁰ The rationale for this was the growing link between hateful speech online and consequence of violence offline in real-world situations and spaces. Tell MAMA's recent annual report documented the dangers of hate speech, and how language which targets Muslims and their faith is often interchangeable, notably on social media.²¹

²⁰ Twitter Safety. "Updating Our Rules Against Hateful Conduct."
https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2019/hatefulconductupdate.html.

²¹ Tell MAMA (2019). Normalising Hatred: Tell MAMA Annual Report 2018. Available at: <https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-annual-report-2018-normalising-hate/>

FACT-CHECKING

Social media literacy is not a skill gained overnight, and it comes through practice and repetition. Activists or their networks will likely come across content from obscure or unknown sources.

Keep these points in mind:

Who published it?

Does the article contain offensive terms, racist language, obtuse amounts of capitalisation? For example, the term 'globalist' which is not necessarily antisemitic, but antisemitic individuals often use the word as a coded language against Jewish people, according to the hate-monitoring group, the Anti-Defamation League.²²

Does the article contain any quotes? Double-check the accuracy of a quote is to search it through Google News. Keep these questions in mind: *Are other news websites sharing this quote? Is there a website or press release to find the original quotes? Is the content being shared by trusted sources like journalists?*

Are the names of buildings, streets, locations correct? *Do the locations match-up on search engines?*

The misuse of satire can catch people out, and result in real-world threats, as a 'satirical' website posted a fictitious story about an imam in Texas who allegedly denied refuge to people caught in a hurricane in 2017.

None of this was correct, of course, and the photograph of the imam was of a Canadian man who was undergoing religious pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia at the time for hajj. Ibrahim Hindy said that encouraging others to

²² Anti-Defamation League. "Quantifying Hate: A Year of Anti-Semitism on Twitter." Anti-Defamation League. <https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/quantifying-hate-a-year-of-anti-semitism-on-twitter#globalist-as-code-word-for-jew>.

donate to charity supporting victims of the storm, adding that fake stories have the potential to incite violence.²³

BBC Africa debunked several viral videos which were exacerbating tensions in South Africa and Nigeria, following a wave of xenophobic violence – including attacks on other African nationals in September 2019. It warned that many of the viral videos were in no way doctored, but removed from their original context, and presented as ongoing or recent events, despite footage having occurred in other countries or months (or even years earlier).²⁴

Remember: the spread of misinformation is not always about doctoring content, but removing context, and presenting it as factual – a favoured tactic of the far-right.

²³ Kerr, Jaren. "Photo of Mississauga Imam Used in Fake Story About Hurricane Harvey." Thestar.com. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/09/03/photo-of-mississauga-imam-used-in-fake-story-about-hurricane-harvey.html>.

²⁴ Mandhani, Nikita, and Anthony Irungu. "SA Xenophobic Attacks: 'Fake' Videos Stoke Tension." BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-africa-49611810/sa-xenophobic-attacks-fake-videos-stoke-tension>.

MURAL

Mutual Understanding Respect and Learning

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