

FACT-CHECKING TOOLS & LINKS & RESOURCES

All the tools listed are either free or have 'freemium' options, which are adequate for most journalism fact-checking needs.

List curated by Raymond Joseph
In conjunction with Roth Communications

FACT-CHECKING AND VERIFICATION

FACT-CHECKING TOOLKITS

Raymond Joseph's free tools fact-checking toolkit:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A239yGD8uqU19ldy7bzyLbI4XPOMvC7YndHk6zyZAtU/edit?usp=sharing>

FakeWatch fact-checking toolkit:

<https://www.fakewatch.africa/fakewatch-academy/michael-salzwedel/950-1104>

OSINT Essentials digital toolkit:

<https://www.osintessentials.com/>

Malachy Browne's open-source investigative tools:

<https://start.me/p/gyvaAJ/open-source-investigative-tools>

Craig Silverman's OSINT and open-source investigation tools:

<https://bit.ly/2OkqRd5>

Bellingcat's online investigations tools:

<https://bit.ly/2YTBLIG>

FirstDraft fact-checking resources:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zn6-OurUhMnaQMY9XH3ACgxb3eWfzgVmH01dPmwqxrU/edit>

FirstDraft resource for fact-checking photos and videos:

<https://firstdraftnews.org/en/education/curriculum-resource/verifying-photos-videos/>

FirstDraft verification toolbox:

<https://firstdraftnews.org/verification-toolbox/>

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FACT-CHECKING AND VERIFICATION REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH TOOLS

TinEye finds where else a photo has been used and allows you to check whether the one you have has been altered or manipulated. It also helps you to find newest, oldest, and most-changed versions of a photo you're wanting to check.

<http://www.tineye.com/>

RevEye Reverse Image Search is a browser extension that searches multiple search engines, including Google, Yandex, Bing, Baidu and TinEye – either one at a time or all at once. It is available for Chrome and Firefox – search for it in the relevant app stores to download.

Fact-Check Explorer helps you do a keyword search to find fact-checks related to a person or topic.

<https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer>

Firefox Reverse Image Search

<https://mzl.la/2N4lQn6>

COVID-19: Searchable database of debunked COVID-19 hoaxes and misinformation

<https://www.poynter.org/coronavirusfactsalliance/>

PHOTOS

Is it edited? Easy-to-use tool that will tell you whether a photo has been edited or manipulated:

<http://imageedited.com/>

Fake Image Detector to check if a photo has been manipulated (Chrome only):

<https://bit.ly/3nBlNwD>

Jeffrey's EXIF Viewer to check metadata in a photo, including when it was taken:

<http://exif.regex.info/exif.cgi>

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PHOTOS CONT.

Google Image Search – just click on the camera in the search box and follow the instructions:

<https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=EN>

Google Advanced Image Search to search for photos:

http://www.google.com/advanced_image_search

Labnol Reverse Image Search is easy to use and has a good tutorial on reverse image searching:

<https://www.labnol.org/reverse/>

Veracity is a reverse image search tool for your iPhone:

<https://apple.co/2lbeiuR>

Forensically is an advanced tool for checking whether a picture has been faked. It allows you to check the picture's metadata, where it was taken (if it is geo-tagged) and lots more:

<https://goo.gl/wtiSwu>

FirstDraftNews guide helps you to verify photos – just download the guide, print it and stick it on a wall:

https://firstdraftnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FDN_verificationguide_photos.pdf

VIDEOS

FirstDraftNews guide helps you to verify videos – just download the guide, print it and stick it on a wall:

https://firstdraftnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FDN_verificationguide_videos.pdf

YouTube Data Viewer – Just insert the URL of a YouTube video into this tool and it will give you details of the video, including when it was uploaded. (Be aware that the upload date is not the same as the creation date of the video.) The tool will also take screenshots from the video and allow you to do a Google reverse search to find other iterations and earlier posts of the same video (if they exist):

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/citizenevidence/>

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VIDEOS CONT.

Video Vault helps you to preserve videos; take screengrabs to do a reverse search; slow down and speed up video; and simplify the verification process:

<https://www.bravenewtech.org/>

InVID Verification Plug-in is a powerful tool for verifying photos and videos with basic and advanced functions:

<http://www.invid-project.eu/tools-and-services/invid-verification-plugin/>.

(Scroll down to 'Release Versions' to download for Chrome, Firefox or Mac OS.)

VERIFICATION RESOURCES

FirstDraftNews is a coalition of media organisations with fact-checking and verification at their core. The site is a treasure trove of essential newsgathering and verification resources for journalists. Make sure you sign up for the excellent newsletter – just scroll to the bottom of the page to sign up:

<https://firstdraftnews.com/>

Counting Crowds is a tool you can use to estimate the size of a crowd that can fit in a selected area:

<https://goo.gl/vRE3dB>

Disinformation, fakes, hoaxes and urban legends

The internet is awash with all kinds of dodgy stuff that can spread like wildfire. These are a few go-to sites to visit before Tweeting or sharing rubbish – and throwing your name away in the process.

SITES THAT DEBUNK FAKES AND HOAXES

Snopes

<http://www.snopes.com/>

AfricaCheck

<https://africacheck.org/>

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SITES THAT DEBUNK FAKES AND HOAXES CONT.

HoaxSlayer

<http://www.hoax-slayer.com/>

Bellingcat

<https://www.bellingcat.com/>

FirstDraftNews

<https://goo.gl/weccDq>

Hoax of fame

<https://goo.gl/z3xfXS>

Wafflesatnoon.com

<https://goo.gl/v8Z8V7>

WEBSITE DOMAIN AND IP INFO

IP address and domain information is available as a Chrome browser extension:

<https://who.is/> (worldwide)

<http://co.za/whois.shtml> (South Africa)

TWITTER

twXplorer is an excellent breakin-news tool that will help you to find out what hashtags people are using:

<https://goo.gl/21xKuz>

Twitter advanced search:

<https://goo.gl/sDQPwg>

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TWITTER CONT.

Twitter search tips – shortcuts for searching Twitter:

<https://goo.gl/zVls3P>

Foller.me is an excellent verification resource with extensive info on a user's Twitter account:

<http://foller.me/>

Analyse the behaviour of a Twitter account:

<https://goo.gl/6aLywP>

Treeverse is a free browser extension for keeping track of Twitter conversations by visualising them as a tree:

<https://goo.gl/jfRWwR>

Who tweeted it first? Find the original tweeter and get back to the original source:

<http://ctrlq.org/first/>

TweetBeaver is a powerful suite of free tools that allow you to take a close-up look at a Twitter account. It includes loads of other useful verification functions:

<https://tweetbeaver.com/index.php>

BOT SPOTTERS

Botometer helps you identify whether a Twitter account is human or a bot:

<https://botometer.iuni.iu.edu/#/>

BotOrNot helps you check how many of your Twitter follows are real people:

<http://botornot.co/>

Identifying Bots: Twelve Ways to Spot a Bot:

<https://goo.gl/etj5Vj>

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BOT SPOTTERS CONT.

Hoaxy is a powerful fact-checking tool. It visualises both the source and the spread of online claims. It also shows any fact-checks that have been done that verified or debunked a claim:

<https://hoaxy.iuni.iu.edu>

AfricaCheck blog on how to verify a Twitter account:

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-verify-twitter-account/>

SOCIAL MEDIA SEARCH TOOLS

Storyful Multisearch is a Chrome-only browser extension that allows you to search several social media platforms, including Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Tumblr:

<https://tinyurl.com/nnt85bw9>

Google Advanced search:

<https://goo.gl/bUEcRR>

Searching Facebook

Facebook has blocked most third-party tools from searching its platform.

The following tools still work to a certain degree, but don't forget that you can use Facebook's own search tool to run searches.

Imagine you're working on a story about a South African killed in a rocket attack in Israel. Try searching for 'People from South Africa living in Israel'. Go through the results and then dig through the groups that might be useful, to see if anyone in a group is talking about the attack. You may come across useful info or possible contacts. If you find a post from someone who may have further info, reach out to them.

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SEARCHING FACEBOOK CONT.

Graph Tips offers shortcuts for searching Facebook:

<http://graph.tips/>

Facebook Graph Searcher:

<http://bit.ly/2LXxJco>

Intelligence Facebook Search is a nifty Chrome browser extension that will help you search Facebook:

<https://goo.gl/i7vNkw>

Who posted what?

<https://whopostedwhat.com/>

Facebook ID finder:

<https://bit.ly/3yOE4dV>

Useful blog with tips to search Facebook:

<https://bit.ly/3GjYfpS>

ASSESSING THE CREDIBILITY OF WEBSITES

KnowNews is a browser extension that tells you the credibility of South African news sites. If you're on a site you think is dodgy, you can report it through the tool. If the people behind it agree, they'll add a warning about the site to the tool (Chrome only):

<https://goo.gl/NLS95T>

B.S. Detector is similar to KnowNews but exposes US and European sites that publish disinformation and fake news. While KnowNews only identifies websites, B.S. Detector also flags fake stuff on Facebook and Twitter:

<https://goo.gl/G9KF7V> (Chrome)

and Firefox <https://goo.gl/xtyHrr> (Firefox)

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ASSESSING THE CREDIBILITY OF WEBSITES CONT.

NewGuard is similar to B.S. Detector, but it's still worth running both as one may catch some sites that the other doesn't:

<https://goo.gl/cb6GqW> (Chrome)

<https://goo.gl/LsQzo2> (Firefox)

<https://goo.gl/ZNGU1s> (Safari)

Evaluating Social Media Accounts:

<https://bit.ly/3xqplTI>

SEARCH ENGINES

How to create a Google alert:

<https://goo.gl/5COLwg>

WolframAlpha is an excellent search engine for answering questions. How far? How deep? What was the first? What was the weather on a given day?

<http://www.wolframalpha.com/>

DuckDuckGo is a search engine that doesn't track you:

<https://duckduckgo.com/>

CHECKING OUT WEBSITES

Find cached versions of web pages plus when a web page was first posted on the internet:

<https://goo.gl/lILkgZ>

<https://goo.gl/yMQ3wt>

<https://archive.org/web/>

<http://cachedview.com/>

Find cached web pages in Google Search results:

<https://goo.gl/qANm73>

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CHECKING OUT WEBSITES CONT.

When was a story published online? Knowing when a story was posted is a key part of fact-checking. But sometimes you come across an undated story online. Check here to learn how to check when an undated story was posted:

<https://goo.gl/Hp4wYE>

View DNS Information offers a suite of free tools that helps you interrogate various aspects of a website:

<https://goo.gl/chMimo>

DNS History helps you check if a website has moved servers or changed ownership:

<https://goo.gl/695igW>

MOZ: Check the reach of a website (the free version allows 10 searches a month):

<https://goo.gl/KKvBEy>

FINDING PEOPLE

Pipl is a tool that helps you find out who is behind an email address, phone number or social username:

www.pipl.com

Phonebooks worldwide helps you search by country for local phone books:

<http://www.numberway.com/>

Browser extensions for Chrome and Firefox

Search for them in the Firefox or Chrome app stores and save them to your browser bookmarks bar. Some will then be available on your mouse right-click.

Scraper is an easy-to-use tool to get data out of web pages and into spreadsheets:

<https://goo.gl/wgq7Uy>

Google Translate is an essential browser extension that translates words, phrases or entire web pages in a click.

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SCRENGRAB TOOLS

Full Page Screen Capture

Nimbus Screenshot can also annotate a screengrab

Distil WebMonitor helps keep track of changes to web pages and online PDFs. Add a webpage or online PDF to your watchlist and the tool will alert you by email if any changes are made.

Spam protector

10 Minute Mail will set up a temporary email to protect you from spam when signing on to a dodgy site (or if you don't want to leave tracks):

<https://goo.gl/h00MaB>

PDF CONVERSION TOOLS

EasyPDF:

<https://www.easypdf.com/>

iLovePDF:

<https://www.ilovepdf.com/>

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Advanced tools for investigative journalists:

<http://pudo.org/material/investigative-tools/>

Investigative Dashboard finds researchers and expert sources to help you. It also helps you search databases and access visual networks of influence:

<https://goo.gl/n65H3Z>

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INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM CONT.

Promotion of Access to Information Tool for South Africa:

<http://foip.saha.org.za/>

Data Journalism Handbook is a free PDF download:

<http://datajournalismhandbook.org/1.0/en/>

FREE DOWNLOADABLE HANDBOOKS

Verification Handbook is a useful online resource:

<http://verificationhandbook.com/>

UNESCO downloadable handbook on journalism, 'fake news' and disinformation:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002655/265552E.pdf>

TOOLBOXES

FirstDraftNews Verification Toolbox is a nifty fact-checking resource with all the basic tools you need to expose and fight mis- and disinformation, as well as fakery in its many guises:

<https://goo.gl/BFiDE1>

AfricaCheck fact-checking guide offers questions to ask when fact-checking:

<https://africacheck.org/how-to-fact-check/tips-and-advice/>

AfricaCheck guide to spotting fakes and hoaxes online:

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-how-to-spot-fakes-and-hoaxes-online/>

AfricaCheck guide to verifying images on a smartphone:

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-verify-images-smartphone/>

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TOOLBOXES CONT.

AfricaCheck guide to verifying a Twitter account:

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-verify-website-people-behind/>

AfricaCheck guide to verifying a website and the people behind it:

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-verify-website-people-behind/>

AfricaCheck guide on how to avoid falling for 'fake news':

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-stop-falling-fake-news/>

AfricaCheck guide to spotting dodgy journals and research:

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-how-to-spot-predatory-academic-journals-in-the-wild/>

Full-fact 'fake news' toolkit:

<https://fullfact.org/toolkit/>

Snopes.com guide 'Six Quick Ways to Spot Fake News':

<https://www.snopes.com/news/2016/01/21/6-quick-ways-spot-fake-news/>

Snopes.com is a tool that helps you search for hoaxes, urban legends and assorted made-up stuff (although largely US material, the listed fakery often pops up in other countries, adapted for the local market):

<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/category/media-matters/>

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