

Examining the way how to investigate date and time stamps. In this unit you learn how to read timestamps on the different social networks and the challenges of trying to find out when a photo or video was actually captured vs. when it was uploaded.

So there are two main challenges when doing these types of checks. The first is that the timestamp protocols differ across social networks. It's great that all social networks use the same verified blue tick and that hashtags work in the same way across different platforms. But unfortunately when it comes to timestamps that isn't the case. They work very differently on each platform. But you just need to learn these rules and you'll be fine.

Secondly remember that timestamps are only ever telling you when a piece of footage was uploaded, not when it was captured. This is why you always want to try and access original files if you can and try to talk to the person who captured the footage in the first place. Many newsrooms started relying on eyewitness media around 2011 at the height of the Arab Spring. At that time smartphones were less prevalent and data was more expensive, so many people would capture their footage and have to get to an Internet cafe download the footage and then upload it to the social web. Often Youtube at that time. That wasn't always on the same day as the footage was captured. But many news outlets would rely on the timestamp on YouTube as evidence of when the event took place. Luckily this no longer really happens, but it's important to remember that the timestamp is only ever the upload time.

I hope you find the materials in this unit useful. This is a critical part of verification that people often get wrong. And finally don't forget to take a look at that reading list.