

Module 3.1

It's a powerful tool for checking whether. It's called Wolfram Alpha.

It's the knowledge engine that brings in available information from across the web. One of its main strengths in terms of verification is that you can check the weather from any particular location on any date. When you're trying to double check the date on an image or video it can be very useful.

So here's another case study: on July 17th, 2014 Flight MH17 took off from Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. A plane spotter who captures images of airplanes posted this pictures to Twitter once it was clear that the plane had crashed explaining that he had captured the plane as it had actually been taking off.

The photo has a timestamp of 6:03 P.M. Amsterdam time which is when he uploaded it, but the question is whether the photo was captured just after takeoff. The plane took off at 11:31 A.M. local Amsterdam time.

If we take a look at Wolfram Alpha it tells us that the weather on that day in Amsterdam was listed as: rain, fog, overcast, cloudy, partly cloudy, few clouds, clear.

So that definitely raises some concerns about this photo. However, if we scroll down the site shows its cloud cover and when the plane took off is actually when cloud cover is at its lowest.

As ever, no tool is foolproof. So this doesn't prove anything, but it provides an extra clue that it is possible that this photo was taken at that time.