

[Trust and verification in an age of misinformation Module 3.5](#)

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Alright we've made it to our final lesson of week three. I know there's a lot this week, but I think, I wanted to make sure that you have a lot of options and I think it's important for you to see a lot of the different tools and approaches that you can use. And hopefully you take these tools and approaches and you apply them in ways that are valuable to you or at least you know about them if something pops up.

So the last quick thing I just want to do is show you two tools I use for tracking and monitoring websites. And it's really important to try and do this kind of work in a systematic way. We on the team that we have a BuzzFeed that does this kind of work use a lot of spreadsheets. When we come across a website that is spreading misinformation we add it to a spreadsheet. We also use some tools to look at it on an ongoing basis, so that we don't have to keep reinventing the wheel. We're able to go and consult lists of fake websites that we know exist and see what's spreading on them. And I usually start my day scanning across a lot of these websites just to see what's out there and if there's anything we need to move on.

So I'm going to show you two tools. But I just want to emphasize again that we are constantly monitoring and gathering data and if you're more systematic in your approach you're going to be better at doing this kind of stuff. So the two tools that I want to show you today are highlighted here. So one is called crowdangle. This is a free tool that's actually owned by Facebook. I want to show you the browser plugin that they have which is amazing way to quickly on any webpage see what kind of traction it's gotten on Facebook but also see what accounts have been propagating it on Facebook and on Twitter because then you can start to track that path. Second tool I want to show you is called buzzsumo. It's a tool that's actually built for marketers but I find it really helpful for me to look on a consistent basis and track groups of websites.

Alright so I'm gonna do kind of a live demo for you here. Let's hope that everything works all right. So what I've pulled up here is a website called world news daily report. This is a website that publishes a hundred percent complete fake articles and an often scores viral hits with crazy ones, like this one fake story about a morgue employee who was cremated by mistake while taking a nap. And there the way that they approach things is they often take, as you can see here, a really wild mugshot of a real person and then make up a story around it. Now world news daily report, we can see they

have a Facebook page with 71 thousand fans but you know it's not it's not really about their Facebook page. It's about other people seeing these stories and sharing them.

So on my web browser here, you can see this little CT that's the crowd tangled browser extension. Just search for that online crowdtangle browser extension install it. I really encourage you to have it. You know, I talked about the embed plug-in before that's here. I talked about the wayback machine plug-in, that's here. Those are really essential ones that everyone should have.

So let's click on the crowd tangle browser plug-in. It's going to show us a couple different things, so the first thing that pops up right away is the amount of facebook interactions that this particular piece of content has gotten. So it's more than a million and we can see it's divided them as well for us which is nice. So it's had almost four hundred and fifty one thousand reactions, four hundred and six thousand comments and a hundred and fifty thousand shares. So a really viral piece of fake information and now we can see here, that it hasn't pulled up every single account or page or Facebook group that it's been shared in, but it's pulled up some of the more notable and influential ones. And just a quick note you can also download this data and look at it more in detail. But we can see here, you know, where it's been shared on Facebook, how many interactions each one has gotten. So we see the world news daily report Facebook page here, but there are three pages three places at with share that actually got more interactions. And we can scroll down and see here, and we can also see that you know Snopes has tweeted about it and debunked it. And you know they clearly linked back to the original rather than an archive. So they've given it some extra boost here unintentionally. We can see it's been on reddit, we can see it's been on Twitter. So this is a great way to see if something has been going around. And those little discussion bubbles there you can see what texts people used when sharing it. So this is also a great way to see are people sharing it because they know it's fake or are they sharing it because they think it's real. And you know in a lot of cases they're just kind of making you know comments that don't really debunk it at all. And here's someone with , followers on Twitter who shared it. You know can anything be done more or more tragic so this is a person who's propagated it and that's an influential account. Unfortunately only seventy-seven total retweets and likes but they really put it out there. So that's a really important way to see how stuff is spreading.

And then that quickly the next one. I wanted to show you is buzzsumo.com they do have an upgraded paid version, which we have access to a buzzfeed but there is a free version which will give you some value as well. Crowd tangle is totally free, what I can do here is I can pop in the URL for world news day of the report and again it's going to

show me Facebook engagements. It's also going to show me Twitter shares. And the cool thing here is I can click on view backlinks. And it's going to show me some places that have actually linked back to this content. So again, I can see websites over the past year, there's our date filter that have shared and here we can see that it was translated into Spanish. And we can see other sites here good here's the debunking that's up there. Here's a site that shared it completely as true. And so you can see where again it's been spreading. But the thing that I use buzzsumo for every single day is what I've done. I've created saved searches so for example, you know I have a group of fake news websites that I've been tracking for a long time, I have saved them all together as one search and I can quickly see. Let's go to the past week, what have these sites been sharing. And I can adjust my date filter and see. Alright so we've got the website hustlers has a fake story about a man stabbing his friends 63 times for making them lose a gaming match. That's a fake story It's done pretty well. And I can scroll down really quickly and see what other stuff has been spreading around.

So I encourage you to familiarize yourself with crowdtangle. There's not only a browser tech plugin but also another tool that enables you to analyze and track Facebook pages, Facebook groups and Twitter accounts really useful. Crowdtangle again sign up for that and buzzsumo, great tool meant for marketers but also useful in tracking websites and also seeing how content has been flowing.

Alright that's it for week 3. Hope you find these tools useful and happy hunting out there!

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