

## Module 2 video 2: Searching Facebook

[00:00:00] Hey, welcome to the second lesson of week 2, which is Searching Facebook.

[00:00:07] Now, before we get in to how to search Facebook, we need to understand some advantages and limitations of the platform. The advantages is that Facebook is great for getting local context on stories. And Facebook groups are a key venue for finding sources and understanding a community, really. But most false information also explodes on Facebook. So there's tools that can give you a strong idea of where, how and why.

[00:00:38] But Facebook is also quite difficult to search and research. Close communities make it difficult to understand the true origin of a piece of information and data limitations that, that Facebook has put in place make it tricky to look at the platform at scale. We've lost a lot of Facebook search tools over the years. So now we're back to sort of using the platform for finding the content that we need.

[00:01:09] So keeping that in mind, this lesson will focus on utilizing Facebook's own tools for on platform search, using viral content, finding viral content, using free tools like BuzzSumo and CrowdTangle, and using those off platform tools to then again search Facebook. I'll show you how it all works.

[00:01:32] The key Facebook features that I think are useful to focus on is number one is groups. Facebook groups is was where everything happens. But after that, pay attention to events, pages and profiles. Profiles, particularly as Brandy probably shows you last week are an interesting, an interesting place to focus your investigation.

[00:01:59] So searching on Facebook proper, all of the similar rules to Twitter apply, which is follow the same principles, always tweak your searches, try for different keywords, and don't use Facebook to search for articles, for stories. Instead, look for posts, groups and events. Plus, I'm going to show you a simple trick for a catch all term that you might be able to utilize in your own searches.

[00:02:30] OK, so without without any further ado, let's get into it and click around. Go to Facebook.com and I'll meet you there.

[00:02:41] Alright. So for this example, I decided to focus on Re-opened Missouri, which was a fairly large, sort of, a fairly large movement of people who really wanted for the state to be reopened, for the coronavirus restrictions to be lifted because of the economic impact that they were having. So they said.

[00:03:09] So let's look at how this one simple search term has different results, depending on which features on Facebook you look through.

[00:03:22] I clicked on posts and posts, allows you to filter, filter through different options. The date posted I personally don't find very useful, but I do find posts from very useful because if you use Facebook for a while, you're gonna start getting into a lot of big groups and a lot of big pages for monitoring. And I want you to remember this option, the option to look at your groups and your pages, because the next tool I'm going to show you is gonna be extremely helpful in building out that network and understanding what to watch. Now, as you can see, looking for people doesn't really, doesn't really get us a lot of places with these particular key terms. But looking for photos and looking for videos absolutely does.

[00:04:15] And all of these have different tweaks that you can go through. For example, I find it very useful to compare most recent videos with the most viewed videos, which tend to have very, very different results. This is going to load for a little while, but you could also flick the live video option and you will be able to see some of the protest coverage, for example. So if we look at the Black Lives Matter protests, you can flick this live button and a bunch of our results will populate. You can once again look at groups. But it can get a little bit tricky, as you can see, the most viewed right now is Tomi Lahren or in August sort of, she's a right wing provocateur who frequently makes a lot of videos. But you're also, of course, able to see different other related

videos. And tag a location by default. It will allow you to pick the locations that are associated with your profile. But you can also type in and see, for example, what's going on in St. Louis.

[00:05:36] Unfortunately, no results. And you're not able to set a full province. Excuse me. That was a very Canadian term, local state search. But you are able to look at different cities.

[00:05:53] Going forward pages, as we can see. It's a pretty fruitful result here. But really, the key thing for us is groups. As you can see, there is a couple of big groups. This one has 20000 members. So that's a group that I would absolutely apply to be a part of. And events, if you're looking for sources, there's no better way than to look through the events on Facebook.

[00:06:26] You can set the dates. Unfortunately, they're usually in the future. You can also select categories, which is really handy. And then when you click into an event, looks like this one wasn't too popular. Only one person went to this one. This one had two thousand guests. But this is a telethon, so not quite what we're looking for. But for example, if we click into this guests, we can see who the two people who responded are. Now, if they're not your friends, some events will limit. Since this is a private event, some events will limit what you will see. But public events will not.

[00:07:20] I'll just show you the links portion. It's generally a little bit, not great, and we're going to use a different tool to look for links. But at the same time, I really wanted to show you that there's more filters and the ones that are just on the left hand side here. You can also filter by pages here. The most useful ones for me are watch and groups. So let's walk through them.

[00:07:49] The groups feed is like your own personal feed of groups that you belong to. And this is why it's really important to sort of build out your Facebook account and allow for that continuous monitoring for the all the groups that you're in to sort of be there when you need them, when another then happens.

[00:08:13] So as you can see, I'm in a bunch of different groups and I'm getting different results. And because a lot of groups are closed. You really want to be in them ahead of time. Are you really want to sort of plan to the best of your ability so that way you're able to see more of what's going on. And once again, I'm gonna show you a better way to look at groups than this Facebook search.

[00:08:38] But what is very handy is, is Facebook watch. Now, Facebook watch is Facebook own native video player, and it allows you to search for videos within Facebook. So here we see a leader of a rally speaking that's already a great source for us. We see the live video of the rally that may be really helpful for us. We can filter for any live events that may have been happening is as you can see, we're getting a little bit more than we were getting with the other search. So there's a lot of different options available. And as you play with the key words, as you play with those terms that we talked about in the last lesson, you can find a lot of very interesting information. And you can sort of keep monitoring for that information as it happens.

[00:09:35] Now, another great way to search through Facebook is by using BuzzSumo and CrowdTangle, two of my favorite tools for content discovery. So BuzzSumo.com is a Web site. It has a free version. There is a limit to how many searches you can have in sort of the limit, some of the tools. But for our purposes, the free version will absolutely get us by. And those search techniques are you can definitely apply them on the BuzzSumo as well, as you will see in a second.

[00:10:06] CrowdTangle is another key tool. They do allow many newsrooms to use it for free. But some newsrooms do not have access to the full tool. We're not going to go through the full tool today. For us, the Chrome extension is enough. It allows you to see the key places where a piece of content was shared and you combine it. You can combine it with BuzzSumo or Twitter searches to better understand how a piece of information moved online. And it's important to remember that CrowdTangle is not all of Facebook, but it is a really good chunk of Facebook.

[00:10:43] So we can combine different methods for monitoring and discovery on Facebook itself. You can use the CrowdTangle extension on a piece of content that you found, for example, an event or a video or a post. It allows you to download the list of pages or groups that posted a piece of content so you can use it for future searches and search key terms on Twitter. Like if you use key terms on Twitter, you can flip some of that into Facebook. Although Facebook search is not as sophisticated and you're not able to use those search operators that Twitter users.

[00:11:25] So let's give it a try. I'm gonna give you a second to download the Chrome extension if you don't have it here and open up BuzzSumo.com, a Web site before we get started.

[00:11:41] Alright. So BuzzSumo is essentially a perfect place to look for articles and sometimes YouTube videos. If you're using key terms, it will bring up content related to those key terms. So open up BuzzSumo.com and type in "reopen missouri protests" to keep with the theme and click the search button.

[00:12:12] Now, there are advanced searches, just like there are on Twitter. If you click on advanced search tips, it will show you all of the different operators that you can use. But for our lesson today, we're happy to just look at what we have. So, as you can see, one of the results is going to be from the Gateway Pundit. And let's focus on this one, because the Gateway Pundit is known for spreading false information so it might be useful for us to focus on. So let's just go ahead and click here.

[00:12:44] We can see that it's the second most posted article about the Missouri re-open protests. So let's let's open it up. Now we can see that this story was fairly popular. It's including a few different notes about the protests. You can even see some Facebook pages here, if you like. But what we're gonna do is we're going to click on the BuzzSumo extension just up here and just let it open up for a second here. Now, here's what it's telling us. It's telling us that there has been a lot of different interactions on Facebook. And there's definitely a lot of vectors for us to keep investigating. The Twitter data for CrowdTangle only goes a week back in time, so it might not be very useful. And because link sharing is really rare on Instagram. That's something that we can skip because almost always you're not going to see a link shared on Instagram.

[00:13:53] Sometimes you will see some discussion on Reddit and that might be really interesting for you to look at. But for our purposes today, we're going to click on Facebook and let's just click on this top group. This seems to be the top shared article or so at the top shared group. At this moment. So let's just go ahead and click out.

[00:14:15] Alright. So you can see the Recall Gavin Newsom group. And here's our post. Now, this group is particularly interesting because it has fifty thousand members. It seems to be quite large. It's a closed group. So we have to click, join and we see our little Facebook pop up here. So we're going to just click and join the group. And to quickly sort of understand how a group, what a group is about. You can click on the about page.

[00:14:48] There is a really useful history function here. You can click on see more to see when the group was created and whether it's changed any names. So in this case, the group was just created about a year ago in March. And it has not changed its names.

[00:15:09] There's a few different approaches you can take to the group. It does have even if it's closed group, it will have some public announcements. As you can see, there's some events here that might be worth checking out. And of course, there are plenty of members that you can browse through and search. So, for example, let's just take a common name like Michael. And you can actually see all of the people who have joined this group by that name.

[00:15:45] So this is very, very useful. And sometimes Facebook will also break down members that you have things in common with. That's based on your own profile. It'll also show you pages that have like the group, which is another interesting. Which is another interesting vector for information. You can look at these pages and sort of check out what they're about. But the thing that I really want to point you to is the media and files folders.

[00:16:17] So media is a really great way to get a quick glance at what the Facebook group is posting, sort of get a feel for it. And files is especially useful because these this will include things like petitions, group rules. As you can see, there's a Declaration of Independence here. And so you can quite literally just download the PDF that's part of the group and and see look at the types of actions they're trying to get their members to take.

[00:16:58] All of this is really useful when you're pulling together a story for when you're monitoring it. But I cannot stress enough the key to this method. The key to understanding Facebook and looking at it is using it.

[00:17:14] Alright. So some final notes, which is figure out the information that you're after. Looking for sources is different than searching for content. So if you're looking for sources, focus on those groups and focus on those events. If you're searching for content, look at the videos. Use BuzzSumo in CrowdTangle and try those off platform approaches for on platform results. Monitoring Facebook requires investment. Keep joining those communities. Keep liking those pages. Keep a list of a spreadsheet of all the communities that you've joined. And that way you're able to see when new ones come on. Or old ones are taken down.

[00:18:00] And if it is available in your area, do request a full CrowdTangle tool. There's currently no better tool for searching the entirety or as much of Facebook as we're able to see. So just a quick plug for the full tool.

[00:18:16] And remember, just as on Twitter, always archive what you find in case of removals and as proof for your future journalism. Alright. So that was searching Facebook.