

Searching Twitter

This lesson will focus on:

1. Using keyword combinations for advanced searches and discovery.
2. Folding the keyword knowledge for setting up Tweetdeck live monitoring.
3. Finding removed tweets using archives and advanced search.

Advantages

1. Twitter user base includes public figures, academics, influential accounts.
2. ideal for live event monitoring.
3. Twitter can be used to identify sources during a breaking news event.
4. It's a good tool for mis/disinformation discovery and monitoring.

Limitations

1. Its user base excludes non-technical people, moms and pops.
2. While video is a part of Twitter, Twitter is not a video-first platform.
3. It's rapid-pace and hosts a lot of junk.

Thinking through Twitter usage

When you're using Twitter to search or monitor, **think through how different users would experience it.** What would a person involved in a disaster post? How would a provocateur or bad actor frame their tweet?

Because many journalists use Twitter, **beware of attempts to manipulate you.** Verify documents and ask for original copies of photos and images to be emailed to you. If a source gets in touch, verify their identity.

Be open to your audience. Include easy ways to contact you, make sure your affiliations are clear, and link to your work.

Twitter advanced search: Common operators

- until:YYYY-MM-DD
- since:YYYY-MM-DD
- OR
- AND
- Minus sign -
- Brackets ()
- Quotes “ ”
- Bonus: Remember notification alerts

What to think about when thinking through keywords

Places:

- State
- District
- City (include abbreviations, nicknames, airport codes)
- Key neighborhoods, streets, structures
- Alternate spellings, translations, autocorrect errors

Events:

- Name of event
- Hashtags (include hashtags of support, etc.)
- Synonyms for terms associated with the event
- Names and titles for mayor, sheriff, fire chief, senator, etc
- Community groups
- Names of organizers and activists

Other useful terms to combine with

- Activist/s
- Arrest
- Authorities (get more specific with terms like police, ambulance, hospital, etc.)
- Breaking
- Conference or press conference
- Crowdfunding
- Defend/ing
- Donate
- Fact-check
- Fake
- Fundraising
- Gun/s
- Hashtags frequently associated with manipulation (#antifa, #qanon, #savethechildren, #wwg1wga)
- Live/Livestream
- Victim
- Warrant
- Weapon

Let's give it a try: bit.ly/twitter-search-ex

Finding and copying Twitter lists

Finding lists on Twitter can be tricky and tedious — your best bet is sifting through profiles of influential people who may have created them. There’s a better way, which uses a trick I [originally learned from Bellingcat](#).

1. Open Google
2. Type in: `site:twitter.com/*/lists "LIST-NAME-HERE"`
3. Use this tool to duplicate the list to your account:
projects.noahliebman.net/listcopy

Tips: Keep list search terms simple and general. Copy list instead of following it so you can modify it.

Tweetdeck

Tweetdeck is a great tool that allows for **live monitoring** and filtering through key words and through building out lists.

Tweetdeck allows you to **filter by engagement** to make sure you see less junk.

When using Tweetdeck for monitoring, **separate out columns by topic**. Have a separate search for tweets from authorities, tweets associated with key people involved in the event, and tweets about the location.

**Note that Tweetdeck searches follow a different format.*

Let's give it a whirl

Finding deleted tweets

1. [Go Back In Time Chrome extension](#) allows to search through archives or caches of the page you're on. (Always check Bing!)
2. [Archive.is](#), a website widely used for social media archiving.
3. ThreaderApp website, [threadreaderapp.com](#), is searchable and includes video, images, and gifs.
4. [PolitiTweet.org](#) tracks removed tweets from key public figures.
5. Searching replies with an image for a screenshot. (But beware of fakes!)

Outside tools that can help

Twitter analytics: foller.me

Bulk single or intersecting account analysis: tweetbreaver.com

Bio search: followerwonk.com

Final notes

Keep a cheat sheet and a list of useful past searches you could quickly turn to.

Assume everything is going to get deleted. Archive key tweets. Note: You can also archive searches for a snapshot of what you're seeing. Archive.is is the best tool for the job.

Put yourself in the tweeters' shoes. Think through terms and wording they'd use.

Coordinate with your social team to ask your audience for help tracking information about the event.

Remember Twitter's limitation.