

Searching Facebook

Advantages

1. Facebook is *great* for getting local context on stories.
2. Facebook groups are a key venue for finding sources and understanding a community.
3. Most false information explodes on Facebook and there are tools to give you a strong idea of where, how, and why.

Limitations

1. Facebook is difficult to search and research.
2. Closed communities make it difficult to understand true origin of a piece of information.
3. Data limitations make it tricky to look at the platform at scale.

This lesson will focus on:

1. Utilizing Facebook's own tools for on-platform search.
2. Finding viral content using free tools like BuzzSumo and CrowdTangle.
3. Using off-platform search tools to search Facebook.

Facebook features

Groups. There are two types of groups you want to zero in on: local and issue-based.

Events. Great for source searches and understanding participants.

Pages. Pages provide the most information in Facebook's system. Study them carefully, including places like reviews, comments, and check-ins as well as the "transparency" feature.

Profiles. Watch for frequent posting, repeated posting times, and stolen information.

Searching on Facebook properly

Follow the same principle as Twitter: always tweak.

Don't use the Facebook search to look for stories. Look for posts, groups, and events.

PLUS: A simple trick for a catch-all term.

Let's click around

Using BuzzSumo and Crowdtangle for content discovery

Go to [BuzzSumo.com](https://www.buzzsumo.com) (free version will get you by).

Apply search techniques you learned in the previous lesson to find stories and videos.

CrowdTangle is a key Facebook tool

CrowdTangle has a main product, but the extension is also a powerful tool. It allows you to see the key places a piece of content was shared.

Combine it with BuzzSumo or Twitter searches to better understand how a piece of content moved online.

**Note: CrowdTangle is not all of Facebook, but it's a good chunk.*

Combine different methods for monitoring and discovery

Use the CrowdTangle extension on a piece of content you found on Facebook like Events, Videos, or Posts.

Download the list of Pages and Groups that posted a piece of content and use it for future searches.

Search key terms, groups, or titles on Twitter OR use information found elsewhere and search it on Facebook.

Let's try them

Download CrowdTangle Chrome extension here:

bit.ly/ct-ext

Final notes

Figure out the type of information you're after. Looking for sources is different than searching for content.

Try off-platform approaches for on-platform results.

Monitoring Facebook requires investment. Keep up joining communities and closed groups, consistent participation means more visibility.

If it's available in your area, request access to the full CrowdTangle tool.

Remember to archive what you find in case of removals.