

Topic 5.

Data Journalism &  
Data Verification



# Data Verification

Data verification refers to the process of ensuring that data is accurate, complete, and consistent. It is a critical step in data quality management and involves comparing data against a known and trusted source to check for errors and inconsistencies.



# Verification fundamentals



- Develop human sources
- Contact people, and talk to them
- Be skeptical when something looks, sounds or seems too good to be true
- Consult multiple, credible sources
- Familiarize yourself with search and research methods, and new tools
- Communicate and work together with other professionals — verification is a team sport

# Verification is a mix of three elements:

- A person's resourcefulness, persistence, skepticism and skill
- Sources' knowledge, reliability and honesty, and the number, variety and reliability of sources you can find and persuade to talk
- Documentation



# Using online research methods

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## To investigate “who” of a person:

- “ {name & surname} is” AROUND(15) {company, etc.}
- filetype:pdf “{name & surname}” -site:{site}.\*
- inurl:gov “{name & surname}”
- “{name & surname}” site:int
- “mr \* {surname}” -{name} {company}



# Using online research methods

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## To investigate “where”:

- Use photo search in Topsy
- Use Echosec
- Use photo search in Google Images



# Using online research methods

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## To investigate “when”:

- Date search
- Find old data with *archive.org*



# Finding people

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## The person's name, bearing in mind:

- Different variations (does James call himself “James,” “Jim,” “Jimmy” or “Jamie”?)
- The spelling of foreign names in Roman letters (is Yusef spelled “Yousef” or “Yusuf”?)
- Did the names change when a person married?
- Do you know a middle name or initial?





# Finding people

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## **The person's name, bearing in mind:**

- The town the person lives in and or was born in.
- The person's job and company.
- Their friends and family members' names, as these may appear in friends and follower lists.
- The person's phone number, which is now searchable in Facebook and may appear on web pages found in Google searches.
- Any of the person's usernames, as these are often constant across various social networks.



# Finding people

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## The person's name, bearing in mind:

- The person's email address, as these may be entered into Facebook to reveal linked accounts. If you don't
- know an email address, but have an idea of the domain the person uses, sites such as email-format can help
- you guess it.
- A photograph, as this can help you find the right person, if the name is common



# Using databases and other publicly available material to investigate companies

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- What does the company do?
- How many employees does it have? Who are they?
- In which countries does it operate?
- In which countries is it incorporated?
- What are the names of linked companies in each country of operation?



# Using databases and other publicly available material to investigate companies

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- Where does it pay taxes?
- Where does it report its profits?
- What is the extent of transfer pricing among its subsidiaries?
- Which companies use this practice and why? (And where?)



# Verification Handbook

For Disinformation And Media Manipulation

