VERIFICATION CHECKLIST

User-generated content can be an engaging and timely source of material for news coverage. It can also be a rich source of lies, slander and misinformation. Your reputation depends on your ability to accurately verify the information you choose to use.

CONTENT CLAIMS

The Aim: To establish a frame of reference against which claims can be assessed:

1. What is the date and time at which the content is purported to have been created?

   _____

2. What is the location where the content is purported to have been created? (Include location name and GPS coordinates):

   _____

3. What event does the content claim to cover? (These details can act as keywords for investigating):

   _____

4. Are the claims made of this content consistent with mainstream coverage?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

WHO POSTED IT?

The Aim: Determine whether or not the source who posted the content is reliable:

1. Who first posted the content? _____

2. Where is that original poster located? _____

3. Do the networks of the original poster indicate this content could be accurate?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

   > Use Twitter tools such as http://foller.me to uncover account details and posting patterns and http://mentionmapp.com to see with whom a user connects.

4. How long has the person had this online account?

   _____

5. Does the person have a lot of friends (i.e. does the person seem legitimate?)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

6. Does the original poster have other online accounts? Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

7. Does the original poster post their own content or repost that of others?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

8. Is the information shared by the original poster consistent? Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

9. Does the original poster have a motive or agenda for sharing? Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

10. Was the image posted directly or is linked from somewhere else (click on the image to see)?

    Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

ORIGINAL CONTENT

The Aim: Find the original content and source for information considered for use in news coverage:

1. Has this content been published elsewhere?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

   Use Google Images to search for similar images online

2. Is the material linked to another website?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

3. If this material has been published elsewhere, what is the file or post with the earliest date (Note the source file and date)?

   _____

4. Can you identify the creator of this content?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

   On Mac devices go to the application named tab in the menu bar and select Preferences. File user information can often be found here. Alternatively, use this online EXIF viewer: http://regex.info/exif.cgi

METADATA

The Aim: To uncover as much information about the original file creator as possible:
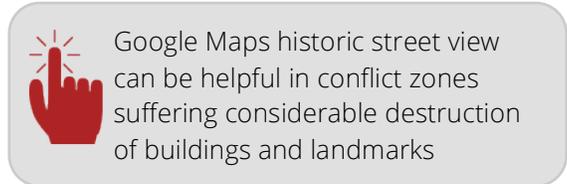
1. Download the media file to your computer and run it through an EXIF viewer. What metadata is saved to the earliest version of the file or post?

5. Creator Name: _____

6. Date & Time of Creation: _____

7. Software Used: _____

8. Copyright: _____

9. Camera Details: _____

10. GPS Latitude & Longitude: _____

11. Location: _____

12. Is the above metadata consistent with the claims made by the person who originally posted the content?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

IMAGES

The Aim: To verify claims made about the image:

1. Has the image been altered? (Try running it through http://fotoforensics.com)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

   > 👆 Google Maps historic street view can be helpful in conflict zones suffering considerable destruction of buildings and landmarks

2. Does the time stamp correlate to claims made about when and where the picture was taken?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

3. Does the weather in the image correspond to the weather recorded at the time and place when the picture was claimed to be taken? (Try searching http://www.wolframalpha.com)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

4. Is the geography in the image consistent with the claims made of the picture? (Try corroborating with Google Streetview: https://www.google.com/maps/views/u/0/streetview)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

5. Is the sunlight consistent with the time claims made of the picture (Try corroborating with: http://suncalc.net)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

6. What distinguishing features, if any, can be further investigated (e.g. license plates, landmarks, signs, architectural features, billboards, clothing etc.)?

_____

VIDEOS

The Aim: To verify claims made about the video:

1. Does the video link to another URL?
   (Try searching the YouTube URL for the video.)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

> Try searching related keywords to return supporting information – don't forget to also search in local languages!

2. Has the thumbnail for the video been used elsewhere? Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

> Search through Google Images to see if the thumbnail has been used elsewhere

3. Is this video posted elsewhere online? Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

4. Has the video been altered? Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

5. Does the time stamp correlate to claims made about when and where the video was taken?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

6. Do the accents or dialects spoken in the video correlate to the location where the video is claimed to have been made?

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

7. Is the geography in the video consistent with the claims made of the video? (Try corroborating with Google Streetview: https://www.google.com/maps/views/u/0/streetview)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

> File formats can indicate if the video was uploaded directly from a device, for example, a video marked as "Uploaded via YouTube Capture" might indicate that the video was filmed with a smartphone

8. Is the sunlight consistent with the time claims made of the video (Try corroborating with: http://suncalc.net)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

9. Does the weather in the video correspond to the weather recorded at the time and place when the video was claimed to be made? (Try searching http://www.wolframalpha.com)

   Yes □ No □ Not Sure □

10. What distinguishing features, if any, can be further investigated (e.g. license plates, landmarks, signs, architectural features, billboards, clothing etc.)?

_____

_____

 Would you stake your journalistic reputation on this source? What will happen to the subject if you are wrong?