

*Arcom consultation on access to data from online platforms*

- Data access is very uneven across platforms. Other platforms should align with the 'most transparent' platform in terms of data access, which should be used as a standard and the basis for improvement.
- Specific data access issues: TikTok - when "disinformation" isn't included in the caption of the video it is impossible to search for the disinformation item.
- Twitter: Would be good to have a search tool to look for the 'followers' or 'following' of an account.
- The Crowdtangle tool has been extremely beneficial to the research purposes and it is important to ensure that researchers including those from civil society have access to this tool across different platforms.
- Open search to private accounts would be beneficial.
- Facebook groups: more transparency on who is behind or managing them is important for research.
- Tweets visible on Crowdtangle over a week, not only to the last 7 days are needed.
- Searching data on Crowdtangle: limited data for Twitter makes it impossible to compare data between platforms (7 days for Twitter, longer periods for Facebook or Instagram).
- Searching data on Crowdtangle: there are problems for searching some formats. It's a very useful tool for studying the dissemination of links, but not for other formats (videos, photos, etc).
- Searching data on Crowdtangle: there is a privacy issue. When studying the amplification of a hoax, going to a post or content requires clicking the content. The tool doesn't permit indirect access or an overview without clicking or accessing potentially dangerous content.
- Searching data on Facebook: Facebook makes it more and more difficult to find content. When looking for a piece of content, the searches are sometimes complex and the results are presented in a chaotic way. For instance, it's not easy to find the first person or account that published the post. Presenting the results in a more structured way would help.
- Searching data on Facebook, Twitter and others: aggregate data about the spread of a piece of content is missing. It's not possible to quantify the global spread of a piece of content (video, photo).
- Very complex data searches on TikTok forces the researchers to look for TikTok content posted on other platforms that are more easy to research.
- In addition, researchers may demand to have access to the items that have been taken down to be able to follow possible disinformation actors, look for connections with newly created accounts, avoid disinfo replication, etc. Social platforms must keep archives of taken downs and make them available to researchers to investigate.
- Directed to Telegram: Now that they have positioned themselves and it is a well-known channel with hundreds of thousands of users, it is time for Telegram to address the disinformation that moves through groups and channels. Sometimes we can only detect that there is disinformation in a channel by seeing the name of the channel. But it would be useful to have more tools to monitor or investigate the content inside the groups or channels.
- In cases of sensitive or urgent release of disinformation that could put in danger a certain part of the society having off-line impact, researchers could request access to partial information contained in private accounts. Always under strict protocols that safeguard privacy as much as possible. For example, providing key works about very sensible topics (based on our narratives follow up). When searching for very concrete keywords, Crowdtangled could open the search to private accounts.
- Civil society researchers could have more fluid and direct communication with platforms, similar to what the fact-checkers have.

- APIs are widely used and appreciated, however, there is a lack of standardization across platform API access, that makes accessing data and studying cross-platform difficult, also many variables cannot be accessed such as impressions, closed captions, and anonymous comments.
- Often access to data depends on relationships an organization has with a platform, your request for API access can very much depend on that, helping to make this process more structured and transparent would be beneficial.
- The data access should not be limited to having links to academic research, it excludes a vast number of civil society organizations doing important work where academia is not taking a primary role in researching an area, like in case of disinformation.
- There is a need to improve transparency reports, particularly in the context of geographic and language granularity.
- There is a need better access to tools that help with the analysis of video content and direct messaging platforms.