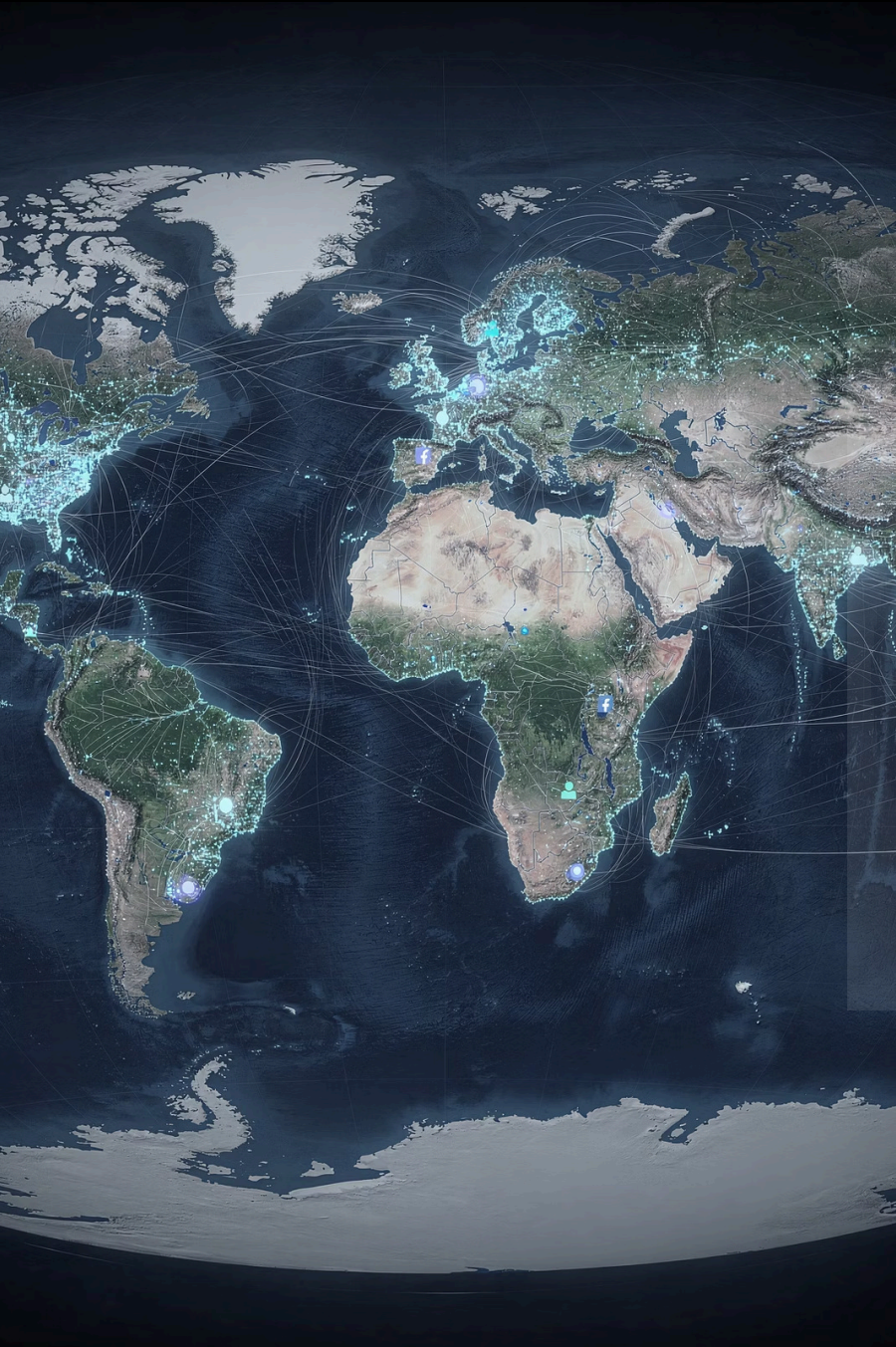




Social Media as an Informative Source

Social media are web-based platforms providing communication tools for people to interact, share thoughts, and create information flows in private and public networks. From Likes and Followers to Videos and Blogs, these platforms generate massive data — but knowing how to cut through the noise to find actionable insights is a real skill.

Because social media is construed as a tool of **collective wisdom**, it is used by researchers, journalists, investigators, and advertisers. However, its explosive growth has created information overload, making it harder to filter fact from fiction. This presentation explores social media as a data source — and how to spot fake accounts spreading misinformation.



Social Media Facts to Reckon With

3.03B

Active Users

Active social media users
out of 3.5B internet users
worldwide (2017)

7.6

Avg. Accounts

Average number of social
media accounts per internet
user

60B

Messages/Day

Messages handled daily by
Facebook Messenger and
WhatsApp combined

15s

New User

A new social media user
joins every 15 seconds;
121M new users in Q3 2017
alone

91% of retail brands use 2 or more social media channels, and 81% of all small and medium businesses use social platforms to reach customers.

Social Media Business Statistics

Ad Spend Growth

Social networks earned **\$8.3 billion** from advertising in 2015, surging to **\$40 billion** in 2016. 38% of organizations planned to spend more than 20% of their total ad budgets on social media.

Brand Engagement Insights

- Only 20 Fortune 500 companies engage customers on Facebook; 83% have a Twitter presence
- People aged 55–64 are **twice as likely** to engage with branded content than those under 28
- 96% of people who discuss brands online do **not** follow those brands' profiles
- 78% of people who complain to a brand via Twitter expect a response **within one hour**

Social Media Data as a Predictive Tool

Extracting social trends from online chatter — combined with surveys and polls — creates a powerful opportunity for **Data Analytics and Predictive Analytics**. The Business Dictionary defines a social trend as "a pattern of gradual change in a condition or process over time, represented by a line or curve on a graph."

Every era has its social trends: beepers gave way to cell phones; Facebook and Twitter introduced instant global connectivity. Today, tools can churn large quantities of data to create valuable insights — mining customer sentiment, likes, dislikes, and personal interests to support marketing and customer service.

In professional research and academics, social media is being upgraded as a **primary information resource** — provided the information is verifiable.

Social Media Benefits for Researchers

1

Stay Current

Keeping up-to-date with topics and following other researchers' work

2

Collaborate Globally

Virtual collaborations, global reach, and discovering new ideas or publications

3

Verify & Collect

Verifying theories, collecting real-time information, and accessing massive data collections

4

Promote & Connect

Promoting current work, making new research contacts, and conducting social experimentations



CHAPTER 1

Social Media Trends

Understanding how trends form, spread, and evolve across social platforms is foundational to effective research, marketing, and investigative work. The following slides explore social trends across sociology, marketing, lifestyle, and culture.

Social Trends in Sociology



The term "**social trends**" came into use with the statistical measurement of trend lines, but quickly expanded to describe movements not statistically measured — such as the growth of institutions.

A major objective in studying trends is to indicate the **future as well as describe the past**. Trends are projected forward, though prediction error increases with the extent of extrapolation. It is essential to study the factors affecting a trend and how they correlate with it.

Much foundational research in this field was conducted at the **Social Science Research Building, University of Chicago**.

Source: Ogburn

Social Trends in Marketing

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a form of internet marketing involving creating and sharing content on social networks to achieve marketing and branding goals — including text, image updates, videos, and paid advertising.

With more brands competing across social channels, **audience attention spans are declining**. Businesses must quickly determine what resonates with their audiences to generate better engagement and brand loyalty. A focused study of the most advantageous social media platforms — guided by popular trends — is essential for driving audiences to online platforms.



Social Media Lifestyle Trend



Self-Image & Identity

Lifestyle reflects how people see themselves and believe they are seen by others — a composite of motivations, needs, and wants.



Cultural Influences

Lifestyle is shaped by culture, family, reference groups, and social class, expressed in both work and leisure behavior patterns.



Psychographics

Analysis of consumer lifestyles (psychographics) is critical for determining how consumers make purchase decisions. See also: VALS-2 system.

Source: Dictionary.com

Socio-Cultural Trends

Sociocultural trends are **patterns found within human culture and interaction** that change over time, influenced by environmental, technological, and social forces. The Internet has dramatically increased global interconnectedness, causing many trends to be observed worldwide simultaneously.

The largest current sociocultural trend is the **growth of connectivity through social media and telecommunications**. Ideas once confined to certain hubs can now be anonymously displayed online and spread globally — enabling uprisings against authoritarian regimes, such as during the **Arab Spring**, and giving voices to those previously afraid to speak out.

Source: current-sociocultural-trends

Key Insight

The instantaneous and anonymous transfer of information has fundamentally reshaped political and social power structures worldwide.

CHAPTER 2

Social Media Data Collection Methods

This section addresses data collection methods from social media websites and introduces social data extraction tools and information-gathering techniques. Because many social media portals focus on specific markets — LinkedIn for corporate communities, YouTube for video, Facebook and Reddit for social groups — **Facebook will serve as the primary example** for trending pattern data collection methods.



Why Social Media Matters in Investigative Research

Collective Wisdom

Social media acts as a primary information resource for researchers, journalists, and investigators — capturing events as they unfold in real time.

Digital Footprint

As of 2026, a subject's digital footprint resides more in social interactions than in traditional public records. **62% of adults** now get news from social media.

Key Benefits

Verification of observations, access to massive data for facts verification, and real-time intelligence on person-of-interest activities or locations.

Trend Data Concepts

Sociological Trends

Focus on the growth of institutions and deviant movements from trend lines, often used to project future societal behaviors.

Marketing & Engagement Trends

Tracking audience engagement through text updates, videos, and paid advertising to determine what resonates with a target demographic.

Socio-Cultural Trends

Patterns within human culture and interaction. Global connectivity via social media enables instantaneous transfer of ideas, leading to major socio-political movements.

Lifestyles (Psychographics)

Lifestyle trends reflect a composite of motivations, needs, and self-image — critical for determining how consumers make purchase decisions.



CHAPTER 3

Facebook and LinkedIn as Data Sources

Both Facebook and LinkedIn offer specialized data attributes that go far beyond simple profile viewing. Understanding these platforms' unique data structures enables researchers to extract deep, actionable intelligence on individuals, organizations, and trends.

Facebook Data Attributes



Facebook Trending

Discover relevant topics based on publisher volume and user activity. Categories: Top Trends, Politics, Science/Tech, Sports, and Entertainment.



Facebook Insights

Gathers data on sentiments, opinions, and engagement metrics — Page Likes, Post Reach, and Engagement Type.



Facebook IQ

Uses inputs from scientists and trend spotters to help researchers understand consumer behavior across generations, geographies, and time.



Vertical Insights

Specific data funnels for industries like Automotive, Financial Services, and Retail.

LinkedIn Data Attributes

Why LinkedIn?

LinkedIn serves as the **primary source for corporate community data** and professional history — invaluable for identifying affiliations, career paths, and professional networks.

→ Feed Content

Surfaces "What People Are Talking About Now" — stories curated by editors leveraging on- and off-platform data.

→ Professional Footprinting

Identifies current job titles, company affiliations, and education histories.

→ Suggested Stories

Professional conversations of the day, keeping users informed about what colleagues and peers are discussing.



Platform Feed Behavior and Personalization

EdgeRank

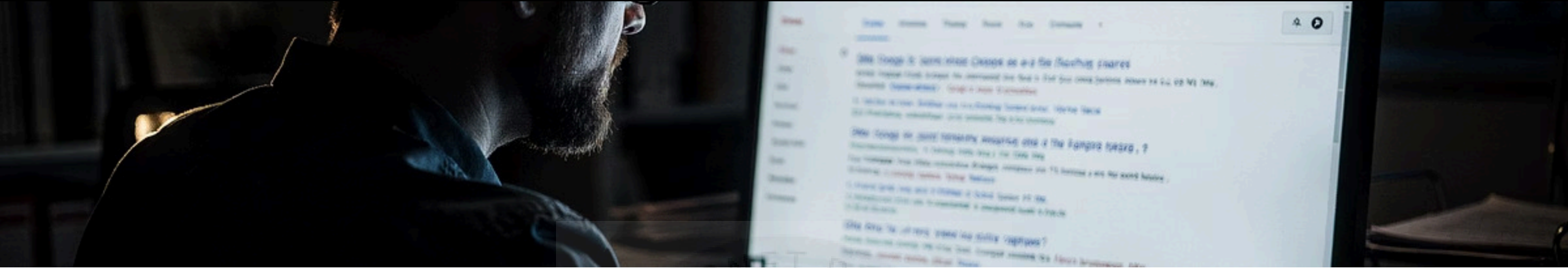
Facebook's algorithm dictating content value. The more likes, shares, or comments a post receives, the more exposure it gets — governing how a page interacts with other profiles.

Personalization Markers

Content is tailored based on location, prior activity, and follows. A researcher viewing a profile may see a different "reality" than the subject themselves.

Vibe Hacking (2026)

Sophisticated agents now analyze emotional responses to feed content, allowing threat actors to adjust tone mid-interaction to steer user behavior.



CHAPTER 4

Practical Search and Collection Methodologies

Researchers use "**Google Dorking**" and native platform operators to isolate high-value data from social media platforms. These specialized search queries allow investigators to pinpoint individuals, companies, groups, and posts with surgical precision — turning public data into structured intelligence.

Specialized Search Query Examples

Target	Platform	Query Example
Person by Name	Facebook	site:facebook.com "First Last Name"
Employees of Company	LinkedIn	site:linkedin.com inurl:people "Honeywell"
Group by Keyword	Facebook	site:facebook.com inurl:group "Internet Research"
Post by Title	LinkedIn	site:linkedin.com content "Internet Search"

These Google Dorking queries leverage the `site:` and `inurl:` operators to restrict results to specific platforms, dramatically improving signal-to-noise ratio in social media research.

Search Operators on LinkedIn

Supported Field Operators



firstname: / lastname:

Search for specific individuals by name



title:

Find members by their current job title



company: / school:

Keyword searches within specific institutions

Boolean Logic

Combine operators with **AND**, **OR**, **NOT**, and **Quotes ""** for exact phrases to build highly targeted searches. Example:

```
title:"software engineer" NOT lastname:doe school:(harvard OR stanford)
```

Practical Data Collection Tools



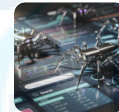
Hashtag Analysis

Using # metadata tags to identify messages on specific topics. Tools like **Hashtagify** and **Hashatit** provide real-time conversation mapping.



People Search Portals

Pipl (deep web archives), **Yasni**, and **Spokeo** correlate social accounts with emails and public records.



Web Scraping (2026)

Automated collection mimicking normal user activity, converting dispersed information into structured datasets.



Social Listening

Talkwalker and **Social Mention** track brand mentions across multiple networks, including the real-time Twitter firehose.

Detecting Fake Accounts on Facebook

As many as **10% of monthly active Facebook accounts** are duplicates, per Facebook CFO David M. Werner. An additional **2–3% are "inauthentic accounts"** used for spam and policy violations — up from previous estimates of 6% duplicates and 1% fake accounts.

Facebook differentiates between **wrongly classified accounts** (e.g., a company set up as a personal profile) and **undesirable accounts** that deliberately use false information to spread spam. With 2.1 billion monthly users, Facebook estimates **approximately 270 million accounts** may be considered fake — with significantly higher concentrations in emerging markets like Indonesia and India.

Source: facebook-270-million-fake-accounts, 2017

The Importance of Facebook "Likes"

What is EdgeRank?

EdgeRank is the score Facebook assigns to every profile and page, dictating how it interacts with other profiles. The **greater the EdgeRank, the more a page appears in newsfeeds** — making it the engine behind viral content spread.

How Likes Drive Exposure

The Facebook Likes algorithm determines if content has value. The more likes, shares, and comments a post receives, the more exposure it gets — both short-term and long-term. All these metrics contribute to a user's EdgeRank score.

EdgeRank is the reason irrelevant or low-quality content floods newsfeeds — certain pages have EdgeRank factors Facebook has decided are relevant to you, regardless of actual quality.

Source: Pierce, 2012

Buying Fake Accounts and Fake "Likes"

Fake likes refer to external services selling packages of likes from fake accounts for a flat fee — e.g., "buy 10,000 likes!" There are **four primary methods** of generating fake likes:

1

Click Farms

Individuals with real accounts paid to manually like specific Pages.

2

Fake Accounts

Accounts not representing real people, generated solely to like Pages.

3

Self-Programmed Accounts

A person knowingly installs rigging programs to inflate their own Page likes.

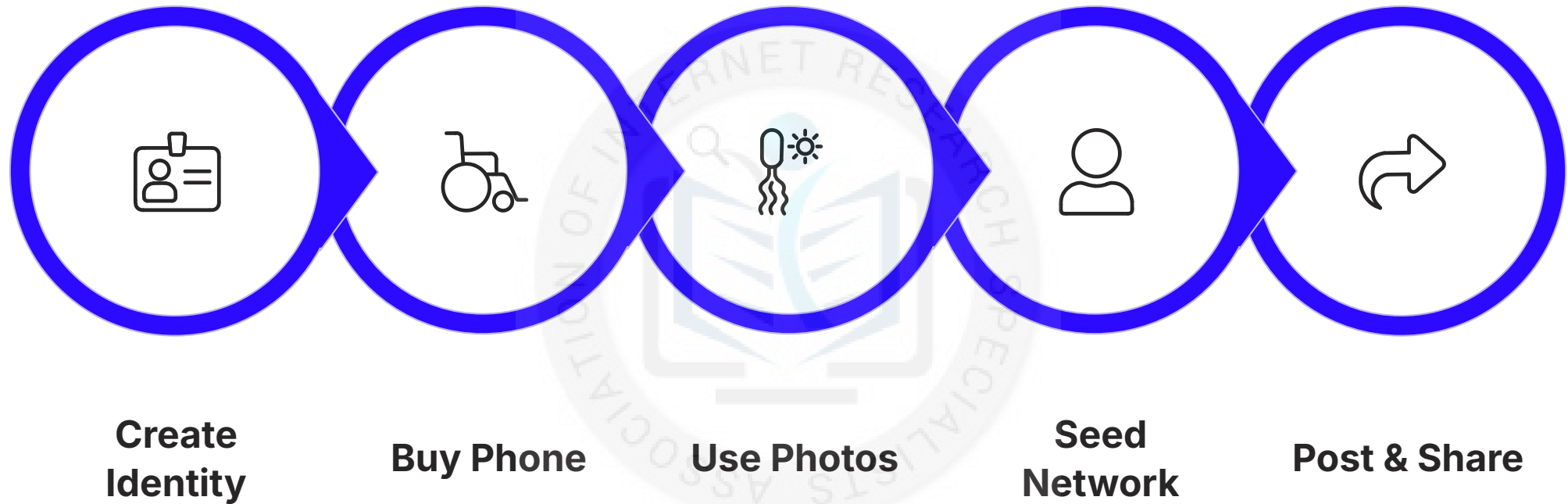
4

Hijacked Accounts

Compromised accounts injected with malware, causing them to like Pages without the owner's knowledge.

A Russian-run Facebook account called **Blacktivist** attracted 500,000 followers with provocative posts before Facebook shut it down. Facebook linked ~\$100,000 in ad purchases by Russian entities to about 500 fake accounts.

How Are Fake Facebook Accounts Created?



The process is surprisingly accessible — requiring no special technology. The end goal is typically financial: building a page with high EdgeRank and a large following, then selling it to businesses seeking quick wins in social media marketing.

Steps Taken by Facebook to Overcome Fake Accounts

Pattern Identification

Facebook's systems detect inauthentic accounts by identifying behavioral patterns — such as repeated posting of the same content or sudden spikes in messages sent — without assessing content itself.

Third-Party Fact-Checkers

Facebook flags untrustworthy websites with warning banners after vetting. Third-party fact-checkers, curated articles, and manual flagging are used alongside user reporting tools.

"Disputed" Labels

Facebook announced "Disputed" labels for false reports, giving users and fact-checkers a visible signal that content has been flagged as potentially inaccurate.

Source: Engadget.com

Video Content "Motion Scoring" Algorithms



Because Facebook's News Feed algorithm gives **preferential treatment to video content**, some Pages post static images as videos to game the system — gaining inflated view counts (e.g., 1.6K views on a 14-second static image).

Facebook responded with a **"motion scoring" system** that detects movement inside a video and demotes content that isn't a genuine video. Similarly, Facebook uses **machine learning** to detect fake play buttons in preview images — a tactic spammers use to trick users into clicking links to low-quality websites.

Source: Hutchinson

Detecting and Diffusing "Engagement Bait"

Engagement Bait refers to posts that goad users into interacting — likes, shares, comments — to artificially boost reach. Facebook now recognizes when publishers intentionally prompt engagement solely to inflate organic reach.



React Baiting

Asking people to react to the post



Share Baiting

Asking people to share with friends in exchange for something



Vote Baiting

Asking people to vote using reactions



Tag Baiting

"Tag a friend who'd do this!"



Comment Baiting

"Comment YES if you agree!"



Source: Scherer / Labs



Detecting Fake Accounts Through Facial Recognition

Facebook rolled out new **facial recognition features** to help users protect their privacy and block catfishing. Users who enable face recognition gain access to three key tools:

1 Photo Upload Alerts

Facebook alerts you when photos of you are uploaded — even if you haven't been tagged and aren't friends with the uploader.

2 Profile Picture Alerts

Alerts if your face appears in someone else's profile picture — aimed at preventing catfishing and "revenge porn" style attacks.

3 Accessibility for Visually Impaired

Visually impaired users can now hear aloud who is tagged in photos alongside them.

Source: gizmodo.com

Facebook's Tips to Spot Fake News

1. Skeptical Headlines

Catchy all-caps headlines with exclamation points are red flags.

2. Check the URL

Look-alike URLs mimic authentic sources with small changes.

3. Investigate the Source

Check the "About" section of unfamiliar organizations.

4. Unusual Formatting

Misspellings and awkward layouts signal low-quality sites.

5. Verify Photos

Reverse-search images to confirm origin and context.

6. Inspect Dates

Altered event dates or nonsensical timelines are warning signs.

7. Check Evidence

Lack of sources or unnamed experts may indicate false stories.

8. Cross-Reference

If no other trusted source reports the story, be skeptical.

9. Satire Check

Determine if the source is known for parody or humor.

10. Think Critically

Only share news you know to be credible.

Source: Tips to Spot False News, Facebook

Types of Fake Facebook Accounts

SPAM-BOTS



Automated accounts posting ads, spam links; rarely engage.

LIKE-BOTS



Programmed to collect likes/views, can be purchased.

STALKERS



Fake accounts to spy on blocked individuals.

PSEUDONYM ACCOUNTS



Real people using false names for privacy.

PSEUDONYM ACCOUNTS



Help accounts using another man a privacy.

SHARED PAGE MANAGEMENT



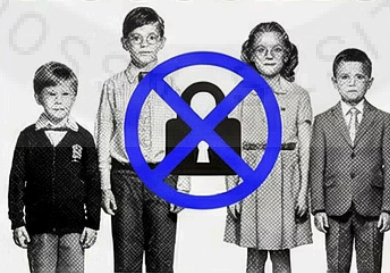
Marketers using separate accounts to manage pages.

TROLLS



Provocative users leaving hurtful, off-topic comments.

KIDS ACCOUNTS



Under-13 users misrepresenting their age.

ANONYMOUS SOCIAL ACTIVISTS



Extreme-view users hiding behind anonymity.

IMPERSONATORS



Using another's identity for fraud or chaos.

Detecting Fake Profiles: A Practical Illustration

A shared Facebook account ("GK – General Knowledge") is used here to illustrate how marketer-created accounts are designed to gather large volumes of likes and followings to attract advertisers. Key investigative steps include:



Reverse Image Search

Download profile pictures/logos and search via Google Images or TinEye. The GK logo was low-resolution, rough-edged, and used by many other accounts.



Split Video into Frames

Videos split into static frames revealed copy-pasted stock images with captions. Views of 65K–125K per image indicated paid distribution through high-traffic marketing partners.



Analyze Engagement Ratios

Disproportionate ratios — e.g., 1M views with only 22K likes and 23.5K shares, or 10M views claimed on a post — indicate purchased engagement.



WHOIS & IP Check

Domain "worldwidebuzz.net" was registered August 25, 2017, with private ownership. IP trace revealed hosting in Singapore with a poor email reputation — indicating spam activity.

Quick Checklist: Spotting Fake Social Media Accounts

PROFILE SIGNALS



- Too many likes too early too arly
- No contact info/updates
- Low-resolution pics
- Stock/borrowed albums

ENGAGEMENT SIGNALS

Great!
Congratulations!



- Brief generic comments
- Disproportionate likes/shares/views
- Engagement bait shares
- Extreme emoji bombardment

CONTENT SIGNALS



- Inconsistent upload frequency
- No personal status updates
- Enticing videos/photos to malware

NETWORK SIGNALS



- Groups joined immediately
- Most content public
- Friends list dominated by bots

Social Media Search: Tools, Utilities & Queries

Talkwalker

Social media listening across **10 social networks** with full Twitter firehose access. Covers **187 languages**, monitors **150 million websites**, and tracks **30,000+ brand logos** — the only platform with fully integrated visual listening.

Hashtag Search Tools

Hashtags (#) are metadata tags used to identify messages on specific topics across social networks. Key tools include:

- **Hashtagify** — Detailed hashtag analysis over time, influencer discovery, and trend rankings for Twitter and Instagram
- **Hashatit.com** — The first social search engine for hashtags; searches Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest in real time
- **Hashtags.org** — Hashtag analytics using Twitter's streaming API for a 1% sample of all tweets

People search portals like **Pipl** (nearly 3 billion online accounts, deep web archives including court records), **Yasni**, and **Spokeo** allow researchers to correlate social accounts with emails and public records.

Social Media Search Engines

Social Mention

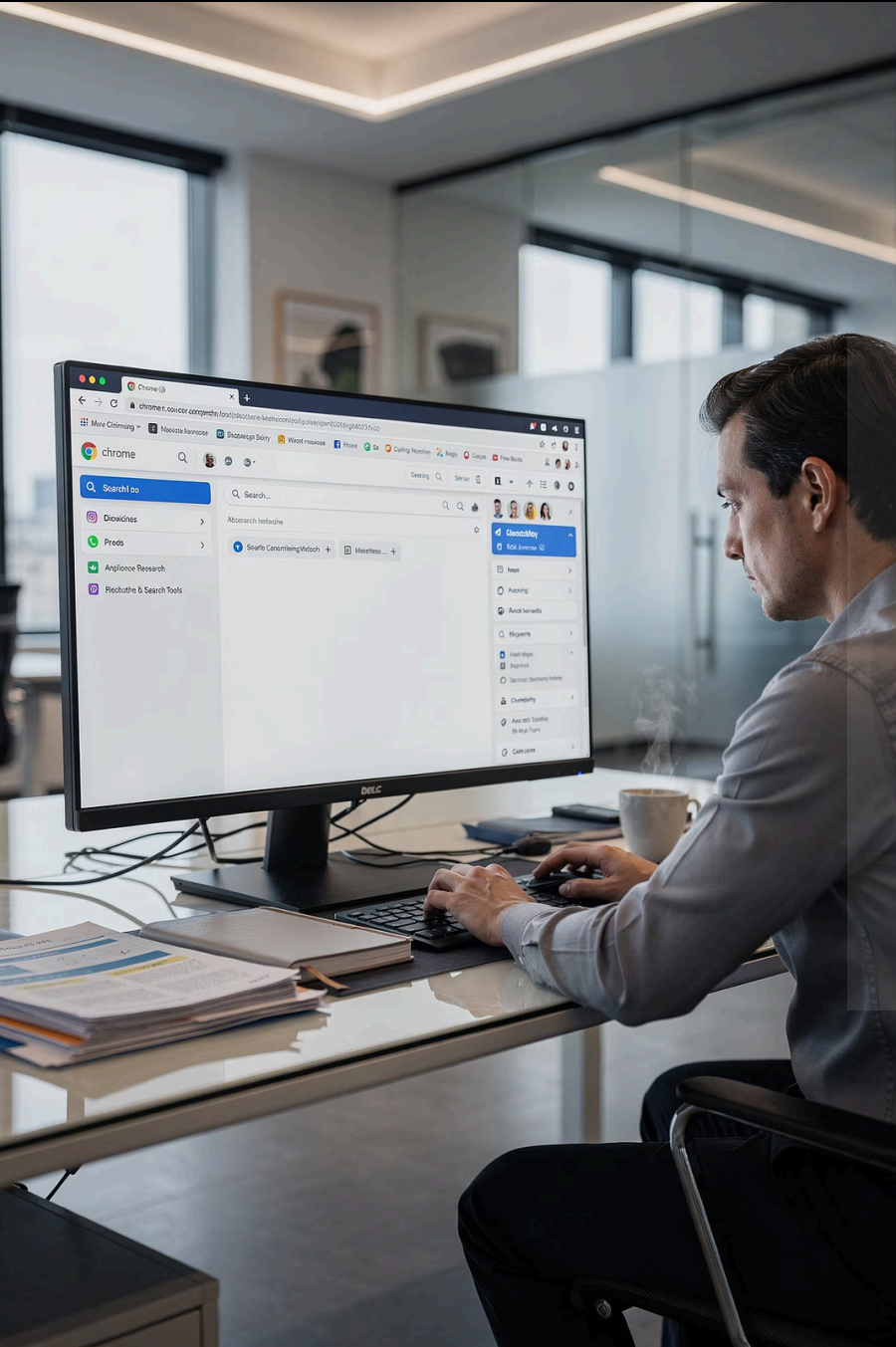
Aggregates user-generated content from 100+ social media properties including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Digg into a single real-time stream. Provides daily alerts and API access.

PeekYou

Searches usernames across social networking communities. Allows you to discover everything a username is doing across the web — an astonishing amount of data from a single handle.

Search Is Back

A custom Facebook advanced search engine using drop-down menus to find people by city, relationship status, school, and name — converting simple selections into Facebook Graph Search URLs with no extra login required.



Social Media Search Apps and Chrome Extensions

Social Searcher

A free social media search engine allowing real-time content search across Twitter, Google+, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, Reddit, Flickr, Dailymotion, and Vimeo — **without logging in**. Premium features include saved search history, data export, API integration, and advanced analytics.

Google Chrome Extensions

A range of Chrome extensions are available for performing targeted searches across social media websites, enabling researchers to streamline data collection directly from the browser without switching between platforms.

Tracking Usernames with KnowEm



What is KnowEm?

KnowEm was developed to assist everyone — from individuals to Fortune 500 companies — in discovering where their names, brands, or trademarked terms are available or have been taken on social media networks.

KnowEm helps secure your name across the vast social media landscape and shows you how to contact each site to have a stolen name released and returned to you.

Google Search Queries for Facebook

Specialized Google Dorking queries allow researchers to search within Facebook for people, posts, jobs, companies, and groups using `site:facebook.com` combined with operators like `inurl:` and `intitle:`.

Google Search Queries for Facebook

Search Goal	Query
Find a person by name	site:facebook.com "First Last Name"
Find in a specific country	site:en-uk.facebook.com "First Last Name"
Find a post by title	inurl:facebook.com posts "internet search"
Find a job by title	site:facebook.com jobs "research analyst"
People working for a company	site:facebook.com inurl:people "Honeywell"
Person at a company	site:facebook.com people dana clark "honeywell"
Group by keyword	site:facebook.com inurl:group Internet research
Exclude a term	site:facebook.com intitle:"marketing manager" -salaries

Using Specialized Search Operators in LinkedIn

Five Supported Operators



firstname: / lastname:

Find members by first or last name



title:

Find members by current job title



company: / school:

Keyword search within specific institutions

Example Query

To search for software engineers not named Doe who attended Harvard or Stanford:

```
title:"software engineer" NOT lastname:doe school:(harvard OR stanford)
```

Tips

- Use quotes for multi-word search terms
- Use parentheses for AND, OR, NOT phrases
- No spaces between the operator and the search term
- No commas between multiple search operators

Source: linkedin-help-answer-operators

Boolean Logic in LinkedIn Search

Quoted Searches ""

Enclose phrases in quotation marks for exact matches. Example: "product manager". LinkedIn only supports standard quotation marks.

NOT Searches

Exclude a term using uppercase NOT immediately before it. Example: programmer NOT manager

OR Searches

Include one or more terms using uppercase OR. Example: sales OR marketing

AND Searches

Include two or more terms using uppercase AND. Example: manager AND director. Note: searching two terms automatically applies AND.

Parenthetical Searches ()

Combine terms for complex searches. Example: VP NOT (assistant OR SVP)

Order of precedence: **Quotes** → **Parentheses** → **NOT** → **AND** → **OR**

Advanced LinkedIn Boolean Query Construction

Important Rules

- The + and - operators are **not officially supported** — use AND and NOT instead
- NOT, AND, OR must be typed in **uppercase**
- LinkedIn does **not** support wildcard searches
- Boolean search only works in the **keyword field**
- No spaces between the colon and the search term

Example: HR Title Search

(title:"human resources" OR title:hr OR title:hrm OR title:"people operations" OR title:personnel OR title:hrbp)

Example: Consulting Company Search

(company:accenture OR company:kpmg OR company:pwc OR company:ey OR company:mckinsey OR company:bain OR company:consulting)

Source: socialtalent.com

Using Hashtags (#) on LinkedIn



Hashtags on LinkedIn are **searchable words or phrases** preceded by a # sign. They can relate to your job function, industry, or target audience.

Examples: #B2BSales, #Marketing, #Accounting, #Finance, #Insurance, #SalesTrainer

Using hashtags helps you **increase LinkedIn reach** and get updates in front of people outside your immediate network — without needing to be connected. This raises brand awareness for both your company and personal brand.

When you type any hashtag into the LinkedIn search bar, you receive a list of relevant people, companies, groups, and posts.

Source: Roser, 2017

LinkedIn Boolean Search Tool

What It Does

The LinkedIn Boolean Search Tool helps users build targeted prospect lists by generating correct Boolean search strings. Enter target details, copy the generated string into LinkedIn's desktop interface, and use the resulting URL in prospect campaigns.

Two-Column Approach

The tool operates in two modes:

- **Column 1:** Advanced searching within LinkedIn using URL manipulation to filter by Keyword, First Name, Last Name, Title, Company, or School
- **Column 2:** Replicates these options through a detailed Google search for broader coverage

Additional utilities allow querying a live profile by username, displaying current employees of a business, viewing employee photos, and conducting reverse image searches on restricted profiles.

Google Advanced Search Queries for LinkedIn

Search Goal	Query
Find a person by name	site:linkedin.com "Naveed Manzoor"
Find in a specific country	site:uk.linkedin.com "Naveed Manzoor"
Find a post by title	site:linkedin.com content "internet search"
Find a job by title	site:linkedin.com jobs "research analyst"
People working for a company	site:linkedin.com inurl:people "Honeywell"
Person at a company	site:linkedin.com people dana clark "at&t"
Group by keyword	site:linkedin.com inurl:group Internet research
Exclude a term	site:linkedin.com intitle:"marketing manager" -salaries

Social Media Search Engines Directory (A–B)

Addictomatic

Searches the best live sites for the latest news, blog posts, videos, and images. Perfect for keeping up with hot topics and performing ego searches.

Anoox

A social networking-based search engine enabling information discovery through multiple social media websites or by asking questions to real people.

Backtweets

A Twitter time machine enabling search through tweet history for tweets that link back to your site.

Boardreader

An online search tool for forums and boards, finding popular content including videos, news, press releases, and articles.

Bing Social

Find the latest news and trending topics from Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites.

Brandwatch / Buzzsumo

Brandwatch delivers deep consumer opinion insights. Buzzsumo analyzes what content performs best for any topic or competitor.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (E–G)

Echosec

Location-based social media search. Finds, filters, and analyzes social media information in real time based on geographic data.

Facebook Graph Search

Facebook's social search tool enabling discovery of connections between people, places, and things based on friends, activities, interests, and status updates.

Flipboard

Your personal magazine — a single place to keep up on news, follow topics you care about, and share. Used by millions daily.

Google Social Search

Filters search results to include only content found within your social circle. Sign in to Google, search a term, and select "Social" from More search tools.

Google Trends

See the latest trends, data, and visualizations from Google. Find out what's trending near you right now.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (H-I)

Hashtracking

A famous hashtag search and tracking tool for Twitter and Instagram. Tracks and shares hashtags in real time and offers historical data for past hashtag lookups.

Hashatit

The first social search engine for hashtags (#). Searches Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest simultaneously in real time.

Hashtagify.me

The most advanced Twitter hashtag search engine. Find the best hashtags to reach your audience with detailed analysis and influencer discovery.

IceRocket

Connected to Twitter and Facebook, allowing keyword searches across blogs and social platforms for comprehensive content discovery.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (J–L)

Junoba

A search engine for the web and Twitter, providing basic cross-platform search capabilities.

Keyhole.co

Finds popular, useful, and interesting content published on Twitter, blogs, and news sites. Filter results by tweets, links, photos, videos, experts, or trending topics.

KnowEm

Check for the use of your brand, product, personal name, or username instantly on over **500 popular and emerging social media websites**.

LinkedIn Advanced Search

Filtered search — excellent for business, company, and executive searches. Rated 5+ for professional research utility.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (M–P)

Mamuna

Creates an organized catalog of all social media, complete with reviews and ratings for easy navigation.

Meetup

Find Meetups to do more of what matters to you — or create your own group and meet people near you who share your interests.

Mention

Real-time media monitoring with live updates about your brand from the web and social media. Monitors over **1 billion sources daily** including social media, forums, and blogs.

Omgili

A search engine that lets you find discussions, reviews, and user-generated opinions across the web.

Pinterest

A content sharing service allowing members to "pin" images, videos, and other objects to their pinboard, with standard social networking features.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (R–Se)

Rankspeed

A social media monitoring tool focused on filtering noise from social media conversations and providing cleaner signal from the crowd.

Search Is Back

Custom options for Facebook search — play with knobs, add friends to the search box, and discover what you can find through Facebook's Graph Search via a simple interface.

Sency

A Twitter-based search engine with an uncomplicated interface designed for average users, making real-time Twitter search accessible.

Smashfuse

Focused on searching for and connecting with people. Encompasses over **200 million social and online community profiles** — one of the largest people-search tools available.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (So-Sp)

Social Search Engine

A meta search using Google Search Engine filters for filtered, cross-platform social media results.

Social Searcher (Free)

Facebook search without logging in. Finds images, pages, and posts by keywords. Rated **5+** for accessibility and breadth of coverage.

Social Seeking

A media search engine that searches user-generated content — news, videos, and images — across social networks.

Snitch.name

A white pages service for social networks. Enables searching people's profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, MySpace, and other social media sites.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (So-Sp) Continued

Social Search Engine

A meta search using Google Search Engine filters — providing filtered, structured results across multiple social platforms from a single query interface.

Social Searcher — Free Social Media Search Engine

Allows Facebook search **without logging in**. Finds images, pages, and posts by keywords across major social platforms. Rated **5+** for ease of use and coverage breadth — one of the most accessible free tools for social media research.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (So-Su)

Social Seeking

A media search engine that searches user-generated content — news, videos, and images — across social networks.

SocialMention

Search blogs, microblogs, networks, bookmarks, comments, events, images, news, videos, audio, and questions for a specific term. Sort results by date, source, sentiment, and keywords. Create daily email alerts and real-time buzz widgets. Rated **5+**.

Sumall

A social media management tool that generates comprehensive social media reports for tracking performance across platforms.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (Sp–Sq)

Sprinklr

Sprinklr is a social media management tool for enterprise businesses. It offers social media marketing, research, advertising, sales, and content management on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other global social channels — all in one integrated platform. Rated **4** for enterprise utility.

Why Enterprise Tools Matter

For large-scale social media research and brand monitoring, enterprise platforms like Sprinklr provide the integration, scale, and analytics depth that individual tools cannot match — consolidating multi-channel data into actionable intelligence.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (T)

Twazzup

A real-time online tool for finding trending news and topics across multiple social media and news sites. Rated **4**.

Topsy

A social analytics company providing instant answers to critical business questions through real-time analysis of public conversations. Operates the world's only index of the public social web. Used by major global marketing, news, entertainment, and financial organizations. Rated **4**.

Tagboard

Leverages the hashtag as a social discovery mechanism — uniting people around common interests and goals with speed, versatility, and widespread adoption. Rated **4**.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (Ta)

Talkwalker

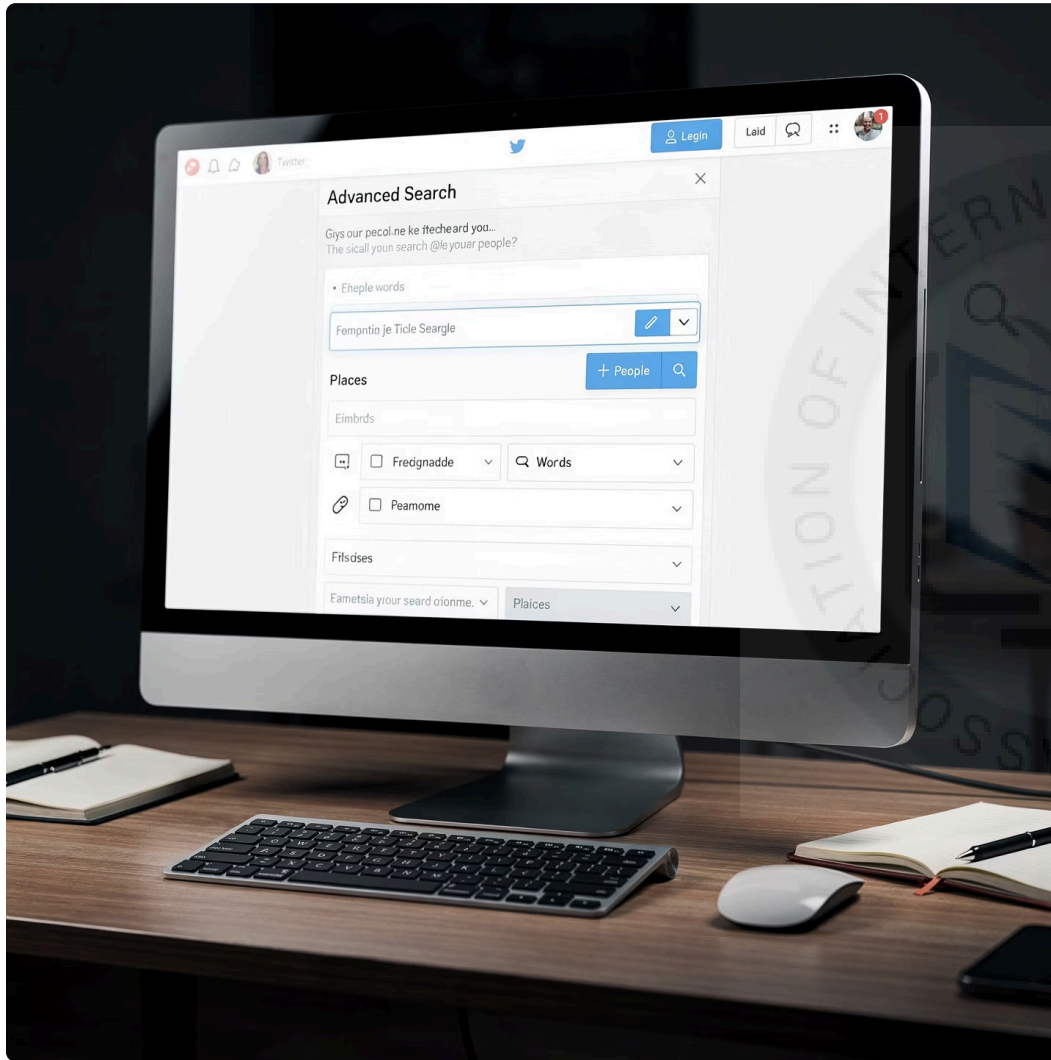
Brand media search across social networks. Rated **3** for specialized brand monitoring use cases.

Talkwater

A brand opinion search engine focused on surfacing consumer sentiment and brand perception across social platforms. Rated **3**.

- ❑ Both Talkwalker and Talkwater serve brand monitoring purposes but differ in scope — Talkwalker covers broader media listening while Talkwater focuses specifically on brand opinion aggregation.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (Tw)



Twitter Advanced Search

With **Twitter Advanced Search**, you can search based on people, words, and places. On the displayed results, you can instantly connect and follow any celebrity, expert, brand, or news source.

Twitter Advanced Search is rated **5+** — one of the most powerful real-time search tools available for tracking public conversations, breaking news, and individual activity on the platform.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (U)

UVRX

UVRX is a collection of **Google custom searches** built for Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other platforms. It leverages Google's technology — allowing users to specify a list of sites to search — with Google advertisements displayed as the only requirement. Rated **3**.

Why Custom Search Engines Matter

Tools like UVRX demonstrate how Google's Custom Search Engine (CSE) technology can be repurposed to create targeted, multi-platform social media search tools — without requiring platform-specific API access or login credentials. This makes them particularly useful for open-source intelligence (OSINT) research.

Social Media Search Engines Directory (V)



VK (VKontakte)

VK is Russia's largest social media platform, often described as the Russian equivalent of Facebook. It serves as a critical resource for researchers and investigators focused on Russian-speaking communities, Eastern European networks, and geopolitical intelligence.

Rated **5** for its relevance in international and cross-border social media research — particularly given the platform's role in political discourse and information operations originating from Russia.



Social Media Search Engines Directory (W–Z)

WhosTalkin?

If you want to join an online conversation about a topic, public figure, or brand, WhosTalkin searches the web and connects you with all relevant conversations on your chosen subject. Rated **2**.

Zoomph

Advanced social search tools ranging from basic phrase search to a proprietary **advanced fuzzy search** — enabling discovery of content even when exact keyword matches are unavailable. Rated **3**.

- ❏ This directory covers 40+ social media search tools across platforms and use cases — from hashtag tracking and people search to brand monitoring and enterprise analytics. The right combination of tools depends on your research objective, target platform, and required depth of analysis.