



## Analysing and verifying digital images and videos

#### Technology-assisted verification to counter disinformation

Jochen Spangenberg

**Deutsche Welle** 

Research & Cooperation Projects

Twitter: @jospang & @dw\_innovation











## Social Media Becomes a Lifeline in the Nepal Earthquake Aftermath

Posted 26 April 2015 7:11 GMT









Nepal, Apr 2015

Source: Global Voices Online, 26 April 2015.

**Brussels 21 March 2016** 

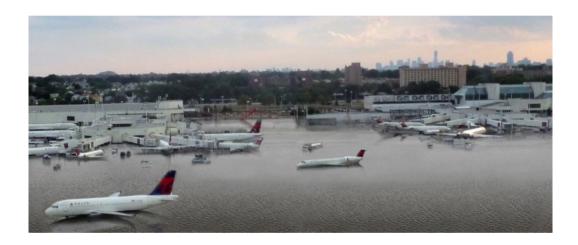
Source: Screenshot of video by Pinchas Kopferstein.
On YouTube here.

Sulawesi, 29 Sep 2018

Source: Screenshot from video uploaded by Muhammad Yasir Arafat On YouTube here.

Kabul, Afgh, 16 Aug 2021

Source: Screenshot from video uploaded by an anknown source



Source: NOT Houston airport after Hurricane Harvey, but a projection of what LaGuardia Airport / New York could look like at high tide with 5 feet of sea level rise, an amount that could occur by 2100, according to some estimates.

Image credit: Nickolay Lamm/<u>StorageFront</u> interpretation of Climate Central data.







#### EUROP

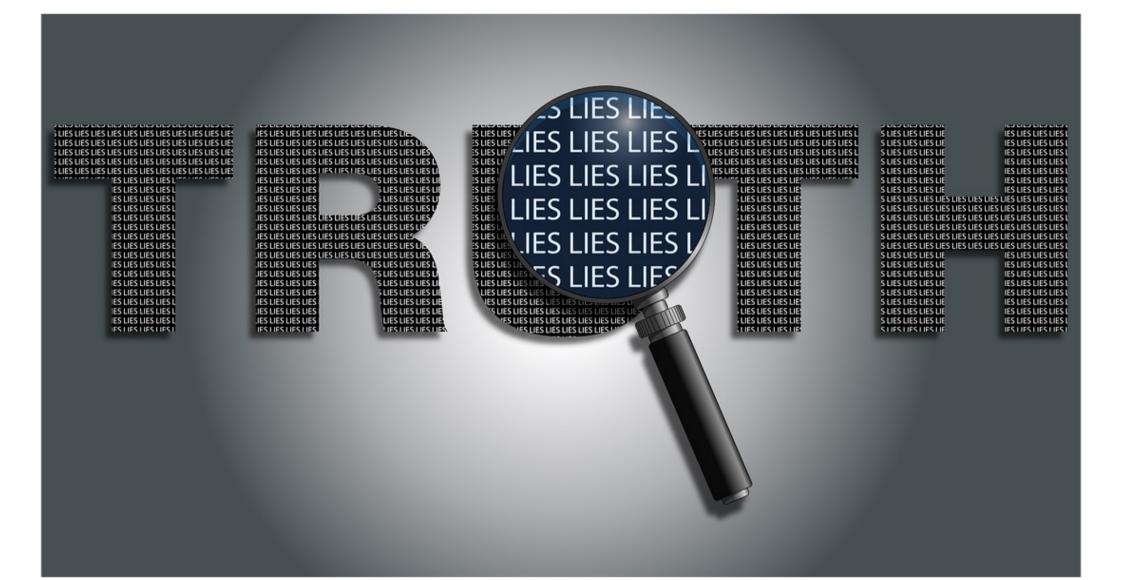
#### Fact check: 5 fakes of the war in Ukraine

Ever since Russia attacked Ukraine, thousands of images and videos of battle scenes have flooded the internet. But not everything is real — or what it appears to be.





Source: <u>BBC</u> Source: <u>DW</u>



# GRAPHIC CONTENT AHEAD

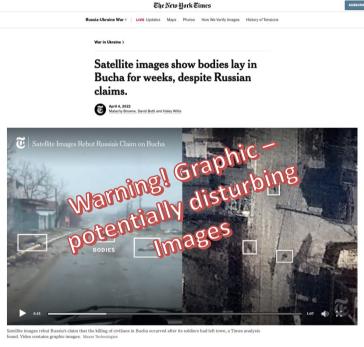
Some people may find some of the images / videos / contents displayed disturbing, unsettling or even traumatising.

As people react differently to different things, you may want to consider leaving the session.

If you do, that would be NO weakness but a sign of strength!

## The digital frontline ...







Shoigu today: "Our army only hits military infrastructure with no civilians

Christo Grozev @ @christogrozev · 29m

Source: Tweet of Russian embassy in the UK. Screenshot taken 10 March 2022 at 15.52. Tweet has meanwhile been blocked / removed by Twitter

Source: New York Times, published 4 April 2022

Source: Screenshot of <u>tweet</u> by Christo Grozev (@christogrozev) taken on 1 March 2022 at 12.55 CET



A Ukrainian immigrant in California shows a photo of her aunt hunkering down in a basement in Kyiv, Ukraine, amid





Mental well-being of investigators on the digital frontline

Searc

Recent Posts

Call for Interest for new Signatories to join the Code of Practice on Disinformation

Online Training: "Understanding and handling disinformation for practitioners focusing on Africa"

The vital role of measuring impact in media literacy initiatives

10 Recommendations by the Taskforce on Disinformation and the War in Ukraine

Mapping European media literacy initiatives in response to the war in Ukraine

Source: <u>dw.com / Jochen Spangenberg</u>
Source: <u>EDMO / Jochen Spangenberg</u>

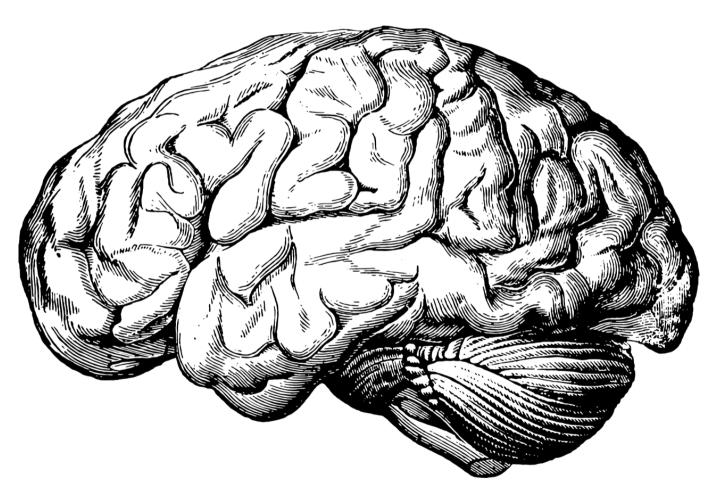


## TTT Tech, Tools and Tactics

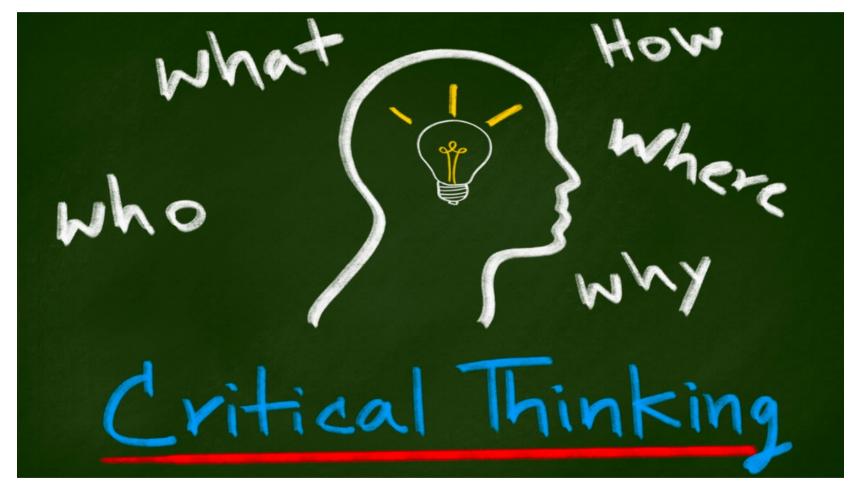




Source: Pixabay

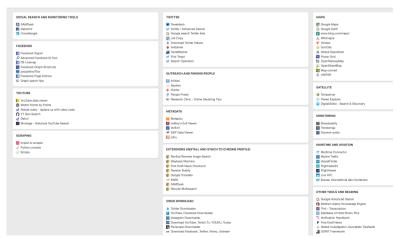


Source: Pixabay



Source: Sanskriti School

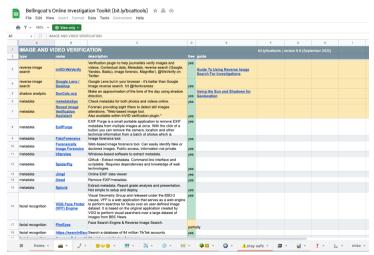
#### Source: Nixintel's OSINT list



Source: Malachy Browne's OSINT list

## Tools ... (and OSINT)





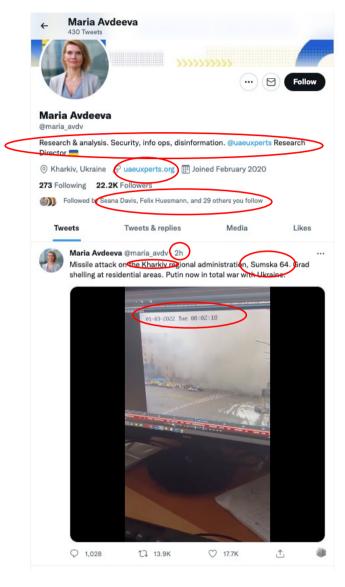
Source: Bellingcat (version 6.9)

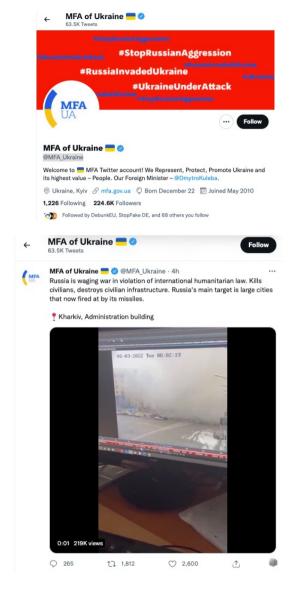


How to verify? Search for verification tools Explore workflows and tools for verification. What has happened? The information in the content you are investigating indicates that an event took place. Can you corroborate that the event and the claim shared by the source occured via other sources? Is there more information available on the event? And are you looking at or listening to the original file or is it a (manipulated) copy? Good to know • Check local media • Search cross-medial on different social media platforms • Reach out to eyewitnesses and reporters on the ground Trail: Home - Image - What

Sources: <u>DW Research & Cooperation Projects</u> / <u>How to Verify</u>

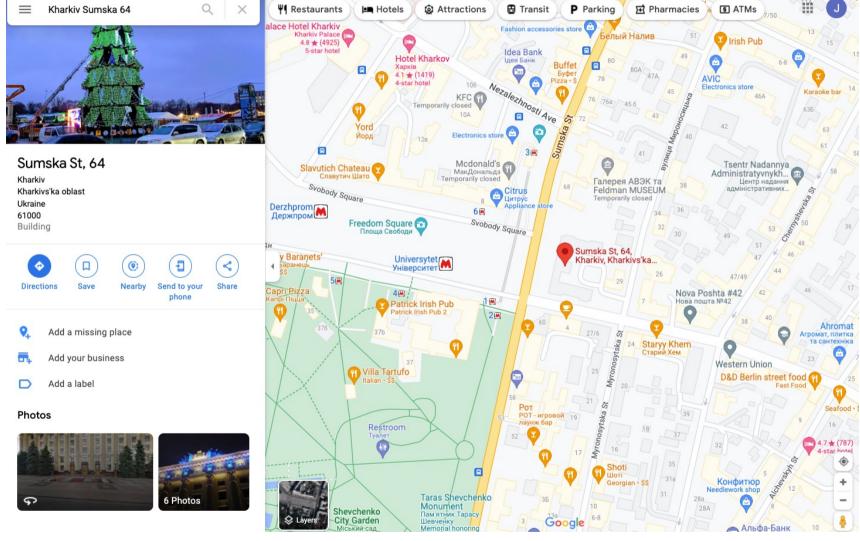
## Example of an investigation (to illustrate a possible workflow and digital verification process)



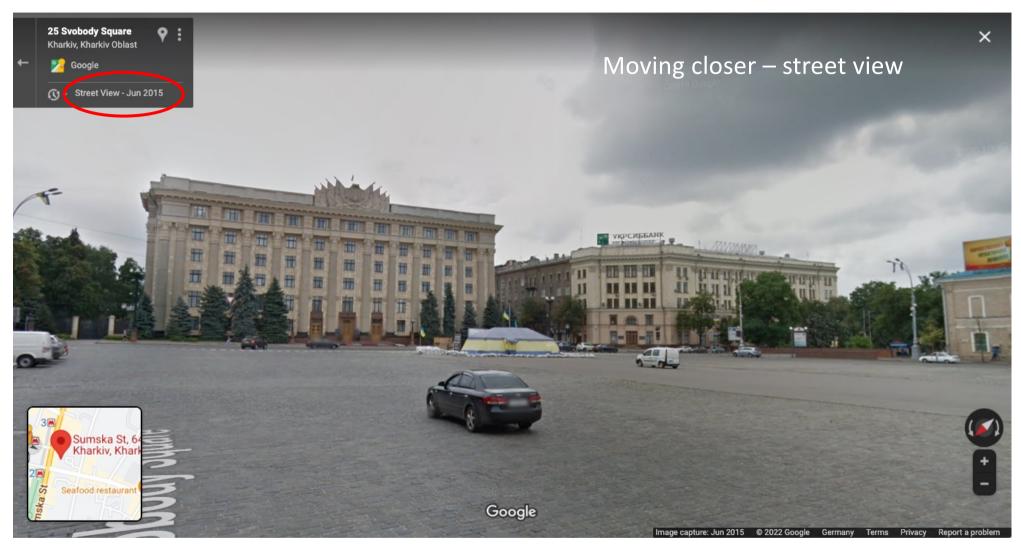


Taking and checking the location given in the text of the tweet

Sumska St, 64 Kharkiv

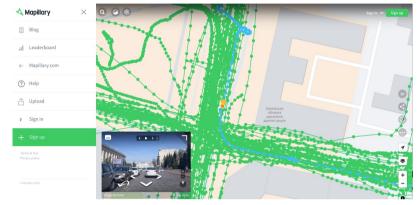


Source: Google maps

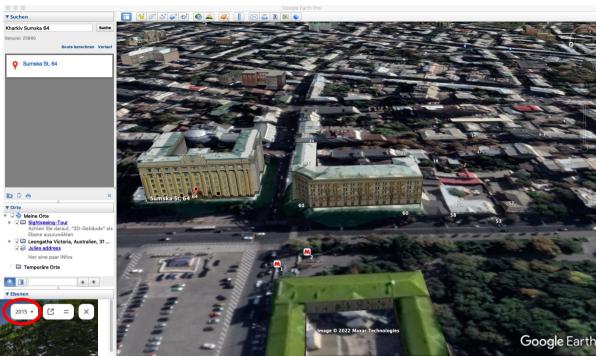


Source: Google maps / Street view

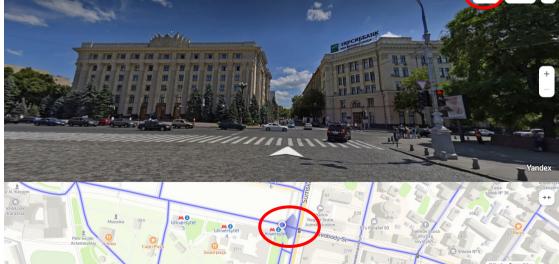
## Different mapping / geo tools, different perspectives



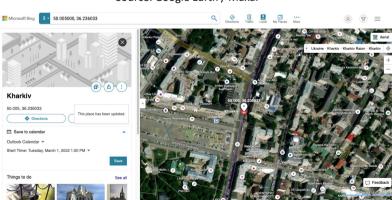
Source: Mapillary



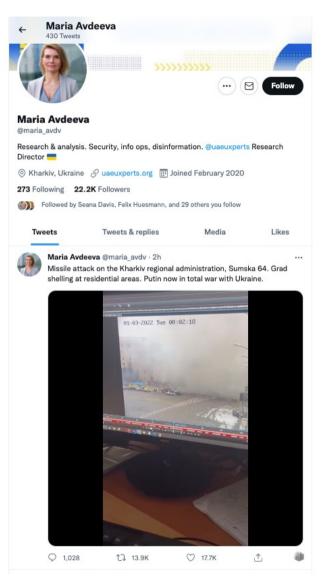
Source: Google Earth / Maxar



Source: Yandex Maps



Source: Bing Maps

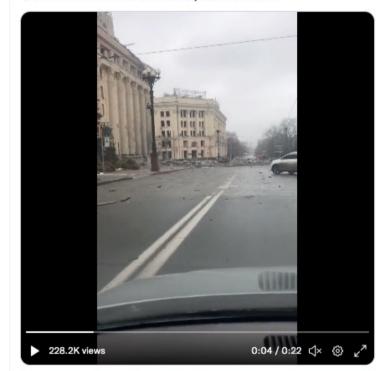


Source: Video shared via <u>Twitter</u> by <u>@maria\_avdv</u>.

Screenshot taken on 1 March 2022 at 10.20 CET



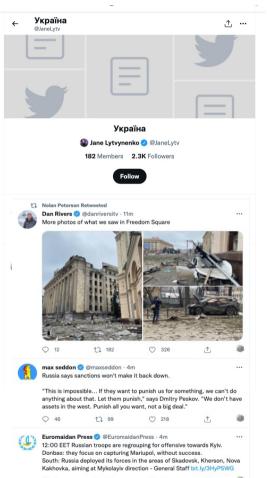
Video of aftermath of Russian rocket strike in Kharkiv, 0801, March 1, 2022. Target seemed to be Regional Administration Building, but rocket missed. Geolocated at 50.005000, 36.236033.



7:57 AM · Mar 1, 2022 · Twitter Web App

556 Retweets 46 Quote Tweets 1,598 Likes

Source: Video shared via <u>Twitter</u> by <u>@Euan MacDonald</u> Screenshot taken on 1 March 2022 at 10.52 CET

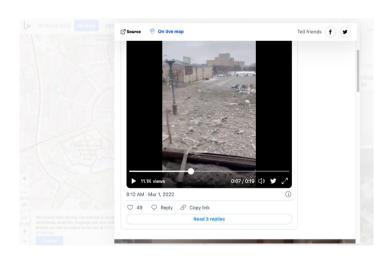




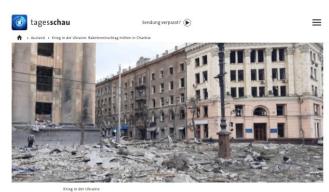
Christo Grozev 📀 @christogrozev - 29m Shoigu today: "Our army only hits military infrastructure with no civilians using high precision weapons" Also Shoigu today:



Source: Screenshot of tweet by Christo Grozev (@christogrozev) taken on 1 March 2022 at 12.55 CET



Source: Screenshot of content embedded into LiveUMap taken on 1 March 2022 at 13.00 CET Tweet by @antiputler\_news here



Raketeneinschlag mitten in Charkiw

Stand: 01.03.2022 10:55 Uhr

Am Morgen hat eine große Explosion Charkiw erschüttert. Offenbar traf ein Geschoss ein Verwaltungsgebäude im Zentrum. Zudem steht vor der Hauptstadt Kiew laut Satellitenbildern ein kilometerlanger Konvoi aus russischen Militärfahrzeugen.

In der ostukrainischen Metropole Charkiw hat es nach Angaben aus Kiew erneut schwere russische Angriffe gegeben. Das Außenministerium veröffentlichte bei Twitter ein Video, das einen Raketeneinschlag direkt auf dem zentralen Freiheitsplatz zeigt. Zu sehen ist eine gewaltige Explosion vor dem Verwaltungsgebäude, nachdem dort kurz vor dem Einschlag noch Autos vorbeifuhren. Über Opfer ist noch nichts bekannt.

Source: Screenshot of tagesschau.de taken on 1 March 2022 at 12.21 CET



Source: Screenshot of tweets contained in Jane Lytvinenko's Twitter List, taken on 1 March 2022 at 12.16 CET



Just when you thought state TV had stopped surprising you, Gazprom-owned NTV comes out with this:

"In expert opinion it was the military who attacked the Kharkiv administration building with a Smerch multiple rocket launcher or an Olkha, its modern modification"



8:02 AM · Mar 2, 2022 · Twitter Web App

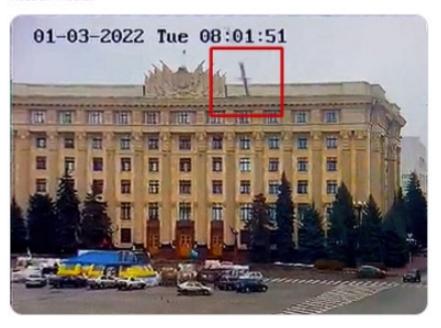
747 Retweets 215 Quote Tweets 2,513 Likes

Source: Tweet of Francis Scarr, BBC Monitoring, 2 March 2022 Screenshot taken on 2 March 2022 at 14.05 CET



#### Eliot Higgins @ @EliotHiggins - 5h

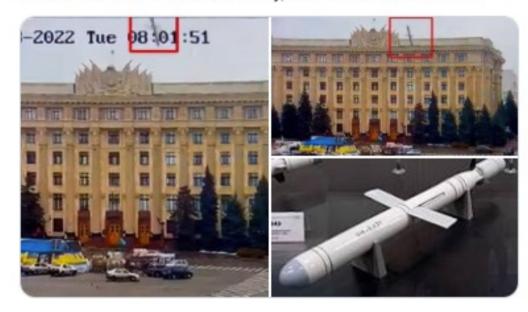
Again, it's no mystery a Russian missile was involved, it was caught on camera just before it exploded. Pathetic war time propaganda from the Russian media.



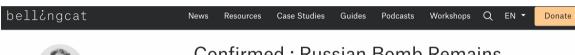


#### Christo Grozev 2 @christogrozev · 4h

We enhanced the CCTV images from the moment the missile hit the cultural/administrative building in Kharkiv. It matches the countours and dimensions of 3M54-1 Kalibr. Obviously, Ukraine has no such missiles.



Source: Tweet of Eliot Higgins, Bellingcat, founder, 2 March 2022 Screenshot taken on 2 March 2022 at 14.10 CET





#### **Eliot Higgins**

Eliot Higgins is the founder of Bellingcat and the Brown Moses Blog. Eliot focuses on the weapons used in the conflict in Syria, and open source investigation tools and techniques.

#### Confirmed: Russian Bomb Remains Recovered from Syrian Red Crescent Aid Convoy Attack

September 22, 2016 Russia Syria

Translations: Русский

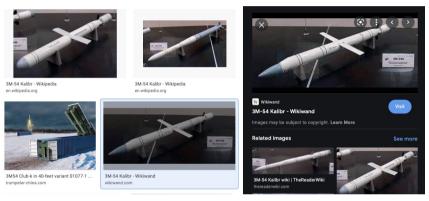
Yesterday, <u>Bellingcat</u> published <u>its report</u> on the bombing of the Syrian Red Crescent aid convoy on September 19th. The report examined various aspects of the attack using open source information, including the comparison of what appeared to be the tail section of a OFAB 250-270 bomb that appeared in images from the attack, first published by <u>CIT</u>:



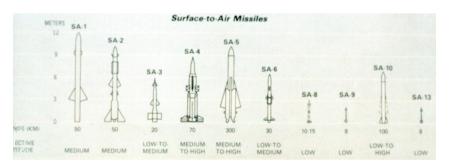
Conflict Intelligence Team comparison of debris found in crater and an OFAB 250-270. Source

Since the post was published the Bellingcat team has been in touch with the Syrian Civil Defence unit closest to the attacked site, who recovered and photographed two pieces of debris, including the object featured above.

Source: Bellingcat

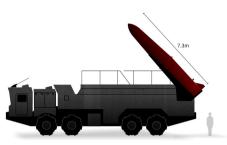


Source: Google image search "3M54-1"



Source: picryl.com





#### 9K720 Iskander

ORIGINATED FROM Russia

IN SERVICE 2006

RANGE 400-500km PAYLOAD 700kg

CAPACITY 2 ballistic or cruise missiles

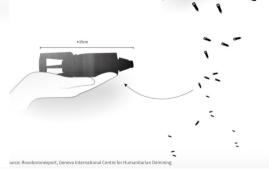
Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies



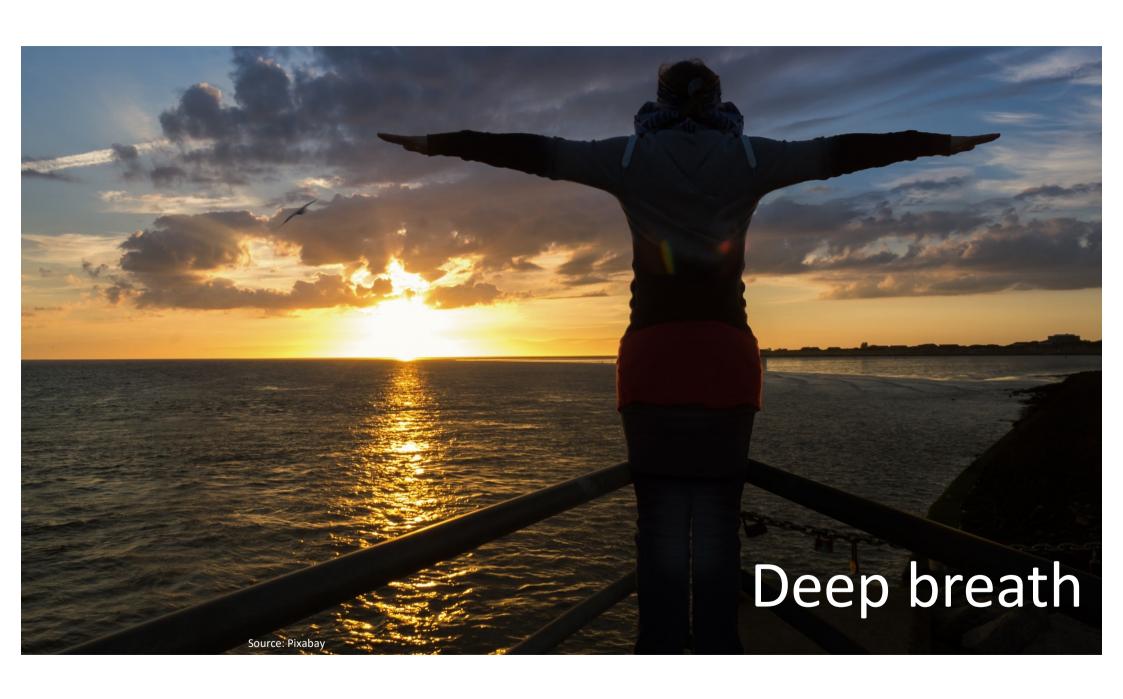
#### **Cluster munitions**

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch both said that Russian forces appeared to have used widely banned cluster munitions, with Amnesty accusing them of attacking a preschool in northeastern Ukraine while civilians took shelter inside.





Source: Reuters and respective named sources







## Some context



2016-2018

























2019-2021















Sources: respective copyright holders



Vera.ai

Sep 2022-Sep 2025































## Overall aims and concept

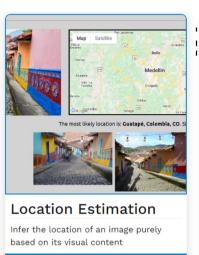
Develop novel AI- and network science-based methods that assist verification professionals throughout the complete content verification workflow.



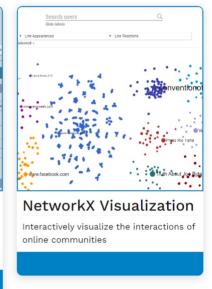
## Some verification assistants by vera.ai





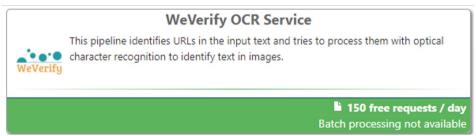






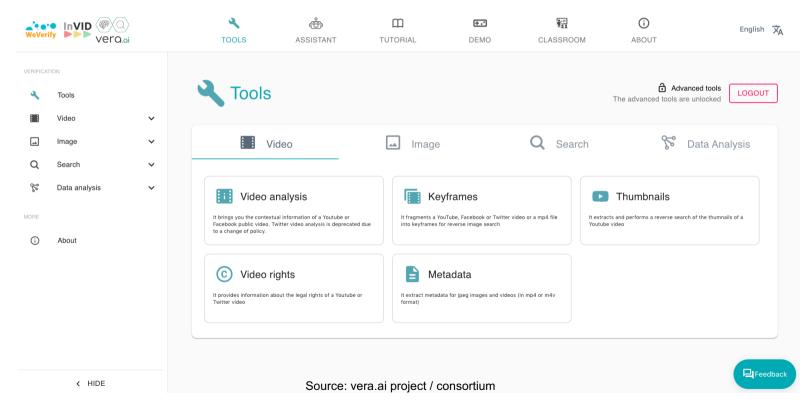


manipulated faces



## What is "the plug-in"?

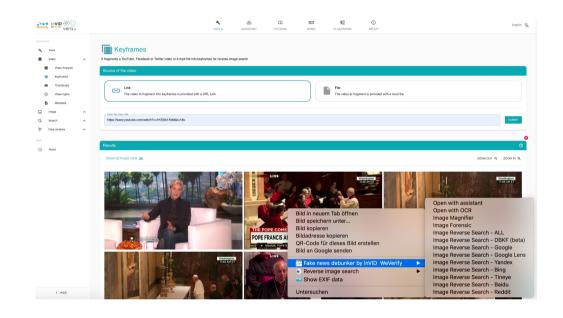
In short: "outward facing": a freely available browser extension for the analysis of digital content (mainly images and videos), optimised for Chrome, <u>available to anyone</u>, for free



## What is it and what's it for?

#### Combines numerous features

- From third parties
- Own developments / exclusive services

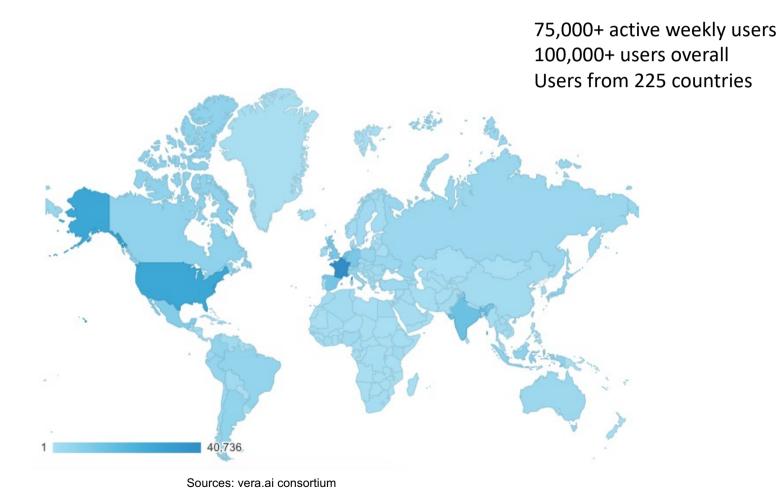


### Main usage by

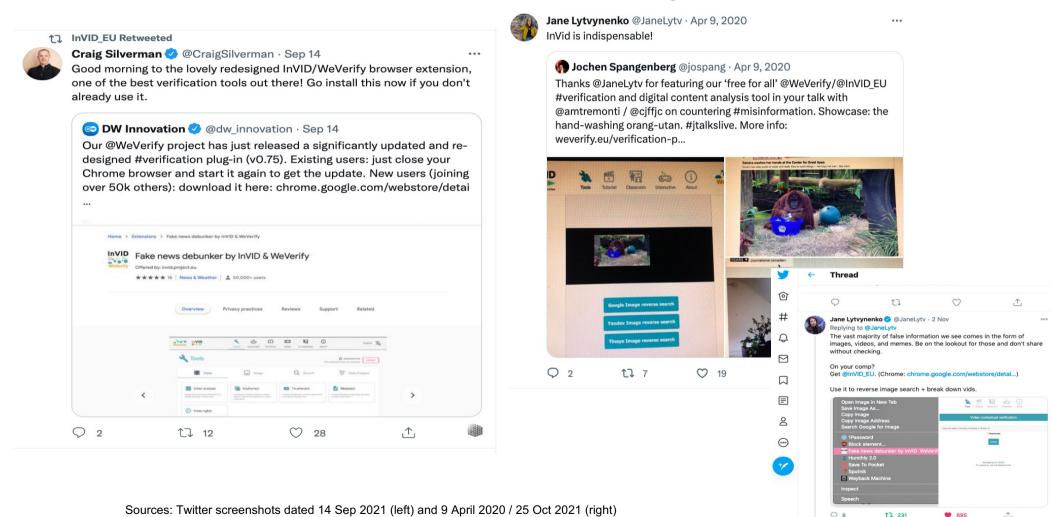
- Media workers (journalists, fact-checkers etc)
- Human rights (abuse) investigators
- OSINT community
- (Law enforcement, other investigators)

## Usage of the verification plugin

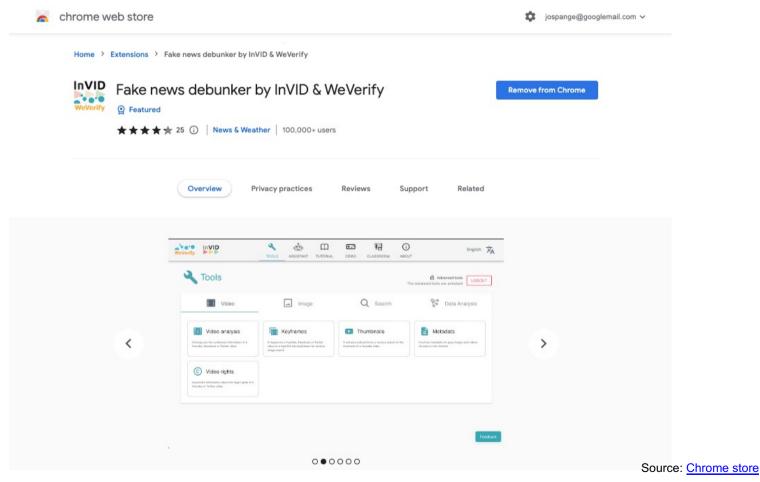




## What others say



# Getting started – getting the WeVerify browser extension / plug-in



# Getting started – <a href="https://hebrel.ncbe/having-the-WeVerify-browser-extension/plug-in-b





















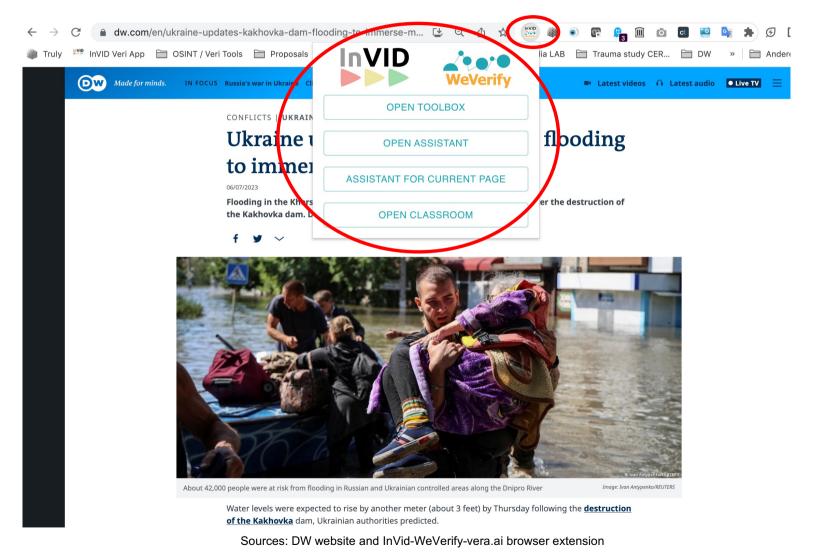




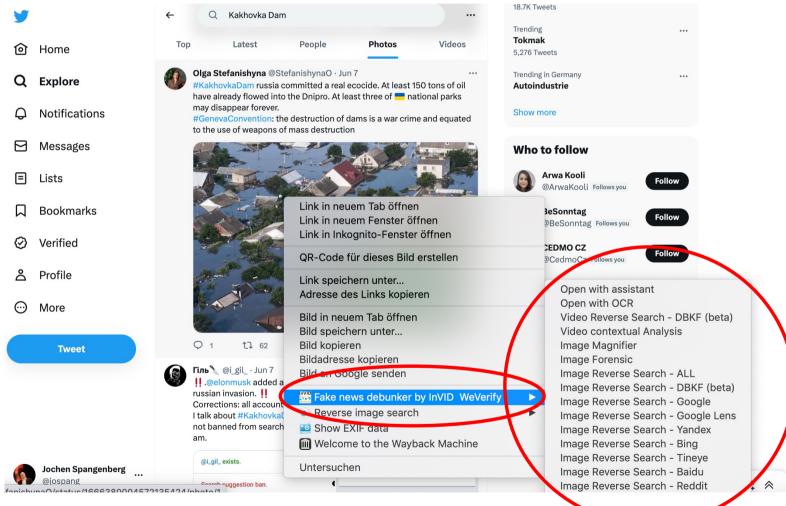




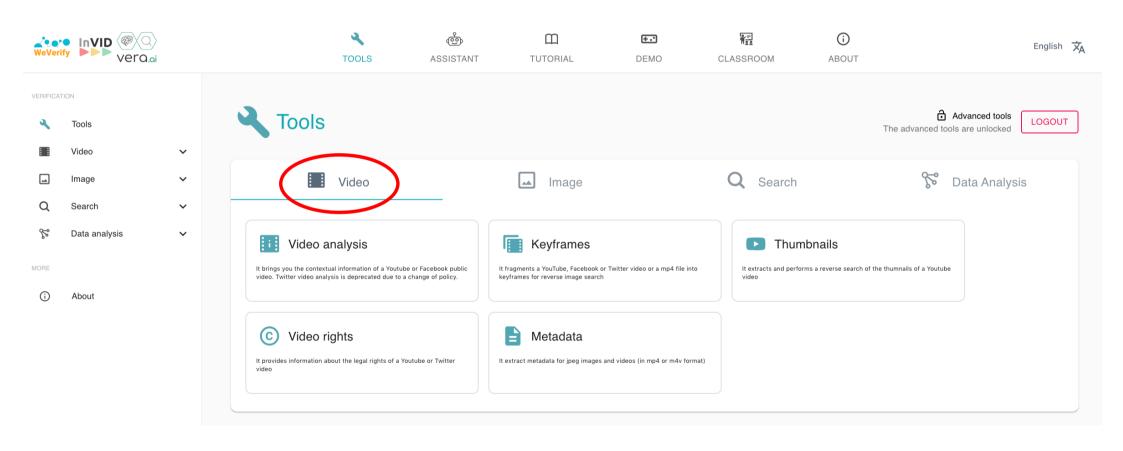
#### Getting started – one way

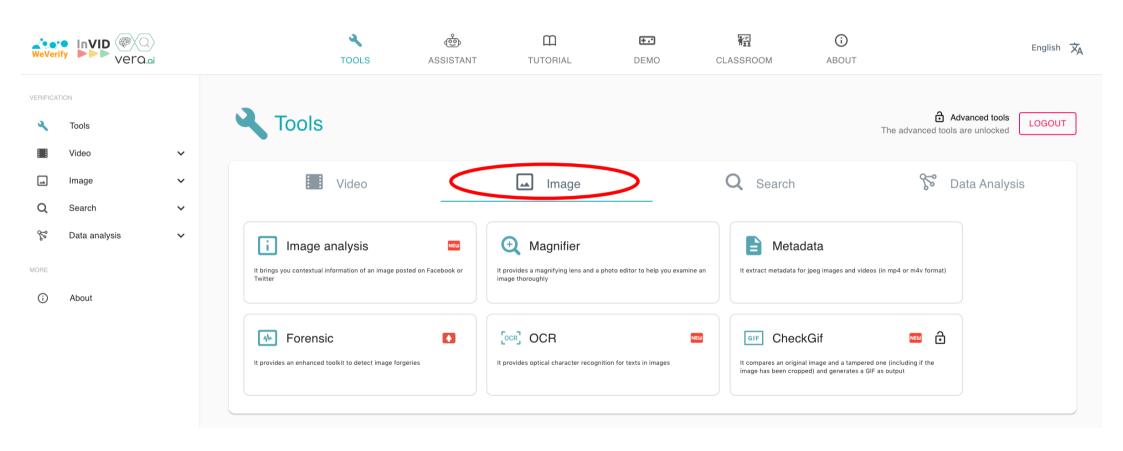


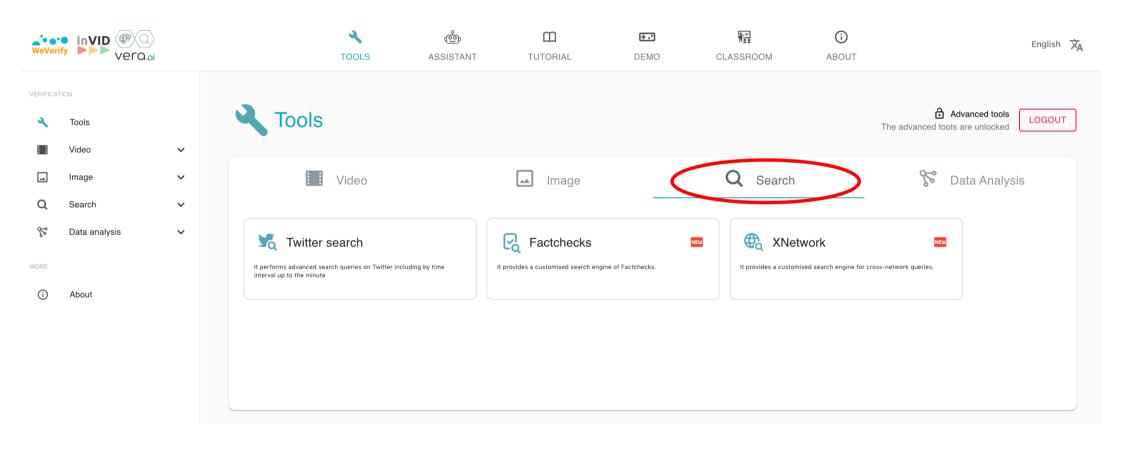
#### Getting started – another way

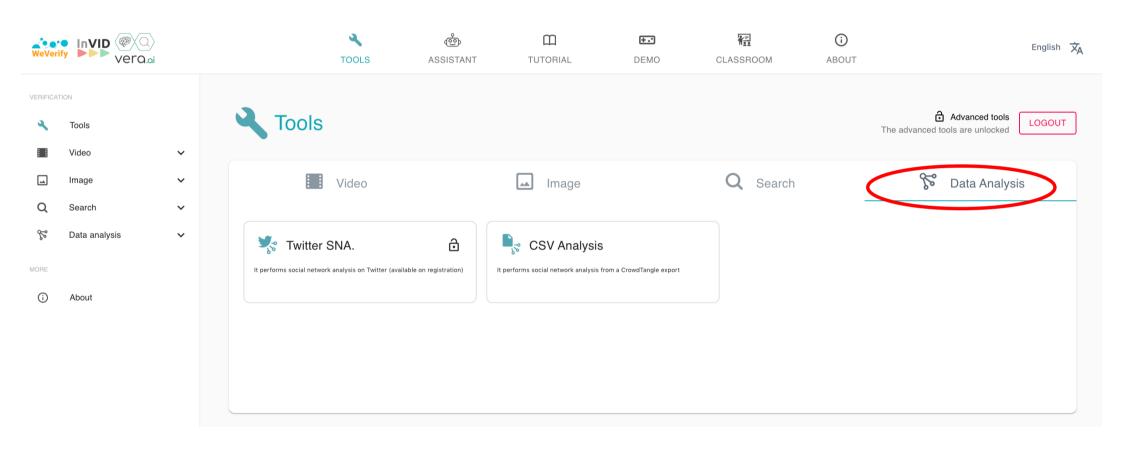


Sources: Twitter and InVid-WeVerify-vera.ai browser extension





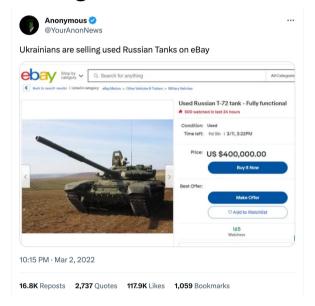




# Selected scenarios / use cases: going live!



## 1: Investigating an image found online



Source: Tweet of @YourAnonNews. Screenshot taken on 06 Sep 2023 at 10.47 am CET

#### **Questions / investigation:**

- Was the photo of this tank taken recently?
- Is it likely that this photo depicts a tank captured by the Ukrainian military?

## 2: Investigating an image you were sent



Source: Screenshot of a personal image

#### **Questions / investigation:**

- When was the image taken?
- Where was it taken?
- Context?

## 3: Investigating a video



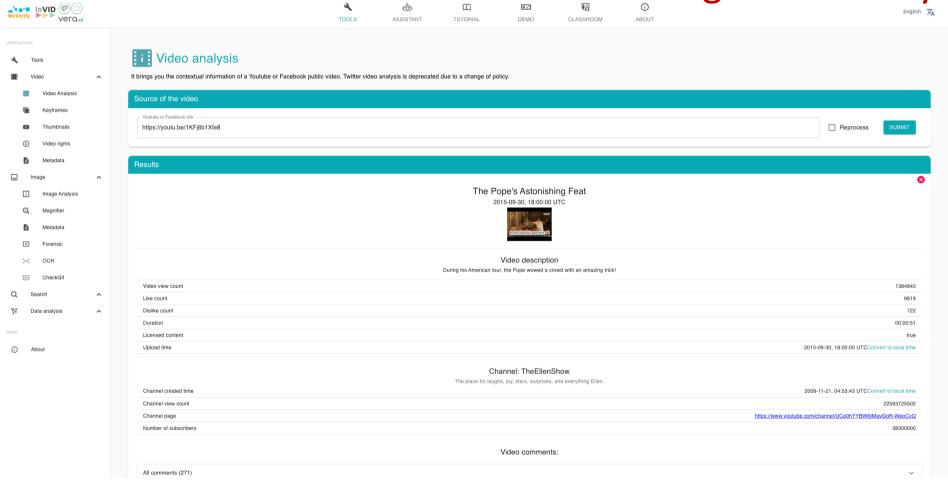
Source: The Ellen Degeneres Show – Onlineversion here

#### Questions / investigation:

• Is this real?

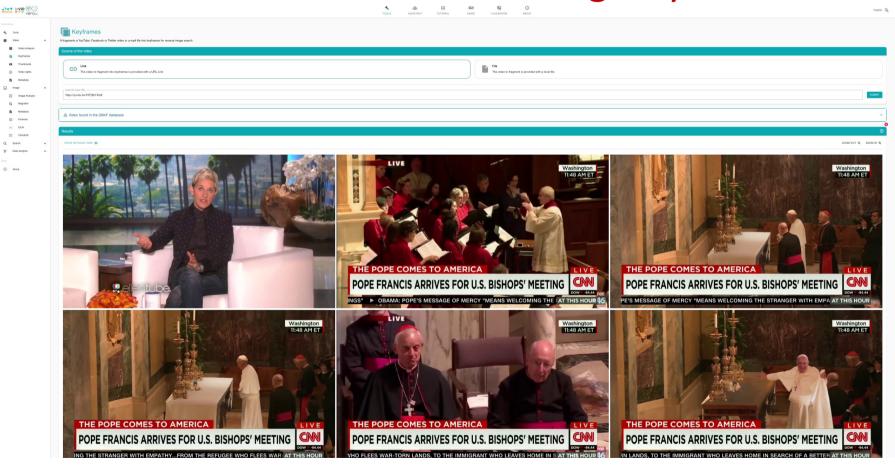


# There's a lot in it (1) e.g. video analysis



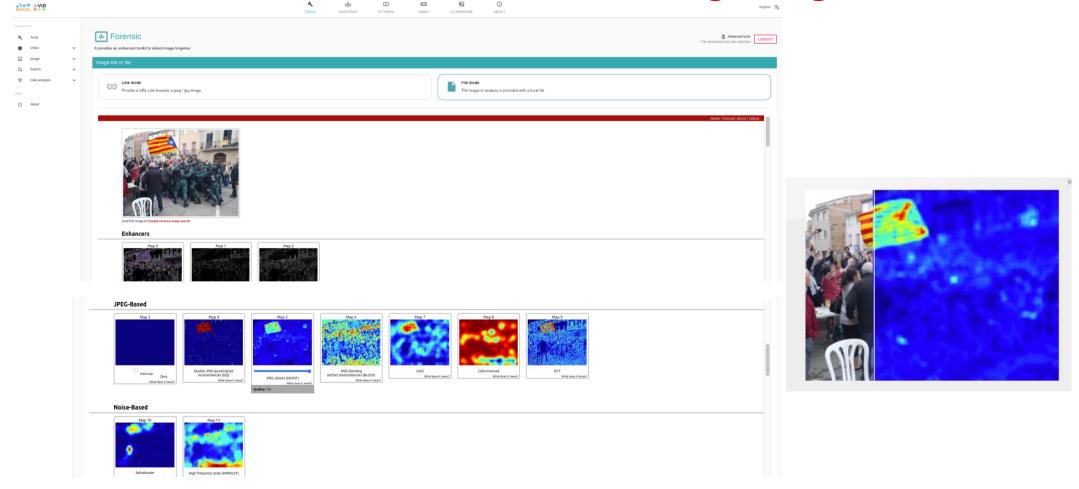
# There's a lot in it (2)

e.g. keyframe extraction

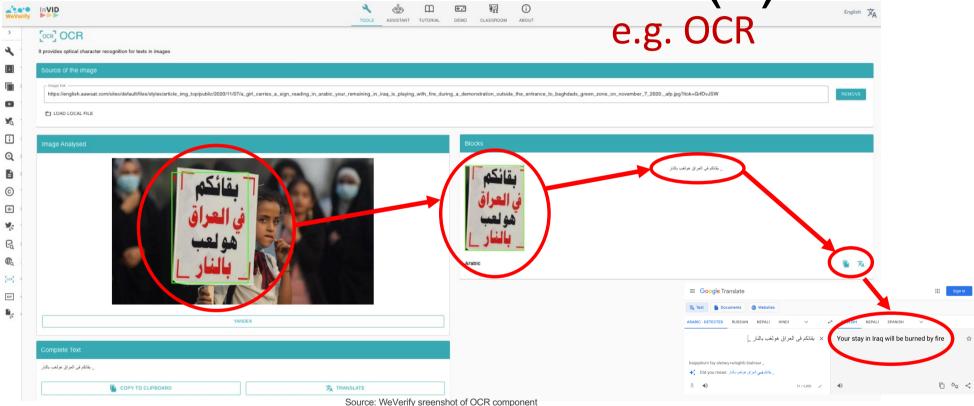


# There's a lot in it (3)

e.g. image forensics



There's a lot in it (4)

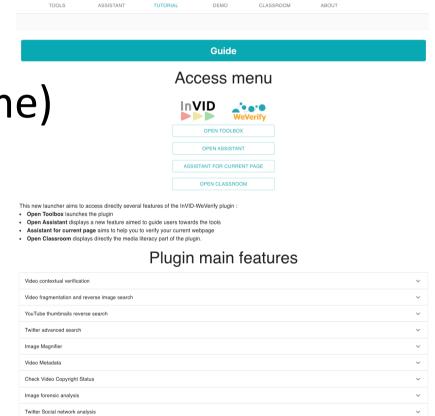


<u>Note / detailed info</u>: technically speaking, OCR doesn't support any languages at all. It has models for scripts, not languages. Specifically it has models for **Arabic, Bengali-Assamese, Cyrillic, Devanagari, Han (both simplified and traditional), Hangul, Hiragana and Katakana, Latin, Tamil, and Telugu.** 

The process works by attempting to auto detect the script in use, and then use the right model (or you can set the script model manually -- at least via the API). The model for the script is then used to perform OCR which just produces a series of characters.

# Advice for use in verification work (if desired and planned)

- Familiarise with tool and features (this takes some time)
- See what's in it and useful for you – and forget about the rest ☺
- Practice usage

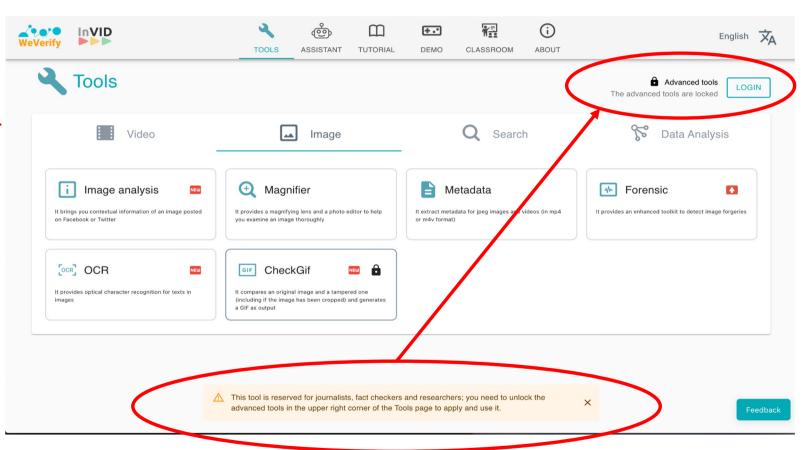


Contextual menu
Image contextual verification

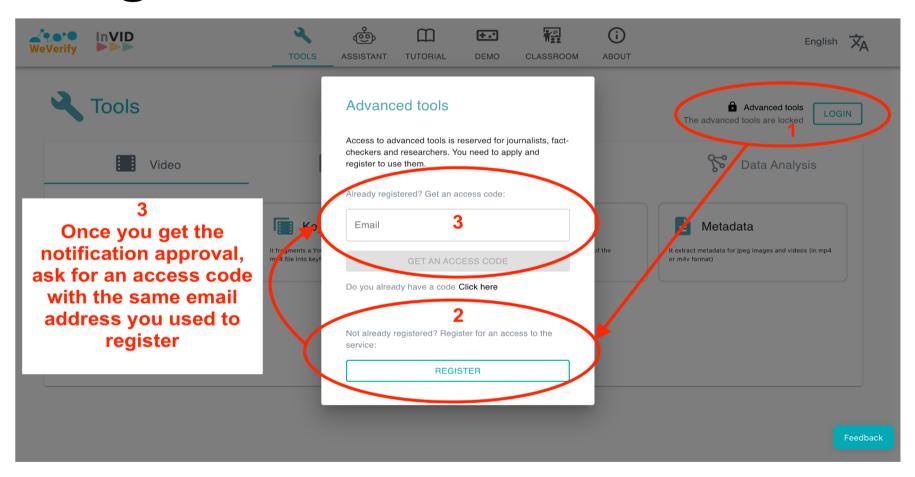
(i)

### Advanced tools for journalists

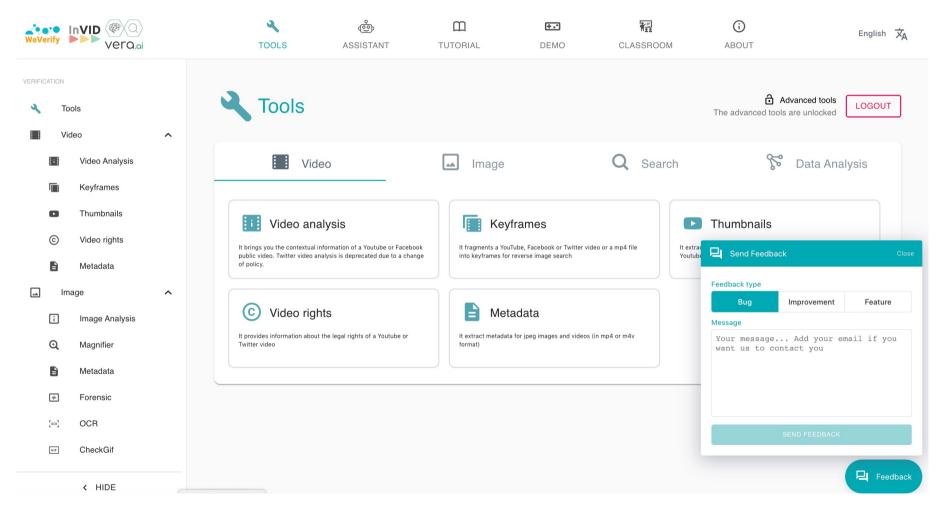
Advanced tools are reserved for factcheckers, journalists and researchers



### Registration for advanced tools



## If you use it: feedback please ©





### Al is all around ...



Making pictures of Trump getting arrested while waiting for Trump's





#### Fake images of Trump arrest show 'giant step' for AI's disruptive power

The tech's capabilities and accessibility have vastly outpaced regulatory and legislative responses, as well as corporate

By <u>Isaac Stanley-Becker</u> and <u>Naomi Nix</u> March 22, 2023 at 5:45 p.m. EDT

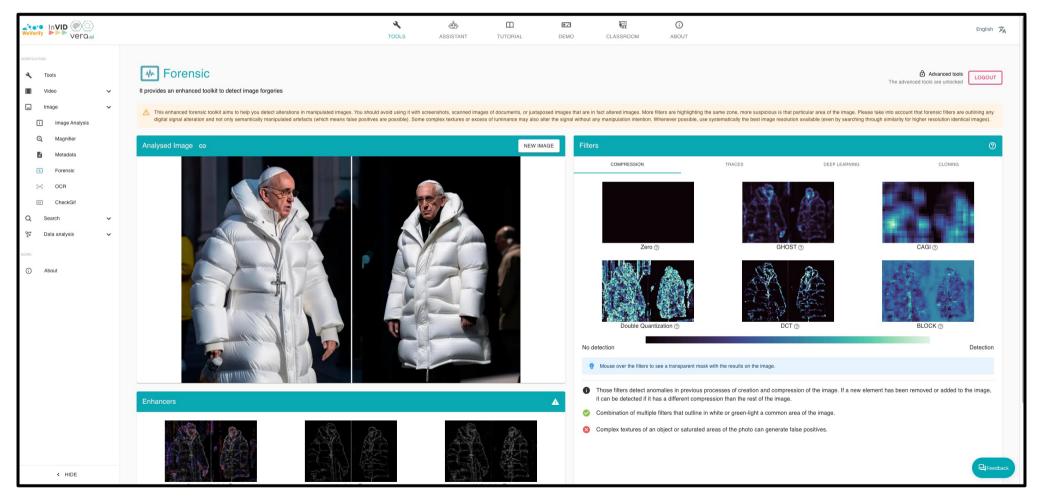
MOST READ POLITICS



10:22 PM · Mar 20, 2023 · 6.4M Views

**5,454** Retweets **2,312** Quotes **40.5K** Likes **3,159** Bookmarks

### We won't stop / watch this space...



### Stay tuned!

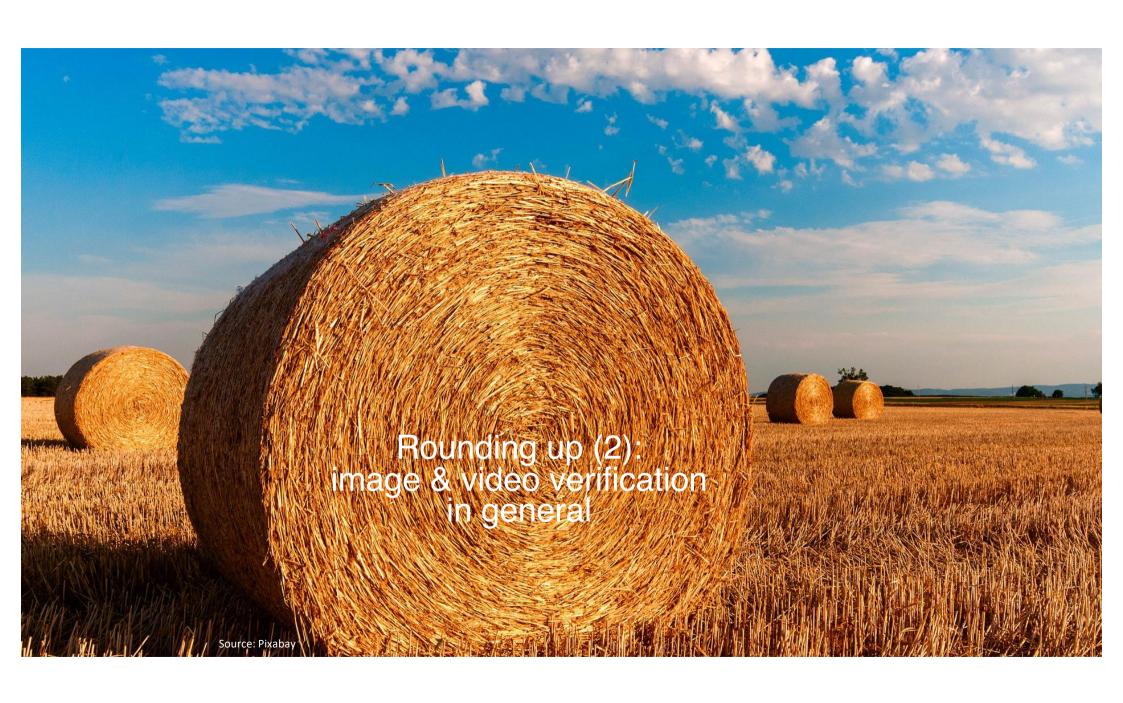


Follow us on Twitter: @veraai\_eu Website: https://www.veraai.eu/

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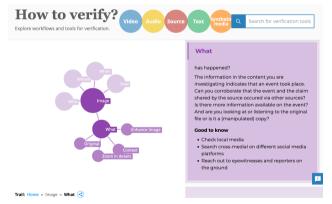




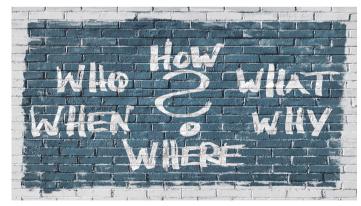
# Tools, tactics, common sense and an inquisitive mind



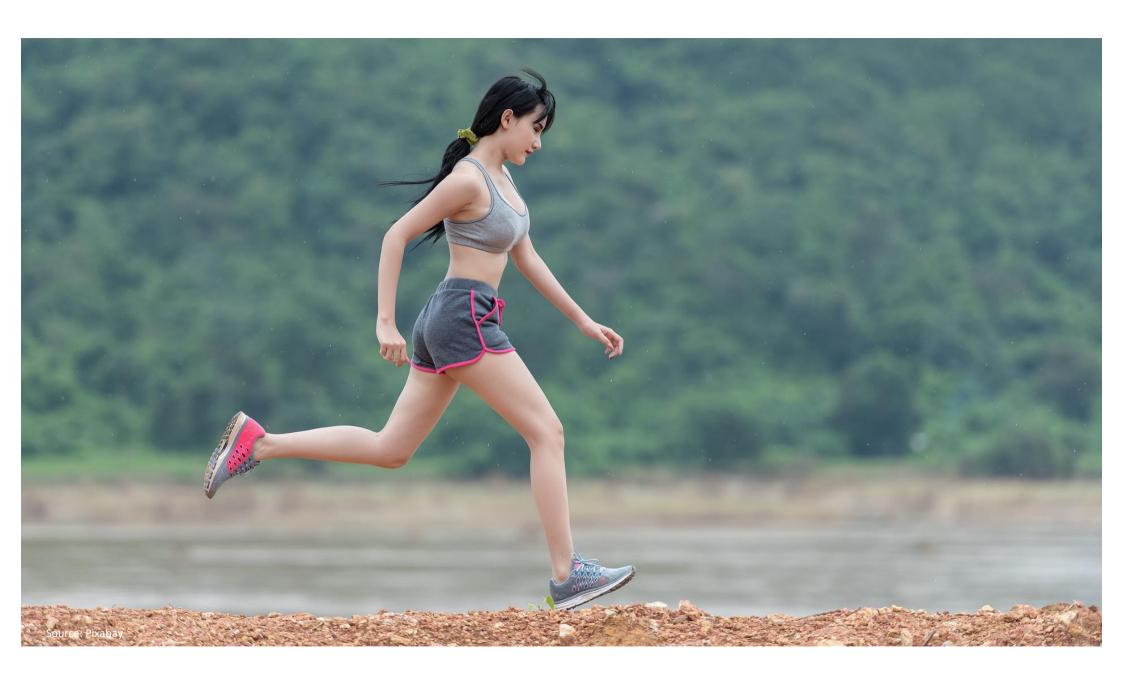
Source: Bellingcat (version 6.9)



Source: DW Research & Cooperation Projects / How to Verify

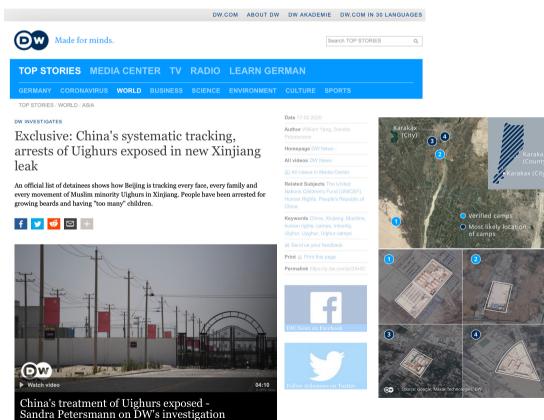


Source: Pixabay, CCO



## If you're willing to invest ...





Source: DW



