

Verification Fundamentals

Craig Silverman

Verification: Three Elements

Verification employs a mix of three factors:

1. A person's resourcefulness, persistence, skepticism and skill.
2. Sources' knowledge, reliability and honesty, and the number, variety and reliability of sources you can consult/talk to.
3. Documentation.

Source: Steve Buttry, Verification Handbook

Principles of Verification

- Identify the original source — and interview them.
- Confirm content of the information.
- Confirm date and time.
- Research similar events, content.
- Speak to additional sources. “How do you know that?”
- Triangulate all collected information.
- Communicate and collaborate.







Larry Elder

13 mins ·

Photo Of Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson Following The Michael Brown Shooting (Unconfirmed) <http://t.co/ZlcriPpFRv>



The Elder Statement: Photo Of Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson Following The Michael Brown...

Comment Policy: The author of this blog will attempt to engage in conversation...

ELDERSTATEMENT.COM

Like · Comment · Share · 7 5

7 people like this.

Top Comments ▾

VERIFYING SOCIAL MEDIA

Evaluate the Account & Person

- Check when account was created
 - Be suspicious of brand-new accounts
- Analyze the network
 - Friends, followers, conversations, retweets
 - What do they usually tweet/post about?
 - Where do they say they are?
- Evaluate tweets/posts before and after

Check Outside Social Media

- See if you can find other accounts online with the info you have.
- Use Spokeo, Pipl, WebMii for searching the name.
- DM them, get on the phone, Skype

Check the Content

- Get details and additional corroboration from people, images, etc.
- Are others reporting this incident or event?
- If so, what sourcing are they using?

Poynter.

VERIFYING PHOTOS & VIDEO



Katina DeKranis

@kdekranis9

Follow

I TOLD Y'ALL! Shark on the highway in New Jersey!!!!
@MaxTheWanted would appreciate this. #HurricaneSandy
pic.twitter.com/kaYMjWzT



29 Oct 12

Reply Retweet Favorite

Poynter.

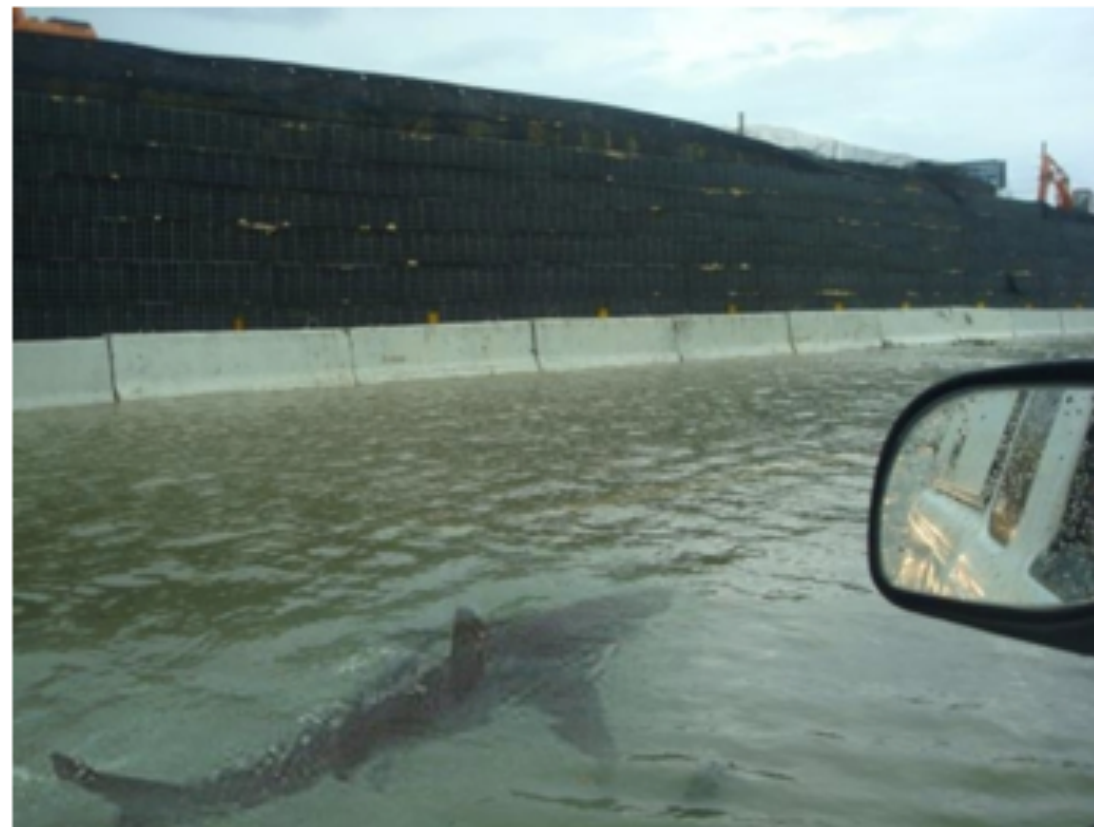


@salma_khan

Salma Khan

"A shark swimming in the street in Puerto Rico after **#HurricaneIrene** hit."

pic.twitter.com/J7yDR4f



powered by Photobucket

[Flag this media](#)

25 Aug via web [☆ Favorite](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [↩ Reply](#) [S Storify this](#)

Retweeted by [MartijnKrook](#) and 100+ others





Poynter.

Verifying Photos & Video

- Check exif info: regex.info/exif.cgi
- Check history of photo with reverse image search: [TinEye](#), Google Images

Peek ahead at image results with new related search previews. [Learn more.](#)



Search by image

Search Google with an image instead of text. Try dragging an image here.

Paste image URL  | [Upload an image](#)

Search

Basic Image Information

Camera:	Apple iPhone 4S
Lens:	4.3 mm
Exposure:	Auto exposure, Program AE, $\frac{1}{20}$ sec, f/2.4, ISO 200
Flash:	Auto, Did not fire
Date:	February 20, 2013 1:04:48PM (timezone not specified) (22 hours, 41 minutes, 43 seconds ago, assuming image timezone of 5 hours behind GMT)
Location:	Latitude/longitude: 40° 45' 39" North, 73° 58' 39" West (40.760833, -73.977500) Photos on Jeffrey's blog that are near this location . Map via embedded coordinates at: Google , Yahoo , WikiMapia , OpenStreetMap , Bing (also see the Google Maps pane below) Altitude: 66.49953402 m Timezone guess from earthtools.org: 5 hours behind GMT
File:	2,448 × 3,264 JPEG (8.0 megapixels) 2,571,446 bytes (2.5 megabytes) Image compression: 89%
Color Encoding:	WARNING: Color space tagged as sRGB, without an embedded color profile. Windows and Mac browsers and apps treat the colors randomly. <hr/> Images for the web are most widely viewable when in the sRGB color space and with an embedded color profile. See my Introduction to Digital-Image Color Spaces for more information.

while on a j
just click th
the image's

You also mig
someone mac

Some of my
· [My Blog](#)
· [Desktop B](#)

🔄 🔍 1:1 Extracted **160 × 120** 12-kilobyte "Composite:ThumbnailImage" JPG
Displayed here at 200% ($\frac{1}{104}$ the area of the original)



Click image to isolate; click this text to show histogram

Poynter.

Content Analysis

- Reference locations against maps and existing images from the area
- Check
 - Clothes, buildings, language, license plates, vehicles, etc.
- Examine weather reports, shadows to confirm conditions shown fit date and time

Source & Context

- Review the uploader's history/location
- Are there images before and after you can compare to?
- Get the uploader on the phone or Skype to talk about the image
- Beware of the amazing shot in a breaking news situation



Verifying Location

Tiji, Libya, 2011
Eliot Higgins (Brown
Moses)



















Debunker Toolkit

- VerificationHandbook.com
- Skype/Phone
- Reverse image search
- EXIF reader
- Google Maps/Earth
- Who.is
- Spokeo, Pipl.com, WebMii.com
- Twitter Advanced Search
- YouTube Data Viewer
- FotoForensics

Links: <https://bitly.com/bundles/silverman/3>

Verification Tips

- Be skeptical about what you see and read and hear
- Check the source, content and data
- Confirm date, time location, provenance
- Investigate the network, the history of a SM account
- Use human sources, always seek contact
- Use tools, but not only tools
- Don't rush to be wrong. Value restraint
- “How do you know that?”

TYPES OF FAKES

Real Image, Wrong Event/Context



Poynter.



The Old Guard

@The_Old_Guard

 Follow

@washingtonpost We truly appreciate the support. However, this photo was taken in Sept. This is #Sandy goo.gl/OC5lz

29 Oct 12

 Reply  Retweet  Favorite



Poynter.



Football Centre
@FootballCentre



[+ Follow](#)

Riots have already started in Brazil. [#BRA](#)

[↩ Reply](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [★ Favorite](#) [... More](#)



RETWEETS
10,051

FAVORITES
2,109



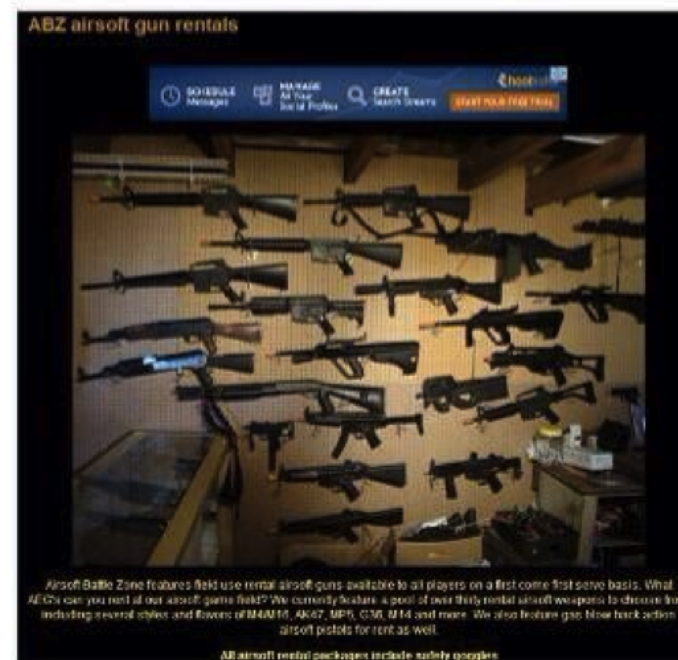
11:14 PM - 8 Jul 2014



Diosdado Cabello muestra en el programa "Con El Mazo Dando" (en VTV 24/02/2014) ésta imagen como presuntas pruebas sobre las armas que poseería el General Angel Vivas en su casa. En seguida, se buscó la imagen en Google y apareció.

La misma imagen en un blog cuya publicación es de antigua data y es de alquiler de armas de aire comprimido.
<http://www.airsoftbattlezone.com/airsoftgunrentals.html>

@EIPaisPerfecto



Composite of Real Images



Poynter.

Actually from Iowa ...



©www.extremeinstability.com

Poynter.

BOOK Search for people, places and things

Keynan Harman Home

Congrats to the SF Giants
shop.mlb.com



Like · Comment · 4 · 2 · 1 · about an hour ago ·

Jason Otts

19 hours ago via mobile
near Murphy, TX

This is an amazing shot of New York today with the Frankenstorm bearing down. Nature is so powerful, yet so beautiful.

Share

39 people like this.

296,339 shares

View all 8 comments

Lisa Harvell Wow!
11 hours ago · 3

Lisa J Rositas Zemanski Andrew, It does. Scary
6 hours ago · 5

Jason Otts Ok... apparently this pic has gone viral from my wall with 99,989 shares. In the last 15 minutes I have had like 200 people add me as a friend because of this pic. So I called the person who texted it to me and she then called her friend who sent it to her and is in New York. He told her that it was fake. So now I have 200 friends who like a photo that is fake on my wall. Funny, but awkward....
23 minutes ago · Edited · 16

Poynter.



Fictional Presented as Factual



Poynter.



Poynter.

Totally Unbelievable



Poynter.



Poynter.

Fake Accounts or Facebook Pages

The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook profile for 'Abe Lincoln'. The profile is a parody, featuring a historical portrait of Abraham Lincoln as the profile picture. The navigation bar at the top includes 'facebook', 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', 'Inbox', and user links for 'Abe Lincoln', 'Settings', and 'Logout'. The profile tabs are 'Wall', 'Info', 'Photos', 'Video', 'Notes', and a plus sign. The 'Wall' tab is active, showing a status update: 'Abe Lincoln is headed for the theater. 14 hours ago clear'. Below the status is a text input field with the placeholder 'What are you doing right now?' and a 'Post' button. The left sidebar contains a 'View Photos of Me (1)' link, an 'Edit My Profile' link, a quote: 'Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them? Kegger!', and an 'Information' section with details: 'Relationship Status: It's Complicated', 'Birthday: February 12', and 'Current City: Washington, DC'. Below the information is a 'Friends' section showing 'Four score and seven friends' and a grid of friend avatars including Horace Greeley, 'Select black people', and Mary Todd Lincoln. The main feed on the right shows several posts: 'Abe is headed for the theater. 7:12pm - Comment', 'Abe is freeing the slaves. 2:15pm - Comment', a post about Reconstruction with the text 'Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.', 'Abe is now friends with Jefferson Davis. 3:12pm - Comment', 'Abe is listed as in a relationship and it's complicated. 12:07am - Comment', a video post by Joshua Speed titled 'I got a crush on Honest Abe', a photo post by Horace Greeley titled 'Jack Armstrong Wrestling Match', 'Abe is depressed and having a hard time getting out of bed today. 10:55pm - Comment', and a post by Robert E. Lee: 'Sorry, I don't trust you and I don't like you. Wall-to-Wall - Write on Robert's Wall'.

facebook Home Profile Friends Inbox Abe Lincoln Settings Logout

Abe Lincoln is headed for the theater. 14 hours ago clear

Wall Info Photos Video Notes +

Update Status Share Link Add Photos Add Video Write Note

What are you doing right now? Post

All Posts Posts by Abe Posts by Others Settings

Abe is headed for the theater. 7:12pm - Comment

Abe is freeing the slaves. 2:15pm - Comment

Reconstruction: You helped defeat the South, now be a part of it 12:15am
Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.
Comment

Abe is now friends with Jefferson Davis. 3:12pm - Comment

Abe is listed as in a relationship and it's complicated. 12:07am - Comment

Joshua Speed uploaded a new video. 10:59pm
I got a crush on Honest Abe
5:25 Added 15 hours ago

Horace Greeley tagged Abe in a photo. 12:06am
Tagged in:
Jack Armstrong Wrestling Match

Abe is depressed and having a hard time getting out of bed today. 10:55pm - Comment

Robert E. Lee wrote at 10:47pm
Sorry, I don't trust you and I don't like you.
Wall-to-Wall - Write on Robert's Wall

View Photos of Me (1)
Edit My Profile

Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them? Kegger!

Information

Relationship Status:
It's Complicated
Birthday:
February 12
Current City:
Washington, DC

Friends

Four score and seven friends

Horace Greeley Select black people Mary Todd Lincoln

Fake Twitter Accounts



Fake Websites

HOME PAGE TODAY'S PAPER VIDEO MOST POPULAR U.S. Edition ▾

Subscribe: Digital / Home Delivery | Log In | Register Now | Help

The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

Search Opinion

Go

ING DIRECT

WORLD U.S. N.Y./REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION ARTS STYLE TRAVEL JOBS REAL ESTATE AUTOS

Open & use a Webster checking account and get up to \$100. LEARN MORE

WebsterBank

Webster Bank, N.A. Member FDIC

Advertise on NYTimes.com

OP-ED COLUMNIST

WikiLeaks, A Post Postscript

By BILL KELLER

Published: July 29, 2012



AS rumors build about the potential financial blockade against the New York Times by Visa, Mastercard, and American Express for hosting U.S. government cables published by WikiLeaks, I find myself in the awkward position of having to defend WikiLeaks. During the [House Judiciary Subcommittee hearing](#) on July 11th, several Republicans made it clear they also want New York Times journalists charged under the Espionage Act for their recent stories on President Obama's 'Kill List' and secret US cyber attacks against Iran.



Tony Cenicola/The New York

As those of you who have followed my [turbulent relationship](#) with WikiLeaks and its Guru-In-Chief Julian Assange know, I am first in line when it comes to distancing myself from his brand of transparency without government checks and balances. You don't have to embrace Assange as a kindred spirit to believe that what he did in publishing those cables falls under the protection of the First Amendment. The backroom pressures by the Obama Administration's State Department to expand its financial blockade targeting WikiLeaks to include news organizations that host information from their trove of pilfered documents goes too far.

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE+

E-MAIL

SHARE

PRINT

SINGLE PAGE

REPRINTS

THE SESSIONS
COMING SOON

Ads by Google

what's this?

1.00% APY Interest Rate

With a Rockland Direct Money Market Account. Open an Account Online!
www.rocklanddirect.com

Get A Visa Credit Card

No Annual Fee, 0% APR & Cash Back Compare Credit Cards & Apply Now.
www.CreditCardGuide.com

Connecticut IT Consultant

Small Business Network Consultants. Reliable Service. Request a Quote!
www.sys-int.com

Advertise on NYTimes.com

MOST E-MAILED

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

We don't have any personalized recommendations for you at this time. Please try again later.

Log in to discover more articles based on what you've read.

PRESENTED BY

Log In

Register Now

Log In

What's This? | Don't Show

Poynter.

Thank You! Questions?