

How to Build Your Own Anti-Disinformation Data-Driven Workflow

- 1 Build your own infrastructure to combat disinformation
- 2 No developer background required — just tech curiosity
- 3 Use AI ethically in the public interest



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02

Set the Scope of Your Research



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Russian Disinformation?

Has foreign-origin disinformation invaded your digital space? Map the accounts, narratives and amplification networks operating in your country.



Dirty Digital Tactics?

Is a candidate using coordinated inauthentic behavior, bot networks, or algorithmic manipulation to distort public debate?

Define your hypothesis before collecting any data.

Be as thorough as possible.

03

Identify Disinformation & Algorithm Manipulation Patterns



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Coordinated Emoji Flooding

Tens of thousands of green and white hearts flooding a live stream. Why? Coordinated bot networks using emoji to game algorithms, push content, and signal allegiance to autocratic figures.



AI-Generated Video Campaigns

Feeds in Republic of Moldova saturated with synthetic videos claiming 'the EU will start a war with Russia.' Deepfakes and AI narrators used to manufacture fear at scale.



Cross-Platform Amplification

The same narrative appearing simultaneously across TikTok, Telegram and Facebook — a sign of coordinated inauthentic behavior, not organic spread.

04

Identify Disinformation & Algorithm Manipulation Patterns - Examples



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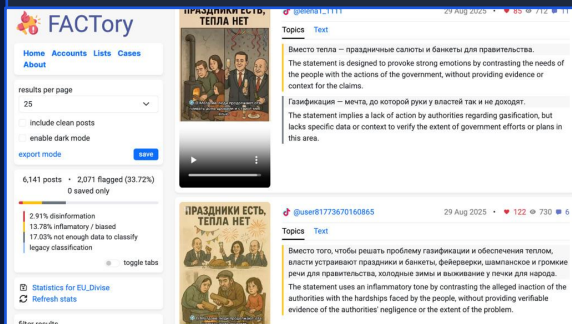
Coordinated Emoji Flooding



1. Moldova



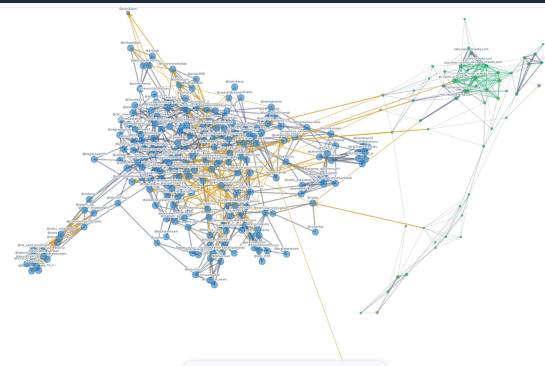
AI-Generated Video Campaigns



2. Hungary



Cross-Platform Amplification



3. Armenia

04 Setting Up Data Collection



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- 1 Create your list of social media accounts to scrape — start from a known list or build your own.
- 2 Context.ro has software that identifies TikTok accounts publishing similar content.
- 3 Commercial tools like OSAVUL and Gerulata can identify accounts publishing the same content.
- 4 Consult attribution guides from Alliance4Europe related to disinformation operations.
- 5 Define clearly what data points matter: account age, follower count, posting frequency, content overlap.

04 Setting Up Data Collection - Ro_Example



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cg_disinfo

12 accounts

List results

Unarchive list

Queue list to

analyze disinfo

go

Export from

dd/mm/yy

Transcriptions

account	actions
NO IMAGE @calin.georgescu	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @calingeorgescupozitia11	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @calingeorgescuofficial	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @calingeorgescu2	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @makaveli.official	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @cuvantul_nostu	account results • delist
@esilviu__	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @pamantulstramosesc.ro	account results • delist
NO IMAGE @bobionut3	account results • delist
@sustinem.calin.ge	account results • delist
@calingeorgescuoff	account results • delist

FACTory

Home

Accounts

Lists

Cases

Metadata

Docs

Results per page

25

Sort by

most viewed

include clean posts

enable dark mode

export mode

save

1,393 posts

 •

354 / 25.41% flagged

show legend

Statistics for cg_disinfo

Refresh stats

Filter results by post date

dd/mm/yyyy

 to

dd/mm/yyyy

apply

Monthly figures

show

Active tasks

see all

28 cases require user action

by context.ro

font- 100% font+ top

<<

Results

search

list • cg_disinfo ×

1 2 3 ... 15

@calingeorgescuofficial

07 Nov 2024

 •

185,200

 •

2,900,000

 •

6,384

Topics

Text

The statement implies that supporting Ukraine economically and militarily is equivalent to supporting war, rather than peace. This is misleading as many international efforts to support Ukraine are framed as a means to defend its sovereignty and promote peace by deterring aggression.

The statement suggests that there are hidden agendas or ulterior motives behind the support for Ukraine, without providing evidence. This can be misleading as it implies that the support is not genuinely aimed at helping Ukraine maintain its territorial integrity.

@calingeorgescuofficial

25 Sep 2024

 •

138,600

 •

2,500,000

 •

2,736

Topics

Text

The claim that foreign corporations do not pay taxes and declare zero profit is misleading. While some corporations may engage in tax avoidance strategies, it is not accurate to say that all foreign corporations do not pay taxes.

The statement that 1500 firms close every month in Bucharest and that all of them are Romanian is an exaggeration and lacks evidence. Business closures can occur for various reasons and affect both domestic and foreign companies.



Build Your Own

For large-scale scraping, custom scrapers outperform commercial tools. Automate download of posts and all attached metadata.

Focus on Metadata

Metadata reveals tactics more than content: timing patterns, account age, follower/following ratios, geo-tags.

Prepare for Battle

Platforms will actively try to block you. Expect rate limits, CAPTCHAs, IP bans, and API deprecations.

Commercial Option: ApifyHub

Ready-made scrapers for TikTok, Instagram and others. Good for rapid prototyping before building custom tools.

Ethics First

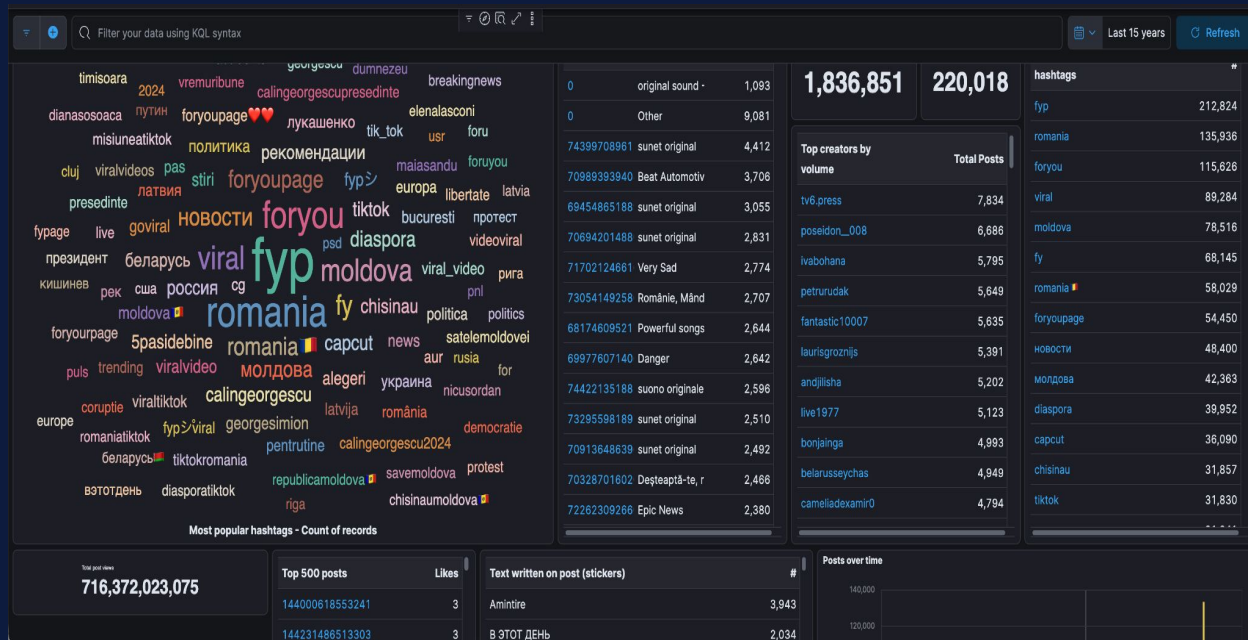
We are journalists, not Palantir. Follow ethical scraping rules: no personal data collection, data minimization, purpose limitation.

05

Scrapers: The Pain of the Game

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A	B	C
COORDINATED MES		
Template Text (truncated)	Total Sends	Unique Users
ásold CSAK A FIDESZ másold	50407	1415
HAJRÁ FIDESZ (masoljátok)	14049	483
CSAK A FIDESZ	5459	403
ásold CSAK A FIDESZ árad a (másoljátok)	7483	398
RAD A ISZA (MÁSOLD KI ÉS KÜLD E)	4404	390
sak a IDEESSZ!!! (másold)	7414	258
ISZA ÁRAD A nasold)	5568	210
	1078	173
RAD A ISZA (MÁSOLD KI ÉS KÜLD E)	1897	164
HAJRÁ FIDESZ (masoljátok)	1122	124
RAD A ISZA (MÁSOLD KI ÉS KÜLD E)	994	120
PRILIS 12. TISZA	1770	114
ásold CSAK A FIDESZ CSAK A IDESZ	1462	100
ISZA ÁRAD A	1154	98
szá árad a	476	90
Hajrá Tisza	1655	78
rad a Tisza		



06 Ethical & Legal Principles When Using AI



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What every journalist building a data-driven workflow must know

✓ Avoid Collecting Personal Data

Focus on behavioral patterns and aggregate metadata, not individual identities. Pseudonymized or anonymized data reduces legal risk and is usually sufficient for disinformation analysis.

✓ Apply Data Minimization

Only collect what you actually need for your specific research question. Strip individual account metadata before feeding data into AI tools. Purpose limitation is both a legal and ethical obligation.

✓ Never Profile Individuals

Behavioral patterns you identify must not be linked to gender, race, identity or any personal attribute. Your analysis targets coordination tactics — not people.

🔍 Always Keep a Human in the Loop

AI classifies. You decide. Every AI output must be reviewed before publication. AI models carry unknown biases from training data — rigorous prompt design and human sign-off are your safeguards.

06 Unique discovery feature



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Our software is able to discover the accounts that spread the same type of content. But it starts with a journalists and ends with the review of the journalist.

 **FACTory**

[Home](#) [Accounts](#) [Lists](#) [Cases](#) [Metadata](#) [Docs](#)

\$ Monthly figures

show

Active tasks

see all

28 cases require user action

by context.ro

font- 100% font+ top

Cases > orban_theBoss

created 02 April 2026

profiles tags sounds keywords

Advanced options

tracked

suggested

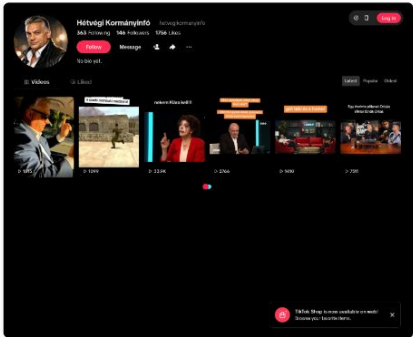
23 2 22 108 toggle all

#	user	posts	score
1	agostonipeter	464	0
2	annatot246	130	720
3	avgusta.iasnogors	25	0
4	batricsi74	282	571
5	bermuda8204	141	128
6	blicz60	256	0
7	bugajakab1975	74	35
8	csakafonok	97	775
9	csakafonok1	60	522
10	csakafonok_	110	1051
11	csakafonokabiztos	87	1482
12	csakegyember1470	356	0
13	csirkefar	342	223
14	devils_power1	112	684
15	rkrlm129	10	45

1000 68 1000 2358

41	14	bandtwwa
42	12	meetmehungary
43	12	hunmoni0000
44	12	hetvegikormanyinfo
45	12	motopeti89
46	12	fovarosi_patriotak
47	12	testbeszed
48	12	orban_1_g
49	12	palfly89
50	12	chordhunter
51	12	bossszuallo
52	12	demeterattilathecoffegy
53	10	kozelet_most
54	10	klippoltas
55	10	bencsik.tataimedence
56	10	klippiram
57	10	gergelyevaalex

Profile preview



Tasks

awaiting processing

Scraping profile for detection

Updating suggested sounds

Add entries to the case

add profiles

add

one entry per line



The Goal: Technology in the service of truth, not the other way around.

AI is a powerful tool for pattern recognition at scale — but editorial judgment, legal awareness, and public accountability remain entirely human responsibilities.



Understand the legal framework in your country: GDPR, DSA, and platform terms of service all constrain what data you can collect and how you can use it.



Use technology surgically: identify, isolate and analyze patterns without collecting more data than your investigation requires.



Be transparent about your methods: document your prompts, your tools, and your validation process so your work can be independently reviewed.



Never automate editorial decisions: AI flags — journalists verify. Build your workflow so a human has the final word at every step.

08 How Our Thinking Shifted



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We started by watching content. We ended up studying infrastructure.

Where We Started

We looked at individual pieces of content: what was the claim, was it false, who published it.

- Flagged disinformation clip by clip
- Tracked sources and authors
- Debunked individual false claims
- Reported specific accounts to platforms

Where the Evidence Took Us

The content was a symptom. The algorithm was the disease.

- Mapped coordination patterns, not just content
- Traced how platforms amplified emotional posts — regardless of truth
- Found that volume itself was the weapon — not the message
- Realised 90% of users' feed was manufactured

09

The Algorithm



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What we found when we stopped looking at content and started looking at the infrastructure.

1

THE ALGORITHM REWARDS EMOTION, NOT TRUTH

In Moldova, fear-based content ('elections will be cancelled', 'EU bans Orthodoxy') consistently outperformed factual content. The platform amplified it because it generated more engagement—accuracy played no role.

2

VOLUME CREATES THE ILLUSION OF CONSENSUS

93 million views in Moldova in 3 weeks. ~500 inauthentic accounts. Real citizens experienced this as their normal feed—never knowing 90% of the political content around them was manufactured.

3

SPEED IS USED AS A WEAPON

In Hungary, accounts posted comments under 1 second apart—faster than any human. The algorithm could not distinguish this from genuine debate. TikTok failed to intervene across 56 documented DSA violations.



President Sandu cited our research at the European Parliament: '100 accounts, 13M views in one month.'

10 What AI Cannot Do



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We learned the limits the hard way.



AI classifies. It does not understand context.

A clip of a priest speaking about his faith was flagged as inflammatory. A journalist immediately recognised it as pastoral—not political. Context requires a human.



AI finds patterns. It cannot explain intent.

128 accounts posting identical content looks like coordination. Whether it is state-sponsored, commercially motivated, or spontaneous—that is an editorial judgement, not an algorithm output.



AI generates confidence. It does not generate truth.

When citizens use AI chatbots for news, they receive fluent, confident answers with no uncertainty. This is the same risk we manage in FACTORY—except citizens have no human reviewer.

● SIGNALS OF INAUTHENTIC ACTIVITY

⚠ No source, total confidence

AI-generated content stated things as definitive fact with no indication of origin—designed to deceive.

⚠ Emotional spike, no evidence

'Elections will be cancelled.' High emotion, zero documentation.

⚠ Identical text, multiple accounts

Same sentence across dozens of accounts within seconds—coordination, not opinion.

⚠ Speed faster than human typing

In Hungary, accounts posted under 1 second apart. Speed itself was the evidence.

● SIGNALS THAT GAVE US CONFIDENCE

✓ A human reviewed it

Every AI classification checked by a journalist before publication.

✓ We could trace it independently

A claim that led to a named, verifiable document—not another viral post.

✓ Pattern matched known infrastructure

When our findings aligned with DFRLab or Atlantic Council monitoring.

✓ The account had a real life

Personal content, inconsistent posting, different topics. Authenticity has texture. AI profiles were flat.

12 What We Now Believe

CJEGC II · Project Conclusions



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01

The content is not the problem — the infrastructure is

We spent months debunking individual claims. Then we realised: the claims changed daily, but the machinery stayed the same. Exposing the infrastructure mattered more than correcting any single lie.

02

People experienced manipulation as normal

93 million views generated by ~500 inauthentic accounts in 3 weeks in Moldova. Voters did not experience their feed as flooded—they experienced it as their feed. That is the most important thing we learned.

03

The work mattered — and AI made it possible

PAS won Moldova's 2025 elections with over 50% of the vote. President Sandu cited our research at the European Parliament. Without AI, we would have seen a fraction of what we documented.