

Training Content

Visual fact-checking: debunking misleading images

Tracing the origin, context, date and location of visual content in the age of AI

Overview

A striking photo, a viral video or an AI-generated image can look convincing within seconds. Visual fact-checking teaches us to do the opposite: slow down, observe and turn what we see into verifiable clues.

This highly practical course teaches participants how to trace the origin and context of an image or video, establish its date and location where possible, and systematically assess manipulated or AI-generated content. Participants work with real cases and learn to cross-check multiple clues rather than rely on a single tool.

The course is fully customisable. Content, technical level, case studies, duration and tools are tailored to the participants' profiles and the needs of the client organisation.

Target audience

Journalists and information and communication professionals, teachers, trainers, librarians and information specialists, researchers and, more broadly, anyone wishing to strengthen their skills in verifying photos and videos online.

Prerequisites

No specific technical prerequisites are required for introductory formats beyond everyday use of the Internet. Advanced modules are adapted to participants' level and existing practices.

Learning objectives

Depending on the needs identified, the course can help participants to:

- apply a simple, structured method to analyse a photo or video before drawing a conclusion.
- trace the origin, date and context of visual content using reverse image search, archives and publication analysis.
- geolocate a photo or video by cross-checking visual clues, maps, satellite imagery, street-level imagery and terrain.
- critically assess manipulated or AI-generated content while understanding the limitations of detection tools.
- document and explain a verification clearly, transparently and reproducibly.

Course content

The course is tailored around five main areas, combined according to the objectives and time available.

1. Observe before searching

Learn to distinguish what an image actually shows, what is being claimed about it and what still needs to be verified. Spot useful details before opening a single tool.

2. Trace the origin, date and context

Use reverse image search, web archives, visible text and video keyframes to trace the earliest publication and understand how content has been reused or taken out of context.

3. Geolocate a photo or video

Turn signs, buildings, roads, vegetation, terrain, shadows and other details into clues, then compare them with maps, satellite imagery, street-level imagery and 3D representations.

4. Assess authenticity and manipulation

Analyse metadata, visual inconsistencies and traces of editing, and examine AI-generated content without confusing clues, probability and proof.

5. Build a robust verification

Cross-check multiple sources, preserve relevant evidence and work with real cases to reach a well-supported conclusion, while clearly stating any remaining uncertainties.

A short session can focus on tracing origins or geolocation; a longer course can cover the full workflow and include advanced exercises tailored to participants' professions and geographic contexts.

Tools and platforms covered

Tools are selected according to the objectives of each session and may include:

- Google Lens, Bing Visual Search, TinEye and other reverse image search engines to trace the origin or earlier versions of an image.
- InVID-WeVerify to extract video keyframes, launch searches and support visual-content analysis.
- the Wayback Machine and other web-archiving resources to retrieve pages or posts that have been changed or deleted.
- Google Maps, Street View, Google Earth / Google Earth Pro, OpenStreetMap or Mapillary for geolocation and location comparison.
- tools for reading EXIF metadata, analysing images and, where relevant, reconstructing viewpoints or terrain.

This list is indicative: platforms evolve quickly and are selected for their educational relevance at the time of the course.

Duration

From 2 hours to several days, depending on the objectives and participants' level. A focused workshop can be organised in 2 to 3 hours; an in-depth practical course generally requires one day or more. The final duration is specified in the training proposal.

Delivery format

Training can be delivered in person or remotely by videoconference. The format, number of participants and organisation of sessions are agreed with the client organisation according to the objectives and constraints of the group.

Access arrangements and lead time

Requests can be made by phone or email. A discussion with the client organisation, supplemented where necessary by a participant questionnaire, is used to assess needs and prepare the programme, duration and quotation. The date is agreed jointly according to availability.

Equipment required

Each participant needs a computer with Internet access and an up-to-date web browser. Any accounts, software or browser extensions required are specified before the course. For in-person sessions, a projector or display and a reliable Internet connection are required.

Teaching methods

The course prioritises hands-on practice and combines:

- methodological input illustrated with recent examples and case studies.

- guided demonstrations of the selected techniques and tools.
- practical exercises, first guided and then completed independently.
- discussion, collective analysis, questions and answers, and feedback from experience.
- practical cases adapted to participants' professions and needs.

Assessment methods

Assessment is adapted to the objectives selected for each session and may include:

- an assessment of needs and current level before the course.
- practical exercises and scenarios used to assess acquisition of the targeted skills.
- quizzes or knowledge-check questions during the course.
- an assessment of whether the objectives have been achieved at the end of the session.
- a separate satisfaction questionnaire covering the quality and usefulness of the course.

Accessibility for people with disabilities

Individual accessibility needs are identified in advance in order to determine reasonable adjustments. For in-person training, accessibility of the venue is arranged with the host organisation. Materials and teaching methods can be adapted where possible. Any specific requirement can be raised when making initial contact so that appropriate solutions can be considered.

Course recognition

This is a non-certifying course. Participants who complete the session receive a certificate of completion.

Funding

Funding may be requested from an employer or funding body, depending on the participant's situation and the rules of the relevant funder. Funding is not automatic. A quotation and customised programme can be provided to support a funding application.

Performance indicators

Satisfaction and achievement indicators are based on end-of-course evaluations. Available aggregated results and the calculation method are published and updated periodically on bourgoing.com.

Fees

Fees are quoted individually. The cost depends in particular on duration, number of participants, in-person or remote format, degree of customisation, specific preparation work and any travel expenses. The final fee is stated in the proposal sent to the client organisation.

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Last update: September 2026