Best practices for OSINT investigations

Where to find them and how to apply them

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Mattia Caniglia,
Associate Director

Givi Gigitashvili,
Research Associate

Sayyara Mammadova,
Research Assistant

Project partners

The Guidelines : I. Principles

A set of core
**cross-cutting
principles** that
underpin the OSINT
process.

- Accuracy
- Community
- Diversity
- Accountability
- Balance and responsibility

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The Guidelines : II. Public interest

🔍 Definition of Public Interest
Why is it important?

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The Guidelines : II. Public interest

Example of good practices

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis for public interest

Risk Assessment

Public Interest Statement

The Guidelines : III. Methodology

Design

Research design is an ongoing process that begins at the outset of the research and is continually refined throughout.

Data collection & preservation

Data collection needs to strike a balance between the public interest purpose of the research and the right to privacy.

Data analysis

Data analysis should be objective, accurate and allow for replicability.

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The Guidelines : III. Methodology

Example of good practices

Design

Research plan

Research skills

Data limitation assessment

Data collection & preservation

Data protection policy

Data Protection Impact Assessment

IT Security Policy

Data pseudonymisation

Long-term archiving tools

Data analysis

Research Logs

Confidence Levels

Peer Review

Technical Stack

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The Guidelines : IV. Outputs

🔍 ## Support to the community

Open source intelligence is fed by the work that the community is ready to share publicly.

Accessible outputs

🔍 ## Follow up

Application of the principles should continue past the dissemination of findings.

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The Guidelines : IV. Outputs

Example of good practices

Public interest assessment of publication/privacy reviews

Methodological Annexures

Provide supporting evidence

Disclaimers

Consider your target audience

Editorial guidelines

Support to the community

Facilitate access to knowledge

Contribute

Make available expertise

Participate or provide training

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The Guidelines : V. General work practices

A diverse, safe and caring work environment

Best efforts should be made to protect staff well-being and the safety of people involved in research and dissemination.

Accountability

Being responsible for the research methodologies used, the data they hold and the public outputs disseminated.

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The Guidelines : V. General work practices

Example of good practices

A diverse, safe and caring work environment

Diversify tools and techniques

Recruitment and Working Practices

Cybersecurity and Online Safety Training

Prevention and Mitigation of risks for staff

Employee Assistance Programme

Cultivate feedback, knowledge and experience sharing

Whistleblowing Policy

Accountability

Accessibility and Responsiveness

Acknowledgement

Corrections Policy

Self assessment

Transparency

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Now let's take a look at how these guidelines are being applied in real life investigations by the DFRLAb!

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