



Global Voices

Civic Media Observatory

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Global Voices works to identify, translate, contextualize and explain emerging trends and issues around the world, with a focus on civics, rights, power, and technology.

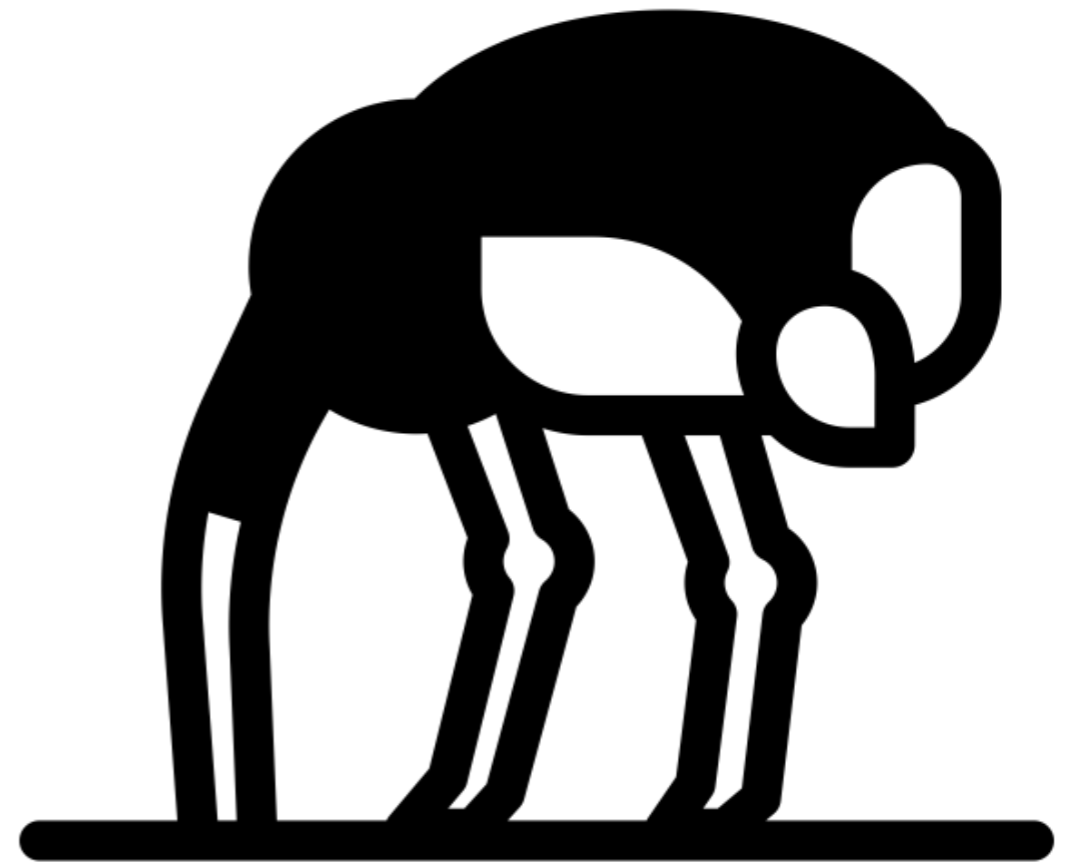
We take the long view, starting with local knowledge and digging deep into a wide range of online sources to make sense of the stories and ideas that shape our societies. We arrive early, and continue to cover stories long after attention has shifted elsewhere.

Our stories emerge from the local knowledge of our global team of volunteer writers and paid editors. By combining cultural awareness with a focus on translation across language and culture, we have uncovered Russian online disinformation campaigns, Arab political uprisings and patterns of digital authoritarianism long before they broke into mainstream awareness.



THE PROBLEM

1. Social media platforms lack the local and contextual knowledge, subtext and language capacity required to understand, assess and respond to emerging events around the world.
2. Media environments are vulnerable to the spread of harmful information: a phenomenon that increasingly disrupts democratic processes.
3. News media often neglect marginalized voices, and are ill-equipped to build understanding across language, culture and geographic borders. Key events or trends are often ignored, leaving institutions and communities unprepared to deal with what should have been foreseeable shocks.



CIVIC MEDIA OBSERVATORY

The Civic Media Observatory is a research method deployable in relation to key events and trends to find, assess, describe and analyze information, grounded in the following:

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE — clarifies subtext and context

EDITORIAL RIGOR — serves as a method to ensure that research analysis is impartial

CIVIC IMPACT SCORE — evaluates material based on potential benefit or harm to civic discourse, in accordance with international human rights norms

SUGGESTED ACTIONS — a range of tactics to inform journalistic coverage, support content moderation and platform governance strategies, and help frame research, to promote the protection of human rights within media ecosystems

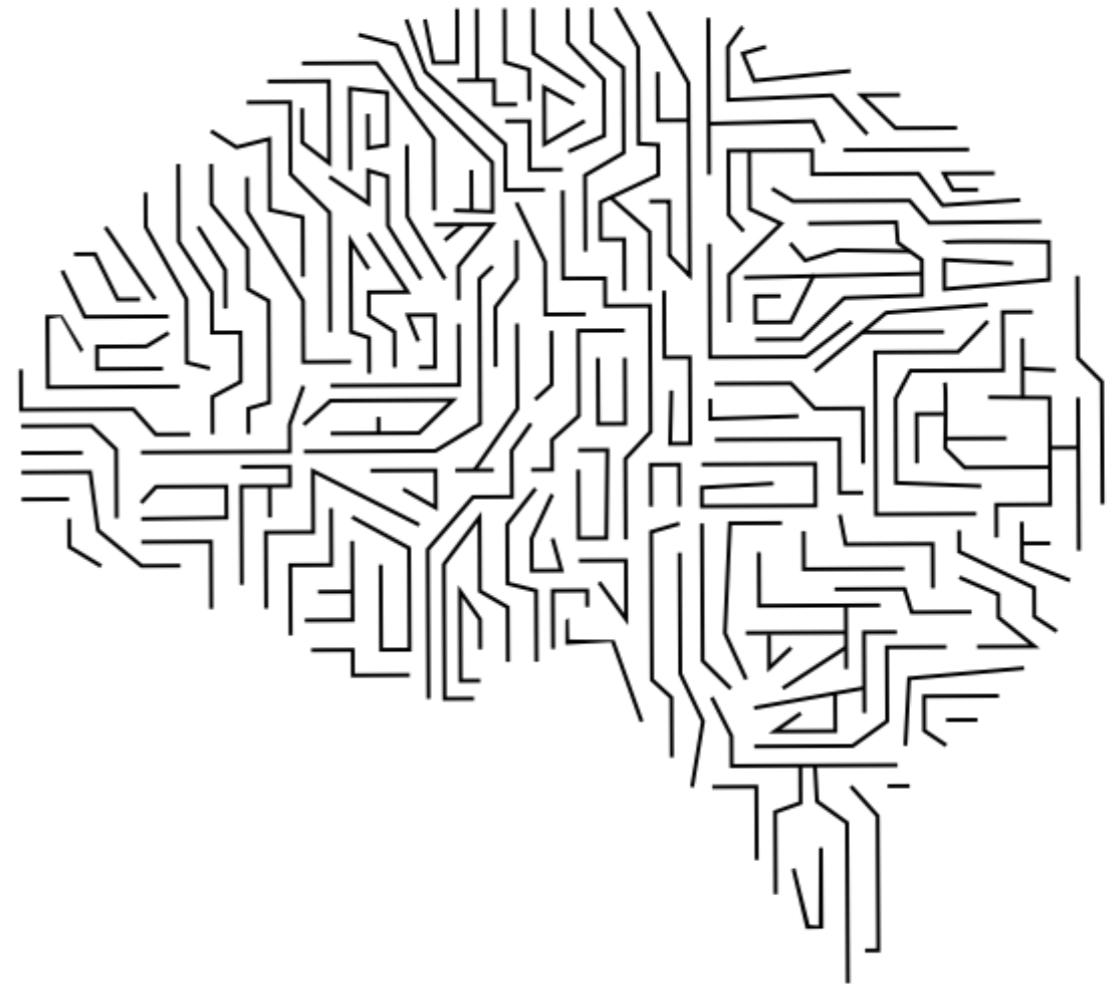


METHOD

The core of the Civic Media Observatory is the **INVESTIGATION**—the focus of the research in a given instance. We also **MONITOR** media ecosystems for emerging themes worthy of further research.

Research focuses on **THEMES**—events, trends or phenomena and on **NARRATIVE FRAMES**—the dominant narratives used to describe and debate themes.

Researchers classify, analyze and assign a measure of civic impact to **MEDIA ITEMS**—social and other online media, mainstream media and offline content—and suggest further **ACTIONS** to be taken.



OUTPUTS

Through a rigorous assessment/analysis of the provenance, messaging and contextual impact of media, we will generate an extensive base of knowledge for use by partners, editorial teams and researchers, comprising:

DATABASE FILES — with documentation such as screen grabs and other evidence

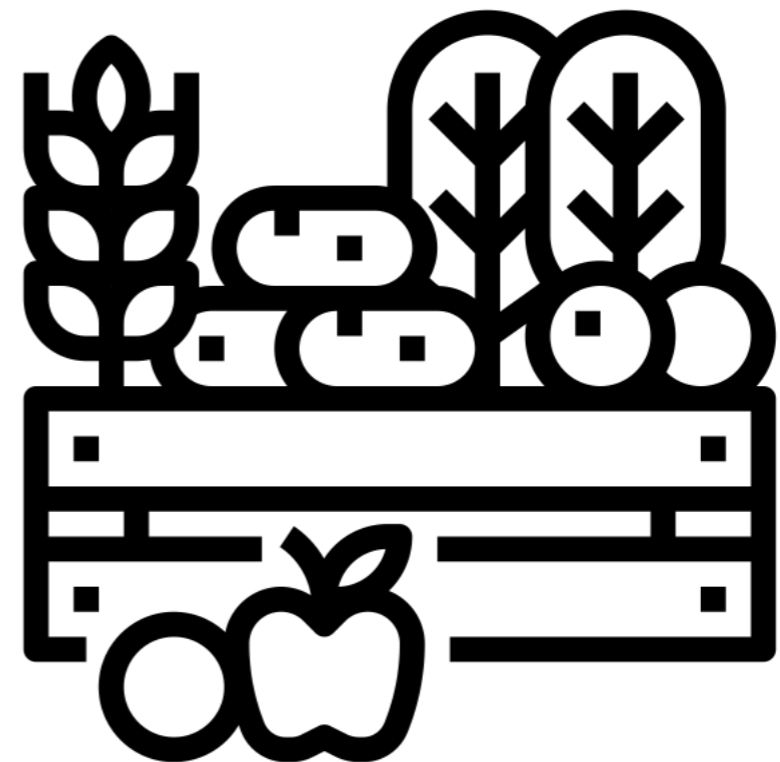
STORIES — reporting on important trends and their meaning

SPECIAL REPORTS — for Investigations

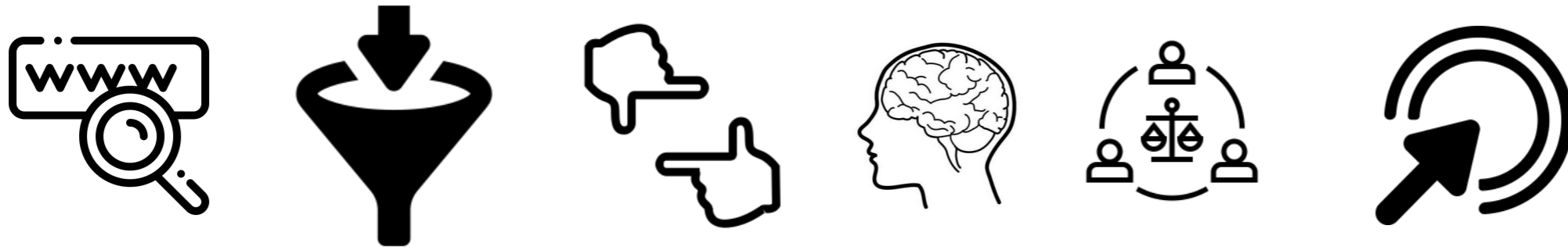
MEDIA ECOSYSTEM ANALYSES — for each Investigation

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS — of individual media items of particular interest

PERIODIC NEWSLETTERS — reporting on monitored media environments



WORKFLOW



Discover → Capture → Describe → Analyze → Score → Action

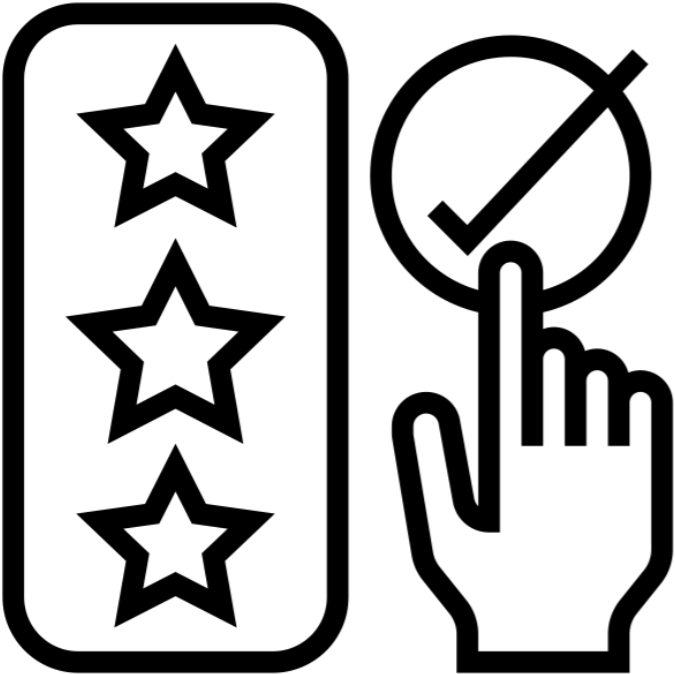
Media item collected.

Full text and screenshots entered into platform; item assigned to researcher with local knowledge.

Researcher annotates item with metadata, describes and analyzes meaning, and assigns it a theme, a media frame, and a civic impact score.

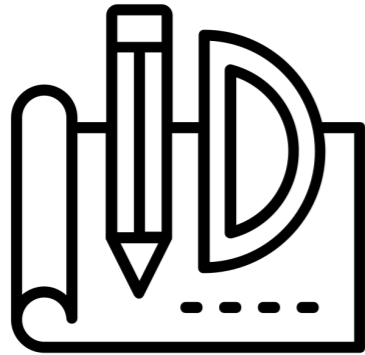
Analysis may trigger actions such as writing a story, reporting item to moderators, or more research.

CIVIC IMPACT SCORING



- 3** hateful, inciting, illegal, disinforming or otherwise harmful material, with a large audience, coordinated activity and likely to result in harm
- 2** hateful, inciting, illegal, disinforming or otherwise harmful material without mass audience or coordinated activity; or false or misinforming material with a mass audience
- 1** false, misinforming, inaccurate or biased material
- 0** material containing no substantive information/knowledge
- +1** generally accurate material with little influence or importance
- +2** accurate, original material that has value and importance
- +3** accurate, highly original material that expands understanding and deserves a wide audience

RELATIONAL DATABASE



The screenshot displays the 'COVID-19 Observatory Consolidated Base' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Items', 'Media Sources', 'Themes', 'Narrative Frames', 'Trends', 'Stories', 'Locations', 'Related Items', and 'People of Interest'. Below this, a secondary navigation bar includes 'COVID Gallery View', 'Customize cards', 'Filter', 'Sort', 'Color', and 'Share view'. The main content area is a grid of data items, each with a thumbnail, a title, and a brief description. The items are organized into columns and rows, with some items having a 'CIVIC IMPACT' score. The interface is designed for easy data entry and viewing, with a clean and modern aesthetic.

Platform model created using Airtable to allow for rapid iteration

Simple form for easy data entry

Bookmarklet for rapid collection of items

Multilingual functionality

Data visualizations to explain complex ideas

Collaborative workflow, integrated with Slack

API syncing to Google Spreadsheets

Automated capture of screenshots and full text

Customized views and segmentations of data for different audiences