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## The Efficacy of Social Media as a Research Tool and Information Source for Safeguards Verification

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The IAEA Department of Safeguards aims to provide credible assurances to the international community that States are fulfilling their safeguards obligations in that all nuclear material remains in peaceful use. In order to draw a soundly-based safeguards conclusion for a State that has a safeguards agreement in force with the IAEA, the Department establishes a knowledge base of the State's nuclear-related infrastructure and activities against which a State's declarations are evaluated for correctness and completeness. Open source information is one stream of data that is used in the evaluation of nuclear fuel cycle activities in the State. The Department is continuously working to ensure that it has access to the most up-to-date, accurate, relevant and credible open source information available, and has begun to examine the use of social media as a new source of information.

The use of social networking sites has increased exponentially in the last decade. In fact, social media has emerged as the key vehicle for delivering and acquiring information in near real-time. Therefore, it has become necessary for the open source analyst to consider social media as an essential element in the broader concept of open source information. Characteristics, such as "immediacy", "recency", or "interactiveness", which set social networks apart from the "traditional media", are also the same attributes that present a challenge for using social media as an efficient information-delivery platform and a credible source of information. New tools and technologies for social media analytics have begun to emerge to help systematically monitor and mine this large body of data.

The paper will survey the social media landscape in an effort to identify platforms that could be of value for safeguards verification purposes. It will explore how a number of social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, might be relevant in the context of overall State evaluation. The paper will further survey the tools available in the public domain that improve the monitoring of, searching for and extraction of safeguards-relevant information. The paper will conclude with an assessment of the value of social media and social media analytics as a component of the open source analyst's safeguards verification toolbox.

### Country or International Organization

IAEA, Department of Safeguards

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