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**From:** Craig Silverman <silvermancraig@gmail.com>  
**To:** Tom Phillips <tom.phillips@buzzfeed.com>  
**CC:** Alan White <alan.white@buzzfeed.com>  
**Sent:** 12/31/2014 10:33:39 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Verification, CEN and Emergent

Hi guys,

Happy new year and other holiday greetings! I hope you've had some time off. I've finished off a few projects and am ready to start more digging on this if you're still game. I just added myself to seven of the 22 stories we have in the spreadsheet. My thought was we would divide the work in three, but I'm happy to take on more if you like. Just let me know. The other bit of new is that we made some updates to Emergent that would enable us to capture the social share counts for each of these stories (and all the articles about them).

So we could create a claim page for each of these and enter in all the URL's we find, as well as the information we gather about them. This can stay private until we are ready to publish. When that happens, we can add a tag to each of them which then makes it easy to have them all on one page for comparison or linking to. Here's an example of a claim page generated by the ISSI tag:

<http://www.emergent.info/tag/ISIS>

We can also back date them so that they don't show up as new on the Emergent homepage (seeing as they are old stories.) This may all sound unclear as it's easier if I just show you what the backend looks like. I'd be happy to do that Friday if you're in the office, or next week can also work.

Tom, I'll also email you to work out the working relationship.

Best regards,  
Craig

On 3 December 2014 at 17:02, Craig Silverman wrote:

I just found another one:

[http://austriantimes.at/image/40313/news/Around\\_the\\_World/2014-12-03/52021/Ski\\_Resort\\_Opens\\_With\\_Snow\\_Stored\\_From\\_Last\\_Season](http://austriantimes.at/image/40313/news/Around_the_World/2014-12-03/52021/Ski_Resort_Opens_With_Snow_Stored_From_Last_Season)

They wrote it up like its new, but the main pic and associated story appear to be four years old:  
<http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/chronik/salzburg/Saalbach-lagerte-das-weisse-Gold/5736774>

The other two pics get nothing on a reverse image search, though. It's possible this happens every year, so I will check on that. Just about to take off so I will add this to the doc later.

Craig

On 3 December 2014 at 12:47, Craig Silverman wrote:

Yes, let's grab stories each to dig into on separate pages. Tracking the spread and shares is something Emergent is built to do really well. the only hitch is we are looking at old stories for the most part, and any new claims I publish to the site are automatically listed at the top. Let me check with my dev to see if we can backdate publishing. That way we'd have a database to just load URLs into and the shares get calculated automatically. We could then do a CSV export to compare who runs their stuff the most.

On 3 December 2014 at 12:39, Tom Phillips wrote:

OK, I'm going to look at some of the ones you've added to the doc, and I'm also going to start going through some old stories I did from their copy at Metro years ago, just to see if I can trace some patterns back.

Shall we just divide up the doc into pages for separate stories, put our names down for any as-yet-undebunked ones we are going to look at, and add in results of any research in as we go? That way we've got a sort of breadcrumb trail of our research.

Additionally, Alan suggests having a spreadsheet where we can list all the sites that ran each particular story – I've set up the very rudimentary beginning stages of one here .

On Wed, Dec 3, 2014 at 5:19 PM, Craig Silverman wrote:

Hi guys,

I'm looking forward to working together on this. I just loaded in a bunch of suspect stories, two of which are of the penis-chopping variety. The others originated on Leidig's Croatian Times and Austrian Times sites. They have suspect sourcing and pics. Looks like we have a lot to go through and I'd say that Tom's suspicion that trouble starts when they go far afield from Eastern Europe is correct.

How do we want to divide up the work? And we should think also think about our methodology for looking into these. That way we can say we applied the same test for each of them.

Best regards,  
Craig

On 2 December 2014 at 09:34, Alan White wrote:

Google hangout here

[https://plus.google.com/hangouts/\\_/gu3zxptdjl3klxz6lbidut6ma](https://plus.google.com/hangouts/_/gu3zxptdjl3klxz6lbidut6ma)

On Mon, Dec 1, 2014 at 6:53 PM, Tom Phillips wrote:

That works for me too – look forward to talking then!

On Mon, Dec 1, 2014 at 6:12 PM, Craig Silverman wrote:

Hangout is good with me.

On 1 December 2014 at 13:08, Alan White wrote:

Works for me! Tom?

What's your preferred method of communication? Google hangout?

On Mon, Dec 1, 2014 at 6:06 PM, Craig Silverman wrote:

Oh gosh -- sorry. That is a silly time to ask to talk. I for some reason had it in my mind that later afternoon was good for you. I could do 9:30 am my time tomorrow morning if that's more sane.

On 1 December 2014 at 12:17, Alan White wrote:

Hi Craig,

Lovely to meet you too. It would be great to do a definitive piece on CEN. Surprised one hasn't already been done to be honest. So this would be 9pm GMT. I could make that - Tom?

On Mon, Dec 1, 2014 at 4:03 PM, Craig Silverman wrote:

Hey guys,

Alan, very nice to meet you! Tom, thanks for the intro. I have a couple of other CEN stories that I would add to the list. I am trying to dig into one right now, though I am committed to doing that for Digg. (We have a content partnership whereby I write up some of the rumors I track for them as Digg Originals.)

I'd love to talk, as I think CEN needs to be exposed. I'd also love to chat about Emergent in general. I'm currently working to raise financing for it and am also looking for partnerships, such as the initial one I have with Digg. I'm heading to the middle east on Wednesday but I could talk today at 4 pm Montreal time (same time zone as New York) or tomorrow at 5 pm.

Best regards,  
Craig

On 1 December 2014 at 10:50, Tom Phillips wrote:

Hey Craig – just wanted to drop you a line for a couple of reasons...

First up, I just wanted to introduce you a chap on our news team here at BuzzFeed UK - Alan White. Alan's one of our resident viral news experts and is very good at spotting hoaxes from a mile off, so he'd a handy guy to know. Alan, meet Craig. Craig and I go way back (in internet debunking years).

Secondly, we've been thinking about doing a piece on CEN/Central European News as a source for a large number of dubious stories that go big on the web (such as the Justin Bieber/bear story you wrote about – I remember we've chatted about them before.) A lot of their stuff falls into that tricky territory of "looks unlikely but hard to definitively

debunk", and we'd like to get your opinion on some of it.

For starters, here are a couple of stories Alan's flagged up – <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2791108/mob-rule-chinese-adulteress-stripped-naked-beaten-senseless-latest-attack-kind.html> and <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/520992/Penis-cut-off-meat-cleaver-India> – have either of them crossed your radar?

Also, as I think I said before, we've been looking at Emergent quite a lot recently, and it'd be really good to have a general chat about that too...

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Read the free Verification Handbook:  
<http://verificationhandbook.com/>

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