Social Listening and Monitoring Tools

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Vaccinate with Confidence
Strategy to Reinforce Confidence in Covid-19 Vaccines

COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence: Rapid Community Assessment Tool

These tools can be used to collect data from social and traditional media platforms to track online discussions, trends, and sentiments about a topic. It is useful for understanding the information landscape (including misinformation) and concerns and attitudes of your community of focus.

Steps for Conducting Effective Social Listening

1. Identify existing monitoring tools:

Your organization may have existing tools available to conduct social listening. If your organization has social media accounts, platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have some level of built-in analytics that are quick and easy to gather. An organization's website is another valuable resource that can provide insight about audience use and habits. If your organization has a hotline where people can submit questions, a quick scan of call logs could also help you understand concerns and questions of your community of focus.

2. Set up a social and traditional media monitoring system:

You can sign up for many free monitoring tools for tracking social and traditional media. Develop Boolean search queries, which are a type of search allowing users to combine key words with operators (or modifiers) such as AND, NOT, and OR to further produce more relevant results. Use these queries on each platform. For example, to understand questions about whether people know where to get vaccinated, you can search for "COVID vaccine" and "where." The search queries should be informed by the assessment's research questions and should be specific to your community or geographic location of interest (see below).

3. Check your monitoring tools regularly:

A dedicated team member should log into all monitoring tools at regularly scheduled time points (e.g., once a day) and gather social listening data. If available and needed, use the filtering feature in your monitoring tool to focus on a specific location or language. Use content themes provided below to keep track of what you are seeing on different platforms.

4. Analyze and develop insights:

Answering the questions below can be a good start. Develop integrated insights by considering findings from other data collection activities.

- What questions are people asking about COVID-19 vaccination?
- What are people's attitudes and emotions that may be linked to vaccination behavior?
- What rumors or misinformation are circulating and how quickly are they spreading?
- What overarching themes and narratives--beyond individual pieces of content--emerge from widely circulated rumors and misinformation?
- How are people responding to and interpreting vaccine-related communication from public health authorities?

6. Report out on a regular basis:

The insights you develop from social listening should be shared with your assessment team and other stakeholders. See the template you can use to report findings on the following page.

7. Ensuring continuity and understanding trends:

One of the strengths of social listening is being able to assess trends over time (e.g., how people's concerns change, how misinformation mutates). Steps 3-5 should be repeated regularly throughout the course of COVID-19 vaccine distribution in your community, beyond the three-week assessment time frame if possible. Once you establish a social-listening system and regular reporting rhythm, it should be less resource-intensive to continue these activities long term. If your organization hasn't already incorporated social listening into its long-term activities or goals, this might be a useful strategy to adopt.

Social Media Monitoring Tools

A host of social media monitoring tools, both free and paid, are available to help organizations in conducting social listening. Some key benefits of using a social media monitoring tool or software include:

Table 3

Social Listening Tools

MONITORING TOOL NAME	COST? (AMOUNT $)	COVERED PLATFORMS	COVERS TRADITIONAL MEDIA? (Y/N)	SEARCH CAPABILITIES
Google Alerts	Free	Web content (e.g., web pages, forums, blogs, news sites, YouTube) but not social media content	Yes	Key words
Hootesuite Insights	Paid (free demo available)	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, Tumblr, and more	No	Key words, hashtags
CrowdTangle	Free (with paid features)	Facebook, Instagram, Reddit	Yes	Key words, hashtags
TweetDeck	Free	Twitter	Yes	Hashtag, key words, Boolean search capability
Social Mention	Free	Twitter, Facebook, FriendFeed, YouTube, Digg, Google, etc.	No	
Talkwalker Alerts	Free	Blogs, websites, forums, and social media	No	
Meltwater	Paid (free demo available)	Online news, social media, print, broadcast, podcast	Yes	Boolean search capability

MONITORING TOOL NAME	COST? (AMOUNT $)	COVERED PLATFORMS	COVERS TRADITIONAL MEDIA? (Y/N)	SEARCH CAPABILITIES
Cision	Paid (free demo available)	Online news, all social media, print, broadcast, podcast, radio	Yes	Boolean search capability
Awario	Paid	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit, news, blogs	Yes	Boolean search capability
TVEyes	Paid (free trial available)	Television and radio	Yes	

Platform Analytics
The insights you develop from social listening should be shared with your assessment team and other stakeholders. See below for a template you can use to report findings.

Twitter
Twitter is one of the easiest platforms to monitor but be sure the relevant conversations are happening there. Twitter is often used to identify breaking news. Twitter has an advanced search option, which gives an easy interface to make very specific queries, such as only searching for tweets from or to specific accounts, during certain time periods, or containing particular types of content, such as videos or links.

Facebook and Instagram
Facebook's native search includes a host of filters, including the ability to search for public posts in public groups and pages, for example. You can also search by date and by tagged location, as well as by media type, such as videos, photos, or livestreams.

TikTok
Tiktok allows you to easily see the current most popular hashtags simply by pressing the discover icon on the bottom of your screen. You can start searching for a key word at the top of the page. After you enter the key word, TikTok will give you different tabs.

WhatsApp
WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app globally, and its group chat function is well-suited to amplifying the impact of information, but closed chat groups are difficult to monitor. However, you can join some groups through publicly available invitation links, which you can find by searching for "chat.whatsapp.com" on Google.

Google Trends
Google trends tracks the volume of searches for certain key words on several channels, including general web, image search, News search, and YouTube. It can compare results for different key words (up to 15). Results can be filtered by time, geography, or even related queries. It can help in signal detection and tracking of conversational shifts.

Choosing Key Words, Building Boolean Search Queries

On many online platforms, Boolean search operators can be used to refine what you are looking for:

- AND: return results with all specified terms
- OR: return results with any specified terms
- NOT: return results without specified terms
- “ ”: return results with the exact phrase contained in quotation marks
- ( ): group the terms in parentheses to clarify search strings with multiple operators

Example Search String for COVID-19 Vaccination:

- Vaccine AND (covid-19 OR covid OR coronavirus OR corona)
- (vaccine OR vaccination OR vaccines OR immunization OR immunizations OR immunize)
- AND (pfizer OR astrazeneca OR moderna OR oxford) AND (california OR cali OR ca)

Reporting Findings of Social Media Monitoring

An important step in the social listening process is reporting the findings. Compile results of your organization’s social media listening activities into a report that is easy to read and comprehend. Reports should include key findings, emerging trends, and results-driven recommendations to improve your organization’s strategies. Reports should be compiled daily, weekly, and monthly depending on organizational need and can range from a simple one-pager of key highlights to multiple pages focused on each social platform. The template below for reporting findings of social listening activities is customizable and should be adjusted to organization need.

TITLE:

COVID-19 Social Listening Insights [LOCATION]: Weekly Update Report: [Insert MM.DD.YYYY]

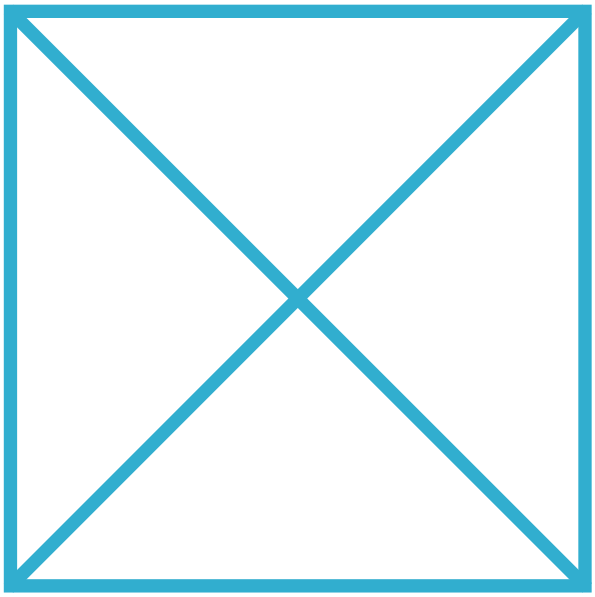
Introduction
Input information about your report’s intended goal, your target audience, methods used to conduct social and traditional media monitoring, and success metrics to provide context for your reader.

Profiles Discussed in the Report
First, identify which social profiles you are tracking and measuring, as this will guide what report sections are included.

Primary Cross-Channel Metrics
Begin the report with the primary takeaway or key findings, followed by overall metrics across channels to provide a snapshot of the social listening space.

[Insert graphic from cross-channel report]

Include overall key findings from daily, weekly or monthly report.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	RESULTS
Total Engagement*	
Total Posts	
Total Audience	

*Standard metrics used to gauge engagement include likes, comments, social shares, saved items, click-throughs, or retweets.

Top Social Media Themes, Week of [Insert MM.DD.YYYY]

PLATFORM	TOP THEMES FROM CURRENT WEEK	TOP THEMES FROM PREVIOUS WEEK
Facebook		
Twitter		
Instagram		

Include one to three bullets summarizing emerging themes from each week to help readers see changes across time.

The themes highlighted will depend on programmatic goals and interest. Some example themes to screen for include, but are not limited to:

- COVID-19 risk perception
- COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, demand, or uptake, motivation for and against vaccination (safety issues, access, etc.
- Discussions on emotions about vaccination (e.g., anger, sadness, happiness, uncertainty, etc.)
- Prevailing social norms in target community

Facebook

[Description of Facebook strategy and high-level results]

Primary Facebook Metrics [DAY/WEEK/MONTH]:

TOTAL ENGAGEMENT	RESULTS
TOTAL VIEWS	
PAGE IMPRESSIONS	
TOTAL REACH	

[Alternatively, or in addition to the table, insert graphic showing total engagement, reach, and impressions over time]

Top 3 topics/comments/user questions on COVID-19 vaccination this week

- [Insert your audience's top topic, comments, or questions asked on Facebook platform]
- [Insert your audience's second topic, comments, or questions asked on Facebook platform]
- [Insert your audience's third topic, comments, or questions on Facebook platform]

Audience Demographic

- [Insert breakdown of audience interacting with your content.]

Top Users and Posts This Week [Insert MM.DD.YYYY]

	POSTS	RETWEETS	CLICKS	MENTIONS	TOTAL ENGAGEMENT
MOST REACH					
MOST SHARED					

Top Users and Posts From Previous Week [Insert MM.DD.YYYY]

	POSTS	RETWEETS	CLICKS	MENTIONS	TOTAL ENGAGEMENT
MOST REACH					
MOST SHARED					

Traditional Media

Key Findings
Begin the report with the week's overall key findings. This can include one of the week's most impactful stories with high social engagement covered in your regional, state, and local print or broadcast media.

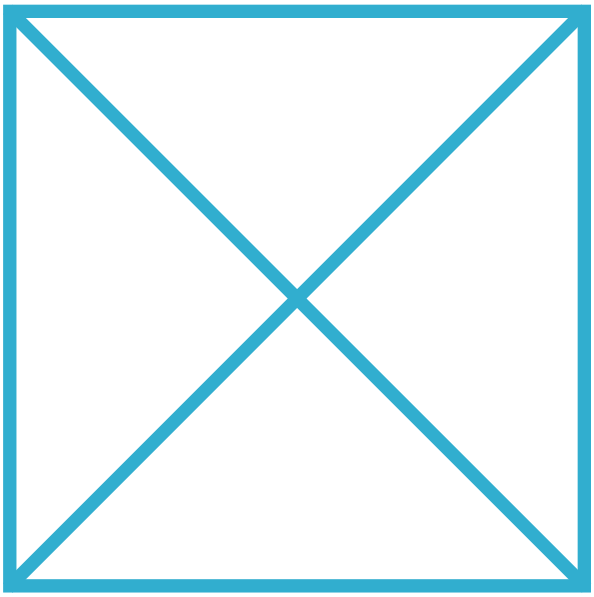
Media Landscape
This section should display the breakdown of COVID-19-specific coverage against all other coverage in your region, state, or local community, if provided by your social listening tool.

Most Shared Articles Published This Week
[Include a blurb summarizing the emerging themes of the most-shared articles.]

Discussion Boards, Forums, Blogs

[Include a blurb summarizing the emerging themes of discussion boards, forums, blogs.]

Coverage Topics by Category This Week



[Accompany the graphics with a box showing any changes in coverage from a previous week. This will clearly identify what topics are dominating traditional media space]
(e.g., general vaccination, access to vaccination, social norms, hesitancy, cultural factors influencing vaccination, adverse effects, etc.) Include overall key findings from daily, weekly or monthly report.

Top Topics Covered in Discussion Boards, Forums, and Blogs [DAY/WEEK/MONTH]

	TOP TOPIC	RELEVANT COMMENTS
[Insert discussion board tracked by your organization]		
[Insert discussion board tracked by your organization]		
[Insert discussion board tracked by your organization]		