

Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPTool

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Title: Chat Apps Analytics: the use of Telegram during the pre-campaign to 2022 Brazilian presidential election

Creator: Giulia Tucci - **ORCID:** [0000-0002-1829-2967](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1829-2967)

Affiliation: Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (ufrj.br)

Funder: Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (capes.gov.br)

Template: Digital Curation Centre

Project abstract:

In 2016, computational propaganda influenced the results of two world-relevant electoral processes¹: the United States presidential election, giving the most important chair of the White House to Donald Trump, and the BREXIT referendum, which resulted in the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. From then on and after the fake news crisis, researchers have confirmed that the employment of manipulation strategies and disinformation dissemination on social media can interfere with electoral processes results and threaten democracies².

Jair Bolsonaro was elected Brazilian president in 2018 after a campaign that focused on the online environment, and he credited his victory to his presence online³. One of the strategies employed by Jair's campaign was the bulk messaging on WhatsApp public groups, financed by private companies, which is against the Brazilian electoral law⁴. In this illegal campaign that happened on WhatsApp, combinations of topics and segmented narratives were used to create persuasive disinformation content that was disseminated to a network of groups⁵.

Since the informational chaos triggered by the 2016 Fake News crisis and during the infodemic experienced in the coronavirus pandemic, disinformation dissemination online has intensified as does the pressure on platforms to react. In this context, extremists' accounts are being blocked by traditional social media sites, like Facebook, a phenomenon called deplatforming⁶. This phenomenon is stimulating the migration of extremists to other platforms, like Telegram⁶. The Russian app allows the creation of public groups and channels with a limit of 200,000 participants and its administrators do not process any solicitation regarding potentially illegal content disseminated. Telegram is a potential environment for the implementation of disinformation campaigns during elections.

There is an urgent need to understand the social uses of Telegram channels. This case study aims to collect and analyze data shared in Telegram public channels of political figures related to the 2022 Brazilian presidential election.

References:

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Chat Apps Analytics: the use of Telegram during the pre-campaign to 2022 Brazilian presidential election

Data will be collected from Telegram public groups and channels. A list of groups and channels comprising Brazilian presidency candidates and respective political parties official channels will be compiled. Messages content and metadata will be extracted via Telegram API.

There are two tools being considered for data collection: [4-CAT](#) e [Telethon](#).

Extracted data will be stored in CSV files in folders named with the prefix "pre-campaign22-telegram" plus the data collection date (pre-campaign22-telegram-year-month). R and Python scripts will be used to process and summarize data.

Dataset comprises: text file with the list of Telegram channels, channels metadata text file, messages text file.

Documentation of Telegram channel's metadata is available in https://tl.telethon.dev/types/chat_full.html e em https://tl.telethon.dev/constructors/channel_full.html.

Documentation of Telegram messages is available in <https://tl.telethon.dev/constructors/message.html>

User related data (i.e. telephone number) will be anonymized during the data extraction.

In this way, the study does is in compliance with Brazilian General Personal Data Protection Law.

According to Telegram Terms of Use, the content shared in a public channel is public content. See https://telegram.org/faq_channels.

Data will be stored in a personal computer with backup in iCloud Drive in real-time.

Data stored in the researcher personal computer and iCloud Drive are protected by strong passwords and biometry.

The dataset will be public available.

Dataset will be published as a repository on GitHub.

Data will be published on GitHub.

The study result will be published as a Chapter in the researcher doctoral thesis.

N/A

Extraction, processing, and analyses of data will be conducted by the principal researcher.

Resources needed for the project execution:

- A computer with Internet access;
- A SIM card (cellphone number) to create and register a research account on Telegram;

- Telegram API access tokens;
 - Expertise using the tools to collect data (4CAT or Telethon);
 - The softwares: Telegram, Anaconda, and RStudio;
 - iCloud Drive to store data backup.
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