

Press release: New technology revealed to help fight terrorist content online

Tests have shown this new tool can automatically detect 94% of Daesh propaganda with 99.995% accuracy. It has an extremely high degree of accuracy, for instance if it analyses one million randomly selected videos, only 50 would require additional human review. The tool can be used by any platform, and integrated into the upload process, so that the majority of video propaganda is stopped before it ever reaches the internet.

Developed by the Home Office and ASI Data Science, the technology uses advanced machine learning to analyse the audio and visuals of a video to determine whether it could be Daesh propaganda.

The Home Office and ASI will be sharing the methodology behind the new model with smaller companies, in order to help combat the abuse of their platforms by terrorists and their supporters.

Many of the major tech companies have developed technology specific to their own platforms and have publicly reported on the difference this is making in their fight against terrorist content. Smaller platforms, however, are increasingly targeted by Daesh and its supporters and they often do not have the same level of resources to develop technology.

The model, which has been trained using over 1,000 Daesh videos, is not specific to one platform so can be used to support the detection of terrorist propaganda across a range of video-streaming and download sites in real-time.

Welcoming the new technology Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Over the last year we have been engaging with internet companies to make sure that their platforms are not being abused by terrorists and their supporters. I have been impressed with their work so far following the launch of the Global Internet Forum to Counter-Terrorism, although there is still more to do, and I hope this new technology the Home Office has helped develop can support others to go further and faster.

The purpose of these videos is to incite violence in our communities, recruit people to their cause, and attempt to spread fear in our society. We know that automatic technology like this, can heavily disrupt the terrorists' actions, as well as prevent people from ever being exposed to these horrific images.

This Government has been taking the lead worldwide in making sure that vile terrorist content is stamped out.

The announcement comes as the Home Secretary travels to Silicon Valley to

hold a series of meetings with the main communication service providers to discuss tackling terrorist content online. She is expected to discuss the new model on her visit to find out what companies are doing to develop innovative methods that identify Daesh propaganda, and support smaller companies, such as Vimeo, Telegra.ph and pCloud to remove terrorist content from their platforms.

Separately, new Home Office analysis demonstrates that Daesh supporters used more than 400 unique online platforms to push out their poisonous material in 2017, highlighting the importance of technology that can be applied across different platforms. Previous research has found the majority of links to Daesh propaganda are disseminated within two hours of release, while a third of all links are disseminated within the first hour.

The new research also shows 145 new platforms from July until the end of the year had not been used before.

As part of her two day visit to San Francisco, the Home Secretary will also meet Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen to discuss how the UK and US can work together to tackle terrorist content online, and appear together at a Digital Forum event today (Tuesday). The Home Secretary will also meet with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, which was launched last year following a roundtable convened at the Home Office in the aftermath of the Westminster Bridge attack.