Bellingcat Global Hackathons Participant Guide

August 17, 2022

This guide contains all the information you'll need before participating in either of the two Bellingcat Global Hackathons.

Hackathon I - Social Media Network Analysis Investigation Tools

September 2-4, 2022 (inclusive)
Participants: **up to 50**
Teams: up to **three** people

The goal of Hackathon I is to develop a tool that can be used in social media network analysis investigations, see [What is a Social Network Analysis Tool](#) document for more info.

SCHEDULE

Friday, September 2

[16.00 CET](#) - European kickoff session (will be recorded)
[17.00 PST](#) - American kickoff session (will be recorded)

You can start working anytime, but we try to accommodate different timezones.

Saturday, September 3

[09:00 PST/18:00 CET](#) - Spatialchat Networking Session

On Saturday we will allocate blocks of time from which you can schedule up to two talks with staff in case you want to discuss your ideas or ask for advice.

Sunday, September 4

[07:00 PST/16:00 CET](#) - Deadline for tool submissions
We will send the link long before and you can submit when ready

[07:00 PST/16:00 CET to 11:00 PST/20:00 CET](#) - Judging

Judges will evaluate the projects, which Bellingcat staff will also check for plagiarism or false claims about the tool and its capabilities.

[11:00 PST/20:00 CET to 11:30 PST/20:30 CET](#) - Award announcements

Bellingcat's founder Eliot Higgins will present the results

Hackathon II - General Digital Investigation Tools

September 23-25, 2022 (inclusive)
Participants: **up to 100**
Teams: up to **three** people

The goal of Hackathon II is to develop a tool that can be used in OSINT investigations, see the [What is a Digital Investigation Tool](#) document for more info.

SCHEDULE

Friday, September 23

[16.00 CET](#) - European kickoff session (will be recorded)
[17.00 PST](#) - American kickoff session (will be recorded)

You can start working anytime, but we try to accommodate different timezones into the event.

Saturday, September 24

[09:00 PST/18:00 CET](#) - Spatialchat Networking Session

On Saturday we will allocate blocks of time from which you can schedule up to two talks with staff in case you want to discuss your ideas or ask for advice.

Sunday, September 25

[07:00 PST/16:00 CET](#) - Deadline for submissions
We will send the link long before and you can submit when ready

[07:00 PST/16:00 CET to 11:00 PST/20:00 CET](#) - Judging
Judges will evaluate the projects, which Bellingcat staff will also check for plagiarism or false claims about the tool and its capabilities

[11;00 PST/20:00 CET to 11;30 PST/20:30 CET](#) - Award announcements
Bellingcat's founder Eliot Higgins will present the results

After September 25

We will send out prizes and goodies, and liaise with participants about including some of their projects in Bellingcat's GitHub and further developing their tools if interested.

Deliverables

When the hackathons are over, you should have prepared and submitted the following deliverables in our submissions form (you will get the link during the event):

1. A github repository with
   a. Your code and analysis
   b. A README that contains information on your project, based on our template
   c. An open source software licence from this list: MIT, Apache 2.0, GNU GPL 2.0 or 3.0, BSD-3
2. A screen recording video (maximum three minutes), where you demo how your project works and what it does

Do note that the judges will not evaluate the aesthetics or visual appeal of your submissions – at this stage, we're interested in the technical content of your proposed tool.

After both hackathons are over we plan to write an article about some of the projects developed, by participating you agree that your project might be profiled. We'll also ask if you're interested in your tool being included in Bellingcat's GitHub.

Grading and Prizes

See our Grading Rubric for more information about requirements and grading criteria. Don't forget to read What is a Social Network Analysis Tool if you participate in Hackathon I, and What is a Digital Investigation Tool if you participate in Hackathon II. Your project should qualify under those descriptions.

Code of Conduct

We want the hackathon to be a moment where you can meet new people, exchange ideas, and learn in a mutually supportive environment. Please be mindful of how you treat others and know we have a zero tolerance policy towards verbal abuse or trolling directed at any of the other participants, teams, or members of staff. See our code of conduct for more information.

A Few Tools to Inspire You

Social Media Tools

Botometer: detect whether or not a given Twitter account is a bot
snscrape: scrape social media data from multiple platforms without requiring login credentials
instagram-location-search: find Instagram posts close to a given location (developed by Bellingcat, uses the Instagram API)
tiktok-hashtag-analysis: analyse TikTok posts with shared hashtags (developed by Bellingcat, uses a TikTok scraper)

General Digital Investigation Tools

[EPIEOS](): perform reverse email search to find accounts across many platforms that are registered to a given email address. Browser interface for [holehe]()

[plane-notify](): track the movements of a specific plane

For more information about the tool needs we've identified among the open source researcher community, read the results of our recent survey [here]().

Advice

Throughout the event you will be able to chat with Bellingcat staff to ask questions and discuss your ideas. Knowing that, here are some dos and don'ts which may help you prepare for the hackathon:

Do's

- **Do check online if your idea has not been implemented already** - we will check this ourselves; if we find it elsewhere online it may impact your *Imagination* score.
- **Do focus on a functional prototype** - avoid projects that consist only of mockups and visuals, although we also leave a lot of space if you need to mock parts of your code or data in order to materialise your ideas
- **Do try to use only tools that others have access to too** - this is not a show stopper but ideally your project minimises the number of proprietary or non open source software and tools
- **Do talk to the staff when you need it** - we are here to help you about rules, ideas, and technical questions
- **Do take time to rest**

Don'ts

- **Don't spend time on making things look sleek** - you should consider the user experience (how people will interact with your project) but there's no need to overcomplicate user interfaces or visual aesthetics
- **Don't submit things after the deadline -** this one is self-explanatory. We need to hold everybody to the same standard to ensure your tools are judged fairly.

Apply at [https://www.bellingcat.com/september-hackathon-announcement-aug-2022]() and Happy Hacking!