

Everything we learned about bots in the Open Lab



[2015 Fellows](#) | [2016 Fellows](#)

— — —

Not those bots

THE TRUMP ERA

Anatomy of a fake news scandal

Conspiracy theorists, Russian operatives, Trump campaigners and Twitter bots manufactured “news” that Hillary Clinton ran a pizzeria child-sex ring.

Nov 16, 2017



CYBERSECURITY

How an army of Twitter bots almost created a major political pundit

To get the true story behind the bot army accused of bolstering Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, “60 Minutes” turned to someone who has spent years mastering the art of deploying fake social media accounts – and uses a fake name.

Apr 3, 2017



HATE

The Hate Report: The big names in racism aren't attending Charlottesville 2

“All these people who were able to get together just a year ago are totally unable to do that now because of all the disputes.”

Aug 10, 2018



Very Annoying Bots

Bots that feed puppies, or listen for keywords to respond to are kind of dumb, but sometimes dumb stuff inspires more ... inspired stuff.



Buzz Bot

Bots that invite our audience to help us cover important news events.

Hi 🙋 My name is BuzzBot. I'm collecting stories from the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia 🇺🇸 Are you following the convention?

I'm in Philly!
Yes, from home
Nope

I'm in Philly!

Cool! What brings you to Philly?

I'm attending
I'm protesting
I just live here

I'm attending

Cool. Who were you jazzed about in the primaries?

What about me?

There will always be outliers, people you weren't expecting. Figure out what you're going to say to them, too. Include them, ask them for stories.

Good reporters are far better at reporting.

We thought it was possible that with enough bot users on the ground we could get stories out faster, but invariably, reporters were much better at reporting accurately on deadline.

Read your logs.

Your logs can tell you a lot about what your audience wants.

THU 6:07PM

Who is speaking right now?


When will Hillary speak?

Help






Buzz Bot

https://github.com/buzzfeed-openlab

 Search or jump to...


[Pull requests](#) [Issues](#) [Marketplace](#) [Explore](#)

[buzzfeed-openlab / buzzbot](#)

[Unwatch](#) 6 [Star](#) 65 [Fork](#) 10

[Code](#) [Issues 17](#) [Pull requests 1](#) [Projects 0](#) [Wiki](#) [Insights](#) [Settings](#)

 Beep Boop Bop – I am BuzzBot; a facebook messenger bot for newsrooms <https://www.buzzfeed.com/westleyargen...> [Edit](#)

[Add topics](#)

[238 commits](#)


[2 branches](#)








[0 releases](#)

[3 contributors](#)

[MIT](#)

Branch: [master](#) [New pull request](#) [Create new file](#) [Upload files](#) [Find file](#) [Clone or download](#)

 **WestleyArgentum** consistent use of es6 import Latest commit 288d4f2 on Sep 14, 2016

 .extensions	socket.io websocket fix	2 years ago
 client	convention-bot => buzzbot	2 years ago
 db	consistent use of es6 import	2 years ago
 docs	update send-message-view	2 years ago
 etc/init	convention-bot => buzzbot	2 years ago
 src	basic fixtures + latest command	2 years ago
 test	convention-bot => buzzbot	2 years ago

Music Swap, Fortune Swap

buzzfeed-openlab / sms-music-swap

Unwatch 1 Star 0 Fork 0

Code Issues 0 Pull requests 0 Projects 0 Wiki Insights Settings

sms bot for mediating music recs between strangers

Add topics

23 commits 1 branch 0 releases 1 contributor

Branch: master New pull request Create new file Upload files Find file Clone or download

cathydeng Update README.md Latest commit 28bda17 on Oct 20, 2017

sms_swap	convo tweaks, manual song add	11 months ago
.gitignore	refactor config	11 months ago
Dockerfile	dockerfile	a year ago
README.md	Update README.md	10 months ago
application.py	oops	11 months ago
requirements.txt	first commit	a year ago
stuff_db.py	first commit	a year ago

buzzfeed-openlab / sms-fortune-cookie

Unwatch 1 Star 1 Fork 0

Code Issues 0 Pull requests 0 Projects 0 Wiki Insights Settings

a playful project for exchanging fortunes w/ strangers

Add topics

10 commits 1 branch 0 releases 1 contributor

Branch: master New pull request Create new file Upload files Find file Clone or download

cathydeng disable multiple fortunes Latest commit cc98f39 on Oct 20, 2017

sms_swap	convo tweaks, utf8mb4	11 months ago
.gitignore	fixes	11 months ago
Dockerfile	fixes	11 months ago
README.md	add setup instructions	10 months ago
application.py	disable multiple fortunes	10 months ago
requirements.txt	first iteration	11 months ago

Tinker, experiment, learn



Start small, and if a project doesn't go the way you were hoping it would go, think about what you will do differently next time.

Nothing good happens overnight.

— — —

Don't expect your bot to take off overnight. Keep trying, keep experimenting with prompts, keep playing with tone.

Iftar Stories



Ayman Mohyeldin Talks About Reporting In Gaza And Fasting In A War Zone

The MSNBC anchor stopped by *See Something Say Something* to talk about his work on-air and off.



See Something Say Something • Months ago



Olympian Ibtihaj Muhammad On Training While Fasting For Ramadan

Hear about how the Olympic fencer and bronze medalist has created the things she wants to see in the world on the newest episode of *See Something Say Something*.



See Something Say Something • Months ago




Trump Promised To Protect Iraqi Christians. ICE Rounded Them Up.

At least 100 Iraqi Christians arrested by ICE over the summer are still waiting to know what's going to happen.



Megan Detrie • Months ago

 buzzfeed-openlab / story-hotline

Unwatch

1

Star

0

Fork

0

Code

Issues

0

Pull requests

0

Projects

0

Wiki

Insights

Settings

playing & collecting audio stories over phone calls

Edit

16 commits

1 branch

0 releases

1 contributor

Branch: master


New pull request

Create new file

Upload files

Find file

Create or download

 cathydeng adding documentation

Latest commit 236939c on Jul 25, 2017

hotline_app	updating audio again	a year ago
.gitignore	first commit - setting stuff up	a year ago
Dockerfile	config tweak, dockerfile	a year ago
README.md	adding documentation	a year ago
application.py	audio tweak	a year ago
requirements.txt	first commit - setting stuff up	a year ago

Your audience is always changing.

— — —

Get to know your audience, but don't expect them to stay the same forever.

Even More Bots

NiemanLab

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BUSINESS MODELS MOBILE & APPS AUDIENCE & SOCIAL AGGREGATION & DISCOVERY REPORTING & PRODUCTION TRANSLATIONS FUEGO



BuzzFeed News' podcast cohost, Jojo the bot, wants to help listeners follow along without friction

"One of our goals has been to talk about the news in a way that invites our audience into the news cycle. We're trying to make it a little bit easier for people to be engaged."

By CHRISTINE SCHMIDT @newsbyschmidt May 11, 2018, 10:33 a.m.

"techno beep"

"Did you hear that? That's Jojo, our gender neutral robot."

Jojo, a chatbot, is a cohost of BuzzFeed News' new weekly news podcast, along with human Julia Furlan. The News, which will be released every Saturday, is designed to give those unacquainted with current events a manageable taste of the nutso news cycle, and also to amplify BuzzFeed reporters' profiles (hmm, sounds similar to a certain forthcoming Netflix

What's the best way to follow how the news is changing?

Our daily email, with all the freshest future-of-journalism news.

your email address here

Subscribe

THE LATEST FROM NIEMAN LAB



Does your Google News change based on whether you're conservative or liberal?

LAURA HAZARD OWENS



How The Globe and Mail is covering cannabis, Canada's newest soon-to-be-legal industry

DAVID DENNIS

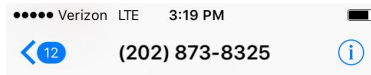
(929) 236-9577



Hi there! I'm JoJo, the BuzzFeed News robot 🤖. I'm excited to be your friend.

Text me the words "SUBSCRIBE," "TIP," or "SUBMIT" to see what I can do for you.

Pro tip: I respond to words, not numbers!
(1) SUBSCRIBE
(2) SEND A TIP
(3) SUBMIT A QUESTION FOR THE PODCAST



Video

Hey there. Jack Smith IV, from Mic, caught this moment on video.



Al Letson at Berkeley protest
youtu.be

That's me in the red shirt. You might want to pause the podcast while you watch. 😊



You don't have to do it yourself.

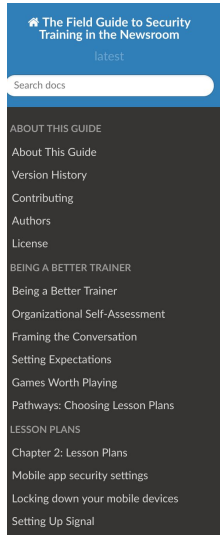


[Ground Source](#) is a great partner for establishing SMS exchanges.

[Hearken](#) facilitates deep audience engagement.

[Coral Project](#) builds fantastic tools that foster vibrant comment sections.

Field Guide to Security Training in the Newsroom



[Docs](#) » The Field Guide to Security Training in the Newsroom

[Edit on GitHub](#)

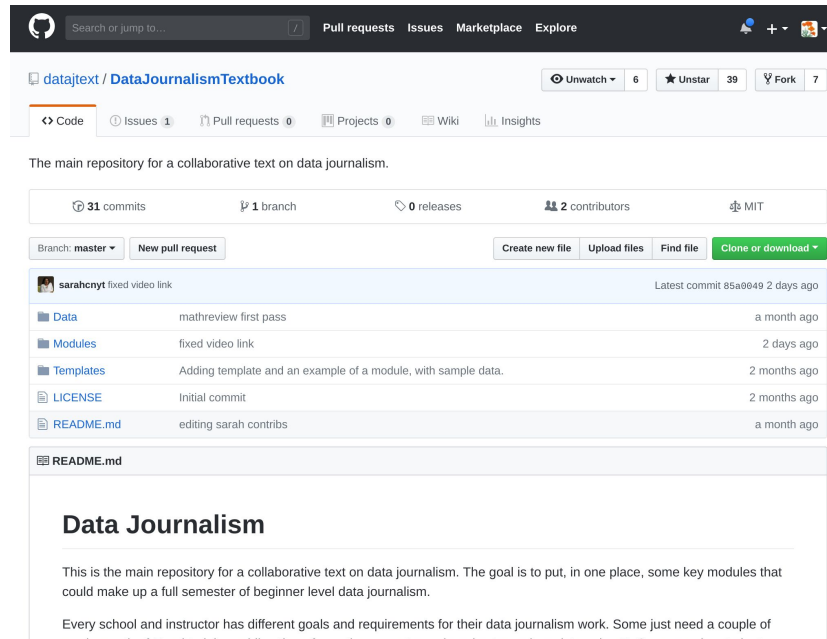
The Field Guide to Security Training in the Newsroom

In the weeks following the 2016 presidential election, [daily downloads of Signal increased four-fold](#). Though the US Border Patrol has had the authority to search electronic devices at border crossings [for almost a decade](#), they seem to be [using that authority](#) more often in recent months. With the inauguration of a president who is [openly hostile](#) to the press (whose own campaign benefited immeasurably when hackers released his opponent's private correspondence), reporters on all kinds of beats have started to ask how to protect their digital data from snoops of all stripes. Often there isn't anyone nearby who can offer solid, informed answers to those questions.

Often the person reporters turn to for help has to come up with smart answers on the fly. They're the one developer who uses GPG, or the reporter who's been trying to convince everyone else to install Signal — and now they're suddenly pressed into service as the newsroom security expert. Or they're the IT staffer tasked with keeping the mail servers running, only now they're also the in-house opsec consultant who doesn't have any formal training in what reporters and editors need.

We want to see a whole lot more people prepared to answer those questions and help newsrooms do a better job of communicating (and storing data) securely. BuzzFeed Open Lab and OpenNews teamed up to assemble a solid, thoughtful series of training modules and resource guides that folks can use to help colleagues step up their security literacy. We'd like to cover everything from how to explain why migrating to a password manager is worth the trouble, to how to convince whoever needs convincing that installing Secure Drop is worth the trouble.

Data Journalism Textbook



The screenshot shows the GitHub interface for the repository `datajtext / DataJournalismTextbook`. The repository is described as "The main repository for a collaborative text on data journalism." It has 31 commits, 1 branch, 0 releases, 2 contributors, and is licensed under MIT. The repository is on the `master` branch. A table lists the files in the repository:

File	Description	Last Commit
<code>Data</code>	mathreview first pass	a month ago
<code>Modules</code>	fixed video link	2 days ago
<code>Templates</code>	Adding template and an example of a module, with sample data.	2 months ago
<code>LICENSE</code>	Initial commit	2 months ago
<code>README.md</code>	editing sarah contribs	a month ago

The `README.md` file is selected, showing the following content:

Data Journalism

This is the main repository for a collaborative text on data journalism. The goal is to put, in one place, some key modules that could make up a full semester of beginner level data journalism.

Every school and instructor has different goals and requirements for their data journalism work. Some just need a couple of weeks worth of content, while others have the resources to expand to entire data journalism courses. Some require students

Emojination



Now what?

Factful



thank you!