

2017 Annual Report

Meedan designs/develops open source software, leads monitoring projects, produces assessment standards, and conducts trainings in support of global digital journalism, human rights media investigations, and digital media verification.

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This Annual Report reflects the state of Meedan.org and its financial health. Meedan.org is a US registered, San Francisco based, 501(c) 3 non-profit organization established in 2006 that works on projects to support global journalism and cross-cultural education.



1. CEO's Note



2017 was a remarkable year to be working on digital journalism. It was the year that the last remnants of idealism were rung out of the fabric of our global

interwebs. Our dreams of the citizen empowering, knowledge extending, society improving internet were being trolled, doxed, and brigaded away.

We are designers, though.

Common Standards

So, when the dust settled on Electionland (before the awards for that project started to drop from the sky) we recognized that the 1000 journalists that were working into our software, doing annotation work, classifying content were completely disconnected from the machinery. We called for: “common media verification standards and APIs, and they should work to develop a shared visual language to expose the work of media verification and fact-checking professionals. This means developing a new schema for verification.”

This found its form in the Credibility Coalition, an initiative we started with Hacks/Hackers that has grown in 2017 to bring Facebook, Google, Twitter, and the W3C behind this effort to develop and test third party signals that can be used to describe link, claim, and image credibility. It is a daunting and ambitious project and amounts to an effort to create a machine readable context layer above the web.

Also in 2017 we partnered with Dig Deeper Media to start Pop-Up Newsroom, to seed and launch collaborative reporting initiatives in different contexts and countries around the world. To date, much of our work has been focused on the challenge of limiting the spread and impact of viral misinformation around elections, and creating media projects that serve audiences through provision of credible content, debunks, and media literacy content. Pop-Up Newsroom was deployed in the US at Texas State’s J-School where we ran a training program for young journalists working on the Documenting Hate project.

With our brilliant partners at Birmingham City University we created the first CheckCon where friends like Katherine Maher, Lina Attalah, Jillian York and many more inspired a global gathering of media and internet geeks with their ideas on the future of open knowledge and open tools.

We have witnessed increasing global demand for access to Check from global civil society and independent media. For example, following Rappler’s implementation of Check in the Philippines, IFCN signatory VERA Files (also in the Philippines) requested access and are now using Check as their primary fact-checking workbench. We ran two projects with Hong Kong University using Check and Bridge to monitor and translate Weibo content. Bellingcat has used Check to open crowdsourced geolocation of imagery for Interpol. Syrian Archive and the Berkeley Human Rights Center conducted digital investigations that conclusively showed the provenance of chemical weapons attacks in Syria. CrossCheck and Electionland both ran on Check and picked up OJAs (Online Journalism Awards). And, following PesaCheck’s use of Check in the Kenyan election in November 2017, the Media Council of Kenya and groups in Zimbabwe (CITE, ZimFact) have partnered with us.



Rights Con, Brussels - March 2017

There is no question that this past seven years of our work has been a single long, and, from this vantage point, prescient, arc to the epicenter of the internet freedom and access issues that offer a serious threat to democratic systems around the world. We take this to be very much the challenge of our time, and a challenge that does not just impact political participation, but also public health, education, environment, and virtually every area of online discourse. We did not envision seven years ago that our idea for addressing verification in service of raising citizen voices would have put us in the middle of the effort to improve the very infrastructure of the web, but we are extremely proud that we have navigated our work to this point and are very grateful for the huge contributions to our work in 2017 from our funders, partners, and, most importantly, our users.

In the next year we expect to work with amazing partners like Yemen Archive, Rappler, Animal Politico, Chicas Poderosas, AfricaCheck, Witness, and Dig Deeper in election settings, digital investigations, and crisis response efforts. Most importantly, we will pursue this ambitious agenda with an organizational commitment to place diversity, kindness, and support for the well-being of our team members and partners at the core of everything we do.

Until Soon, EAB



Check Con, Beirut - April 2017

Program Names

Check Global

CHECK — Meedan’s flagship project focused on open source technologies for media, source, link verification and research and trainings that support these practices. Beneficiaries include human rights investigators, independent journalists, and civil society orgs. In 2017 we delivered high impact projects in Lebanon, Philippines, Hong Kong, Kenya, Egypt, France, England, and the US.

Credibility Coalition

The Credibility Coalition is a diverse, interdisciplinary community committed to improving information ecosystems and media literacy through transparent and collaborative exploration. Rather than jointly deciding whether an article is “credible” or “not credible” or endorsing any single index or evaluation of credibility, the Credibility Coalition fosters the development of a framework around which credibility can be discussed and interpreted.

Our goal is to provide a range of indicators that can be used by a person — or a system — to gauge if an article can inform or educate that person (or whoever the audience is likely to be).

Pop-Up Newsroom



#GE2017 in the UK

Pop-Up Newsroom was founded in 2017 by Dig Deeper Media and Meedan and is an innovation framework for newsrooms that are changing the way they collaborate, communicate and engage audiences through new tools and training. Our structured approach to innovation — both technological and editorial — is unique.

The Pop-Up Newsroom team have been involved in leading a number of large, high-profile social monitoring and verification projects since 2016: from Electionland in the US, to CrossCheck in France, #GE2017 in the UK.

The Translation Project /Bridge

In 2017 we continued development and research on translation solutions for refugees and aid workers in crisis settings.

Geographic areas served

- MENA
- SE Asia
- East Africa
- Latin America
- Europe
- North America



Beirut - April 2017

Check Con

Timeline

A timeline of the events that took place and Meedan participated at in 2017!

03

Internet Freedom Festival

Valencia, Spain

Rights Con

Brussels, Belgium

04

Check Con

Beirut, Lebanon

International Journalism Festival

Perugia, Italy

05

Tom's training at the American University in Cairo

Cairo, Egypt

Stockholm Internet Forum

Stockholm, Sweden

06

Pop-Up Newsroom: UK Election

London, United Kingdom

07

Data Investigations Camp

Hosted by Tactical Tech and ShareLab

Montenegro

08

Pop-Up Newsroom: Documenting Hate Training

Texas State

10

Online News Association Conference (Awards Ceremony)

Electionland and CrossCheck win ONAs - first two major projects run using Check

Washington DC

12

JSDay Recife

Caio Almeida (Meedan's Senior Application Engineer) gave a talk about hybrid applications using React.js and React Native, using Check Mark as example

Brazil

2.
In Numbers



Here are some important numbers that show how our year went:

Check



Check combines smart checklists, workflow integrations, and intuitive design to make digital newsgathering an efficient and collaborative process. Invite your team and online community in a secure environment to work together to validate breaking news content. Then, quickly show the work to your audience on social media or your news site.

List of top things added to Check in 2017

- Check localization to French
- Reverse image search
- Check localization to Arabic
- Check localization to Brazilian Portuguese
- Keep integration
- Browser Extension
- Check Bot

Easy-to-use

73%

Difficult

27%

73% of our users think it's easy to use Check and 27% think Check is difficult to use.

New users

1247

Number of media items created

3130

Average time to verification

~ 2.5
hours

Annotations created

5023

Keep

Keep works as a backup platform for links added online. If a media item is added to Check with a link, with Keep enabled, a copy of the link is added to Keep so that there is always a backup link in case that the original goes down or gets removed at any point in time.

Items archived

128

Items archived and deleted

22

Teams using screenshots

9

Teams with Video vaults

9

Number of teams with Archive.is

7

Number of teams with Archive.org

2

Bridge



Bridge helps communities translate, annotate, share, and source the most compelling global content on social media. Starting with a pilot with the National Geographic Society and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Paul Salopek's Out of Eden Walk project, the product aims to support a team of translators with tools like glossaries and translation memories.



70% of users think it's easy to use Bridge and 30% think it is very easy.

Translations requested **252**

Translations done with Bridge **199**

May include some testing items

Number of new users **21**

3. What are people saying



We are humbled by these quotes from our partners about using Meedan's tools in 2017.

“

If we had not had Check there as a tool, it would've been very difficult to manage that workflow, Having the collaborative aspect of Check as a platform was essential for CrossCheck.

Sam Dubberley

CrossCheck's Managing Editor on using Check covering the French Elections



The app is really good, it makes it very easy to translate the tweets. I think this effort is very important to help informacion, resources and conversations from this type of events to be available to more people in their languages.

Indira Cornelio

Volunteer translator on using Bridge during RightsCon 2017



Whether it's geolocating international airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, finding sites of potential war crimes in Libya, or tracing objects to stop child abuse, Check is the platform which the international investigative group Bellingcat has repeatedly used to successfully organise and structure crowdsourcing campaigns.

Christiaan Triebert

Open Source Analyst with Bellingcat Team on Check

Press

Stories covering Meedan's work in 2017.

Nieman Lab Coverage of Cross Check- As a presidential election looms in France,

Google and Facebook team up with news outlets to factcheck

In addition to CrossCheck's use of the tool in France, Check has been used in recent months by organizations across the globe covering elections in Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It's also worked with groups such as ProPublica, which is using Check for Documenting Hate, its collaborative effort to track hate crimes in the United States. Amnesty International has also used the platform.

NiemanLab

The Credibility Coalition is working to establish the common elements of trustworthy articles

journalism.co.uk

To identify the credibility indicators in news media, Meedan and Hacks/Hackers set up a working group, currently in the process of developing a framework and mark-up a first round of test articles.

The logo for journalism.co.uk features the word "journalism" in a dark blue, lowercase sans-serif font. A pink speech bubble icon is positioned to the left of the text, with its tail pointing towards the letter 'j'. Below "journalism" is ".co.uk" in a smaller, pink, lowercase sans-serif font.

Check platform helps HK varsity students to verify 'fake news', East Asia News & Top Stories - The Straits Times

Founded last September by former CNN journalist Anne Kruger, the lab uses a software called Check, which provides a digital platform for students to work together. On the platform, they can list and share the steps they have taken to verify a claim in a news report or social media post.

THE STRAITS TIMES

More Press Links

Google, Facebook partner to fight fake news in France

Computer Business Review

ProPublica Podcast: After Electionland: How it Worked, What We Found and What's Next

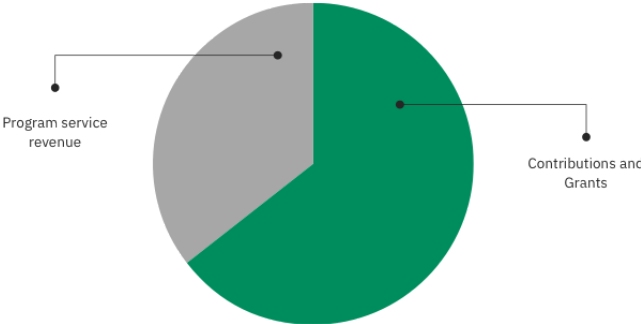
ProPublica

4. Financials



We are pleased to share our financial report for 2017.

Revenue



Contributions and Grants **793,499**

Program service revenue **435,720**

Total revenue **1,229,326**

Expenditures

Total expenditures **1,461,661**

Jon Corshen
Hanan Heikal
Tim Hwang
Zeynep Tufecki

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Other Years

[2018](#)
[2017](#)
[2016](#)
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