

Turning the tables on the terrorists

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It is known that much terrorist activity utilizes the power and immediacy of online social media and social networking tools to coordinate its attacks, rally support and spread the various agendas of the different

groups and networks. Writing in the *International Journal of Grid and Utility Computing*, a team from China explains how we might turn the tables on the terrorists and use those tools to analyse terrorist activity and so make predictions about future scenarios and so have the weapons to thwart them in their malevolent endeavours.

Xuan Guo, Fei Xu, Zhiting Xiao, and Hongguo Yuan of the National University of Defense Technology, Wuhan and colleague Xiaoyuan Yang of the Engineering University of PAP, in Xi'an, have demonstrated how they can look at two kinds of different intelligence sources in China and apply [social network analysis](#) and mathematical statistics to understand the information. First, they used the social [network](#) analysis tool to construct an activity meta-network for the text information. This allowed them to extract four categories of information: person, places, organisations and time. They could then decompose the intelligence into person-organisation and person-location, organisation-location, organization-time. They then applied [statistical methods](#) to this extracted data for the years 1989 to 2015.

The team says that the use of big data can help in combating terrorism whether that emerges from networks and cells within a terrorist organization or even the so-called "lone wolf" attack. We will never eradicate terrorism, but if more attacks can be thwarted through such analysis and the development of predictive tools, then its toll on lives and society as a whole might be reduced.

More information: Hongguo Yuan et al. Winning the war on terror: using social networking tools and GTD to analyse the regularity of terrorism activities, *International Journal of Grid and Utility Computing* (2019). [DOI: 10.1504/IJGUC.2019.10022137](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJGUC.2019.10022137)

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