



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Digital Transformation Unit**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

06 September 2016

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0761-16**

Thank you for your email of 08/08/2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*The following request pertains to FCO's main Twitter account: @foreignoffice*

*As we all know, Twitter is a social media site, and from the academic / research perspective, it is imperative that those tweets can be accessed and downloaded in a user-friendly format (CSV / JSON).*

*Since its adoption date (April 2008), the @foreignoffice account has published 25,973 individual tweets. Unfortunately, due to algorithmic changes and in order to speed up the download time, Twitter limits as to how many tweets can be listed and more importantly downloaded in a user-friendly format. Currently, that number is capped at 3,200 tweets. Which means that we are only able to download last 3,200 tweets that have been published by the @foreignoffice account.*

*At this stage of our research – how the government is using social media to communicate with public – it is essential that we are able to access all those tweets in a user-friendly manner (csv format – excel).*

*The National Archives tries to make cached copies from time to time, but that pattern is rather patchy and it goes only up to 18 September 2013 for the JSON data format. But even, those cached files do not reflect the full picture.*

*FCO's communication on Twitter is a public form of communication and those records have public value. As such it is essential that public has access to that important historic record in a format that can be used to run useful analytics.*

*Therefore, I would kindly ask you to supply us with an Excel (csv) copy of all Tweets that have been published on @foreignoffice account since its inception back in April 2008.*

*Thankfully, Twitter has made provisions for you to achieve this task in a relatively easy manner. As we do not have administrative control over @foreignoffice account, we had to submit an FOI request in order to obtain the records.*

I am writing to confirm that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds information on the subject you have requested which you will find in the attachment, specifically, a CSV data file on all @foreignoffice activity since the account was created in April 2008.

The FCO uses social media as a key medium to update and engage the British public and stakeholders on its work. We therefore actively have a social media presence on platforms such as Twitter as well as many other social media platforms.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

The copies of information being supplied to you continue to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Most documents supplied by the FCO will have been produced by government officials and will be protected by Crown Copyright. To re-use Crown Copyright documents please consult the [Open Government Licence v3](#) on the National Archives website.

Information you receive which is not subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non-Crown Copyright) information.

Yours sincerely,

Digital Transformation Unit



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.