



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 in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Digital Transformation Unit



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