



Increasing the impact of an anti-corruption website through social media: A practical experiment

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Introduction

CurbingCorruption is a new organisation and website, founded in 2018. It brings a practitioner-focused, small-scale approach to the age-old problem of corruption. We at CurbingCorruption believe, based on both experience and research, that corruption can be tackled and reduced, if the corruption issues are sufficiently disaggregated, even in politically hostile environments.

Further, that a sector-by-sector approach is best; because both the corruption problems and the possible reforms are usually specific to each sector.



The website had received good feedback during its first year of existence, with respondents indicating that this disaggregated, sectoral approach to reducing corruption was persuasive and promising. Experts in the field suggested that it was a potential game-changer, with the Peruvian government, for example, already incorporating an explicit reference to adopting a sectoral focus in its recently launched national anti-corruption strategy, following independent visits to the country by both Paul Heywood and founder Mark Pyman.

However, no attempt had been made since the launch in October 2018 to use social media channels to promote the sectoral approach to reducing corruption, or the website itself. Neither Pyman nor Heywood had the time, space or expertise to exploit social media channels as effectively as they would wish. CurbingCorruption did have a Twitter feed (@CurbingCorruptn), but it had so far been used only sporadically; equally, Pyman and Heywood both had appreciable LinkedIn accounts, but for reasons unconnected to CurbingCorruption.

Thus, when the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in the UK awarded a small Impact Acceleration Award (IAA) through the University of Nottingham to the lead editor of CurbingCorruption, Professor Paul Heywood, this was an opportunity to commission a small group of people, who were already working on corruption-related topics, to experiment part-time with supporting and promoting [CurbingCorruption.com](https://www.curbingcorruption.com) via social media channels, so that it could better support potential beneficiaries.

The intention was to drive more traffic to the website, thereby increasing its reach; and to help to identify further contributors to the initiative, because one of the challenges of the sectoral approach had been finding experts able to provide positive accounts of challenging corruption. Much of the research on corruption tends to 'admire the problem' rather than identifying effective ways to tackle it¹. By enhancing the reach of the site, Pyman and Heywood hoped to attract additional input, thereby creating a virtuous circle.

¹ See Pyman, Mark (January 2017) *The Unhelpful Nature of Anti-Corruption Research, As Seen by People Trying to Develop Solutions*. Corruption in fragile states series. Henry J Leir Institute, Fletcher School of Diplomacy. January 24, 2017. See [here](#)

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This paper presents the story of the experiment, which ran for six months from 1 February to 31 July 2020. It is the product of the organisers of the project, Mark Pyman and Paul Heywood, plus the five contributors: Siddharth Chaudhari, Dr. Jen Kartner, Dr. Faith Muniale, Denisse Rodriguez-Olivari and Sigrid Vasconez. After covering the selection of the participants, the modus operandi and the results, the authors reflect on how the findings can help CurbingCorruption to have greater impact. The findings will be put into practice both by the two senior authors and by the participants; all have volunteered to continue with the work of this group into the future.

2. Participants and modus operandi

An advertisement was put out for participants in January 2020, together with the request circulated around the networks of Pyman and Heywood asking for the opportunity to be circulated to possibly interested candidates. There was a good response, with 24 applicants. Six were from Asia, four from Latin America, seven from Africa, four from the USA, two from Europe and one from Australia; though there were no applicants from China, Russia or Arabic-speaking countries. From the 24, Pyman and Heywood selected the five participants through a written test and a Skype interview, selecting for experience, variety of national background, language skills and social media (SM) expertise. The five selected were Siddharth Chaudhari (the USA and also India/Nigeria), Dr. Jen Kartner (Europe), Dr. Faith Muniale (Africa region), Denisse Rodriguez-Olivari and Sigrid Vasconez (Latin American region).

The experiment was managed via monthly group Skype calls, starting 29 January 2020. Material was shared via Slack and occasionally by email. The division of tasks emerged in the course of the first month, as participants familiarised themselves with the website and thought how they could best contribute. It wasn't fixed, but was roughly as follows:

Participant	Social Media	Language	Sector	Other contrib'n
Siddharth Chaudhari	-	Nigerian, En	Private sector, Mortgage services	New blog
Jen Kartner	LinkedIn	German, En	Political institutions, Election campaigns	LinkedIn Comms
Faith Muniale	LinkedIn & Twitter	Swahili, En	Agriculture	New blog
Denisse Rodriguez-Olivari	Twitter	Spanish, En, Fr, Portuguese	Legal, Private Sector, Electoral finance	Twitter Comms
Sigrid Vasconez	Twitter	Spanish, En	Climate, Forestry, Politics	Podcast

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It was agreed that the main SM activity would be on Twitter and LinkedIn. On Twitter, Vasconez and Rodriguez-Olivari posted as CC, as well as through their personal handles. On LinkedIn, a new CC page was created by Kartner, through which Pyman and Kartner both posted, as well as in their own names. A CC Facebook page was created, but not used, due to focusing attention on the other two channels.

Each participant put up tweets, retweets and posts to their followers regarding corruption-related topics of interest to them. They also re-communicated messages that came out during the period from CC: these were mainly on health & corruption (Covid 19) and police violence & corruption (Black Lives Matter; the killing of George Floyd). In addition, Faith and Siddharth researched and wrote a blog each, which they then communicated.

The two major trending topics during this period, Covid 19 and Black Lives Matter ((BLM), had a mixed effect. On the one hand they provided us with a unique opportunity to raise awareness on Corruption and the CurbingCorruption website (abbreviated as CC). Social media acquired greater relevance than usual relevance as we were all confined, and if this had not happened, perhaps we would not have such traffic. On the other hand, the dominance of Covid-19 just when the experiment begun hindered possible visibility and attention of CC activities in other sectors. For example, in March, April and part May, non-Covid social media activity didn't generate much interest at all. Towards end of May and most of June the focus on social media shifted to BLM. Whichever, it emphasised the point that taking advantage of trending topics to post relevant CC work at any given time should be a continuous strategy

3. Activity

3.1 Twitter

CurbingCorruption posted 114 tweets during the six-month period. During this time, we gained 304 new followers, bringing the total to 461. The monthly trend is shown in the table below.

Month 2020	Tweets	Impressions '000	Profile visits	New followers	Mentions
February	0	0.3	64	12	2
March	11	2.6	179	22	8
April	20	7.2	200	38	16
May	35	19.6	465	91	51
June	29	15.9	382	67	17
July	19	13.4	339	74	36
Totals	114	59k	-	304	-

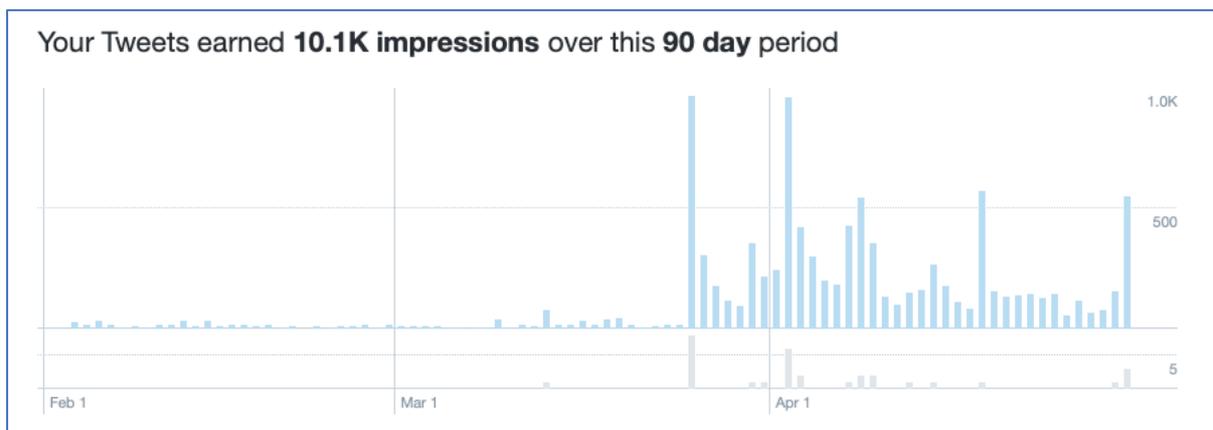
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The top ten tweets, as measured by impressions, during the first three months were all related to tackling corruption in health, notably the new initiative from the Health ACTA network at the World Health organisation, and the Covid-19 responses in health; the top tweet received 2018 impressions. There were 23 retweets and 56 likes, with an average engagement rate of 1.8%.

For the second three month period, COVID-related tweets were still prevalent among the top 10 (top tweet receiving 2659 impressions); followed by a thread presenting new publications by Heywood (and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi)², an edited volume by Adam Graycar with a contribution on a sector-based approach to tackle corruption by Mark Pyman³, and the first book on the Lava Jato edited by Paul Lagunes and Jan Svejnar (where Rodriguez-Olivari wrote a chapter on special prosecutorial teams)⁴ with 2034 impressions; open letters signed by CC in early May (1772) and June (1742); and a policy brief on corruption in the health sector by U4 (1523). Other subjects included corruption in the police, the help offered by CC in tackling corruption and where CC was flagging an initiative, e.g. Vatican finances.

The daily trend through the two three-month periods are shown in the two charts below:

First three-month Tweet activity (February 1st - April 30th)



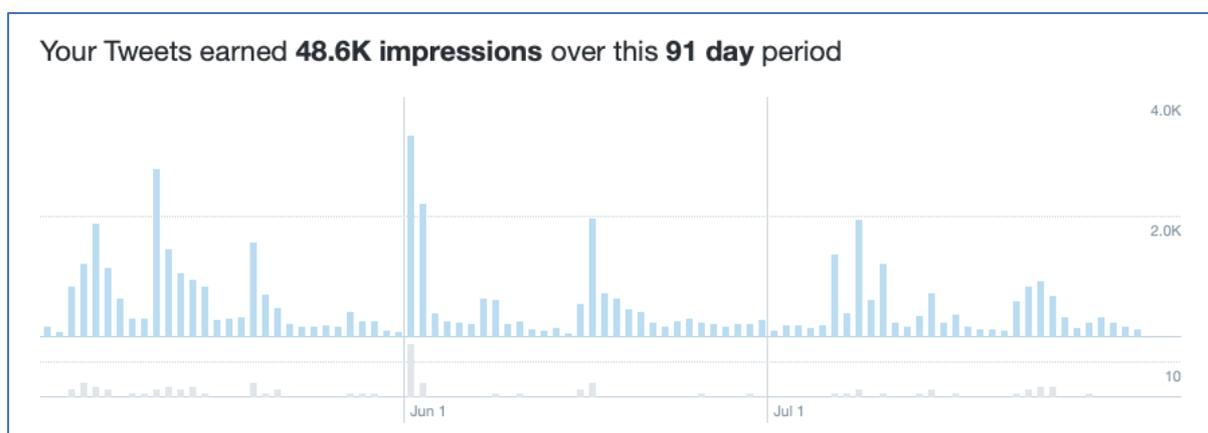
Second three-month Tweet activity (May 1st – July 31st)

² A Research Agenda for Studies of Corruption; Elgar Research agendas. Edited by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi and Paul M. Heywood. published May 20, 2020. See [here](#)

³ Handbook on Corruption, Ethics and Integrity in Public Administration; Edward Elgar Publishing. Published 31 July 2020. See [here](#).

⁴ Corruption and the Lava Jato Scandal in Latin America. Edited by Paul lagunas and Jan Svenjar. Routledge. Published July 14 2020. See [here](#).

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Discussion

The number of likes increased from a negligible level to 235 likes, 142 retweets, 187 link clicks, with an average of 1.9% engagement rate. Twitter users seem to find most value when we share our resources, share other accounts' resources and online modules, and publications.

We also identified the best time for posting tweets. Between 12:00 and 13:00 (UK time, or +2GMT) is our prime time. Other time slots that work for CC are 14:00 and 20:00 (Latin America) and 19:00 (US East Coast), 17:00 and 20:00 (UK time).

The multi-language tweet (telling everyone that the site now had an immediate translation into 16 languages) had few likes, but it had the highest volume of engagement, connecting people directly to the website (11% cf. the norm of 1.8%).

The country with the largest number of followers (as at 14 July) was the United States (92), followed by UK (78), Peru (27), Germany (22), Ecuador (22), Brazil (12), South Africa (10), Ireland (10).

Baseline: The Twitter numbers are well up on earlier Twitter activity. The previous six months of Twitter activity are shown in the table below.

Month	Tweets	Impressions '000	Profile visits	New followers	Mentions
Aug 2019	3	1.1	22	9	3
Sept	0	0.4	18	8	2
Oct	3	1.0	45	11	5
Nov	3	2.7 ⁵	42	17	1
Dec	0	0.8	42	15	7
Jan 2020	0	0.7	19	7	1

⁵ Due to a tweet on the CurbingCorruption blog: *Fighting Police Corruption in London, and Beyond*, Global Anticorruption Blog (GAB), October 2019. See [here](#).

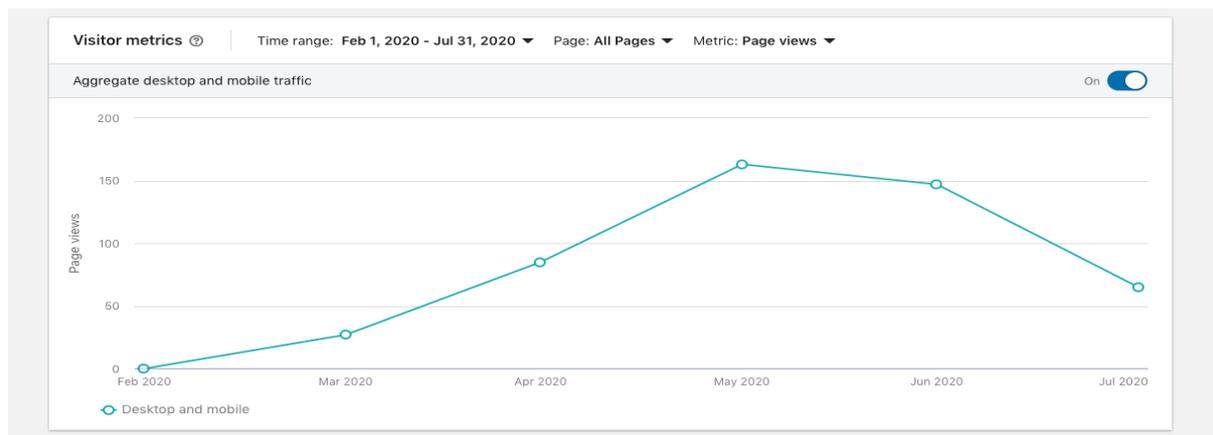
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3.2 LinkedIn

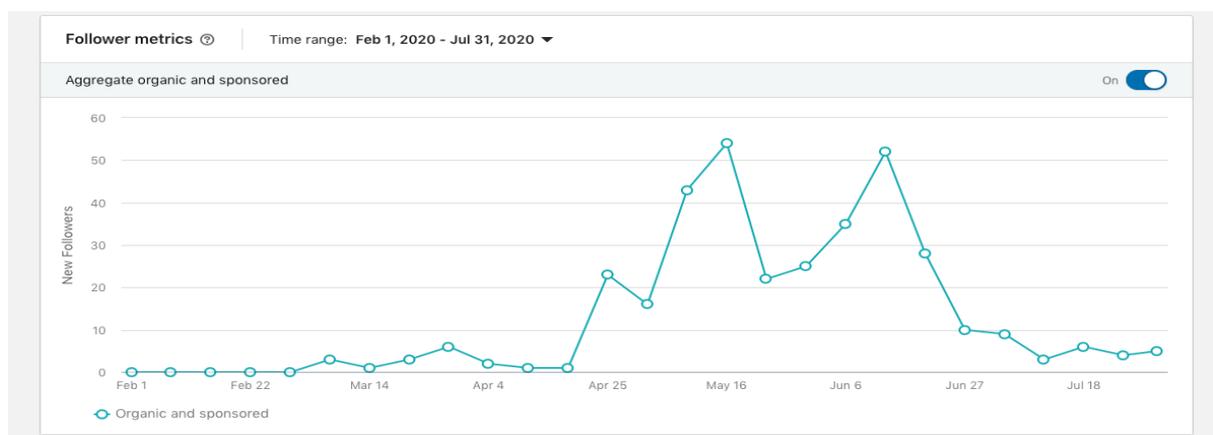
The new page for CurbingCorruption on LinkedIn went from 0 followers in Feb 2020, when there was no CC site, to 336 followers by July. Most of these came in the period April/ May/June. Viewers are largely from the USA and UK, followed by Europe. Fifty per cent of viewers self-identify as being in higher education, non-profits, international affairs, research or consultancy; 10% identify as being in government administration.

Viewers were brought in through two activities: 1) Invitations to join CurbingCorruption made from the personal LinkedIn sites of Pyman and Heywood in April, May and June (LinkedIn permits up to 100 followers /month to be invited into another site). Pyman and Heywood's own LinkedIn identities have some 1500 followers each. 2) General posts by Kartner and Muniale using the CurbingCorruption identity.

Page views 1 February to 31 July



New Followers, 1 February – 31 July

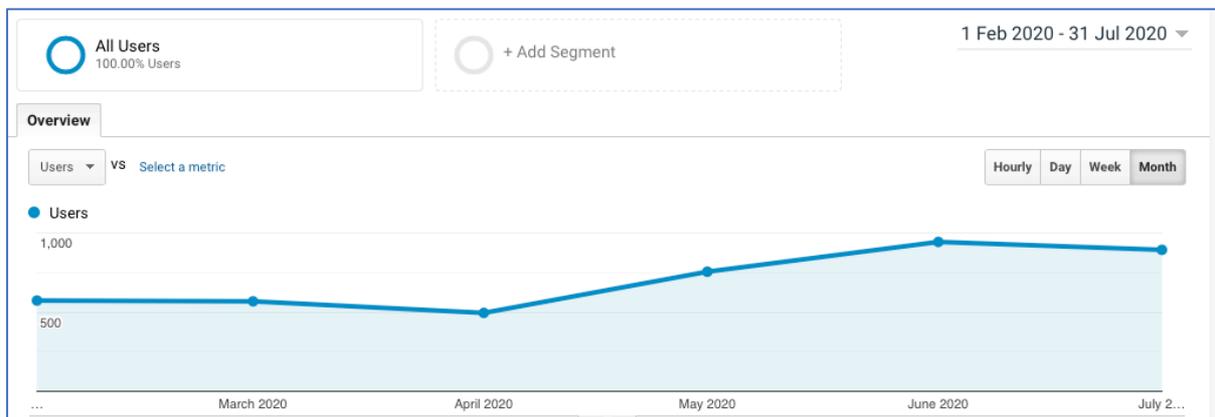


Baseline: There was no Linked in Activity on the CurbingCorruption page before this experiment period.

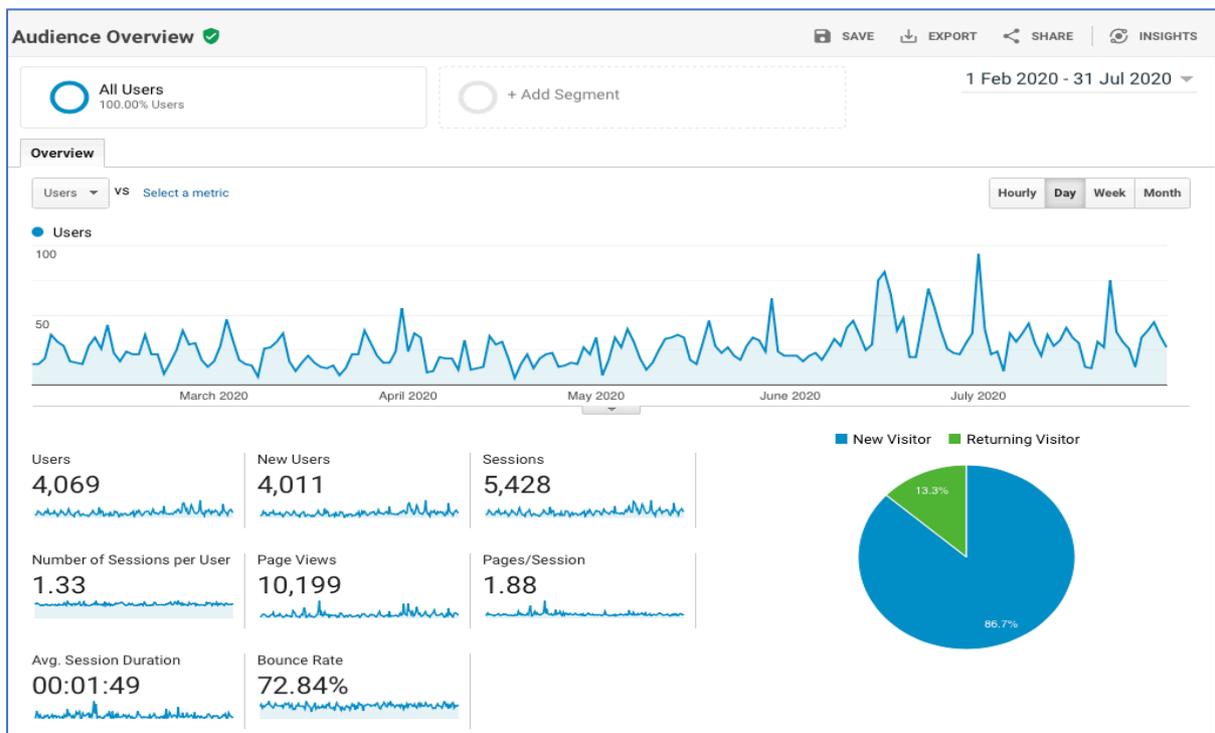
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3.3 Website

Google analytics for the six-month period shows 4,069 users, 10,199 pages viewed. User numbers increased through the six-month period: from a monthly average of 545 viewers in the three months Feb-Mar 2020 before any SM activity started, this increased to 864/month in May, June and July, an increase of 59%; as in the graph below.



This positive trend was welcome. The daily trend shows that it was not attributable to not attributable to any particular intervention, as visible from the screenshot below:



Baseline: How do these figures compare with the two six-month periods before the experiment started on 1 February? The comparative data is below:

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Period	Users	Sessions	Page Views
<i>Experiment: 1 February to 31 July</i>	4069	5428	10199
1 August 2019 to 31 January, 2020	3867	5153	8971
1 February 2019 – 31 July, 2019	3613	5087	11137
8 October 2018 – 7 April, 2019 ⁶	3115	4897	12102

Though the Website traffic increased during the six-month period, user numbers are only moderately up on earlier six-month periods: up 5% up on users (14% up on page views). Compared with the average of the last three six-month periods, user numbers are up 15%, and page views are down 5%.

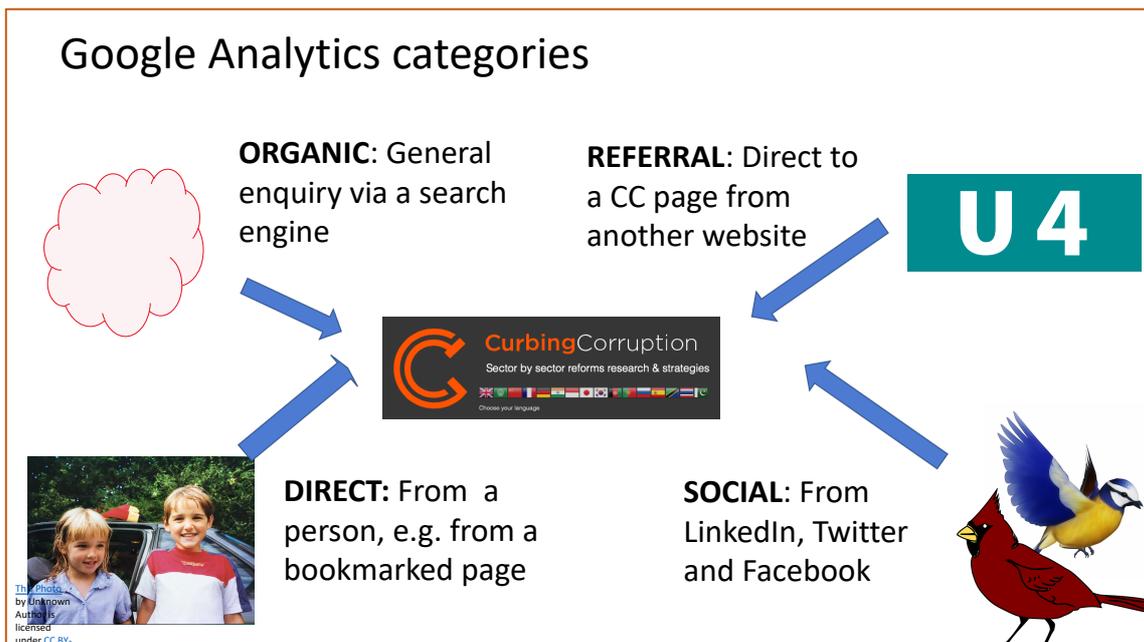
⁶ The website started up on October 8th, 2018; this initial period runs for 6 months to April 7th

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4. Analysis: acquisition of users to the website

Where do the users of the website come from? Of the 4069 users in the six-month period, 54% (2235) came through 'Organic' search, 31% (1265) through 'Direct' search, 6% (255) through 'Referral' and 9% (367) through 'Social'. These four categories have the following meanings:

1. **ORGANIC** is arriving at CC via a search engine, e.g. searching for 'corruption'. Mostly they come through Google, but also a few through Bing and Yahoo.
2. **DIRECT** is a direct connection from a person, e.g. via a bookmarked page or an article where there is a link to CC and does not go through a search engine.
3. **REFERRAL** is where the viewer is on another website, such as from U4 or Global Anti-Corruption Blog (GAB) and that website has a direct link to CC.
4. **SOCIAL** is via a link clicked from within social media, here Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.



4.1 Users coming from social media

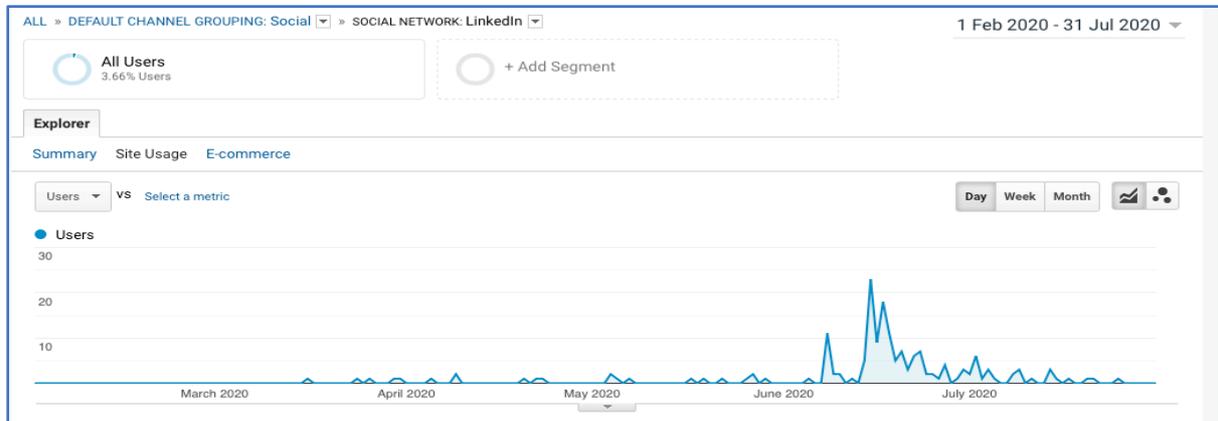
That only 9% of the traffic to the website came via social media was a surprise: we had expected the proportion to be higher. Of the 367 users coming through social media in the period, 149 came through LinkedIn (41%), 118 through Twitter (32%) and 100 (27%) through Facebook.

LinkedIn

Of the sessions driven by LinkedIn referrals, almost all came in the period June 8-23. These were in response to posts on LinkedIn referencing the [new blogs](#) on Police Corruption on

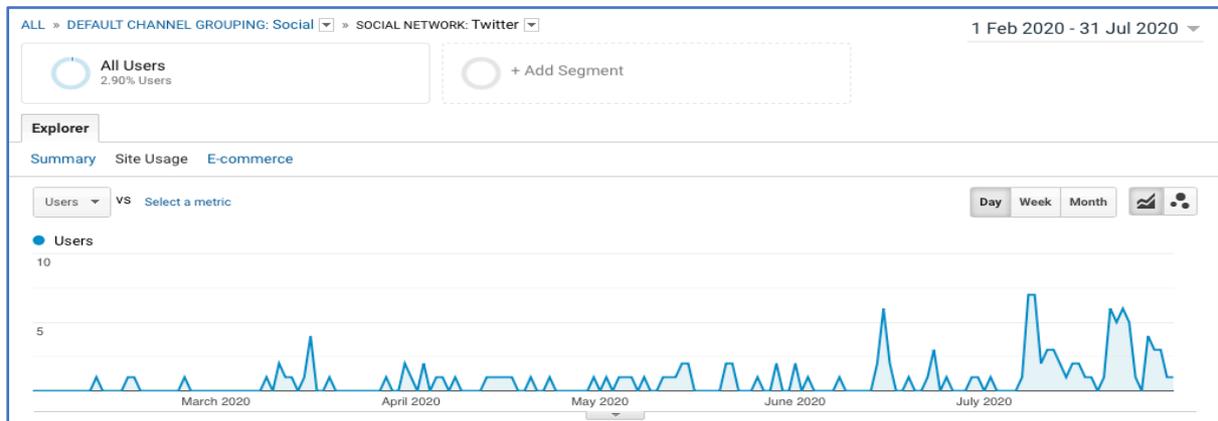
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the CurbingCorruption website. The chart below shows the daily number of sessions originating from LinkedIn:



Twitter

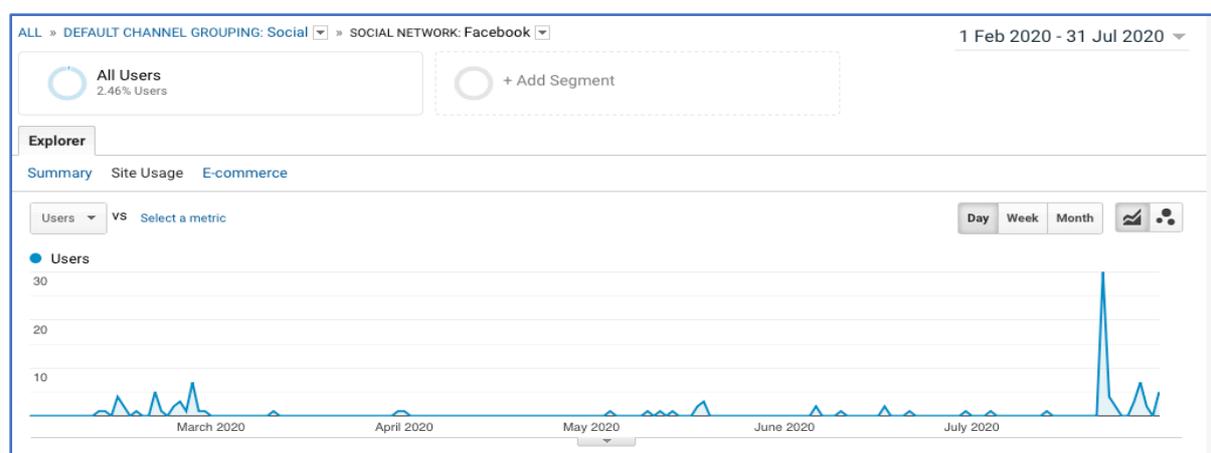
The 118 Twitter referrals into the website were more generally spread across the period of the experiment. The destination URL in almost all cases (80/93) was the home site of CC. The daily uptake is shown in the chart below:



Facebook

The 100 Facebook referrals occurred half in March, mostly to the CC home page, for reasons we do not know; and in July, most likely in response to the Kenyan Agriculture blog from Muniale into a large Kenyan Farmer's Facebook page. The daily uptake is shown in the chart below:

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4.2 Users coming Organically

The channel most used to access CC has been 'Organic' (51%), which means users are coming in via general searches on the website. This, in turn, is a function of how visible the site is when people type in general search terms.

Sector search ranking: We tested CurbingCorruption's visibility by doing a small analysis of how high the website ranks in a Google search when searching for two terms: the sector (e.g. 'agriculture') and 'corruption'.

Sector	Ranking	Sector	Ranking
Shipping	1st page	Education	2nd page
Fisheries	1st page	Local Government	2nd page
Local Government	1st page	Construction	4th page
Land	1st page	Health	5th page
Electricity & Power	1st page	Higher Education	Below 7th
Prisons	1st page	Telecoms	Below 7th
Defence	1st page	Private Sector	Below 7th
Police	2nd page		

Other sites with the same ranking on these search criteria included the World Bank, TI, U4, UNODC and similar - organisations that are older, larger and much better resourced.

Guidance search ranking: An analysis of the ranking of CurbingCorruption's guidance pages found similar results. A search for 'Corruption typologies' showed CurbingCorruption ranked top of the first page; for 'Corruption reform approaches' showed CurbingCorruption also ranked top of the first page; whilst a search for 'Corruption reform strategies' showed CurbingCorruption ranked second on the first page. CurbingCorruption was second on the second page for 'Corruption types' and on the second page for 'Corruption Sectors'.

These are remarkably strong results, and an encouragement that many others are also interested in the work of tackling corruption in sectors. It was not possible in this study,

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however, to see if these high rankings were in any way connected with the extra visibility of the website after the social media advocacy.

4.3 Users coming Directly

Direct users came in throughout the experiment period. Of the 1265 users coming directly via a URL, the biggest group of them, 542 (39%), came in via the home page. We don't know where they got the home page address from. After this, 15% (194) came into the police sector page or to one of the police blog pages, followed by 10% (134) into the 'Health sector' page.

4.4 Users coming via Referral

Of the 255 users coming to the website via Referral, just under half came from two sites: Global Anti-Corruption Blog [GAB](#) (69; 27%) and the [U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre](#) (54; 21%). Others were from OECD Development Matters (18; 7%), in response to a blog by Professor Ang; the Palladium Group (15; 6%); Al Jazeera, Norad, Nottingham University and Tufts University.

5. Analysis: usage of the website

5.1 Users coming in from social media

The proportion of users coming through social media was 9% (367) in the experiment period, as reported in Section 4. This was a significant increase over the earlier two six-month periods: from 1 August 2019 – 31 January 2020 it was 2% (75 users), and from 1 February to 31 July 2019 it was 3% (110 users).

However, the proportion had been much higher at the time of the website launch: In the four months from launch (8 October 2018 to 31 January 2019) it was 19% (363 users). Thus, a significant proportion of the 'news' about the new website had been via social media, but once the launch had worn off, traffic reverted to coming through organic, direct and referral channels.

5.2 Ranking of pages viewed since launch

The website has had 37,608 page-views between the launch on 8 October 2018 and 31 July 2020. The top 25 viewed were the following:

Page	Views	Page	Views
Home	8667	Reform approaches 2	1076
About	2591	Prisons	919
Sectors	1854	Reform approaches	837
Private Sector	1721	Land	810
Education	1616	Higher education	771
Corruption types	1511	New material	558
Shipping	1458	Transnational initiatives	519

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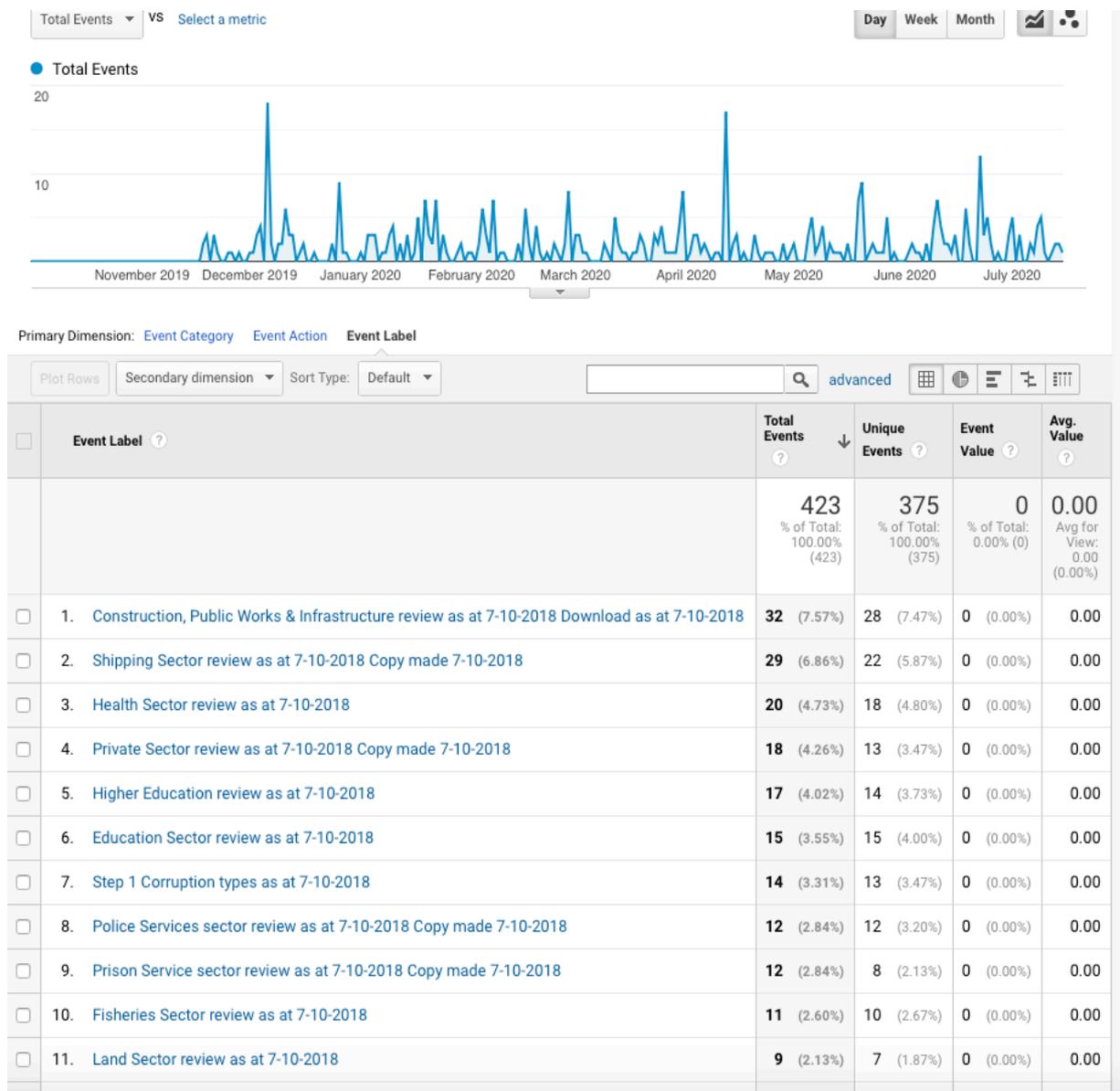
Construction	1449	Fisheries	508
Health	1380	Defence (in progress)	314
Publications	1163	Police blog site	230
Local Government	1125	One police blog	184
Police	1078		

We also examined whether there was any significant change in the pages that were viewed during this period compared with the two earlier periods. The answer, broadly, was not. Nine major parts of the website (out of 22) were in the top-visited 15 in all three periods (About, Sectors, Publications, Corruption types, Construction, Health, Local Government, Private Sector, Shipping), and a further five were in at least one of the earlier periods (Education, Land, Police, Prisons, Reform approaches).

5.3 Downloads from the website of Sector guidance and experience

The material for each sector and each guidance section is downloadable in PDF format. Functionality to track these was added in Dec 2019. The daily number of downloads are shown in the screenshot below, and the details of each of the top 11 are listed beneath. They range from 32 downloads for Construction down to 11 for Fisheries at No. 10 on the list.

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5.4 Identity of users

Age and gender: There was minimal change in Age (constant at 60% in the range 18-34yrs) and Gender (close to 50:50).

Proportion of first-time visitors vs returning users: There was no significant change: The proportion of first-time users was 13.3% in the experiment period. In the earlier periods 1 August – 31 January 2020 it was 13.8%, and from 1 February to 31 July 2019 it was 14.7%

Location: There was minimal change in the geographical location of users between earlier periods and the six months of the experiment.

Period	US	UK	DE	FR	EN ⁷	AUS	ES	RU
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⁷ Other English language users not GB or USA

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Experiment: Feb 1st to July 10th	57	22	0	1	4	1	1	1
August 1st, 2019 to Jan 31st, 2020	61	18	1	1	3	-	1	1
Feb 1st, 2019 - July 31st, 2019	61	17	3	2	-	1	1	1
Oct 8th, 2018 - April 7th, 2019 ⁸	58	20	2	2	2	2	1	1

6. Reflections

So, what is this experiment telling us?

6.1 Having an impact through social media

It was surprisingly straightforward to build up a presence on both Twitter and LinkedIn. It shows that it is feasible, with little effort, to build up a significant identity and voice for CurbingCorruption on social media. It has also shown us the different profiles that the two platforms have. Twitter is a platform where coverage comes from relating to the issue of the day; mostly Covid-19 in the time of this experiment. It is a platform where emotion, often anger, is important for gaining traction. It is very different from the anti-corruption world. LinkedIn, as we experienced it, was more business and subject-focused, and we were being followed by people more in the anti-corruption world.

On both platforms, there were multiple opportunities to contribute constructively to the debates, at least weekly and often daily, in ways that showed how the CurbingCorruption viewpoint on reducing corruption could improve situations.

What was most revealing to Pyman was that these opportunities could be responded to constructively. He had had low expectations, especially of Twitter, seeing many noisy voices jumping on the issue of the day, doing little more than 'pouring from the empty into the void'. On the contrary, the experience of this period was that Twitter was a vehicle through which the many constructive messages of CC could easily be threaded so that the positive narrative of tackling corruption could reach a much larger audience in small, neat chunks.

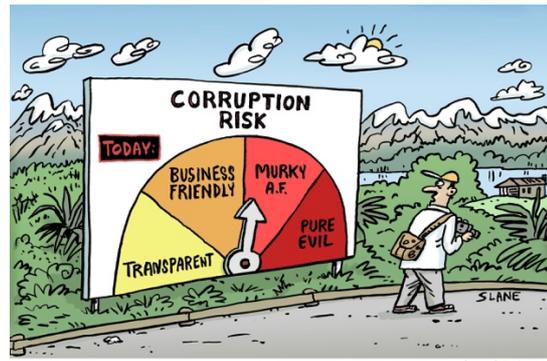
It was also evident that the task of contributing to the platforms is rather different from those working on CurbingCorruption today, who are mostly from a research background. Using social media to convey a message and to generate traction on a topic that appeals to a diversity of audiences (academia, activists, practitioners, policy makers) is a craft. Such a role used to be called communications but connecting in this new digital world alongside the content-creating role feels more like the rhythm of Yin and Yang in Chinese cosmology.

⁸ The website started up on October 8th, 2018. The first 6-month timeframe to April 7th

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Added to this, to attempt to attract attention to a specialised web page (Curbing Corruption) through a social media campaign without deliberate promotion is quite complex. Social media, especially Twitter appeals to current affairs followers, to generate messages that convey relevance and links it to more in-depth content requires research to identify the best way to cater to the different audiences that are interested in corruption issues.

There were also mechanistic lessons about professional use of social media for increasing impact, such as: the website name must be within the tweet and the LI post, not just the hashtags; the time of the tweet matters, tools like Tweet deck allow tweet publication to be programmed; retweeting and latching on to influencers matters; having a picture in the tweet matters hugely. Humour matters also, though there was no space to pursue this.



6.2 Changing the website to appeal more to social media users

Having five enthusiastic participants scrutinise the website and appraise it from a social media perspective showed up various ways to improve:

- **Less complexity, more visually comprehensible.** Participants shared the view that the website 'held a lot of information', was 'rather academic', an 'ocean of many things'. The information and presentation needed to be distilled for practitioners and presented more visually.
- **English language is a significant constraint.** Language really matters, and the automatic translation facility was seen as not good enough. Very few public officials will speak English in non-anglophone countries.
- **On the other hand, the English language network aspect is strong.** Maybe there could be a newsletter, a frequent and easy online survey, a registration to an email circular? This could be a way to know the audience better.
- **More visuals, much more video.** Social media needs to be interactive, like using surveys, asking for responses to questions; more humorous; and with plenty of short video clips, e.g. instructing how to solve corruption problems.

6.3 Attracting users through other channels

We started this experiment with the assumption - a conventional wisdom assumption - that social media would be the natural way to bring more people into CurbingCorruption. We had not appreciated that most people were coming into the website via cold searches or via links from other websites. This was the most unexpected finding of the experiment.

- **Search engine ranking.** As a result, we looked more systematically at Curbing Corruption's ranking on Google searches and realised how highly the site already ranks. Clearly, the site is resonating with many people who come to us 'cold'. This is hugely important, as it is one way that public officials, or people working on their behalf, may come to us.

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- **Audience knowledge.** The experiment made plain that our lack of knowledge about our audience base is almost total. We know the primary intended audience (public officials), but we have little feedback about who is viewing the website, make no attempt to gather up our users, and have zero interaction with them.
- **Attracting more public officials.** To reach practitioners in the public sector, we have to seek out a better sense of how/where they want information and provide surveys and games that people enjoy. Ways forward could include bringing together some groups of officials in focus groups, e.g. public officials in Ecuador. If we want to reach the government, e.g. in Kenya, then it would need deliberate orientation. Once officials know about the site there will need to be many places where they can share the information; social media on its own will not be enough.
- **Referrals need recognising.** This analysis also made clear how some websites act as important 'feeders' to us across the anti-corruption community, notably Global Anti-Corruption Blog (GAB) and the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre.

6.4 Positioning the website

CurbingCorruption has a mix of ambitions - from helping the AC community to change its approach through being useful for practitioners in a wide variety of contexts. The experiment made us more aware of our positioning, in that we risk giving multiple, and confusing, messages about what we are trying to do when we appear on social media and the website.

Without accessible tools, we are not helpful to officials. Although Curbing Corruption has an academic backbone, its utility resides in its usefulness in policy and practice. Hence to advance Curbing Corruption's approach, we need case studies of successful implementation, preferably, and tools that practitioners can use; with both demonstrable in short videos, ideally. The tools could even be as easy as checklists or a small digital application. U4 has a good approach here - providing both a basic guide and an exhaustive guide on every topic.

Are we focused on rich or poor corruption? Where do we position ourselves in relation to corruption as it affects the poor and corruption via elite influence? At the moment we would say that we seek to cover the whole range; but is this true, and if so, is it tenable? Are there visuals that could make our positioning very clear?

Is there a huge first-mover advantage? CC may suffer from being independent and non-aligned: If you are a government minister, where do you go? It could be TI, WB or OECD, and you're probably not going to think (or know of) CC. Are we even positioning ourselves towards them? What about developed country officials? For example, we should be able to raise our visibility with major influencers in the AC world, where we have credibility with many people. Or, should we organise side events, web events and suchlike? Or follow up when an MP was sentenced to jail for agriculture corruption?

CurbingCorruption's vision is too abstract. The current [vision](#), as stated on the website, is straightforward but high level: "Making corruption reforms in each sector with confidence, shifting the primary reform focus from nations to sectors". The strategy, in as much as we have vocalised one, has so far been to put forward a new sector-specific reform approach (though not yet well expressed), plus a lot of newly collated material that showcases constructive reforms in a range of sectors. This experiment has shown that while that may

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be a good strategy for influencing the AC community, it is not coherent if your intended audience is public officials. This will take some thought.

6.5 Personal reflections of the participants

The participants also contributed their personal views from participating in this experiment:

- "As a practitioner and activist, the Curbing Corruption sectoral approach has been eye-opening. It offers a hands-on guide what to do to combat corruption in a tangible way".
- "The incremental changes approach is a novel element. There is great potential to assist governmental officials and practitioners to engage in corruption problem-solving".
- "The most rewarding aspect of this exercise has been the possibility to contribute to the connection of ideas between different stakeholders (audiences). Twitter is a very powerful tool to send a message to a diversity of actors, strengthening not only the transmission but the plurality in the diffusion. The opportunity to learn about cases, approaches and experiences about corruption in other countries and sectors has also been very enriching".
- "Redirecting energy to curbing corruption and reforming is challenging. The sector approach makes it easier to define and analyse the problem and possible solutions. It makes the picture clearer when it narrows down to sector and subsector. I have felt like it is finally possible to think of a solution to corruption when you go down to subsector and specific part of the value chain, for example, in the agriculture, seed subsector. As opposed to a big heavily detailed or populated picture of corruption in the agriculture sector. The broader the blurrier, the narrower the clearer".
- "I think it is time to generate some tools, something practitioners can use in a sector. As awareness increases, the people will want more than reading, they will want something they can apply as they curb corruption. I suppose some sort of checklists, or dichotomous key, or, some digital application".
- "I have thoroughly enjoyed listening to the stories shared and comments offered by our group's members, each of whom has a fascinating background and hails from a different country. For all of Facebook and LinkedIn's capabilities, it remains quite difficult, in my experience, to bring a truly diverse group of researchers together in a virtual room and have them chip away at a shared objective. Curbing Corruption, however, has done an excellent job on this front".
- "While browsing the CurbingCorruption website, I saw lots of good potential stuff, sector by sector, really practical stuff. It was simple, concise, comprehensive, well-structured and presented; I wish many more people knew about it, it's good to create links between practitioners and academics. I see CC as a potential community, people contributing and exchanging. We need to be thinking about how to disseminate it. e.g. very interesting that in shipping, the largest initiative comes from the private sector, not the state".

7. Conclusion

Concluding as a scientist (Pyman), this exercise has been scientifically fruitful, with many useful findings, several new lines of action to pursue, and forcing valuable reflection about what CurbingCorruption is for and how it can best achieve impact. It has also been personally greatly stimulating, finding that so much can be generated from the ideas,

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imagination and energy of such a small group: a group assembled from around the world, without any previous knowledge of each other or of CurbingCorruption, and which never met. Tackling corruption is a subject where the sun rarely shines, but it certainly has been shining for this exercise.