

# Accessing Public Data from Online Platforms & Search Engines under the Digital Services Act (DSA) - a step-by-step guide

This is a simplified guide for members of not-for-profit organisations - including researchers, CSOs, journalists, etc. It explains how they can use DSA data access for research into online services (platforms and search engines), and quickly check if they are eligible to do so.

Note: Many details in the DSA are still being worked out, which means many of the below questions may not be 100% clear. Generally: if you think there's a chance your answer could be "yes" to the question, it's worth considering an application and maybe discussing with experts. But if the answer is clearly "no", the request will probably be denied.

In addition to this guidance, we and other organisations organise workshops and provide advice. Contact: [marsh@algorithmwatch.org](mailto:marsh@algorithmwatch.org)

↓ Yes

Are you investigating any of the Very Large Online Platforms or Very Large Online Search Engines [listed here](#)?

(List includes Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok, X, Google, Bing, app stores, online marketplaces such as Booking.com, Zalando, and Sheln; large pornography platforms, etc)

↓ Yes

Are you independent from commercial interests, and willing to disclose funding sources?

↓ Yes

Are you investigating so-called "systemic risk(s)"? These relate (broadly) to illegal content; fundamental rights; elections and civic discourse; safety and wellbeing. More in [Article 34](#).

Note: You must be investigating systemic risks [in the European Union](#) (though you don't have to be based in the EU yourself).

↓ Yes

Do you have measures to protect security and confidentiality of the data if you receive it? (Toolkits and guidance are being produced, for now refer to your organisational policies or reach out for advice)

↓ Yes

Do you want access to data that is "publicly accessible in the interface" of the platform or search engine? E.g. lists of public posts with numbers of engagements?

↓ Yes

You may be able to make a data access request under Article 40.12 of the DSA! To do so, fill out an online form provided by the service you want data from. Have a look at [this by the Mozilla Foundation](#) and/or the [DSA40 Collaboratory Q&A](#) for more details on how to do that for the service(s) you are interested in.

Be aware that you may need to wait some weeks, and answer follow-up questions from the service.

Please let the DSA40 Collaboratory [know about your request via their tracker](#). If you are rejected on dubious grounds, this can support enforcement against the service.

↓ No

Another part of the DSA - Article 40,4 - which deals with non-public data, which will come into effect 2 October 2025. That is a different process to the one in this guide.

If you have a possible request for non-public data and would like to discuss more details, please do get in touch.