

Cheat Sheet: AI Prompting Examples

Artificial intelligence can support OSINT investigations when it is integrated through clear, structured tasking. Well-designed prompts allow investigators to guide AI toward organized analytical assistance while maintaining human judgment and verification.

The examples below illustrate structured prompting techniques that can be adapted for a variety of investigative scenarios. Each prompt defines the analyst's role, objective, scope, constraints, and output format to support disciplined AI-assisted analysis.

1. Structured Analytic Techniques (SAT) OSINT Prompt

(Used in intelligence analysis to reduce bias and strengthen reasoning)

ROLE

You are an open-source intelligence analyst applying structured analytic techniques (SAT) to assess competing explanations for a given activity or event.

OBJECTIVE

Evaluate competing hypotheses explaining a surge in coordinated misinformation activity related to the upcoming election in United States.

Possible hypotheses may include:

1. Foreign state-sponsored influence operation
2. Domestic political advocacy campaign
3. Coordinated bot or spam marketing network
4. Organic grassroots amplification



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SCOPE

Investigate activity on the following platforms:

- X (Twitter)
- Facebook
- TikTok
- Telegram
- Reddit

Include:

- Post timing patterns
- Network amplification behavior
- Repeated narratives
- Bot indicators
- Cross-platform coordination signals

TIMEFRAME

Primary analysis window:

1 August 2025 – Present

Historical baseline:

Previous election cycle (2020–2024) for comparison if necessary.



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CONSTRAINTS

- Use only publicly available information.
- Do not attribute activity to specific actors without verifiable evidence.
- Distinguish clearly between:
 - Observed data
 - Analytical inference
 - Hypothesis testing
- Avoid confirmation bias.

ANALYTICAL METHOD: ANALYSIS OF COMPETING HYPOTHESES (ACH)

Create a matrix evaluating each hypothesis against available evidence.

Evidence vs Hypothesis Matrix

Evidence	H1: Foreign Operation	H2: Domestic Campaign	H3: Bot Network	H4: Organic Activity
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For each cell:

- Consistent
- Inconsistent
- Neutral

OUTPUT FORMAT

A. Executive Summary

- Key findings
- Most plausible hypothesis
- Confidence level



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B. Evidence Table

Evidence	Source	Reliability	Verification Status
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C. Hypothesis Testing

Explain how each hypothesis aligns or conflicts with the evidence.

D. Explicit Assumptions

List all assumptions required for interpretation.

E. Uncertainty & Information Gaps

Identify:

- Missing data
- Unverified claims
- Evidence requiring additional sources

CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

Use the following scale:

- High: Strong multi-source corroboration
- Moderate: Some corroboration but gaps remain
- Low: Limited evidence or conflicting signals

Explain key drivers of uncertainty.





2. Dark-Web / Illicit Marketplace Investigation Prompt

ROLE

You are an OSINT investigator examining publicly accessible signals of illicit activity associated with online marketplaces and communication channels.

OBJECTIVE

Identify whether there are open-source indicators of organized distribution networks selling stolen payment data or financial accounts.

Potential platforms of interest may include discussion channels linked to services such as Telegram, Discord, and marketplaces referenced on Reddit.

SCOPE

Investigate signals such as:

- Advertisements for compromised financial accounts
- Bulk sale listings
- Recruitment posts for money mules
- Escrow services
- Vendor reputation systems

Exclude:

- Private or restricted systems requiring unauthorized access.

TIMEFRAME

Primary analysis period:

January 2025 – Present

Historical context:

Prior marketplace activity since 2023 if necessary.





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CONSTRAINTS

- Use only legally accessible OSINT sources.
- Do not attempt to access private systems or bypass safeguards.
- Avoid publishing sensitive operational details.
- Do not assume illegality without corroborating evidence.

ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS

Document:

- Marketplace identifiers
- Vendor aliases
- Product categories
- Pricing patterns
- Cross-platform advertising

OUTPUT FORMAT

A. Executive Summary

Provide:

- Overview of observed marketplace activity
- Indicators of organized operations
- Overall confidence assessment

B. Marketplace Observations

Marketplace / Channel	Activity Type	Evidence	Verification Status
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C. Vendor Pattern Analysis

Vendor Alias	Platform	Product Type	Indicators of Scale
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D. Assumptions

List explicit analytical assumptions.

E. Information Gaps

Identify missing evidence and where additional sources are required.

Flag:

Source Needed

or

Unverifiable Claim

CONFIDENCE RATING

Provide:

- High
- Moderate
- Low

Include explanation of uncertainty.



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3. Network Mapping OSINT Prompt (Organized Crime / Extremist Networks)

ROLE

You are an OSINT analyst tasked with mapping relationships between individuals, organizations, and communication channels involved in a potential extremist support network.

OBJECTIVE

Identify publicly observable connections among online communities promoting extremist ideology and potential logistical support networks.

Relevant organizations may include groups historically associated with extremist activity such as Proud Boys and Oath Keepers.

SCOPE

Platforms to analyze:

- Telegram
- X (Twitter)
- YouTube
- Facebook

Look for:

- Shared membership across groups
- Repeated cross-posting
- Fundraising signals
- Event coordination

TIMEFRAME

Primary window:

January 2024 – Present

Include historical context if it clarifies network formation.





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CONSTRAINTS

- Use only open-source material.
- Avoid identifying private individuals beyond publicly available identifiers.
- Do not infer operational intent without evidence.

ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS

Document:

- Accounts
- Channels
- Organizations
- Interactions between them

OUTPUT FORMAT

A. Executive Summary

- Key network structures
- Major nodes (accounts or groups)
- Observed coordination patterns

B. Network Node Table

Node	Type	Platform	Description
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C. Relationship Mapping

Node A	Node B	Relationship Type	Evidence
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Relationship types:

- Shared membership
- Content amplification
- Organizational affiliation
- Event coordination

D. Assumptions

Explicitly state assumptions used to interpret relationships.

E. Uncertainty

Document:

- Ambiguous connections
- Weak indicators
- Claims lacking verification

Flag:

- Unverified
- Source Needed

CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

Assign confidence levels to:

- Individual network links
- Overall network structure

Include explanation of:

- Source reliability
- Evidence density
- Analytical uncertainty





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