

Gab

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About the Platform:



Gab (see: <https://gab.com/>) was launched in May 2017, but it ran into public controversy in October of 2018 after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. After the shooting, it was discovered that the shooter had posted on Gab “immediate intent to do harm” before the shooting. The site faced difficulty finding a host server, turning to Mastodon before eventually funding its own version of Mastodon. Gab does not require that users create an account in order to view content, and there are few very restrictions on material that can be posted. There have been several coding issues within the platform itself, and it frequently suffers from crashes and other malfunctions. Gab allows posts to have categories when they post, a noticeable difference from Twitter and Parler.

1) What data is available from this platform?

The primary data offered through Gab is text-based posts. However, Gab also offers data related to those posts such as likes, dislikes, quotes, attachments, timestamps of posts, and user information. User information includes date of user account created, name associated with account, and profile picture.

2) What are the restrictions/limitations of the data?

Gab has a functional API. There are no notable limitations for the use of it. Some of the variables that can be collected are provided under question number 3.

3) What variables are available? What meta-data (i.e., the data of the data) is included? For example, what information is available about user profiles (e.g., username, demographic data, number of followers/friends)? What information is linked to the content/post/blog/tweet (e.g., timestamps, re-tweets, location, device/platform that content was shared from, number of likes)?

Several meta-data attributes are returned as part of the Gab API responses, and all responses are returned in JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) format. To provide better insight, a few examples of meta-data attributes that are returned are things like:

- **id** - the unique identifier for the post
- **created_at** - the date and time at which the post was made
- **url** - the URL linking back to the post
- **tags** - a list of hashtags included in the post
- **mentions** - a list of users mentioned in the post
- **in_reply_to_id** - the unique identifier for the parent post (will be "null" if the post has no parent post)
- **replies_count** - the number of replies (i.e., responses) that were left under the post
- **reblogs_count** - the number of reblogs (i.e., reshares) for the post
- **favourites_count** - the number of favorites (i.e., positive ratings) that the post received
- **note** - a personal description for the user that made the post

- **language** - the two-letter code for the language that the post is in
- **sensitive** - a boolean variable where “true” indicates that the post might contain malicious or especially sensitive content

4) Is there an Application Programming Interface (API) available for this platform? If yes, please provide the link for the platform.

Yes, GitHub user @ChrisStevens created a Python command-line interface to collect data from Gab.com which can be found here: <https://github.com/ChrisStevens/garc>.

5) Does your assigned API provide a way to limit the search based on geolocation?

No, the Gab API does not provide a way to limit the search based on geolocation.

6) Does the platform use any kind of filters to remove the content on their sites?

No, Gab does not appear to use any kind of filters to remove content.

References

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