Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS) Frequently Asked Questions

October 2019

TEVUS
Terrorist & Extremist Violence in the U.S.

START ▶▶

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
A Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Emeritus Center of Excellence

Contents

Accessing TEVUS

Who can get access to TEVUS?
The TEVUS Portal is accessible to the general public.

How can I get access to TEVUS?
Anyone who would like access to TEVUS must submit a login request to START. To submit a request, please visit http://www.start.umd.edu/tevus-portal-access-request and complete the access request form. Once reviewed, you will receive an email with your user name and temporary password.

Why do I have to provide information about my profession when I log in to TEVUS?
START is collecting this information in order to gain a better understanding of this product's end users. Aggregated names of users will not be revealed without express permission from those concerned.

How can I access TEVUS on different platforms and mobile devices?
Although TEVUS can be accessed on mobile devices it is not optimized for such devices. There may be difficulties navigating, especially within the relational graph pane. There are no plans for the creation of a TEVUS application at the current time.

About TEVUS

How can I get more information about the four databases that feed into the TEVUS database?
You can find more details about the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the U.S. (PPT), American Terrorism Study (ATS) and Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) on their respective web pages. You can also access and download analytical products that use the data contained in TEVUS, such as research reports and research briefs via the START website.

Who funds TEVUS and the constituent datasets?
TEVUS was supported by the Resilient Systems Division (Award Number 2009-ST-108-LR0003) and the First Responders Group (Award Number 70RSAT18FR0000119) of the Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The views and conclusions contained in this document do not represent the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or START.

For more detailed information regarding the funding sources for each of the constituent databases please contact the individual data teams.

American Terrorism Study: https://terrorismresearch.uark.edu/data/

Extremist Crime Database: http://www.start.umd.edu/research-projects/united-states-extremist-crime-database-ecdb-1990-2010

Global Terrorism Database: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States: http://www.start.umd.edu/data-tools/profiles-perpetrators-terrorism-united-statesppt-us

How often is the TEVUS portal updated?
Subject to funding, START updates the portal annually after new incidents or additional historical cases are coded by the research teams.

Is TEVUS Unclassified?
Yes, all of the data used in TEVUS comes from open sources such as media outlets and court case documents. The database does not contain any information not obtained through an open source.

How can I find out more information about START?
Visit www.start.umd.edu.

How can I contact the research teams involved in TEVUS?
Email start_tevus@umd.edu or use the contact form available through the interface.

How do I reference and cite TEVUS?
Please use the following format to cite the TEVUS database:
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2019). Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States Database (TEVUS) [Data file]. Retrieved from https://tap.cast.uark.edu/.

What time span does the data available in TEVUS currently cover?
The TEVUS database is comprised of four separate databases which follow their own data collection processes and timelines. The four databases include the American Terrorism Study (ATS), the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the US (PPT-US), and the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB). The current TEVUS database includes data from the following databases which include data from the following span of time:

ATS data spans 1978 to 2018. Due to the logistics and nature of collecting the court case data and of the court cases themselves, TEVUS users should be aware that not all terrorism related court cases from this time span appear in the TEVUS portal though a representative sample is provided and with each additional data load more court cases are added. For a court case from the ATS to be included in the TEVUS portal it must be a federal court case where the charges are terrorism related according to the AG/FBI guidelines on terrorism investigations. Furthermore, the case must be closed and at least one person was either convicted or the person died prior to trial.

ECDB data spans 1990 to 2018, included in TEVUS entails all publicly known, ideologically motivated homicides committed in the United States by Far-right extremists (FR) and offenders associated with al-

Qa'ida and its associated movement (AQAM). In addition, arsons and bombings committed by the Animal and Earth Liberation Fronts (ELF and ALF) are also included.

GTD data spans 1970 to 2018

PPT data spans 1970 to 2018

Can I have access to the raw data?

Access to the data tables that comprise the TEVUS database and portal are currently unavailable.

However, you can access the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and event level data about attacks in the U.S. via the GTD website: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/. Profiles of Perpetrators of Terrorism in the U.S. (PPT) can be accessed here: http://www.start.umd.edu/data-tools/profiles-perpetrators-terrorism-united-statesppt-us. PPT data includes for each organization information on its terrorist attacks, its history and base of operations, its ideology and goals, its engagement in political and criminal activities (other than terrorism), its alliances, its network and structure, and its financial resources.

The GTD and PPT are two of four databases included in the TEVUS database.

Further information about American Terrorism Study (ATS) and Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) is available via their respective links. However, there is currently no way to access the raw data for these databases. If you have specific questions about any of the data in the portal please direct them to: start_tevus@umd.edu or contact the TEVUS team through the contact form found on the interface.

How can I get more information/training on how to utilize the interface?

START has produced a series of video tutorials as well as a handbook which show users how to operate the different functions within the portal. However if you need further assistance, or if you are interested in customized training opportunities for your organization, please contact start_tevus@umd.edu.

How can I get access to the court case documents used by ATS?

Basic information about the court case documents that pertain to a particular piece of data is provided in the source information for that node. We are currently unable to field individual requests for court case documents. However all court case documents are a matter of public record and, with the information provided in the source information, users can access those documents through the normal channels.

Contacting the TEVUS Team

How do I contact the TEVUS Team?

There are two ways to contact the TEVUS Team. You can email start_tevus@umd.edu or contact us through the portal by clicking on the 'Help' icon in the interface dashboard. Once the 'Help' menu is open, click on the 'Questions/Feedback' button. This will take you to the 'Contact Us' form in a new window.

↓

↓
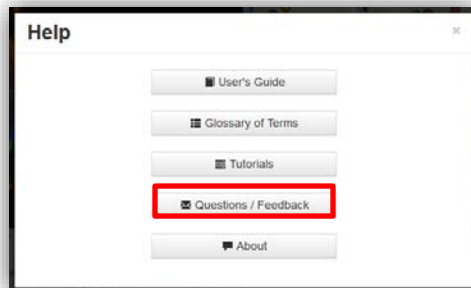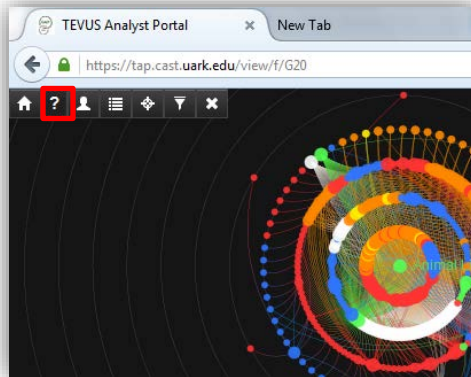
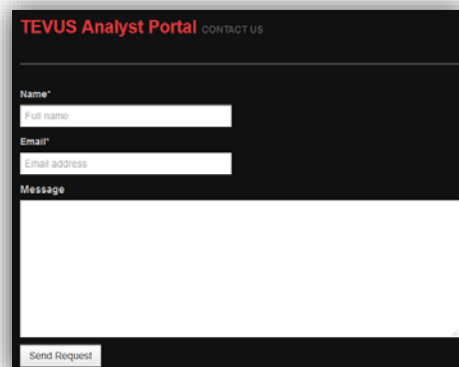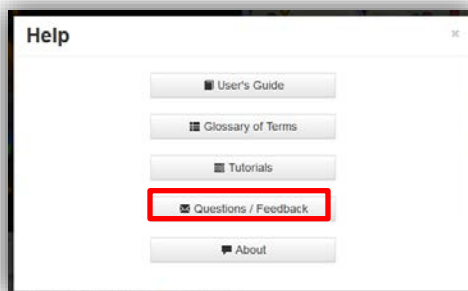## How do I report incorrect or incomplete information?

There are two ways to report incorrect or incomplete information. You can email start_tevus@umd.edu or contact us through the portal by clicking on the 'Help' icon in the interface dashboard. Once the 'Help' menu is open, click on the 'Questions/Feedback' button. This will take you to the 'Contact Us' form in a new window.

↓

↓
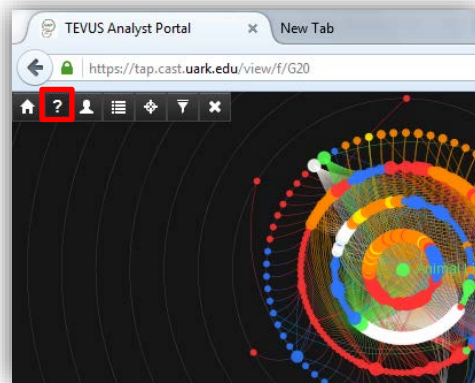
Please be as specific as possible with your comments and feedback. If possible, copy and paste the URL of the relevant search as well as the TEVUS identity number of the specific node you are referring to in your report. The TEVUS identity number can be found in the top right hand corner of the node detail box. (See example below. In this example the identity number is E4165.) Including the URL and TEVUS identity

number will help ensure that the TEVUS team can find the information and investigate the data associated with it.
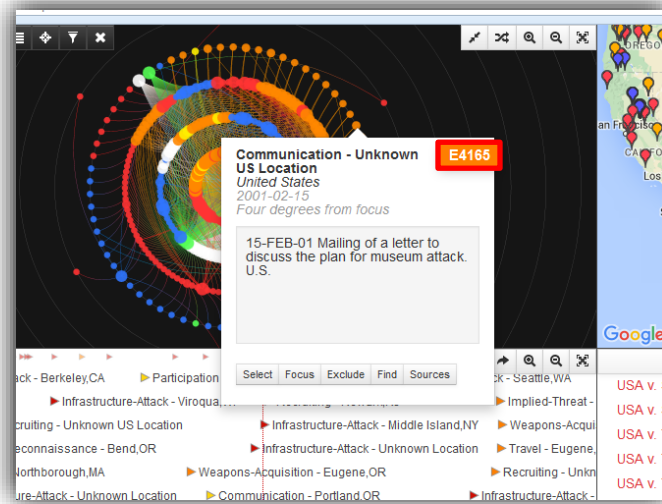
How do I report a technical problem with the interface?

There are two ways to report a technical problem with the interface. You can email start_tevus@umd.edu or contact us through the portal by clicking on the 'Help' icon in the interface dashboard. Once the 'Help' menu is open, click on the 'Questions/Feedback' button. This will take you to the 'Contact Us' form in a new window.

↓

↓

START ▶▶

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
A Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Emeritus Center of Excellence

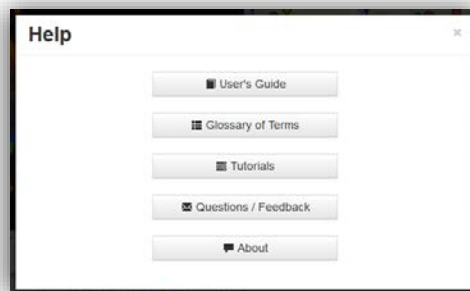Please be as specific as possible in the description of your technical problem. If possible, copy and paste the relevant URL associated with your technical problem as well as the TEVUS identity number of the specific node you are referring to, if applicable. The TEVUS identity number can be found in the top right hand corner of the node detail box. (See example below. I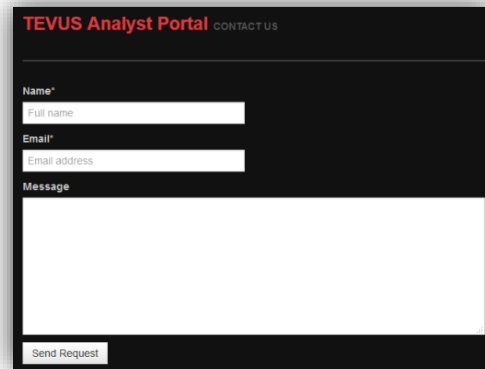n this example the identity number is E4165.) It is also useful for us to know which browser you were using at the time you experienced the problem. The URL, the TEVUS identity number, and your browser information will help us investigate and resolve your reported problem.
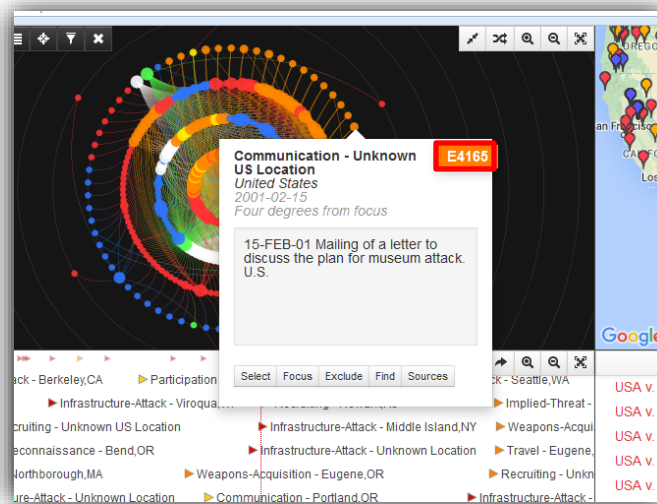
Using TEVUS

Can I use TEVUS for my research/analysis/project?

Yes, we encourage researchers, analysts, and scholars to use TEVUS in their work. Use of the data signifies your agreement to our Terms of Use, which include properly citing TEVUS as a data source, and refraining from redistributing or republishing the data downloaded from the interface for commercial use.

How can I share data (search results)?

Users can share their researched information and data by copying the unique URL that the TEVUS Portal generates for each search query. The main URL for the TEVUS Portal is https://tap.cast.uark.edu.

As you make more modifications on your search query, the URL will change. The URL will also change when you refresh the page. Finally, URL's will change with each update to the underlying TEVUS database.

Users can also download the maps, tables and timeline generated by the portal. Please see below or refer to the user guide for more information about this.

Can I download the data from the portal?

The data displayed in each graph in the summary panel can be viewed in table format by clicking on the graph. Each table can be downloaded as a CSV file by clicking the down arrow in the top right hand corner of the table.
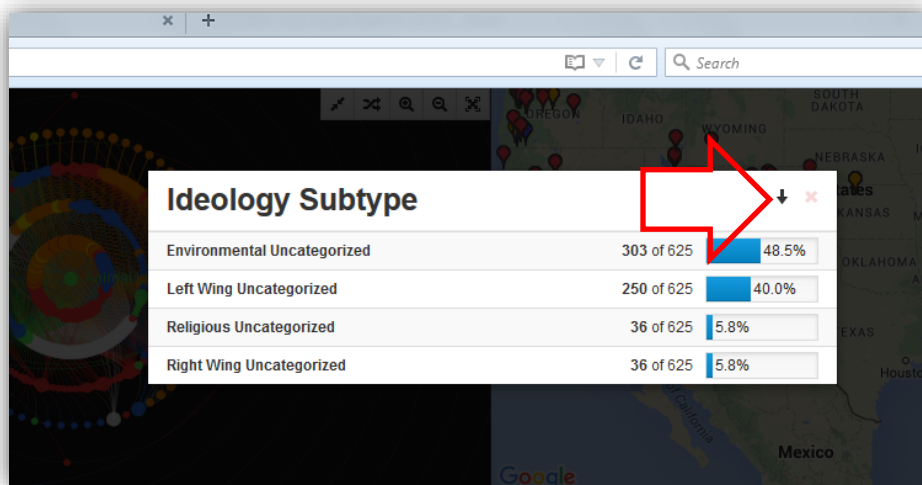
Can I download the map from the portal?

Using the export function in the map panel allows users to export the map to either a KML file or a CSV file. A KML file allows the user to view the information on a standard web mapping tool such as Google Earth. A CSV file allows the data to be saved in table form. In order export the map, the user must: 1) click on the export icon, and 2) select the desired file format. Once done, the file will be downloaded to the user's computer.
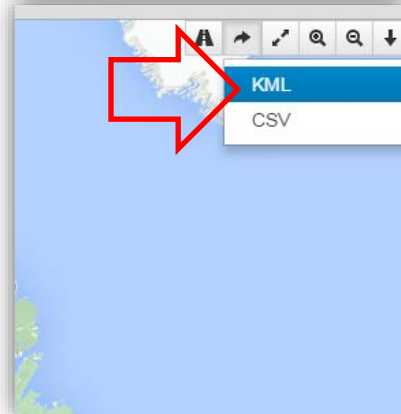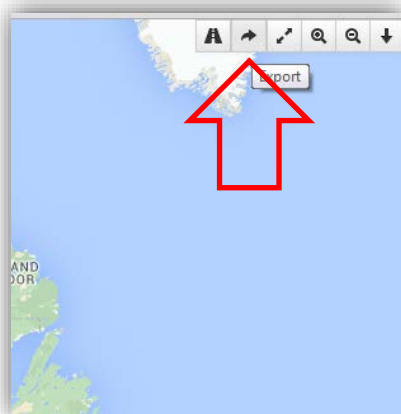
Can I export the timeline?

Using the export function in the timeline panel allows user to export the data to a CSV file. A CSV file allows the data to be saved in table form. In order export the timeline, the user must click on the export icon. Once done, the file will be downloaded to the user's computer.
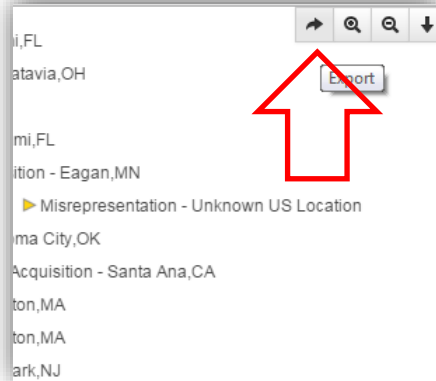
Can users export the graphs shown in the report panel?

No. However the data displayed in each graph can be viewed in table format by clicking on the graph. Each table can then be downloaded as a CSV or an Excel file, depending on the tab you are looking at in the summary, by clicking the down arrow in the top right hand corner of the table. From the downloaded table, users can recreate the graphs shown in the report panel.
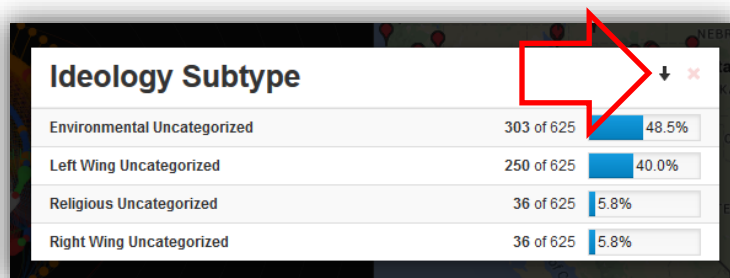
What is the difference between Focus and Filter?

You build searches by selecting search criteria or a focus, which consists of Groups, Persons, Court Cases and Events. To filter is to apply advanced search criteria consisting of "Hard" and "Soft" Degrees of Separation, Ideology, Location, CBSA, Target, Critical Infrastructure, Event Type, Event Subtype, Start/End Date and Weapon.

When defining search criteria, the best procedure is to first select the focus of the search query and then apply filters to refine the search. Once your main focus element or elements are selected, the user can use selected filter criteria to remove unwanted details and return a more focused and refined search.

What constitutes a discrete/specific violent incident?

An incident may involve more than one crime. Incidents are usually distinct if they occur at different times (temporally distinct), in different locations (spatially distinct), involve different victims and are not link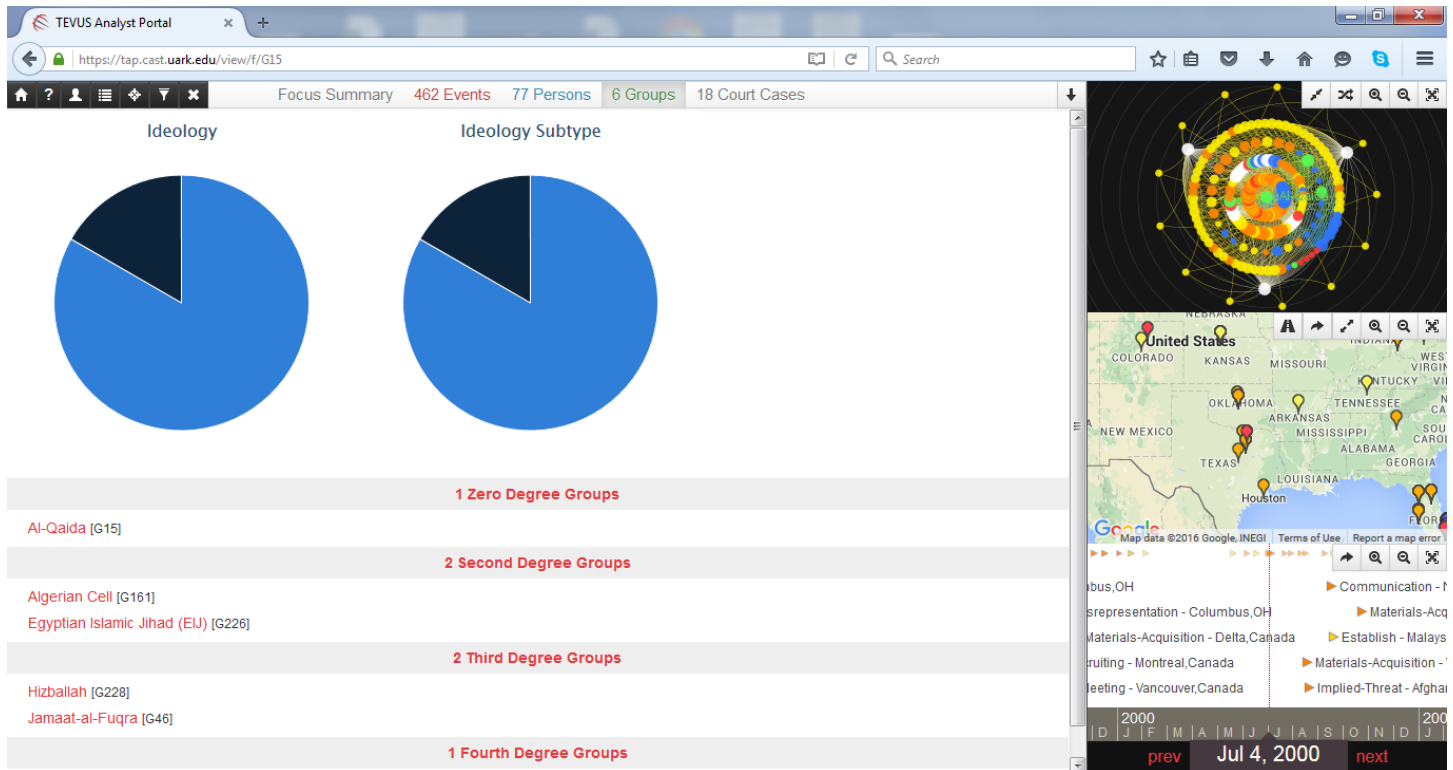ed to earlier acts that were necessary, i.e., must occur, for the subsequent act to occur. Incidents occurring at both the same geographic and temporal point will be regarded as a single incident, but if either the time of occurrence of incidents or their locations are discontinuous, the events will be regarded as separate incidents. For example: a) if four truck bombs explode simultaneously in different parts of a major city, this is regarded as four different incidents as they happened in different locations; b) if a bomb goes off while police are working on the scene the next day, this is counted as two separate incidents as they happened at different times. Whereas if two suicide bombers detonate devices in the same location at the same time, this would be counted as a single event.

Why are the lines connecting nodes in the relational graph curved?

This is purely aesthetic.

Understanding TEVUS Data and Terms

Why doesn't START recommend searching the database using the ideology filter and focus?

While it is possible to query for person and groups based on ideology, users are encouraged to view the results with caution. Due to the difficulty in finding documentation of the ideological motivations of persons and groups committing acts of terrorism and violent extremism in open sources, entries in the database are frequently categorized as "unknown" in regards to ideology. Therefore, returned results may appear incomplete, and additional information on perpetrators and groups may be available in TEVUS through a different line of querying the database.

An additional note about ideology: terrorists often claim to fight for the very same or very similar beliefs and goals that other peaceful and law abiding individuals also believe in. It is not the stated worldview which makes someone a terrorist or extremist – not the grievance which they say they are fighting against or the goal they are fighting for. Instead, it is their criminal support of or participation in illegal violence to advance those beliefs which qualifies an individual as a terrorist or extremist in TEVUS. TEVUS then classifies perpetrators into ideological categories, including environmental, left wing, nationalist/separatist, religious, right wing and single issue. The descriptions of these categories within TEVUS do not suggest that any individual or group with one or more of these characteristics is likely to be a terrorist, but that the perpetrators in TEVUS engaged in or supported criminal violence in order to advance these beliefs or goals.

Why doesn't IS appear in the TEVUS portal/Why can't I search by IS in the Groups drop down menu?

"Islamic State" does not appear in the list of groups in TEVUS because no attacks have been directly attributed to Islamic State operatives. An ideology-focused query of "Religious – Muslim - Sunni" will return a broader sample of those perpetrator groups that are generally motivated by violent Sunni Extremist ideology, like that espoused by Islamic State.

How can I best search for incidents involving Sovereign Citizens?

While "Sovereign Citizen" appears as a group in the drop down list of groups in TEVUS, selecting Sovereign Citizen from the groups list will only return results for which perpetrators explicitly self-identify as Sovereign Citizens. Users should keep in mind that focusing a search by Person: Ideology: and selecting Right Wing - Sovereign will return a broader set of acts and incidents linked to a 'Sovereign Citizen' ideology.

Which groups can I search by in TEVUS and why?

Only groups that are included in PPT-US can be searched for in TEVUS. Only GTD perpetrator groups for which there is high confidence of responsibility for at least one violent attack are included in PPT-US. There are over 140 groups included in the dataset that carried out terrorist attacks in the US between 1970 and 2018. For more information and access to the full PPT-US dataset, visit the START website: http://www.start.umd.edu/data-tools/profiles-perpetrators-terrorism-united-statesppt-us.

Where can I find a full list of the terms used in the TEVUS portal and User Guide?

You may refer to the TEVUS Glossary which can be found at:
https://tap.cast.uark.edu/assets/help/tap_glossary.pdf.

What is the difference between "Terrorism and Violent Extremism" and "Crime"?

The TEVUS portal includes only information on terrorist attacks and incidents of extremist violence in the United States. This does not include crimes or crime incidents that are not directly related to an event in the portal. For example, if one wanted to obtain information on a Mexican drug cartel, those crimes would not be available in the portal unless there is a material support overlap connected to an event in the portal.

What is the difference between a failed and foiled plot?

A failed plot is a violent incident that was set into motion but was not successfully completed, either because the suspect made a mistake or law enforcement action during the final stages of the planned incident. A foiled plot is a violent incident that is stopped before the final stages of the planned incident either through suspect desistance or law enforcement action.

Why do certain people show up in the portal as "Unconvicted or Unindicted Individual"?

To protect civil liberties, individuals who are not indicted or convicted are marked with a generic placeholder in place of names. The database does however include the names of individuals who died in the act of committing a crime. While certain names are withheld, case related information and individual connections are still represented within the Portal. More information on individual cases and incidents are a matter of public record and may be obtained with further research.

Why do certain groups show up in the portal as "Above Ground"?

These organizations are not officially considered terrorist organizations, but are linked to perpetrators who may have acted on their own outside of the direction of the group. More information on specific cases and incidents are a matter of public record and may be obtained with further research.

Why do there appear to be court cases missing from the data?

For a court case from the ATS to be included in the TEVUS portal it must be a federal court case where the charges are terrorism related according to the Attorney General/FBI guidelines on terrorism investigations. Furthermore, the case must be closed and at least one person was either convicted or the person died prior to trial. Users should also keep in mind that the court case data in ATS is not collected chronologically. So although the database contains a representative sample of the court cases related to terrorism in the U.S., the database is not exhaustive.

What does it mean when a Day or Month shows up as OO?

This indicates that the exact date of an incident is not known. We may only know the year, or the year and month. Data points with non-specific dates will display a "00" as the month and/or day (ex: 1998-00-00).

What is the difference between a Preparatory Event and an Ancillary Event?

Preparatory events (represented by the orange nodes) are defined as activities that *can be tied directly* to the preparation of at least one failed, foiled, or completed incident act or extremist crime. Ancillary

events (represented by the yellow nodes) are defined as identified activities that *could not be tied directly* to the planning or preparation of a specific failed, foiled, or completed incident. Both event types are committed by one or more perpetrators and are a subcategory of antecedent activities also known as precursor events. Determining if an event is preparatory or ancillary can be challenging at times. For example, certain events may be both preparatory for one incident and ancillary for a different incident. In these cases, the event type will be categorized as preparatory within TEVUS.

What happens if more than one weapon type was used during an incident in the TEVUS database?

All the weapons types used during the attack are represented. If an event is coded as having more than one weapon type, it will be returned in a query for any of those types.