

J5 communication snapshot – Atlantis

This document provides a communication snapshot of performance of the media and communications undertaken to support Operation Atlantis. Evaluation covers the period 23 January – 29 January 2020.

About the Operation Atlantis Day of Action

On 22 January 2020, J5 countries undertook various actions in support of a coordinated “Day of Action”. The enforcement activities were supported by a global communication strategy that included media, social media, internal communication, newsletter articles and updated web content.

Our objectives were to:

Provide support to the compliance activity by promoting success of operational activity of the J5	We achieved this through the implementation of the overall plan.
Demonstrate the success of the J5 collaboration, and show that the J5 is effectively pursuing transnational tax evasion and crime	We achieved this – some journalists commented that it was as if the J5 was communicating as a group, rather than five separate countries. This is an excellent result for the overall J5 branding.
Position the J5 chiefs as thought leaders in their home countries in the area of tax evasion and crime	We achieved this through Pulse articles and using Chiefs as spokespeople in media interviews. In some countries, journalists are asking to speak to the J5 Chief.
Contribute to breaking the trust between tax evaders and the facilitators and promoters who assist them.	We have had anecdotal information that there is commentary on some blogs saying that the J5 is serious about going after those who commit tax crime, as a result of the communication. We have created an air of uncertainty for some.
Support the overall J5 communications plan by providing a tangible outcome	This was an important milestone in the overarching J5 communication plan.

In detail, this is what we did, and how each activity performed.

Media

The communication was spearheaded by a global media release that included quotes from all countries. This was complemented by domestic releases in some countries where either additional information was included, or where their market needed additional localised media. The media release was published around 4pm US time on Thursday 23 January. The media approach included the issue of media release, embargoed information to selected journalists, facilitated interviews and responses to queries.

Australia: published the global [media release](#) which was provided under embargo to key journalists beforehand. We facilitated four interviews across print, radio and television and two written responses to requests for additional information. This resulted in 16 online articles and 2 print articles, with coverage across print, radio and television.

United Kingdom (UK): issued the global media release on [mynewsdesk](#). Simon York was interviewed by the Times of London

United States (US): published the global [media release](#) which was provided under embargo to journalists. Within the first six hours of the release, a majority of those reporters had published articles. Interviews were not undertaken however media enquiries were responded to.

Canada: published the global media release in both [English](#) and [French](#). Five enquiries were received and coverage was limited to Canadian publications.

Netherlands (NL): published the global [media release](#) and received enquiries focusing on details such as the name and location of the bank and the involvement of Dutch citizens.

Media coverage

Media coverage from each country was variable. Australia and US received substantial coverage despite issuing a release that was light on facts. Australia's coverage spanned radio, tv, press and online. US media wrote basic J5 articles with some operational details. Canada received limited coverage in traditional media, possibly because no Canadian residents were involved, however still achieved coverage in specialist publications and radio. UK and NL did not receive a great deal of coverage, but some online coverage and requests for updates were asked for. Coverage in the UK was localised to where the arrest was made, and special interest media. Dutch media coverage included a small newspaper and a platform for tax experts.

It is clear that when we are able to provide facts, media outlets are interested. They are hungry for updates about operational details. It is likely that we will be able to continue the conversation as further facts about the case are able to be issued.

Web content

Each country either updated their web content to include new information and logos or published the media releases to their website, or both. The IRS J5 website continues to be our main call to

action for people wanting further information but each country maintains important information in support of the J5.

Australia: In addition to publishing the media release (approx. 680 views at 6 minutes time on page), we also updated our [web page](#) (approx. 300 views at almost 4 minutes time on page).

United Kingdom: published the media release (approx. 1,570 views).

United States: published the media release and updated our web page.

Canada: published the media release in both English (230 views) and French (approx. 90 views).

Netherlands: published the media release (approx. 180 views).

Newsletters

Not every country has newsletters in place for specific audiences. Australia has newsletters targeting large business and tax agents.

Australia: developed articles for newsletters targeting large business and tax professionals. These newsletters typically have reasonable levels of readership and subscription levels are quite high.

Social media

Social media provided each country with a chance to show our unification, by sharing, retweeting, commenting and engaging on each other's posts. We ensured that all social media carried our #j5taxcrime hashtag to further consolidate our alliance. The hashtag was tweeted 18 times, with 10 of them coming from our agencies. One of our objectives was to position our Chiefs as thought leaders in tax crime, and the high level of engagement shows that this objective is achieving success. To further demonstrate our collaborative efforts, each country retweeted/shared/liked social media tweets/posts where it was possible to do so.

Twitter

Australia: posted a high performing [tweet](#) that was seen over 11,000 times (10 likes, one retweet and one negative reply).

United Kingdom: posted a [tweet](#) (17 likes, 14 retweets and five negative replies).

United States: tweeted four times:

- 7:49am 23 January – [retweeted](#) HMRC's [tweet](#) (three likes, one retweet and one reply (hidden)).
- 11:40am 23 January – [tweet](#) (seven likes, two retweets and one reply (hidden)).
- 2:50pm 23 January – [tweet](#) (13 likes and 11 retweets).
- 3:00pm 25 January – [tweet](#) (11 likes, five retweets and one neutral reply)

Canada: used a Twitter thread , which is a series of tweets that are linked, allowing for more information to be shared below in subsequent tweets. There were four threaded tweets in total:

- The first English [tweet](#) in the thread received 17 likes, 12 retweets and three replies (hidden). The first French [tweet](#) received one reply (hidden).
- The second English [tweet](#) received four likes, one retweet and one reply (hidden). The French [tweet](#) received one retweet and one reply (hidden).
- The third English [tweet](#) received four likes, one retweet and one reply (hidden). The French [tweet](#) received one reply (hidden).
- The last English [tweet](#) in the thread received five likes and one retweet. The French [tweet](#) received no engagement.

Netherlands: posted a [tweet](#) which was viewed 3,160 times (nine likes and eight retweets).

LinkedIn

Australia: published a [post](#) on the ATO corporate page (144 reactions, one negative comment) and Deputy Commissioner Will Day published a [LinkedIn pulse article](#) which was high performing (130 reactions, five positive comments) for an article of this type.

United Kingdom: Fraud Investigation Service Director Simon York published a [post](#) (100 reactions, 11 positive comments). HMRC [shared](#) Director Simon York's post (55 likes and one positive comment).

United States: IRS – CI Chief Don Fort published a [post](#) which was considered high performing (190 reactions and 16 positive comments).

Canada: [shared](#) ATO Deputy Commissioner Will Day's LinkedIn pulse article in both official languages on their LinkedIn account, with an accompanying post. (23 reactions and one comment).

Facebook

Canada: posted high performing posts on their [English](#) (24 likes, eight shares and 14 comments positive to neutral in sentiment) and [French](#) (nine reactions) Facebook pages.

Other social media coverage

Third party social media coverage from each country was variable. Australia achieved high levels of social media traction, a number of British trade journalists promoted the "Day of Action" and so did Canadian Accountant, an independent news source for the accounting profession.

Australia: Many media outlets backed their stories with social media which achieved high levels of coverage. Please note it is only possible to show number of followers, rather than actual views and sentiment of engagement was mixed:

- [ABC News](#) posted a [link](#) to their [article](#) on Facebook (746 reactions, 279 comments and 128 shares – 4 million followers).
- [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) posted a [link](#) to their [article](#) on Facebook (55 reactions, 12 comments and six shares – 1.1 million followers).
- [The Age](#) tweeted a [link](#) to their [article](#) on Twitter (10 likes, seven replies and six retweets – 877,000 followers).

- [Nassim Khadem](#) tweeted a [link](#) to the ABC News [article](#) on Twitter (six likes, one reply and one retweet –8,000 followers).

United Kingdom: A number of British trade journalists communicated about the media release on Twitter. The [Financial Crime Reporter](#) for [ACAMS moneylaundering.com](#) evidenced [this](#) (five likes and four retweets).

Canada: confirmed to the [Canadian Accountant](#) that ‘no Canadians detained in a major tax evasion bust by the J5 in Central America but they will be reviewing all files.’ The Canadian Accountant published this information in a [tweet](#) (one like and one retweet).

Internal communications

Every country promoted the “Day of Action” through internal communications. No external links to these communications are available.

Australia: published an article in our internal newsletter which reaches more than 20,000 staff.

United Kingdom: posted an internal newsroom article on the intranet and on Yammer. Both communications achieved a good level of engagement and generated conversations between staff.

United States: published articles on our internal websites for IRS employees.

Canada: will circulate an article to colleagues within the directorate and posting an article to the Wiki.

Netherlands: shared the media release on our intranet.

What do these results tell us?

The results show that there is a great deal of interest in the J5, especially operational matters. There is likely to be further interest as the investigation proceeds and we expect that providing more results and information will assist us in achieving more media and social media coverage. We need to continue to find ways to keep the J5 in the news on a regular basis to build on this and any operational successes, but it’s clear that we need to provide more facts, details and tangible information.

For Australia, there was a better than anticipated level of coverage from media and high levels of engagement through social media.

For the UK, the media can be quite cynical and are more interested in outcomes than actions, except in very high level cases.

For the US, there was mixed reviews of the press release from reporters. Some reporters were frustrated with the lack of details and some were excited to see the coordinated actions and know the lacking facts is part of the process.

For Canada, the coverage to date in both traditional and social media has been limited. This is likely because no Canadian residents have been detained as part of this operation. Publications shared

that they were very interested in the J5 but felt this announcement didn't have enough Canada flavour. There was agreement that there may be more to say in the future.