Media Literacy in the Digital Age

Edited by Justin Healey
INTRODUCTION

Media Literacy in the Digital Age is Volume 448 in the ‘Issues in Society’ series of educational resource books. The aim of this series is to offer current, diverse information about important issues in our world, from an Australian perspective.

KEY ISSUES IN THIS TOPIC
Many of us, particularly young consumers, are constantly connected online and increasingly informed by digital media. For the first time, Australians’ use of online news has surpassed traditional offline news sources. In this confusing age of misinformation, how do we make sense of media messages? Media literacy and education are essential tools; we need to be able to tell fact from fiction in news that is rapidly and pervasively generated by multiple sources via websites and digital platforms, including social media.

This book is a timely guide aimed at teachers and students, featuring expert advice on how to promote the necessary skills to access, understand, question, critically analyse and evaluate digital media. If we are to be well-informed and entertained by online content, it is important that we understand the news media environment and our engagement with it, in all of its factual, social and ethical dimensions. How is ‘fake news’ spread, and how can you detect it? What sources should you trust, and why?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Titles in the ‘Issues in Society’ series are individual resource books which provide an overview on a specific subject comprised of facts and opinions.

The information in this resource book is not from any single author, publication or organisation. The unique value of the ‘Issues in Society’ series lies in its diversity of content and perspectives.

The content comes from a wide variety of sources and includes:

- Newspaper reports and opinion pieces
- Website fact sheets
- Magazine and journal articles
- Statistics and surveys
- Government reports
- Literature from special interest groups

CRITICAL EVALUATION

As the information reproduced in this book is from a number of different sources, readers should always be aware of the origin of the text and whether or not the source is likely to be expressing a particular bias or agenda.

It is hoped that, as you read about the many aspects of the issues explored in this book, you will critically evaluate the information presented. In some cases, it is important that you decide whether you are being presented with facts or opinions. Does the writer give a biased or an unbiased report? If an opinion is being expressed, do you agree with the writer?

EXPLORING ISSUES

The ‘Exploring issues’ section at the back of this book features a range of ready-to-use worksheets relating to the articles and issues raised in this book. The activities and exercises in these worksheets are suitable for use by students at middle secondary school level and beyond.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This title offers a useful starting point for those who need convenient access to information about the issues involved. However, it is only a starting point. The ‘Web links’ section at the back of this book contains a list of useful websites which you can access for more reading on the topic.
CHAPTER 1

Digital media consumption in Australia

CHANGES TO COMMUNICATIONS LANDSCAPE ACCELERATING

Australians’ ever-increasing appetite for data-hungry video services is transforming the communications landscape, according to findings from ACMA

This is a key finding of the Australian Communications and Media Authority’s Communications report 2017-18. The annual ACMA report examines the current telecommunication and media environment, including the latest in industry innovations and consumer trends.

“Over 50 per cent of Australian adults have subscribed to video services such as Netflix and Stan since their Australian launch in 2015, indicating just how fast the communications market can change,” said ACMA Chair Nerida O’Loughlin.

Other key findings show that Australian adults are increasingly diversifying the use and mobility of their connected devices.

In particular:
• 40 per cent of adults used five or more devices in 2018, up from 23 per cent in 2014
• 87 per cent of adults accessed the internet through their mobile phone in 2018, up by 10 percentage points from 2014
• 16 per cent of adults only used a mobile connection to access the internet in 2018, down from 23 per cent in 2014
• 41 per cent of adults only used a mobile phone to make voice calls at home, up from 27 per cent in 2014.

Australians’ online participation – have broadband or accessed the internet via mobile phone (millions)

<table>
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<th>Jun 14</th>
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<th>Jun 18</th>
<th>2017-18 change (%)</th>
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<td>Have a broadband connection at home</td>
<td>14.64</td>
<td>15.72</td>
<td>15.76</td>
<td>16.04</td>
<td>16.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessed internet via mobile phone during last six months*</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.21</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>14.37</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of ‘.au’ domain name registrations†</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.15</td>
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* In six months to May 2013, May 2014 and May 2018. 2017 data is not comparable with previous years due to a change in methodology.
† Excludes domain names registered under ‘.gov.au’.

Note: Data relates to Australians aged 18 years and over.

“Consumer demands have led to significant investments in underlying infrastructure by industry and government,” said Ms O’Loughlin.

These investments include:
• The Australian Government contributed equity of over $24 billion between 2013-14 and 2017-18 towards the National Broadband Network (NBN) rollout
• The Australian Government has spent $220 million to deliver more than 800 new mobile base stations since 2013
• Industry spent around $5 billion between 2013 and 2018 at spectrum auctions, in addition to maintenance and upgrade of their mobile networks.

“Interconnectivity and mobility are now integral to the work, home and social lives of all Australians,” said Ms O’Loughlin.

Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). Changes to communications landscape accelerating (15 February 2019).

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Interconnectivity and mobility are this year’s key emerging themes coupled with an ever-increasing demand for content and services.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2017-18**

Increasing interconnectivity and mobility, and data sharing and exchange, are all driving changes in communications markets and consumer behaviours.

The scope, speed and impact of these changes are now being characterised as the fourth industrial revolution. Recent and emerging communications technologies – from the continued rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN), to the coming of 5G – present enormous opportunities for economic growth and broader consumer engagement.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is now mainstream, with major telecommunications carriers making firm commitments for network investments, technology trials and deployments of the IoT for commercial use. Smart devices are increasingly prevalent, with 47 per cent of Australians using them at May 2018. The smart TV is the next most commonly reported smart device in the home.

Subscriber numbers to fixed networks have increased, driven by the volume of premises connecting to the NBN. The Australian Government introduced a range of new standards and record-keeping rules to enhance current consumer protections.

The shift to mobile continues. The proportion of those who are mobile-only for voice – those who have a mobile phone at home and no fixed-line phone – increased to just over 41 per cent (seven million) of Australian adults. This is reflected in the four per cent decrease in the supply of fixed-line phone services, while mobile services in operation increased by four per cent. The proportion of those who are mobile-only for internet has decreased in the last four years – from 23 per cent in 2013-14 to 16 per cent in 2017-18.

Although Australians spend a majority of their viewing time watching broadcast television, this share continues to decrease, driven by younger Australians’ demand for online content, including online subscriptions and user-generated content.

There are clear generational differences in engagement with online video content ... increasingly, younger Australians aged 18-24 are spending most of their total viewing time watching online content.
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS
The NBN fixed network rollout continued at pace in 2017-18, with the number of premises activated over the NBN increasing by 65 per cent to 4.036 million.

Activity in 2017-18 included significant technological developments that, with greater cost efficiency, are likely to drive the next wave of IoT adoption. Investment in IoT capabilities among service providers and private enterprise has been significant, amounting to billions of dollars as new infrastructure is rolled out. A number of IoT technologies are being rolled out in Australia, laying the foundation for a rapidly expanding connected environment.

Improvements to the 4G mobile networks have seen combined 3G and 4G coverage now reaching 99.4 per cent of Australia’s population. The three largest mobile carriers are rolling out advanced 4G infrastructure in the 700 MHz and 850 MHz spectrum bands. The 5G mobile network is expected to be activated in 2019, with compatible handsets likely to become available during the year.

The Australian Government’s Mobile Black Spot Program continued to deliver improved coverage across Australia. In April 2018, the Priority Locations round was announced by the government, with all 125 identified locations to receive improved mobile coverage. The first live base station from this round was activated in June 2018. A fourth round of the program was launched in June 2018, with $25 million allocated toward improving mobile coverage in regional and remote communities.

New submarine cable infrastructure investments were confirmed, with the Australian Government awarding a contract to build an international submarine cable between Sydney, Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea and Honiara in the Solomon Islands. The project is expected to be completed in late 2019.

CONNECTIVITY AND DEVICES
Most Australian adults (89 per cent) accessed the internet in the six months to May 2018 – 74 per cent went online three or more times a day. The majority (90 per cent) of Australian adults are using more than one device to go online – with four in 10 using five or more services at May 2018. Use of the internet via a mobile phone was the most common, while access via a home internet connection remained steady.

The volume of data downloaded continued its decade-long increase, reaching 4.08 million terabytes in the June 2018 quarter over both fixed and mobile networks (up 29 per cent in the last year). The growth in data downloaded slowed compared to previous years, largely driven by less growth from fixed networks; however, growth in data downloaded over wireless and mobile handsets continued at the same steady pace.

Age is a strong predictor of technology use, with older Australians (aged 65 and over) more likely to use traditional communication services, while younger age groups increasingly use over-the-top services (OTT). Messaging and calling apps were used by the majority of Australians aged 18-44 (63 per cent), compared to 29 per cent of those aged 45 and over.

MARKET DEVELOPMENTS
During 2017-18, Australian consumers continued to embrace new forms of communications technology in their take-up of digital platforms.

5G is expected to facilitate consumer applications and communications, as well as machine-to-machine (M2M) services. Advances in automation technologies – using machines to perform tasks otherwise done by humans – are also expected to significantly boost productivity, efficiencies and provide new opportunities.

In planning for the transformative power of artificial intelligence (AI), in May 2018, the Australian Government allocated $29.9 million to fund the development of an AI ‘technology roadmap’ and ‘standards framework’. A national AI ‘ethics framework’ is also proposed to identify global opportunities, guide future investments and support responsible technological development.

Data-driven services such as Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google (FAANG) continue to expand, increasing pressure on communications infrastructure and consumer demand for increased connectivity and mobility.

The spread of IoT technology has provided the launching pad for a number of new technologies requiring rapid M2M communications – in health, agriculture, transport and civic infrastructure and planning. In 2017, the Australian IoT home market increased by 55 per cent to exceed half a billion dollars, with rapid take-up of internet-connected devices (such as smart speakers) in Australian households set to continue. Research company Telsyte predicts that the Australian market for smart devices will reach $4.7 billion by 2021.

ONGOING SHIFT TO MOBILE
At 30 June 2018, there were 34.84 million mobile services in operation, up four per cent from 33.57 million services in 2016-17. The declining trend in fixed-line phone services continued, down 4.3 per cent to 8.09 million services, compared to 8.46 million services in 2016-17.

The mobile phone was the most used service, while fixed-line phone use continued to decline, especially among younger Australians. At June 2018, 48 per cent of Australian adults had used a fixed-line phone in the previous six months, down from 54 per cent in 2017.

In June 2018, 41 per cent of Australian adults were mobile-only for voice, owning or using a mobile phone but without a fixed-line phone in their home. Sixteen per cent were mobile-only for data, accessing the internet by mobile phone or mobile broadband, with no fixed-internet at home. At the end of May 2018, nearly all Australian adults (96 per cent) had used a mobile phone to make a call in the last six months, while 86 per cent had sent a text message. Sixty-six per cent had used social media and 64 per cent had used a messaging/calling app.

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Media Literacy in the Digital Age
MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Australians continued to spend a majority of their viewing time watching television on the day of broadcast. While there has been a gradual decline in free-to-air (FTA) viewing over the last six years, it continues to hold the largest share of viewing hours – 48 per cent of total hours. FTA broadcast programs remained the most watched of any type of content, with older Australians spending most of their viewing time watching FTA TV.

Australian adults spend more time listening to traditional radio (AM and FM) than digital or online, with 49 per cent of those living in metropolitan areas having a digital audio broadcasting plus (DAB+) radio at home or in their car.

The number of Australian adults watching some online TV or video content in the six months to May 2018 was 71 per cent, with 46 per cent regularly watching both user-generated content and video content via a subscription service.

Take-up of subscription video on demand (SVOD) and pay-as-you-go services increased by 54 per cent, from 5.9 million to 9.1 million (paid and non-paid) at May 2018 – Netflix is the most used service and accounts for 3.9 million subscribers.

There are clear generational differences in engagement with online video content. Time spent viewing online content (catch-up TV, subscription and free video content) decreased proportionally to age – increasingly, younger Australians aged 18-24 are spending most of their total viewing time watching online content.

Online advertising expenditure grew, along with total advertising expenditure across the main media categories.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSUMER SAFEGUARDS

After last year’s slight increase in the number of services subject to the Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) Standard, this year saw a return to the declining trend. At 30 June 2018, there were 5.78 million services subject to the CSG Standard, compared to 6.11 million at 30 June 2017 (a 5.4 per cent decrease). The number of instances in which consumers waived their rights under the CSG Standard continued to increase. At the end of the reporting period, there were 1.77 million occasions where customers waived their rights under the CSG Standard, up by 22.3 per cent.

All qualifying CSPs reported that they met the CSG performance benchmarks. There was a decrease in the amount of compensation paid to customers by CSPs for failing to meet CSG Standard time frames – down 30 per cent to $14.66 million.

During 2017-18, 167,831 new complaints were made to the TIO. This represents an increase of 6.2 per cent from 2016-17, but is much lower than the 41.1 per cent increase in 2016-17. Complaints about services delivered over the NBN fell across several categories, with complaints about service quality falling from 4.1 per 1,000 premises to 3.2. In the second half of 2017-18, complaints relating to NBN connections or changing service providers fell to 5,878, down from 8,711 in the first half.

ACMA consumer survey data shows that Australians aged 18 and over experienced relatively high satisfaction with their communications services, being most satisfied with fixed-line phone, followed by mobile and then internet services.

The number of complaints received by the ACMA about telemarketing increased by 42 per cent from 28,197 in 2016-17, to 40,098 in 2017-18. The number of complaints about email and SMS increased by 39 per cent to 3,309. The growth in telemarketing complaints activity over recent years may reflect improved awareness of the DNCR, increasing scam activity and growing consumer concern about unsolicited marketing.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

In 2017-18, there were just under nine million calls made to the emergency call service numbers – Triple Zero and 112 – an increase of 4.8 per cent, with a majority of emergency calls made from mobile phones.

Telstra’s performance as the Emergency Call Person exceeded the benchmarks – 85 per cent answered within five seconds, 95 per cent within 10 seconds – for the time taken to answer emergency service calls.

The number of disclosures made by CSPs and carriers reported under section 308 of the Telecommunications Act was 2.27 million. While this appears to be a large increase compared to 2016-17 (698,371), this rise can be attributed to the way one provider used customer information to perform data analytics on new commercial offerings, and investigations carried out by the ACMA as part of its compliance work.

The cost to industry of providing interception capabilities decreased by 2.3 per cent to $21.5 million in 2017-18.
Australians are seeing the rise of telco-tainment, esports and in-home voice technology, but with more entertainment options than ever, consumers are looking for new ways to search for the best program and the best value. Deloitte Sydney Managing Partner and Technology Media & Telco Consulting Partner Niki Alcorn said the seventh edition of Deloitte’s annual Media Consumer Survey underlines the proliferation of media and entertainment content in our lives and the challenges emerging for both consumers and providers.

Australians stream an average of 13.5 hours of video each week and we are becoming increasingly prepared to pay for content with Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) growing across every age group. More than 40% of respondents to this year’s survey purchased SVOD subscriptions, up from 32% last year,” Alcorn said.

There is an increase in the number turning to social media as their primary news source, with the figure highest among Millennials.  

“But with the entertainment world now at our finger tips, people are finding it harder to decide what to watch, how and where.

“Nearly a quarter of respondents are uncomfortable with the algorithm-based program recommendations created to direct us through the ‘content jungle’ (raising concern about the impact of these on future programming decisions) and 75% would like to be able to search all content in the one place.

“Pay television remains the most valued media content subscription across all ages (stable at 31%), despite 20% of respondents having indicated in 2017 that they would cancel subscriptions in the next 12 months (16% in 2018).”

Kimberly Chang, Deloitte TMT lead partner highlighted the rise of telco-tainment (the increasing move of telcos into digital entertainment) with 21% of video and music streaming subscribers now accessing services as part of a packaged internet or mobile plan.

“The strategic importance of digital entertainment to telcos is now unmistakable. Seventy per cent of respondents say that digital entertainment inclusions influenced their purchase decision, and 79% say it is a key reason for staying with their provider.

“We expect to see telcos increasingly entering content rights deals, particularly through sport, as they strive to create greater value from increased investments in bandwidth.

“The attraction of family or household accounts accessed across multiple devices is clear, although the survey showed that there is a bending of the rules with high levels of ‘extended’ sharing as 26% of respondents (40% of Millennials) share log-in details outside the home at least once a month.”

Leora Nevezie, Deloitte Digital partner and report author, said Deloitte’s unique snapshot also highlighted growth areas in ‘in-home voice technology’ and esports.

“While in-home digital voice assistants are relatively new, Australia’s take-up rate is rapid. Nearly 10% of respondents already have devices in their homes, with many having more than one (average 1.5), and 55% of these use digital voice assistants daily (59% of Millennials) and 86% weekly (90% of Millennials),” Nevezie said.

62% (65% last year) of respondents remain concerned about fake news.

“The race is on for advertisers and brands to adapt to this technology and become the ‘default option’ on a new channel which generally provides a single conversational response to each question.

“Esports are also emerging as a perfect storm of opportunity in our entertainment market, combining video-gaming, social networking, live-streaming and
e-commerce in one hugely popular package. Nearly 35% of male Millennials attended or streamed an average of 20 esport events last year and 47% are heavily influenced by advertising within the gaming environment."

The Seventh Deloitte Media Consumer Survey is focussed on four generations and five distinct age groups, providing a snapshot of how people are interacting with media, entertainment and technology, as well as considering future preferences. The survey is conducted yearly by an independent research organisation. It uses self-reported data from 2,000 consumers in Australia. Each year the survey is run new questions or responses are added and older questions removed to accurately reflect changes in media and entertainment consumption.

AUSTRALIANS SPENDING MORE TIME ONLINE THAN WORKING

In mid-2018 there were 20.2 million Australians aged 14+, who each had 8,760 hours to spend over the last 12 months equalling a total of 177 billion hours in the year to March 2018. Roy Morgan’s Single Source research of employment and time spent with media breaks down how Australia spends its time between working and interacting with the various types of media.

In the past year, Australians spent more time on the internet than working. We spent just over 21.9 billion hours on the internet in one form or another – whether at home, at school, while at work or elsewhere compared to 20.5 billion hours on the job. Of course these are not mutually exclusive, some 4.6 billion of those hours online occurred at work – whether work-related or not.

Analysing our time on the internet more closely shows that 5.9 billion hours was spent using social media on the internet while the balance of just under 16 billion hours was spent using the internet for other purposes. A further 18.6 billion hours were spent watching TV and 14.6 billion hours spent listening to radio.

Of course we don’t all spend more time online than working or even watching TV. In a normal week 95% of Australians go online (and so average 1,144 hours online over the full year) while 60% of us have jobs (averaging 1,647 hours per employee).

The 92% of Australians watching TV in a given week average 1,004 hours each of TV viewing over the full year while the 85% of us that listen to radio during the

“When one considers an estimated third of our day is spent sleeping (8 hours), around three-quarters of our time is spent either working, consuming media, or fast asleep.”

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week listen to an average of 851 hours per year of radio.

Analysing our internet time between usage at home and usage elsewhere whether at work, school, or anywhere else shows our online time is still dominated by usage at home. Nearly 14.9 billion hours were spent online at home compared to just over 7.0 billion hours spent actively online at work, school, and everywhere else.

Newspapers scored 1.8 billion hours of national attention over the year, with magazines claiming just over 820 million hours overall.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan, says the rise of the internet continues in 2018 with Australians now spending more time online than they do working!

"Australia’s population is set to surpass 25 million next month, less than 15 years after hitting the 20 million mark in December 2003, and there are now well over 20 million Australians aged 14+ and entering adulthood. But how do they spend their time?

"To no one’s surprise the rise of the internet has continued over the last 18 months with more hours now spent by Australians using the internet – an estimated 21.9 billion hours by Australians aged 14+ in the year to March 2018 – up 2.1 billion hours since September 2016.

"Tracking the rise of the internet is the rise of social media. Despite the problems Australians have with trusting social media – our recent Roy Morgan Net Trust survey revealed social media companies are distrusted by 47% of Australians – Australians as a whole now spend nearly 6 billion hours on social media in an average year, over a quarter of all time spent on the internet.

"It isn’t only the internet where Australians are spending significant amounts of their time in 2018, with over 10% of our time spent working equal to 20.5 billion hours, up by 0.4 billion hours since September 2016.

"Although other media have experienced small declines in total hours spent since late 2016, it’s worth realising that we still spend over 10% of our time watching TV (18.6 billion hours) and over 8% of our time listening to radio (14.6 billion hours).

“When one considers an estimated third of our day is spent sleeping (8 hours), around three-quarters of our time is spent either working, consuming media, or fast asleep.”

SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT FINDINGS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY DETAILING THE FINDINGS FROM THE LATEST ANNUAL ‘YELLOW SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT’, PRODUCED BY SENSIS

The Yellow Social Media Report contains the results of research which commenced in 2011 surveying Australian consumers and businesses on how social media channels are being used.

These findings help Australian businesses stay connected with consumer social media trends. Yellow, as a market leader in providing social media services to Australian businesses large and small, is a part of the Sensis family and we have changed the name of the report in recognition of their expertise.

This year, the report has been released in two parts, with this edition focusing on the results of the consumer survey. A second report features the business survey results.

1,516 Australian consumers were sampled this year, with the survey shifting from a telephone to online methodology and the target sample size increasing from 800 to 1,516.

The changed consumer survey methodology prevents us making definitive comparisons with prior results, but provides stronger analysis power and ability to compare segments. However, most of the latest consumer survey results do not vary significantly from the 2017 observations.

For the purposes of this report, the term social media refers to:
- Social networking websites such as Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram
- Online blogs and online rating and review mechanisms.

The findings detailed in this report aim to help Australian businesses to make more informed decisions about how to use these channels to engage with consumers.

AUSTRALIANS AND SOCIAL MEDIA
Sixty per cent of Australians use the internet more than five times a day. The average number of internet-enabled devices owned is 3.5.

Smartphone penetration is 87% which compares with 76% for laptops, 59% for tablets and 52% for desktop computers. Other devices have minority ownership although nearly half those sampled have an internet-enabled TV (45%). The penetration of devices such as the iPod touch and wearable devices are 11% and 21% respectively.

The main barrier to social media use is lack of interest or appeal followed by security and privacy concerns. Our sample this year was of internet users and 88% have a social media profile. More than six in ten (62%) use social media sites daily with 34% checking in more than five times a day. The two most popular times for social networking are in the evening (61%) and first thing in the morning (59%).

On average, social media users mentioned four reasons for social networking. The top four are to catch up with family and friends (85%), to share photos or videos (46%), for news and current affairs (36%) and to watch videos (32%).

Smartphones (74%) stand out among devices used for accessing social media, but laptops (49%), desktops (35%) and tablets (35%) are not unpopular. An app is used almost twice as much as a website for accessing social media (82% to 43%).

Nearly all social media users access it at home (94%) with the lounge or living room (78%) and the bedroom (58%) being the two most popular areas of the house where people use it. The toilet was mentioned by 20%.

Almost two thirds use social media while watching TV and this occurs across a range of genres with news, current affairs and reality shows mentioned most.
Almost one in three discuss the program on social media whilst viewing. Only 5% primarily watch free-to-air TV replays via social media.

Outside the home, the most popular location for accessing social media is at work (35%) with use on public transport (32%) almost as common. Among those who are in the workforce, 54% use social media at work. Usage in the car (23%) and restaurants, bars or parties (25%) is not uncommon. Nor is checking social media while eating a meal with family or friends (23%).

More than nine in ten (91%) social media users are on Facebook, accessing the site 37 times a week for 16 minutes each time on average. This translates into an average of nearly 10 hours a week on Facebook (same as indicated in the 2017 survey). The average number of Facebook friends is 239 (was 234 in 2017).

Facebook Messenger is used by 79% of social media users, 28% have used Facebook Live to watch live or recently recorded videos with 9% publishing their own live video. Forty-four per cent have published videos or pictures via the story function on Facebook (35%), Snapchat (16%) or Instagram (16%).

YouTube is the second most popular social media site with usage at 53% ahead of Instagram (39%), Snapchat (23%), LinkedIn (22%), Pinterest (22%), Twitter (19%) and Google+ (13%).

Twitter appears to be losing appeal. 17% stopped using at least one social media site in the last year with Twitter (31%) mentioned most of all. (In 2017, Twitter’s penetration was 32%).

Users of Instagram and Snapchat access these sites almost as much as Facebook users access that site – respectively 33 and 36 times weekly on average. Instagram users have many more friends, contacts or followers than Snapchat users – 241 on average compared to 93. However, they spend similar amounts of time on each, averaging 13 and 12 minutes respectively per usage occasion.

Among social media users, we found 29% spending more time on this behaviour in the past year against 17% reducing their time spent on social media. Over a third (36%) feel they spend too much time on social media and 22% expect to decrease this activity in the next year.

Social media consumers are inclined to believe it impacts negatively on their privacy, sleeping, concentration, productivity, patience, grammar and spelling. On the other hand, they tend to view social media as impacting positively on their connectedness to others, relaxation and downtime, and personal relationships. Three in ten admit being excited when one of their posts received more likes than usual.

Among parents with children or teens at home, 61% have placed restrictions on their social media use, most commonly relating to how much time and when its use is allowed.

Bullying or harassment on social media has been witnessed by 25% of the consumers surveyed and 14% claim to have experienced this themselves. Twenty per cent have posted something they later regretted while 15% are worried their social media footprint might one day come back to haunt them.

Just over one third (35%) of social media users support topical issues or events or contribute to public debate on them through this forum. The main motivations are because social media is an easy way to show support, feeling passionate about the issue concerned and to make their voice heard.

73% of us trust traditional media for our news over social media (16%) or posts from family and friends (11%)
Traditional media is a much more trusted source for news than social media or posts from family or friends about what is happening (73% vs 16% vs 11% respectively).

Twenty-three per cent use social media for retail research. Items most likely to be researched via social media are movies/TV shows (66%), holidays/travel/accommodation (65%), entertainment (63%) and clothing/fashion items (60%). On the last occasion such research occurred, in over half the cases it led to a purchase (59%), typically via an online transaction (76%).

The proportion claiming to follow a social media group associated with a brand or business is 44% while 18% have stopped following a company or brand in the last 3 months. Users of Instagram (44%) and Facebook (39%) are similar in their likelihood of following brands or businesses on those platforms. The types of brands or businesses most likely to be followed operate in the fields of holidays/travel/accommodation, entertainment, music and movies/TV shows. The benefits most desired by those who follow brands or businesses are discounts (62%) and give-aways (51%).

More than half the consumers using social media are more likely to trust brands that interact with customers in a positive way on that forum (54%), regularly update their content (54%) and have engaging and relevant content (55%). The main reasons people have ceased following a brand or business in recent times are irrelevant, unappealing or excessive content (55%).

Attitudes towards businesses advertising on social media tend to be more negative than positive but many consumers are neutral. For instance, 22% are happy to see ads on social network sites with 44% neutral. More than one third (36%) of social media users admit sometimes clicking on ads they see on a site to find out more with 26% neutral on this dimension. Just over one in five (21%) like sponsored posts from businesses they follow on social media and 47% are neutral. One in three say they will inspect a brand’s social media presence before making an online purchase if they have not purchased from their website before with 39% in the neutral camp. If we take those neutral views into account, negative opinions of social media advertising or sponsorship are in the minority on the dimensions measured which augers well for its use as a marketing tool for brands.

Over two-thirds of consumers read online reviews and blogs (68%) averaging eight before making a purchase decision. We found 43% have posted an online review or blog, averaging six posts in the last year. Holidays/travel/accommodation feature more heavily in the posts than other categories. Only 24% of those who post reviews or blogs online reject the possibility of changing their opinion of a supplier who got back to them after they had posted a negative review.

Almost half of the social media users have provided online ratings in the past year (45%) with the average number of ratings being eight. Suppliers of holidays/travel/accommodation have been the recipient of ratings much more than other product or service providers.

For a more in-depth analysis of how Australian businesses use social media see Part Two of the Yellow Social Media Report 2018.

Facebook is again the preferred channel for SMBs and large businesses advertising on social media. Around nine in ten have advertised on Facebook. The next most popular platform used for advertising has been Instagram – by 10% of small businesses, 22% of medium businesses and 30% of large businesses. Most businesses believe their social media advertising has been effective across all platforms used.

In line with prior findings, only a minority of small (21%), medium (32%) and large businesses (35%) measure their return on investment (ROI) on social media. Response numbers, asking customers and new sales are the main ways in which businesses of all sizes measure their social media ROI. The average estimates for ROI on social media are 24% for small and large firms and 19% for medium-size firms. Across the board, the key measures of their social media success continue to be the number of likes, followers and subscribers and the sales, revenue and profits.

Very few businesses expect to reduce their social media expenditure in the coming 12 months. Among those who foresee a change in their social media spend, it is much more likely to be an increase than a decrease. SMBs expecting to spend more on social media in the coming year appear less likely to fund it by decreasing their expenditure in other marketing or advertising activities, in contrast to the large businesses. Where increased social media expenditure is likely to be funded by sacrificing spend elsewhere, print advertising was nominated most of all.

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Executive summary from a report commissioned by Facebook in February 2018. The opinions contained in this report represent the independent views of the authors: Professor Terry Flew, Dr Fiona Suwana and Dr Lisa Tam from Queensland University of Technology

This report identifies the growing uptake in recent years of internet-distributed news which has given rise to movement away from a concentrated oligopoly of news providers in Australia. This is a strongly consumer-led development, with consumers increasingly attracted to the capacity to share, comment on and recirculate news through digital platforms.

This report focuses on the:
- Benefits of internet distribution of news for consumers;
- Benefits of internet distribution of news for advertisers;
- Benefits of digital platforms for journalists and news publishers; and
- Increasing level of competition in the provision of news that has occurred in the past few years, and the steps taken by the news industry to remain competitive in the digital age.

News consumers now have ready access to an almost infinite range of choices of news content and can access news across multiple sources.

The structural shift to digital platforms as a means of distributing, discovering and sharing news is a global phenomenon. It continues to create significant benefits for consumers, advertisers and publishers in Australia. This has, in turn, contributed to the movement away from a concentrated oligopoly of news providers in Australia to a market in which there is increasing competition. The advent of digital platforms has contributed to this development and this contributes, in a more general sense, to some of the following industry dynamics.

Considerable benefits to consumers from internet distribution of news
The rise of digital platforms as a means of sourcing news has provided significant value to consumers. News consumers now have ready access to an almost infinite range of choices of news content and can access news across multiple sources. Consumers also have a significant degree of flexibility in customising the ways that they consume available content.

Internet users have access to more information in convenient formats and often for free, across a range of increasingly sophisticated personal and mobile devices, and in ways that enable new forms of participation. Those consumers most engaged with news have been embracing these new opportunities to get, share, and comment on news, and engage communities of interest in discussion of the content.

These developments mean that internet users have access to more and more information from more and more publishers, increasing the opportunities most people have to use diverse sources and encounter different perspectives on topics of interest.

Digital platforms have increased competition in the provision of news
The ease of access to sources and news content has generated a perceived increase in demand for news worldwide. As a result, news providers – both print-and-digital and digital-only – have embraced this trend and sought to develop business models that allow them to compete in the digital age.

All news media organisations have been engaged in innovation in their business models. The most successful news outlets in Australia have adapted to the digital news environment by diversifying revenue models, transforming journalistic storytelling, and better understanding their audiences.

Successful organisations have adopted innovative business models, including by working with digital platforms such as Facebook, as well as alternative funding sources such as advertising, hosting events, philanthropy, memberships, spin-off products and crowdsourced journalism.

This trend, and the need for new providers to re-calibrate their business models in order to adapt to the changing news environment, started long before the rise of digital platforms. However, the increase in internet distribution of news and digital platforms has created new opportunities for publishers and other
Internet distribution has provided new opportunities for domestic and international players to compete with the long-established oligopoly in Australian news media markets, and to compete alongside more traditional formats (e.g. print, television and radio).


Benefits to advertisers from internet distribution of news

Advertisers have also benefitted from the consumer-led movement to digital platforms, as it provides them with a much wider array of media content providers, and a much more detailed understanding of target demographics through data generated from online transactions. This is, in turn, beneficial for consumers, as they are more likely to see advertisements.

In addition, digital platforms offer a variety of online advertising solutions to suit advertisers’ needs. Traditional digital advertising is being complemented by new forms, including: native advertising, customised online content, and e-commerce options on the news provider’s site.

The internet distribution of news has raised some challenges for traditional business models. However, it has also created significant benefits for publishers and journalists. The consumer-led movement to digital platforms has enabled them to reach larger and more diverse audiences at a fraction of the cost of traditional formats.

Benefits to publishers from internet distribution of news

The internet distribution of news has raised some challenges for traditional business models. However, it has also created significant benefits for publishers and journalists. The consumer-led movement to digital platforms has enabled them to reach larger and more diverse audiences at a fraction of the cost of traditional formats.

Digital platforms have increased the provision of quality news

Internet distribution of news has also created an environment in which traditional news businesses have been able to increase their audiences, with digital strategies that have both used social media platforms and boosted subscriptions – through both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ paywalls – to trusted news brands.

The increased competition between news providers means that there are now more quality Australian online news sites than ever before. These include public service media such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) (which has partnered with Vice around the Viceland TV channel), and sites such as The Conversation, Guardian Australia, Crikey, The New Daily and The Saturday Paper.

Digital platforms have promoted innovation in news to the benefit of underserved communities

There is significant evidence in the provision of innovation in Australian digital news markets. First, international news outlets such as The Guardian, Daily Mail and The New York Times have significantly added to the mix of Australian news content available to local audiences. Second, a number of news providers have innovated in catering to underserved sections of the community, including Indigenous Australians, young people, women and the LGBTIQ community. These news providers include ‘born digital’ (and primarily digital) brands such as BuzzFeed, Junkee and Vice, as well as Guardian Australia.

DIGITAL NEWS REPORT: FAKE NEWS HAS AUSSIES CONCERNED

More than three-quarters of Australian news consumers have experienced fake news and are bothered by it, according to a new University of Canberra report. By Amanda Jones

While poor journalism, such as factual mistakes and misleading headlines, is the most commonly experienced type of fake news (40 per cent), news consumers are most worried about politically and commercially fabricated stories (67 per cent). Those who experience fake news also have lower trust in news generally.

The Digital News Report: Australia 2018, published annually by the University of Canberra’s News and Media Research Centre (N&MRC) also shows that for the first time, access to online news (82 per cent) has overtaken traditional offline sources such as newspapers, TV and radio (79 per cent).

The report, which is now in its fourth year, is based on a survey of more than 2,000 news consumers in Australia and is part of a global study of digital news consumption in 37 countries, commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford.

Researchers found that approximately 45 per cent of Australian news consumers are worried that expressing their political views on social media could change the way their family and friends think about them. This is higher than the global average (38 per cent), with those aged between 25-34 the most concerned age group (58 per cent). Mobile phones (59 per cent) have also overtaken computers/laptops as the main way to access online news in Australia.

There has also been a steady increase in paying for online news, from 10 per cent in 2016 to 20 per cent in 2018. However, the majority of Australians still don’t and won’t pay for news.

Lead author and Director of the N&MRC Dr Sora Park said the report uncovered a link between trust and fake news, with news consumers adopting strategies to manage their exposure to misinformation.

“News consumers are accessing trusted sources directly via brand websites and apps, using news aggregators to get tailored news, and following news sources directly on social media,” Dr Park said.

“Trust is highest in established news brands, public broadcasters and print newspapers as consumers seek quality, credibility and reputation in news.”

Glen Fuller, Associate Professor of Communication and report co-author, said this year’s report also shows a generational divide in how people access news and what they think about it.

“Unsurprisingly, younger people rely heavily on social media and online news, are more active sharers, and treat news as social content,” Dr Fuller said.

“In contrast, older news consumers tend to replicate their traditional unidirectional habit of news consumption even when they access news online.”

The survey also showed that while Australian news consumers are more polarised than the global average, they prefer to keep their political views to themselves.

University of Canberra Assistant Professor of Journalism and report co-author Caroline Fisher said this reluctance, particularly among younger people, to share such information could be for a number of reasons.

“Young people may prefer to keep the platform purely social, are aware of the openness of digital platforms and the impact it could have on their reputation, or simply want to avoid any trolling or online abuse,” she said.

The report also found an 11 per cent increase in news consumers following politicians on social media. Women are also more likely to use social media to find news and less likely to go directly to a website or app than men. There were also gender differences in sharing activities, with men more likely to comment or engage on news.

执行摘要和关键发现来自《数字新闻报告：澳大利亚》，由Sora Park、Caroline Fisher、Glen Fuller和Jee Young Lee共同撰写，出版于堪培拉国立新闻与媒体研究中心。在澳大利亚，我们正在见证数字和移动新闻的快速发展。首次，澳大利亚人使用在线新闻的时间超过了传统离线新闻来源。与此同时，大多数澳大利亚人仍然依赖电视新闻，这是他们最信任的新闻来源。澳大利亚人也在获取新闻的方面更频繁。每天多次获取新闻的人数自2016年以来增长了15%。

今年是首次手机使用次数超过电脑来访问在线新闻。几乎60%的澳大利亚人在使用智能手机获取新闻。新闻应用程序和新闻提醒或通知的使用也在持续增长。亚马逊Echo和Google Home这样的语音激活数字助理也继续迅速增长，为新闻音频打开了新的机会。播客是获取新闻的流行方式。这些变化主要由年轻新闻消费者推动。

信任新闻也在改善。在过去十二个月中，对新闻的信任度从42%上涨至50%。然而，对社交媒体的信任度仍然很低，仅为24%。信任度最高的新闻品牌；公共广播公司和印刷报纸。那些直接通过网站访问品牌的消费者也对新闻有更高的信任度。这表明消费者寻求新闻的质量、信誉和声誉。

我们还发现，澳大利亚新闻消费者越来越愿意为他们信任的知名品牌的质量新闻付费。过去两年中，对新闻付费的人数增加了10%，其中澳大利亚的捐赠人数在37个国家中最多。

澳大利亚人也非常关心假新闻，并认为是新闻机构的责任来解决它。虽然对政治假新闻的担忧最高，但最常见到的假新闻形式是“糟糕的新闻”或“误导新闻”。对假新闻的担忧可能正在推动捐赠的增加；那些经历过假新闻的人更不可能付款，但那些担心假新闻的人更可能捐款。

我们发现，信任与新闻消费者的假新闻体验密切相关。在获取新闻的社交媒体和搜索引擎上，信任度较低。然而，那些具有较高新闻素养的人也报告了更多的假新闻，可能是因为他们更经常接触到假新闻。
they are better at discerning the quality of reporting. There are signs news consumers are adopting strategies to manage their exposure to misinformation, by accessing trusted sources directly via brand websites and apps, using news aggregators to get tailored news, and following news sources directly on social media.

This report documents a number of firsts: The first time online sources have surpassed offline. The first time mobile phones have become the main way to access news. It also marks an increase in accessing and paying for news. However, it is also clear there is a strong link between trust in news, concern about fake news, and people being prepared to pay for it.

While social media is the main source of news for 18-25 year olds, Australians are reluctant to express their political views on social media because they are worried it could change the way others think about them. This indicates a strong awareness about how information on social media can be widely shared and misused by others. Concern about this is higher in Australia than in many other countries.

This year’s report shows there is a clear generational divide. Younger people rely heavily on social media and online news with overall higher trust for these sources. Younger news consumers are more likely to access online news via social media or search engines and less likely to go directly to a website or app. They are also more active sharers online.

Those under 35 treat news as social content and their news consumption is embedded in other social media and online activities. They are more aware of social cues, such as likes and shares, in the online environment than older news users. Self-curation practices of filtering relevant news are largely adopted among young people. In contrast, older news consumers tend to replicate their traditional unidirectional habit of news consumption even when they access news online.

We also see significant gender differences. Women are much more likely to use social media to find news and less likely to go directly to a website or app than men. There were gender differences in sharing activities as well. Women like to talk face-to-face and engage in ‘light’ sharing activities such as ‘likes’ or sharing news on social media. Men engage in more active methods of news engagement such as commenting on news. When sharing, women use social media and men use email. Women are also more likely to be mobile news consumers.

The digital divide is affecting how regional Australians access news. News consumers in regional areas rely more on offline platforms, particularly television news. They also rely heavily on local and regional newspapers for news, almost twice as much as urban consumers. Mobile news consumption is also lower among regional news consumers. This suggests that internet connectivity may be a factor in accessing news online.

This report documents a number of firsts: The first time online sources have surpassed offline. The first time mobile phones have become the main way to access news. It also marks an increase in accessing and paying for news. However, it is also clear there is a strong link between trust in news, concern about fake news, and people being prepared to pay for it. With the majority of news users saying ‘poor quality’ journalism was the
Digital News: Key Findings

News Access (Chapters 5/6)
- For the first time, access to online news (82%) has overtaken traditional offline sources (79%).
- Mobile phones have overtaken computers/laptops as the main way to access online news in Australia. 59% of Australian news consumers use smartphones for news, 36% (+7%) of news consumers access news mainly on mobile phones.
- More than half (58%) of 25-34 year olds use podcasts for news and information.

Fake News (Chapter 3)
- Almost three-quarters of Australian news consumers (73%) have experienced fake news and are very concerned about it. Poor journalism (40%) is the most commonly experienced type of fake news but news consumers are the most worried about politically and commercially fabricated stories (67%).
- Most respondents (81%) believe that media companies and journalists have responsibility to stop the problem of fake news. The majority (68%) also believed the government can do more to combat fake news.

Political Views (Chapter 9)
- Australians worry about how others will think of them if they express their political views online; 45% of news consumers are concerned that expressing their political views on social media could change the way their family and friends think about them. Younger people are more worried (58% of 25-34 year olds).

Trust (Chapter 2)
- Trust in news has risen to 50% (+8%). 55% (+7%) trust the news they use most of the time. In contrast, only 24% of news consumers trust news they find in social media and 39% trust news they find via search engines.

News Literacy (Chapter 4)
- The majority of respondents (68%) have low and very low news literacy.
- Audiences for The Guardian and ABC have higher news literacy.
- 76% of people who rely on social media for news have low or very low news literacy.

Social Media (Chapter 5)
- Facebook for news has flattened, but other social media and messenger apps have risen: YouTube (+5%), Instagram (+5%), Snapchat (+3%), WhatsApp (+3%).
- Social media is now the main source of news for 18-24 year-olds (36%).
- There has been a 6% increase in the use of social media for news, from 46% in 2017 to 52% in 2018.

News Participation & Engagement (Chapter 8)
- 82% of consumers engage in news sharing.
- Talking face-to-face is still the most popular way to share news.
- News alert use has increased by 10% since 2016.

Paying for News (Chapter 7)
- There has been a steady increase in paying for online news from 10% in 2016 to 20% in 2018, however the majority of Australians still don’t and won’t pay for news.
- Donations to digital news services have increased and almost half of 25-34 year olds (46%) are considering donation in the future.

Political Orientation & Polarisation (Chapter 9)
- There is an increase in news consumers subscribing to the direct feeds of politicians on social media (2016: 11% ⇒ 2018: 22%).
- Australian news consumers are slightly more polarized than the global average.
- Readers of online newspapers are less polarised than print newspaper readers. Left-wing oriented news consumers turn to online and social media news sources more than right-wing consumers.
- ABC TV News attracts viewers evenly from across the political spectrum. In contrast, ABC News Online attracts a more left-wing audience.
CHAPTER 2
Media literacy and fake news

MEDIA LITERACY: MAKING SENSE OF MEDIA MESSAGES

A FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS FROM RAISING CHILDREN NETWORK

Your child interacts with media every day. Some of it might inform or entertain her, and some will try to sell her things. It can be overwhelming for your child—and you! Media literacy is about helping your child learn to understand and question media messages.

MEDIA LITERACY: THE BASICS

Media literacy is about having the skills to access, understand, question, critically analyse, evaluate and create media, like television, DVDs, apps, photographs, print and online content.

Children and teenagers who are media literate are more aware of the way media content is made, where it comes from and what its purpose is. They’re more confident about voicing their opinions about media. They’re also safer online and less likely to be manipulated by the media.

Basic media literacy involves understanding and making judgments about:

- Content – the obvious content, the hidden or embedded content like gambling built into apps and video games, and any content that feels upsetting or uncomfortable
- Advertising and other forms of marketing
- Bias
- Different media forms and how they’re created
- Effects of media ownership on the way information is presented
- Online safety
- Censorship.

Children and teenagers also need the following extra media literacy skills for online media.

Content literacy
This includes understanding how a search engine like Google ranks search results, and being able to work out who has created a website—for example, the difference between .com, .gov and .org sites. Working out whether information is based on expert or amateur opinion and whether it’s from a reliable source is also important, as is the ability to spot marketing, advertising and scams.

Communication literacy
This is knowing the difference between types of communication on the internet, including social media, online chat and chat rooms, multiplayer games, blogs and discussion forums. These all have their own formal and informal rules.

Creative and visual literacy
This is being able to create and upload online content, understand how online visual content is edited and constructed, and understand when copyright applies.

Children and teenagers also need the following extra media literacy skills for online media.

Technical literacy
This means knowing how to understand and use computers, the internet, web browsers, software programs, apps and technical language. For example, it’s important to understand that the internet is global, or that when you post text, images or video, there’s no guarantee this content can ever be removed.

Your child should also know how to check and change his privacy settings, report inappropriate or unsettling content, and block content he doesn’t want.

HELPING YOUR CHILD DEVELOP MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Developing your own media literacy
Developing media literacy yourself is a great start to helping your child. And if you know that your child has more media and digital literacy than you do, ask her to show you things like privacy settings and report buttons. This sends the message that you’re interested in what she’s doing online and that you care that she’s safe.

It’s also a good idea to keep up to date with the latest social media, because new social media are constantly being invented and children and teenagers are often early adopters. Some examples of social media are Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Role-modelling media literacy
You can model your own media literacy for your child by discussing your choices with him—for example,
why you choose certain TV programs or websites, or how you respond to advertising. This gives you the chance to reinforce your family’s values and beliefs while teaching your child to question what he hears and sees in the media.

Encourage a questioning attitude
A questioning attitude can help your child sort out facts from opinion, identify advertising and product placement, understand bias, be aware of the misuse of statistics, make judgments about quality, and identify media scams.

You can encourage your child to ask questions about media content. For example:

- Is this newspaper article a report or an opinion column?
- Who paid for this magazine page about this new product?
- What sources of information did the author use in putting this piece together?
- What is the author’s intention?
- Are there other points of view that have been left out?

Encourage awareness of how media works
It’s important for your child to be aware that the media and a lot of internet content is owned, and the person or organisation that owns the media influences the content and points of view that are published.

Likewise, all media content is edited and constructed. In other words, some things have been included and other bits have been left out. Even the news (which you might think of as the ‘facts’) reflects the way editors, directors, producers and media owners see the world – after all, some things make it on to the news and some don’t.

You and your child could look at different current affairs programs together to check out the differences in the way they report things. Or you could ask your child why she thinks different media content – on the TV or internet, or in magazines and newspapers and so on – uses certain images, music and words, and what messages these help to convey.

You might also like to talk with your child about points of view that differ from those in whatever TV program or newspaper article your child is watching or reading. The movie *Hoodwinked* is useful for this kind of activity, because it presents different characters’ points of view.

We all take different meanings from media messages, depending on our backgrounds, interests and values. We are many audiences, not just one. For example, one person might think something is funny, but somebody else might see it differently.

Talk about advertising
Talking with your child about what advertising is, and what it’s trying to do, can help your child learn the difference between advertising messages and other media messages that are designed to entertain, inform, educate, or express an opinion or viewpoint.

For example, you could pick out an advertisement in a magazine or on TV. Ask your child to think about who’s behind it, and what they want you to think about the brand or product. Or you could watch a movie with your child and play ‘spot the strategically placed brand-name products’. You might also want to discuss news content that’s actually product promotion.

Talk about internet content
The internet can bring the best and worst information that’s out there into your home. Children can easily access the internet through phones and tablets as well as computers, so you and your child need to be able to sort the good from the bad.

The following ideas might help:

- Search the internet together. You might use a few search engines, try different search words, and talk about which websites contain the best or most useful information and why. Also encourage your child to look beyond the first link in search results.
- Encourage your child to be careful about what he clicks. Many sites contain ‘pop-ups’ or animated advertising that entice you to ‘click here’ by promising free products or money. They’re generally scams and can contain computer viruses.
- Talk about different kinds of websites, and why some are restricted by age. Explain that there’s disturbing material on the internet. You could use an example from your child’s experience, like a ‘scare’ where a creature leers out of the screen. It’s important for your child to know that if she sees something that upsets her, she should talk about it with you.

Children can come across adult content on the internet and might show it to other children. Talking about pornography with your child is the best way to help develop his resilience and provide some perspective if he sees something upsetting.

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In September 2017 we surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 young Australians aged 8-16 years to understand their news engagement practices and experiences. The preliminary analysis provided in this report considers the overall results and compares this with results filtered specifically to account for gender and age. Below we refer to two age categories we have used for our analysis: children (aged 8-12) and teens (aged 13-16 years). Our key findings are as follows.

1. Young Australians consume a lot of news regularly, from many different sources. News stories most often come from their families and that’s how they like it.

To provide a snapshot of news consumption, we asked young Australians where they got news stories from on the previous day. We found that 80% had consumed news from at least one source. Across this and all other questions we asked about their news consumption, family came first with 42% of young people reporting that they heard news stories from their family on the previous day. This was followed by television (39%), a school teacher (23%), friends (22%), social media networks (22%, 35% for teens and 10% for children), radio (17%), and a website or mobile app (14%). Less than 1 in 10 young Australians said they read news stories in a newspaper (7%).

We also asked young people to nominate their overall top three preferred news sources. The most preferred source for teens is television (46%), followed by family (42%) and social media (41%). For children it is family (50%), followed by television (48%) and teachers or other adults in their life (32%). Young Australians consume the same news as their parent/s or guardians often (20%) or sometimes (53%).

2. Young Australians value the news. Engaging with news stories makes them feel happy, motivated and knowledgeable. But most think news organisations don’t understand young people’s lives and don’t cover the issues that matter to them.

Providing a mixed picture, close to half (44%) of young Australians aged 8-16 years agree that getting news is important to them while more than one third (38%) say it is not.

However, 69% of young people said the news often or sometimes makes them feel ‘happy or hopeful’, ‘smart or knowledgeable’. Almost half (48%) said it makes them feel motivated to act or respond to situations presented in the news.

At the same time, close to two thirds (65%) of young Australians believe that news media organisations have no idea what the lives of young people their age are like. One in three believe young people do not often appear on the news talking about things which affect them (34%). Less than half (38%) think that the news covers issues that matter to them.

The news topics that matter most to young people are technology (52%), news about their local community events and issues (43%). This was followed by news about education and schools (39%), news about sport (36%) and news about health issues (36%). By far, ‘news about politics including what happens in parliament’ mattered the least to young people (18%) when compared with the other eight topics we asked them about.

3. Trust in media organisations is low. Perceptions of bias are high.

Just 23% of young people said they trust the news stories they get from news organisations ‘a lot’ compared with 58% who trust the news they get from their families ‘a lot’.

Young people hold strong perceptions of bias when it comes to how the news treats people.

Just 38% of young Australians believe news treats people from different race and ethnic background equally fair. In addition, only 40% believe news treats men and women equally fair.

In both cases, teenage girls perceived more bias in news stories when compared with children or teenage boys.

4. Social media is popular for getting news. But young people are not confident about spotting fake news online.

One third (33%) of children and two thirds (66%) of teens often or sometimes get news from social media sites. Facebook was the most preferred social network site to get news for teens (48%). Children preferred YouTube (48%). Just one third of young people believe they know how to tell fake news from real news (34%) with children being much less confident about this than teens (27%) compared with 43%.

However, more than half of young Australians don’t critique the source of news they encounter online (52% pay very little attention and 14% pay no attention at all). Just under half say they often or sometimes try to work out if a news story they encounter online is true or not (46%).

5. News upsets and scares young Australians. While most can talk this through with their family and teachers, a significant number cannot.

More than half of young Australians say that news makes them often or sometimes feel afraid (57%) or angry (56%), while 71% say it makes them feel sad or
upset. In each case girls are more likely to have these emotional responses, when compared with boys.

While 81% of young people feel they can talk to their parents about news stories that upset or distress them, 10% feel they cannot do this and 9% are unsure. At school, when upset or distressed by news stories, 58% of young people feel they can talk with their teachers, while 25% feel they cannot and 17% are unsure.

6. Young Australians receive infrequent lessons about how to critique news media. News made for young people may also provide important opportunities for developing news media literacy.

Just one in five young people said they had received lessons at school in the past year to help them work out if news stories are true and can be trusted (20%). Given this low level of media literacy education at school, the consumption of news media made especially for young people may play an important role in developing news media literacy since this kind of media often integrate an educative process.

We found that 28% of teens and 57% children regularly (once a month or more) use news media created especially for children. Behind the News (BtN) was the most frequently used of these (34% of children and 14% of teens) followed by the news on ABC Me (28% of...
The comments we received in our survey about why news is important to young people not only highlights the role and value of news, but also the need for news media to be created especially for them.

“Mum doesn’t let me watch the news as it gives me scary dreams. I would like to watch news for kids that doesn’t scare me.” – Girl, 8, QLD

“Some news is hard to understand with words [I’ve] never heard of. Kids’ news is easier to understand.” – Boy, 13, WA

“Mainstream news does not deal or focus on issues that affect young people or [it’s] portrayed in a way that is not easily understood or accessible to kids my age.” – Boy, 16, NSW

“News helps me to understand the world and know [what’s] going on and how it might affect me and my family and friends.” – Girl, 10, TAS

‘Fake news’ spreads faster online than the truth, finds biggest-ever study

Who is to blame for spreading false rumours online? A new study suggests it’s not just the bots. It’s us. An ABC Science report by Ariel Bogle

False news spread “farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly” than true news on Twitter between 2006 and 2017, a team of US scientists has found.

Their study, published today in the journal Science, is one of the largest long-term investigations of fake news on social media ever conducted.

The role of social media in spreading misinformation, propelled by bots or malicious actors, has been heavily scrutinised since the election of US President Donald Trump in 2016.

In February, the US Justice Department charged 13 Russians with allegedly trying to “promote discord in the United States” by posing as Americans on social media.

“It just so happens our paper finishes around the same time as ‘fake news’ became the talk of the town,” said Dr Soroush Vosoughi of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The study’s findings suggest veracity may be a rare commodity: the truth typically took about six times as long as a falsehood to reach 1,500 people.

Axel Bruns, a professor at Queensland University of Technology’s Digital Media Research Centre, who was not part of the study, said the result helps prove the proverb: “A lie can get half way around the world before the truth gets its boots on.”

While the study was funded by Twitter (which also gave the team access to its full historical tweet archives), Dr Vosoughi said it was conducted independently.

WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT IS FALSE?

While recent concern about ‘fake news’ has focused on political stories, Dr Vosoughi and colleagues also looked at urban legends, business, terrorism, science, entertainment and natural disasters.

They analysed 126,000 ‘rumour cascades’ – tweets that contained links, comments or images about a story – spread by 3 million people more than 4.5 million times. Political news was the largest rumour category with about 45,000 ‘cascades’.

For example, rumour spikes occurred during geopolitical flashpoints such as the annexation of Crimea.

The study’s findings suggest veracity may be a rare commodity: the truth typically took about six times as long as a falsehood to reach 1,500 people.
While the researchers suggested false news was shared more often because of its novelty, more work is needed about the motivations of people who share this content and its impact.

Bots are bad, but how bad?

Recently, social media companies have been made to face US and UK lawmakers about the role of bots on their platforms. The researchers found bots accelerated the spread of news, but there was little difference in how false or true news spread when bots were removed from the analysis.

“We’re not saying that bots did not have an effect, but bots cannot explain everything,” Dr Vosoughi said.

He said he was unsure whether or not bots would be more prominent if the study had focused solely on political news.

“If we limited our study to only political rumours around the 2016 election, then my guess is – and this is just a guess – you would see bots playing a much greater role,” Dr Vosoughi said.

Not all bots are malicious, for example, publishers use bots to automatically tweet news headlines. Professor Bruns suggested strategically set up bots may also aim to make stories visible to Twitter’s trending stories tab by mass retweeting, for instance, rather than distributing the false stories in the first place.

“The bots may initiate the visibility, but as it becomes visible, it’s humans that play a big role in passing it on,” he said.

Why do we spread false news?

The study provides only one part of the picture of how falsity spreads online. For one thing, it only looked at English-language rumours, Dr Vosoughi said.

While the researchers suggested false news was shared more often because of its novelty, Dr Vosoughi said more work is needed about the motivations of people who share this content and its impact.

Is it actually changing people’s minds?

So far, Twitter has mostly resisted being “the arbiters of truth,” said Nick Pickles, Twitter’s head of public policy for the United Kingdom.

“We are not going to remove content based on the fact this is untrue,” he told British MPs in February.

“I don’t think technology companies should be deciding during an election what is true and what is not true, which is what you’re asking us to do.”

Dr Vosoughi is now looking at interventions to try and stop the virality of false news. For example, people who are likely to share information, but who are receptive to messages about whether an item is true or false, could act as “nodes of influence” to keep questionable news from spreading.

Bot panic or not, Dr Vosoughi said social media companies may need to intervene.

“In a way, the more engagement Twitter gets, the better it is for their business model. I wouldn’t say that the platforms are complacent, but they have a big role to play in addressing this issue,” he said.

Twitter declined to comment.

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FAKE NEWS SPREADS MORE THAN JUST LIES

Cybercriminals are using ‘fake news’ articles to attract victims to dodgy websites, cautions the Australian Government website, Stay Smart Online.

If you go to the fake news site, malware downloads onto the computer or device you’re using. It then searches for sensitive information such as your bank login details and passwords, or it might exploit your device for other malicious purposes, such as a botnet attack.

WHAT IS A BOTNET?
A botnet is a collection of devices connected to the internet, which are infected and remotely controlled to carry out malicious activity. Typically, the owner of the device has no way of knowing a botnet has infected their system. Infected devices may include your computer, mobile phone or any other device connected to the internet.

WHAT IS FAKE NEWS?
Fake news is when incorrect or false information is deliberately sent out, disguised as credible news. Rampant on social media, fake news can be difficult to spot and is shared by those who believe the often sensationalist headline.

Merely clicking the headline to read the full article, or pressing ‘play’ on a video is enough to expose your system to malware.

HOW DOES FAKE NEWS SPREAD?
Fake news can spread like wildfire on social media, potentially exposing millions of users to malware! When a friend shares something, it’s natural to think the link is safe and trustworthy, but this isn’t always the case.

Merely clicking the headline to read the full article, or pressing ‘play’ on a video is enough to expose your system to malware.

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS
• Be wary of sensationalist headlines.
• Consider the source before clicking the link – fake addresses often look similar to credible news sites.
• Use a search engine to see if other credible sources are reporting the same story.
• Don’t click on links in social media or those emailed to you. Navigate to a credible news article via a search engine to find out what’s happened.
• Stop and think before you share on social media. If you share a fake news article that is carrying malware, you will expose your friends and family to the risk.
• Make sure you install all security updates issued for your computer and devices.
• Install anti-virus software on all your devices and keep them up-to-date. Get your news from trusted sources rather than relying on your social media feed for news.

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CAN YOU TELL FACT FROM FICTION IN THE NEWS? MOST STUDENTS CAN’T

More young Australians are turning to social media as a source of news – but can they spot fake news? By Kathleen Williams and Jocelyn Nettlefold

Have you clicked through to this article from your news feed? Are you checking it on your phone? More of us are consuming news online, and increasingly we’re turning to social media for news. Social media platforms are now the main source of news for Australians aged 18 to 24.

The Digital News Report: Australia 2018 shows while Australians’ trust in the media has risen overall, when it comes to online news, 65% of Australians are still concerned about what’s real and what isn’t. Less than one-quarter of those surveyed said they trusted social media as a source of news. A Roy Morgan poll also found nearly half of young Australians (47%) distrust social media.

Despite the issues with trust, news media is a critical part of keeping up to date and informed for most Australians – particularly young people. It’s crucial we better empower young people to understand our ever-shifting media landscape. This is central to the health of our democracy.

Australia needs dedicated media literacy curricula

Recent studies show young Australians are not confident about spotting false news online. We surveyed 97 primary and secondary school teachers across Catholic, independent and state schools in Tasmania about how they understand the role of contemporary media in the classroom and the challenges they face.

Some 77% of teachers surveyed said they felt equipped to guide students on whether news stories were true and could be trusted, but nearly one-quarter say they couldn’t. Overwhelmingly, teachers viewed critical thinking about media as important, but nearly one-quarter said they rarely turned it into a classroom activity.

The data from this research identifies the need for more dedicated curricula, professional development and resources to boost critical thinking about media, in and beyond the classroom. In 2017, just one in five young people said they’d received lessons at school in the past year to help them work out if news stories were true and could be trusted.

Why the mistrust of the media?

Many teachers, particularly those at the secondary level, are deeply worried about students’ reliance on digital and mobile media for news.

The concerns about editorial independence and editorial quality raised by Nine Entertainment’s takeover of Fairfax Media has added to the complexity at national and local levels. There are concerns about the implications for investigative journalism and the future of 160 community, regional, rural and suburban publications in Australia and New Zealand. These concerns centre around a potential lack of media diversity in regional and local areas.

Data from more than 50 million Facebook users was harvested without their consent or knowledge. There are also growing fears about where artificial intelligence on our social networks will take us next. Our verification skills are being constantly tested by new video and audio trickery.

Given the complexity of misinformation and low levels of public trust, we need to to equip people of all ages to navigate the news. To design better ways of helping all citizens, media organisations, academics and educators need to collaborate more deeply on the issue.

Teachers need better resources

The teachers in our survey were predominantly aged over 35 and tended to trust traditional media such as

Despite the issues with trust, news media is a critical part of keeping up to date and informed for most Australians – particularly young people. It’s crucial we better empower young people to understand our ever-shifting media landscape. This is central to the health of our democracy.
Teachers report a lack of contemporary teaching resources at their disposal to adequately transform ideas about media literacy into tangible, practical activities. This hinders their ability to truly incorporate media literacy into the classroom. They’re also concerned about students’ increasing reliance on social media to access information.

There appears to be a growing divergence between the practices of teachers and the young people they guide. It’s critical to address how we mediate the gap between the media consumption practices of teachers and young people to ensure a common ground on which to build. Children, teenagers and teachers deserve creative and engaging ways of sifting fact from fiction, with more practical support from their schools and community.

Resources that could be provided in classrooms to boost media literacy include:

- Age-specific, engaging videos about understanding and making news
- Interactive quizzes that include fact and source-checking games
- Current, relevant media news with examples of misinformation with tips for classroom use.

These could give young people insight into the mechanisms of media production, while empowering them to make decisions about what they consume outside the classroom. While resources such as these would be useful for teachers and students, teachers have pointed to the need for in-person and virtual professional development sessions to provide them with strategies and resources for teaching media literacy.

**What media and social media organisations can do**

As social media is central to how people access news, transparency from platforms and newsrooms is an important way to build trust (or in Facebook’s case, attempt to claw it back). As well as Facebook and Twitter supporting academic research, Facebook recently lifted the veil of secrecy on its news feed algorithm and how its engineering and product teams are tackling the complexity of fighting false news.

But the need for transparency doesn’t stop with international platforms. Australian journalists, while serving as honest and reliable distributors of news, need to become more involved with new ways of helping citizens develop the necessary skills to identify quality information. The emergence of fact-check outlets such as The Conversation and RMIT/ABC Factcheck are a step in the right direction.

One way to broaden the conversation about media literacy is for news outlets to think about building transparency of practice. The Australian’s Behind the Media podcast and ABC Backstory rise to this challenge by providing insight into the journalistic process.

Demystifying the process can lead to greater insight into how to check sources and information, which are good skills for all ages.

The concept of media literacy is being approached in new ways at the school level, in the journalism industry and in the community. It’s increasingly viewed by researchers to be one of the best weapons against false news, which in turn provides knowledgeable citizens with a toolkit to bypass incorrect or misleading content.

**This article is based on a national conference hosted by the ABC and the University of Tasmania. Navigating the News focuses on transparency and trust in news and media literacy and involves media, academia, educators and youth. You can watch segments from the conference on iView.**

**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Dr Jocelyn Nettlefold works for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as Media Education Partnerships Manager. Kathleen Williams does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond her academic appointment.

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Issues in Society | Volume 448

Media Literacy in the Digital Age
A new Institute for the Study of Social Change report titled *Insight Five: A Snapshot of Media Literacy in Australian Schools* explores the challenge of teaching young people to separate fact from fiction in an age of online news manipulation.

Authored by Dr Jocelyn Nettlefold, who leads the Media Literacy Project partnership between the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and University of Tasmania, and Dr Kathleen Williams, head of journalism at the University of Tasmania, the report draws on a recent survey of Tasmanian primary and secondary school teachers.

It also provides an overview of news consumption trends and the proliferation of misinformation in the digital realm, while highlighting concerns about students’ abilities to identify false news.

The report calls for a multi-stakeholder approach to media literacy and media education in Australia and for greater support and training for teachers.

**Key findings:**

- Of the 97 teachers from the State, Catholic and Independents sectors who took part in the snapshot survey, the majority (77%) feel equipped to guide students on whether news stories are true and can be trusted, but nearly a quarter (23%) do not.
- Overwhelmingly, teachers view critical thinking about media as important but when asked how often they explore critical engagement with news stories, nearly a quarter of the teachers surveyed (24%) said they rarely turned it into a classroom activity.
- Many teachers, particularly those at the secondary level, are deeply worried about students’ reliance on digital and mobile media for news.
- There are inconsistencies across educational sectors about the teaching of media literacy under the Australian Curriculum.

The teachers, who were predominantly aged over 35, tended to trust traditional media including the ABC and local newspapers, TV and radio, but reported low levels of trust in social media.

“With research showing Australians, particularly younger Australians, are increasingly relying on social media for news, this discrepancy between how teachers and students access news raises some issues,” Dr Nettlefold said.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A multi-stakeholder approach to media literacy and media education should be pursued in Australia.
- Future researchers, policymakers, and educators need to focus more on standards of teacher training and professional development in media education.
- More clarity is required for teachers from school and curriculum authorities regarding media literacy instruction and the priority it should be given in Australian classrooms.
- Specialised media education resources should expand focus on explaining the news media environment and the way participants are engaged in it, including social and ethical dimensions.
- The impact of the media industry’s involvement in media literacy education needs further research, including what content approaches successfully engage and entertain students, the value of age-specific news and engaging with user-generated content.
MOST YOUNG AUSTRALIANS CAN’T IDENTIFY FAKE NEWS ONLINE

Media education opportunities should be more frequently available in schools to ensure young Australians meaningfully engage with news media, write Tanya Notley and Michael Dezuanni

In September 2017, we conducted Australia’s first nationally representative survey focused on young Australians’ news engagement practices.

Our survey of 1,000 young Australians aged eight to 16 indicated that while roughly one third felt they could distinguish fake news from real news, one-third felt they could not make this distinction. The other third were uncertain about their ability.

In part, we were motivated by the gravity of recent academic and public claims about the impact of the spread of ‘fake news’ via social media – although we are well aware of arguments about the credibility and accuracy of the term ‘fake news’. In our study, we classified fake news as news that is deliberately misleading.

WHAT WE FOUND

Age plays a role here. As children get older, they feel more confident about telling fake news from real news. 42% of Australian teens aged 13-16 reported being able to tell fake news from real news, compared with 27% of children aged 8-12.

We found young Australians are not inclined to verify the accuracy of news they encounter online. Only 10% said they often tried to work out whether a story presented on the internet is true. A significant number indicated they sometimes tried to verify the truthfulness of news (36%). More than half indicated they either hardly ever tried (30%) or never tried to do this (24%).

We also asked young Australians how much attention they pay to thinking about the origin of news stories, particularly those they access online. More than half indicated they paid at least some attention or a lot of attention to the source of news stories (54%). However, 32% said they paid very little attention and 14% said they paid no attention at all.

Our survey of 1,000 young Australians aged eight to 16 indicated that while roughly one third felt they could distinguish fake news from real news, one third felt they could not make this distinction. The other third were uncertain about their ability.

To us, the circulation of fake news on social media is troubling, given what we know about how social media platforms create news filter bubbles that reinforce
existing worldviews and interests.

Even more concerning, though, is the way many social media platforms allow people with vested interests to push content into feeds after paying to target people based on their age, location or gender, as well as their status changes, search histories and the content they have liked or shared.

There is often no transparency about why people are seeing particular content on their social media feeds or who is financing this content. Furthermore, much online content is made by algorithms and ‘bots’ (automated accounts, rather than real people) that respond to trends in posts and searches in order to deliver more personalised and targeted content and advertising.

WHERE ARE YOUNG AUSTRALIANS GETTING THEIR NEWS?

Given these concerns, we used our survey to ask just how much news young Australians get through social media. With all the hype around young people’s mobile and internet use, it might come as a surprise that social media did not emerge as their top news source and nor is it their most preferred.

The circulation of fake news on social media is troubling, given what we know about how social media platforms create news filter bubbles that reinforce existing worldviews and interests ...

80% of young Australians said they had consumed news from at least one source in the day before the survey was conducted. Their most frequent source was family members (42%), followed by television (39%), teachers (23%), friends (22%), social media (22%), and radio (17%). Print newspapers trailed a distant last (7%).

However, this is not to diminish the significance of young people’s use of social media to consume news. Two-thirds of teens said they often or sometimes accessed news on social media (66%) and more than one-third of children stated they did so (33%).

For teens, Facebook was by far the most popular social media site for getting news with over half (51%) using it for this purpose. For children, YouTube was by far the social media platform used most for news. 37% got news from this site.

... Even more concerning, though, is the way many social media platforms allow people with vested interests to push content into feeds after paying to target people based on their age, location or gender, as well as their status changes, search histories and the content they have liked or shared.

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING?

There is no doubt that legal and regulatory changes are needed to address the issue of fake news online. However, education must also play a critical role. Media education opportunities should be more frequently available in schools to ensure young Australians meaningfully engage with news media.

Media Arts in the Australian Curriculum is one of the world’s only official systematic media literacy policies for children in preschool to year 10, but it is being under-used. Our survey suggests only one in five young Australians received lessons in the past year to help them critically analyse news, and only one-third had made their own news stories at school.

The curriculum also needs to ensure young people understand the politics, biases and commercial imperatives embedded in technologies, platforms and digital media.

Our survey shows that young people are consuming lots of news online. However, many are not critiquing this news or they don’t know how to. The implications of this are not necessarily self-evident or immediate, but they may be very wide-reaching by influencing young people’s capacity to participate in society as well-informed citizens.

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THE CONVERSATION

HOW TO HELP KIDS NAVIGATE FAKE
NEWS AND MISINFORMATION ONLINE

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN KIDS CAN BE DUPED BY NATIVE ADVERTISING,
WRITES RESEARCH ACADEMIC JOANNE ORLANDO

Young people get a huge amount of their news from social media feeds, where false, exaggerated or sponsored content is often prevalent. With the right tools, caregivers can give kids the knowledge they need to assess credible information for themselves.

Being able to identify the trustworthiness of information is an important concern for everyone. Yet the sheer volume of material online and the speed at which it travels has made this an increasingly challenging task. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook provide a loudspeaker to anyone who can attract followers, no matter what their message or content.

Fake news has the power to normalise prejudices, to dictate us-versus-them mentalities and even, in extreme cases, to justify and encourage violence.

We have become obsessed with getting kids off their devices at the expense of developing their understanding of the online world. This is not about surveillance, but rather about having open conversations that empower children to understand and assess the usefulness of information for themselves.

FAKE NEWS IS TRICKING CHILDREN
Young people are growing up in a world where distributing large volumes of misinformation online has become a subtle yet powerful art.

It’s no surprise then that research published in 2016 by Stanford University suggests kids “may focus more on the content of social media posts than on their sources”.

For example, of 203 middle school students surveyed as part of the report, more than 80% thought a native ad on the news website Slate labelled “sponsored content” was a real news story. A majority of high school students questioned by the researchers didn’t recognise and explain the significance of the blue checkmark on a verified Fox News Facebook account.

With the amount of content we see in a busy day, it’s possible that these subtleties are being lost on many adults as well.

MINIMISING THE HARM OF
FAKE NEWS FOR KIDS
Helping young people navigate online spaces requires better skills in verifying what is true and what isn’t. Here are five questions to start the conversation with children.

Find an online post that you consider to be fake news and talk with the child about it. Shape your conversation around these questions:

- Who made this post?

Being able to identify the trustworthiness of information is an important concern for everyone. Yet the sheer volume of material online and the speed at which it travels has made this an increasingly challenging task.
Fake news has the power to normalise prejudices, to dictate us-versus-them mentalities and even, in extreme cases, to justify and encourage violence.

- Who do they want to view it?
- Who benefits from this post and/or who might be harmed by it?
- Has any information been left out of the post that might be important?
- Is a reliable source (like a mainstream news outlet) reporting the same news? If they’re not, it doesn’t mean it’s not true, but it does mean you should dig deeper.

**CLUES FOR CHILDREN TO USE**
Detecting fake news can be like a ‘spot the difference’ game. These questions are clues for kids that a source may be dodgy:

- Is the URL or site name unusual? For example, those with a ‘.co’ are often trying to masquerade as real news sites.
- Is the post low-quality, possibly containing bold claims with no sources and lots of spelling or grammatical errors?
- Does the post use sensationalist imagery? Women in sexy clothing are popular clickbait for unreliable content.
- Are you shocked, angry or overjoyed by the post? Fake news often strives to provoke a reaction, and if you’re having an intense emotional response then it could be a clue the report isn’t balanced or accurate.
- How is the story structured and what kind of proof does it offer? If it merely repeats accusations against the people involved in an incident without further reporting, for example, there’s probably a better version of the story out there from a more reliable news source.

**GET TO KNOW THE RULES**
Many social media sites are now also cracking down on the spread of fake news. Showing kids the restrictions these sites are imposing on their users will help them get a rounded understanding of the problem.

For example, asking kids to read the rules by which Reddit will remove content from r/news is a good starting point. Facebook also offers Tips to Spot False News, suggesting readers check that other sources are reporting similar facts and that they look out for weird formatting, among other hints.

Growing up in a world of fake news doesn’t have to be a heavy burden for kids. Rather, it requires extra support from adults to help them understand and navigate the digital world.

Our goal should be not only to help children survive this complicated online world, but to equip them with the knowledge they need to flourish in it.

**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**
Joanne Orlando does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond her academic appointment.

Joanne Orlando is Researcher, Technology and Learning, Western Sydney University.

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HOW TO DETECT FAKE NEWS

The internet is full of misinformation, designed to look like credible news and to encourage viral spreading online. Here are some tips we have compiled to show you how to decipher fact from fiction.

Types of fake news

Deliberate misinformation – fake news written for profit which is then shared on social media among targeted groups of readers who want to believe that it is true, often spreading it without taking the time to properly verify it.

False headlines – a news headline may read in a certain way or state something as fact, but then the body of the article says something different; known as ‘clickbait’ – headlines that catch a reader’s attention to make them click on the fake news. This type of fake news is misleading and can also be untrue.

Social media sharing – social media sites often rely on shares, likes, or followers who then turn news items into a popularity contest. But just because something is popular and shared doesn’t mean it is true.

Satire – satirical or comedy news often begins with an aspect of truth but then twists it to comment on society. Satirical news can be spread unwittingly by people who don’t understand its humorous intent.

CRAAP Test

Currency – can you find a date of the article or photograph? When was it last updated?

Relevance – who is the intended audience? How does the source meet your needs?

Accuracy – is the information supported by evidence? Does it cite other sources?

Authority – who is the author, and what are their credentials?

Purpose – does the site give facts or opinions; does it have a clear bias?

Fake news tips

You can also ask yourself the three broad questions, and the specifics that they entail, in determining if news is fake.

WHO is the creator?

➤ Do you know the person or organisation behind the presentation of the material?
➤ Is there a byline; are you aware of the author’s expertise?
➤ Is the author/organisation listed on the site, or is there an ‘about me’ section or link?
➤ What is the name of the organisation creating or hosting the content?
➤ Look at the URL. Does it look unusual, or have a tilde – in it? (This symbol frequently indicates a personal site)
➤ Check the suffix of the website’s URL: .gov, .edu and .org are more credible than .com, .net and others.
➤ Search the internet for more author information, including LinkedIn, a social media site for professionals.
➤ Search an online library catalog to see what books the author has written.
➤ Search online research databases to see what the author has written/published.
➤ Is the news a first-hand account, or is this being seen through the eyes of an editor?

WHAT is the message?

➤ What is the content of the message?
➤ Can you find the same news in multiple places?
➤ Do multiple places use different experts and sources in their reports?
➤ Is the website this news appears on updated regularly?
➤ What is the date of the story?
➤ What is the quality of the writing like? (Legitimate journalism rarely contains words in caps, multiple exclamation marks or poor grammar)
➤ Check the sources from the story and their expertise; are the sources quoted anonymous?
➤ Are sources in quotes? (Quotes tend to lend greater authenticity and credibility)
➤ Can you figure out if there is a bias/slant in the message?
➤ What are your own biases in reading the content; are they being exploited?
➤ Is the news fact, or is it more opinion?
➤ What viewpoint is being expressed; what is being left out?
➤ What is the format of the message? Do the visual and text elements reflect a quality journalistic source?

WHY was this news created?

➤ Can you tell what motivated the creation of this news item?
➤ Was this news item created directly for profit; is it really an advertisement, sponsored content or advertorial?
➤ Are the sources and/or authors being paid?

Fact checking tools for fake news

Before you comment on or share suspected fake news, a quick revision of the evidence is worthwhile. Free fact-checking tools like reverse image searches, bot-spotters and character recognition to translate non-Latin text can be a good way to see if a news story is likely to be false.

Spotting digitally altered images

Reverse image search
You can check if an image has been on the internet before by doing a reverse image search with Google Images or TinEye.

Image metadata
There are many websites where you can upload an image and it reveals the metadata and if the image has been opened in Photoshop and re-saved.

Light and shadows
Shadows and light can reveal objects that have been moved or inserted into a photo. If you have concerns about the veracity of the image, rule a line from several points on an object to the corresponding point on its shadow; the lines should converge on the light source.

Image editing software
If you suspect an object has been deleted from an image, software like Photoshop or Pixlr can uncover telltale signs. Play around with the contrast, brightness and exposure, and you may see solid colour blocks, suggesting something is missing or has been altered.

SOURCES
libguides lowtherhall vic edu au english Fake News

Compiled by The Spinney Press.
# SOURCE CHECKER ACTIVITY GUIDE

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<td><strong>Currency</strong>&lt;br&gt;When was the information written and last updated?</td>
<td>Is there a copyright or last updated date on the page?&lt;br&gt;Are links broken (404 error)?&lt;br&gt;Is it current enough for your topic?</td>
<td>There is no indication of when the site was created or revised.&lt;br&gt;The date given for the site’s creation is over 3 years old; no date of revision or update.&lt;br&gt;The site has been created or updated within the last 3 years.</td>
<td>Created or updated less than two years. Sources referenced are current.</td>
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<td><strong>Reliability</strong>&lt;br&gt;Where did the author get this information?</td>
<td>Does the creator provide links to sources for data or quotations?&lt;br&gt;Do those sources seem reliable?&lt;br&gt;Is the information accurate and error-free?&lt;br&gt;Can the information be corroborated with another source?</td>
<td>No links to sources or works cited is given.&lt;br&gt;There is a general statement about the source of the information, but no specific links to sources or a works cited list.&lt;br&gt;There are links to sources or a works cited list.</td>
<td>There are links to sources or a works cited list. Information is corroborated with another source.</td>
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<td><strong>Authority of author</strong>&lt;br&gt;Who is responsible for the information?</td>
<td>Is the author’s name listed?&lt;br&gt;Google the authors’ names to learn more.&lt;br&gt;Can you figure out what makes the author an expert (Credentials, known and respected)?</td>
<td>The author is probably a student. Errors indicate the author is not an expert.&lt;br&gt;The author is unnamed and/or no credentials are given.&lt;br&gt;The author is named but credentials are incomplete.</td>
<td>Credentials are given and indicate that author is an expert.&lt;br&gt;After investigation, there is evidence of other works completed by the author in credible publications.</td>
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<td>Is there a reputable organisation behind it? What is the organisation’s interest (if any) in this information? What is the domain edu, .com, .org, .net, .uk, .K12, etc?&lt;br&gt;Is the page hosted by an individual? (Look for any of the following in the URL: %, ~, ‘users’, ‘AOL’, or ‘yahoo.’)&lt;br&gt;Search who owns the site using a ‘whois’ search engine such as: <a href="http://whois.domaintools.com">http://whois.domaintools.com</a>.&lt;br&gt;Who else links to the site? Google command: link:anchs.net</td>
<td>An individual’s page hosted by an internet service provider (Comcast, yahoo, AOL, etc) or a .com site with no affiliation.&lt;br&gt;Any of these:&lt;br&gt;The home page is a K12, .com, .org, or unknown, and NOT included in level 2 or 3.&lt;br&gt;The homepage is a student folder on a .edu site.</td>
<td>A known business, government department or agency is the homepage.&lt;br&gt;A professional association or organisation, museum, a university-sponsored home page or a domain of .edu and faculty maintain the site.</td>
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<td>&gt; Is there a conflict of interest? Does the website producer stand to benefit from the information being provided?</td>
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<td>&gt; How important is balance? Is it required for your purposes? Is any bias explicit or hidden? Can you use the information?</td>
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**WHAT DOES THE SCORE MEAN?**

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<td>Good source for a research paper or academic project. Confirm with other sources.</td>
<td>Useful for ideas or casual projects. Do not cite as a reference for a research project.</td>
<td>Highly questionable source.</td>
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AUSTRALIANS ARE LOSING THEIR TRUST IN ‘THE MEDIA’, BUT NOT IN JOURNALISM

We are feeling more disillusioned about the role of the media than almost any other country, according to this report by RMIT/ABC Fact Check senior researcher Josh Gordon

Australia has just churned through its fourth prime minister in a decade as a result of party room shenanigans. Much has been said about the willingness of our big political parties to trade in prime ministers, on average, every 30 months.

There is the so-called 24-hour news cycle, blamed for corralling fatigued governments into flawed and poorly executed public policy.

There is the structural factionalism of both parties, blamed for rewarding plotting, navel gazing and self-interest at the expense of good policy.

Clearly, Facebook and others have work to do, amid growing public alarm about the spread of ‘fake news’ and the misuse of personal information for nefarious political purposes.

And there is the destabilising role played by elements of the media, blamed for blurring the line between commentary and activism, and for creating a sense of chaos and mistrust through the reporting of unverified and unsourced information, among other things.

The latest leadership spill, in which Malcolm Turnbull was deposed as prime minister has raised further questions about the role of the media in public life. Indeed, Australians are feeling more disillusioned about the role of the media than almost any other country, according to an annual global survey of more than 33,000 people taken well before the latest knifing.

Communications giant Edelman found that people’s trust in the media in Australia now ranks as the second lowest of 28 surveyed countries. Only Turkish people are less trusting of the sector.

According to the 2018 survey, about seven in 10 Australians are now worried about the spread of false information and of ‘fake news’ being used as a weapon to mislead and influence public opinion.

Political engagement also appears to be declining. The Australian Electoral Study, a detailed and long-running post-election survey conducted by the Australian National University’s School of Politics and International Relations, has identified some alarming trends.

Almost eight out of 10 voters (79 per cent of survey respondents) said they did not watch leaders debates during the last election campaign. That compares to just 30 per cent during the 1993 election.

Fewer than one in three voters (30 per cent) reported taking “a good deal” of interest in the last election, compared to half of voters 23 years earlier.

And just 17 per cent of voters said they followed the election through newspapers, down from 29 per cent in 1993. For television, the decline has also been precipitous – the internet has only partly offset this, with 19 per cent using it to tune into the last campaign.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The first point to make is that viewing the problem merely in terms of ‘the media’ isn’t necessary helpful.

‘The media’ – as a collective noun – includes a diverse array of news outlets and organisations, mastheads, TV and radio stations, and even individual journalists with different approaches to news and opinion. Some ‘commentators’, for example, openly run political agendas.

Importantly, ‘the media’ is now also seen to include social media platforms such as Facebook, and search engines such as Google, both of which have become purveyors of news.

Somewhat encouragingly, voters appear to be becoming more cautious and discerning. While the previously cited Edelman Trust Barometer would appear to suggest that trust in the media in Australia has collapsed, drilling into the figures reveals a more nuanced story. Trust in ‘journalism’ – a more specific subset of the media – has actually strengthened.

On the other hand, Australia’s trust in social media platforms such as Facebook and search engines has collapsed in 2018. Only the Irish and the Swedes
placed less trust in these media forms. Clearly, Facebook and others have work to do, amid growing public alarm about the spread of ‘fake news’ and the misuse of personal information for nefarious political purposes (think Cambridge Analytica).

Facebook is now running a concerted public relations campaign in an apparent effort to repair its battered image and regain the trust of users. As a Facebook-sponsored message on a Melbourne billboard put it: “Fake news is not our friend.” “We’re committed to reducing it,” the message continued.

“So we’re working with more fact-checkers globally, improving our technology, and giving you background information on the articles in your news feed.”

Fact checking, it seems, has an important role to play. A major poll undertaken by Roy Morgan in May tells a similar story of distrust. It found almost half of Australians do not trust social media, compared to (for example) only 9 per cent who distrust the ABC. So, trust in some news outlets remains high.

The point is, the loss of trust in the media as a broad concept may not necessarily be a cause for lament. Rather, it could reflect the community’s increasing discernment between information sources and, if you like, a growing polarisation of trust.

The upshot is a public that is increasingly placing a premium on credible news and information sources.

Which brings us to the role played by organisations such as RMIT/ABC Fact Check. The goal as we see it – and the big opportunity – is to build trust with the public; that is, to put a trust ‘premium’ on our reporting. This will not be achieved by running political agendas, nor by seeking to strong-arm voters or by practising ‘gotcha’ journalism. Rather, the aim is to engage with the public by bringing rigour, dispassion, fearlessness and facts to the fore in debates that are, all too often, marred by shouting and misinformation.

Fact checking is a global phenomenon. It is still in its relative infancy, although as a form of journalism it is growing rapidly.

In the heavily polarised US, fact-checking organisations such as Poynter are seeking to engage with non-traditional audiences, often with preconceived notions of mistrust. The results have reportedly been promising. Clear, factually-based and relevant information does make a difference.

In Australia, we have had an impact on political debates in policy areas including migration, taxation, the economy, health and education.

Fact checking is a global phenomenon. It is still in its relative infancy, although as a form of journalism it is growing rapidly.

Our work requires tenacity, detailed research and taking the necessary time to consult with experts.

It can be arduous, but we and other fact checking organisations such as The Conversation are having an impact on the quality of public debate.

Of course, fact checking is not the panacea to all political ills; it can simply encourage public figures to think more carefully about the quality of information they are disseminating.

In return, we hope the public will continue to engage with us, not as purveyors of ‘truth’, but as purveyors of ‘fact’.

Josh Gordon is a senior researcher for RMIT/ABC Fact Check.

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Trust in media is low in Australia, which is why traditional news values like accuracy and objectivity matter, writes Sacha Molitorisz

In an age of social media and smartphones, people are accessing more news than ever. The problem is, they don’t believe much of it.

Three-quarters of Australian news consumers say they have experienced ‘fake news’ and are very concerned by it. In the US, two-thirds of adults get their news from social media, but more than half of people expect this news to be “largely inaccurate”.

This is in stark contrast to public trust in journalism before the rise of the internet. In the 1970s, more than two-thirds of Americans trusted news media. By 2016, that figure had fallen to less than one third.

This question motivated new research at the Centre for Media Transition at UTS, which was funded by Facebook as part of the company’s APAC News Literacy initiative, but conducted independently by my colleagues and me.

Our findings suggest that what Australians want most from their news media is accuracy and objectivity, not necessarily accessibility and friendliness – the hallmarks of social media.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE TO RESTORE TRUST IN NEWS MEDIA?**

In the first stage of our research, we compiled an extensive, annotated bibliography of the academic and non-academic literature focusing on trust and the news media. That bibliography includes more than 200 titles and many more authors.

Among these authors is Rachel Botsman, who argues that institutional trust in the media has largely been replaced by what she calls “distributed trust”. Where people used to trust banks, the church, the government and the news media implicitly, she argues, they now tend to trust their friends, family and even strangers.

This is evident in the success of social media, but more obviously in the rise of companies such as Uber and Airbnb, which exemplify the ‘gig economy’ and ‘collaborative consumption’.

Drawing on Botsman and other authors, we postulated that today’s news consumers want a different type of news media: one that is more peer-to-peer and less top-down. And so in the second stage of our research, we held four qualitative workshops in Tamworth and Sydney to ask participants about their relationship with the news media.

In one exercise, we asked participants to design their ideal news source by choosing from a list of 13 characteristics, including “interactive”, “accurate”, “transparent”, “easy to access”, “objective” and “vulnerable” (by admitting and correcting mistakes). We also included “like a friend” and “less ‘voice of god’”. These last two, we suspected, might well be popular, especially among the young. (Of our participants, half were under the age of 35.)

But the results surprised us. Overwhelmingly, participants both young and old did not want their ideal news source to be like a friend or less like the ‘voice of god’. These two attributes were the least popular. Conversely, top of the list were three highly traditional journalism values: accuracy, objectivity and being in the public interest. A closer look, however, revealed that participants did value some elements of a peer-to-peer news media – they also wanted their ideal news source to be transparent, easy to access and interactive.

**TRUST GOES DEEPER THAN THE SOURCE**

If our participants are typical, these results suggest that Australians want the news media to be aligned foremost with traditional journalistic values, but also...
enable consumers to be part of the news-sharing, and sometimes even news-making, process. In other words, Australians seem to want news that blends elements of institutional and distributed trust.

The workshop participants repeatedly expressed grave concerns about trusting news on social media. However, our results also suggest that Australians believe the trust problem is not wholly the fault of social media. According to our participants, part of the problem is that journalists themselves need to be better at accuracy, objectivity and working in the public interest.

This corresponds with the results of the Digital News Report: Australia 2018, published earlier this year, which found the most common form of ‘fake news’ encountered by Australians is “poor journalism”.

In another exercise, we asked our participants to rate six trust-enhancing strategies currently being trialled by media outlets in various forms.

Tellingly, the most preferred option was “go behind the story”, which involves informing readers why a story was written and what the journalist was unable to find in his or her reporting, among other details. The second preferred option was a clear labelling of news, comment and advertising.

Clearly, consumers want a higher degree of transparency from their news sources.

PEOPLE WILL PAY FOR MEDIA THEY TRUST

The good news emerging from research globally is that there has been a rebound in trust in journalism. Currently, 50% of Australian news consumers trust the news, up from 42% last year. By contrast, only 24% of people trust the news they find on social media.

In his 1995 book Trust, US political scientist Francis Fukuyama argued that high-trust societies tend to be thriving societies. And this is where the media play a crucial role.

As philosopher Onora O’Neill says:

If we can’t trust what the press report, how can we tell whether to trust those on whom they report?

Our workshops suggest that Australians want to trust the media, but are suspicious. This must be addressed, not least because, as the Digital News Report: Australia 2018 found, there is a strong link between trust in news, concern about fake news and people being prepared to pay for their news.

This raises an interesting prospect: if we can successfully address the issue of trust and news media, we might even begin to solve journalism’s revenue crisis.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Sacha Molitorisz is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Media Transition at UTS. The Centre has received funding from public and private sources, including News Corp Australia for a study into digital defamation, and Facebook Australia for a study on journalism and trust.

Sacha Molitorisz is Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Media Transition, Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney.

THE CONVERSATION

Facebook, Google and your personal data

CHOICE ADVICE FROM ANDY KOLLMORGEN ON TAKING CONTROL OF WHAT THE TECH TITANS KNOW ABOUT YOU FROM YOUR DATA

THEY KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU

Unless you’ve gone off grid or weren’t on it in the first place, Facebook and Google probably know more about you than you do.

Aside from customising our online experience and shepherding us through the labyrinths of the internet, some would argue the two big tech titans use personal data in ways that make our lives easier and maybe even better.

Whether ceding so much influence to a couple of big publicly traded companies based in California is good or bad remains open to question.

The more immediate question is how much control we should have over our personal data and what happens when our data is misused.

It’s an issue of growing concern around the world, and many consumer-minded people think the concern is well founded.

Since we’re the actual product that Facebook and Google are selling to advertisers and other businesses, the thinking goes, it can’t hurt to have a better handle on what we bring to the transaction.

We spoke to a number of digital privacy experts and thousands of CHOICE members to find out:

• What happens when your data is misused
• What data you’re providing to Google and Facebook
• Steps you can take to get control of your data.

DATA FREE-FOR-ALL

The experts we spoke to agree on this point: the businesses that use our personal data have not put a high enough priority on preventing its misuse or giving us control of it.

As Lauren Solomon, CEO of the Melbourne-based Consumer Policy Research Centre (CPRC), puts it, “data science and coding experts are typically not provided with training in ethics or the fields that might relate to the way their data is being used”.

“Data that might be shared with one party for a perceived particular purpose can very quickly end up being used in another sector for an entirely different purpose.” Which is precisely what happened in the recent Cambridge Analytica scandal.

Professor Longbing Cao of the Advanced Analytics Institute at University of Technology Sydney, echoes that point. “The companies that own our data can make use of it as they want, even though their privacy policies may tell us something different.

“There is no third party, government regulations or other mechanisms to check compliance. And if we do not allow access to our data, we may not be able to use these services well.”

Emeritus Professor Margaret Jackson of RMIT University, who has researched both Facebook and Google extensively, is also unimpressed with the platforms’ commitment to consumer protection.

“Generally, neither Facebook nor Google protect users’ privacy, as their main business model is to collect as much personal data as they can without really offering users the right to give informed consent. Neither of the two organisations offer an easy way to control the data you surrender to them.”

These criticisms are echoed in the results of our survey of 2,698 CHOICE members – who are generally more conscious of their consumer rights than other people – on the issue of data privacy.

Only three per cent trust Facebook to protect our privacy, and only 10% trust Google.

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA: LEGAL DATA COLLECTION?

Companies can use our data in ways we might not approve of. Recently large amounts of Facebook data were used in attempts to influence the US election and the vote on whether the UK would remain part of the EU (Brexit).

While it’s not clear how much of an impact the Facebook data actually played in either of these events, the firm caught up in the scandal – UK-based Cambridge Analytica – did get its hands on around 87 million Facebook profiles and was hired by the Trump campaign to create targeted pro-Trump messages.

Was Facebook complicit in the misuse of all this personal data? Our in-house digital expert and head of CHOICE’s in-house innovation unit, Viveka Weiley, thinks they are. The social media leviathan, which has 2.2 billion active users and counting, had known about the Cambridge Analytica problem since 2015 but blindly trusted the firm to delete data in line with Facebook’s policy (apps were allowed to harvest Facebook data but not share it with – or sell it to – third parties).

“Facebook desperately claimed that it didn’t count as a ‘breach’ as no technical protection measures were bypassed,” Weiley says. “Instead, they just had no serious protection measures in place.”

The data that Cambridge Analytica deployed actually came from a personality quiz application called “thisisyourdigitallife”. Using the app, 270,000 Facebook users gave it permission to access their profile information, including likes, birthdays and locations.

But Facebook’s policy at the time also allowed the app to grab data from the profiles of the 270,000 users’ friends, extending the total data grab to 87 million profiles. (It changed its policy to limit such permissions in 2014.)

Most of the profiles accessed belonged to US Facebook users, though about 311,000 were reportedly...
Australia-based and only 53 of those users apparently used the app in question.

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE?**

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<thead>
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<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A few times a week</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don't have an account</td>
<td>2%</td>
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n = 2698, Voice Your Choice survey conducted March 27 - April 9, 2018, unweighted. Participants were asked about Google-branded products only.

**HOW FACEBOOK REACTED**

Facebook’s initial response was slow, but in early April this year the company took the following actions:

- Imposed new restrictions on the data apps could access
- Added security updates
- Committed to contacting all 87 million users whose profiles were obtained by Cambridge Analytica with a ‘protecting your information’ notice
- Provided a link so users could check to see if Cambridge Analytica has their data
- Issued a statement that made its terms of service slightly clearer (at least for non-lawyers) and reiterated its data policy.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg then apologised to the US Congress, where he admitted that perhaps a bit of data privacy regulation wouldn’t be a bad thing.

The CPRC’s Lauren Solomon agrees that there’s a need for more regulation, especially in the Australian context.

“Adjusting privacy settings on phones and browsers are some good first steps, but in reality this only goes a very small way towards providing Australian consumers with greater control over what data is being collected and how it is being used,” Solomon says.

“Part of this issue is the lack of transparency and vague terminology currently allowed in Australia by our privacy laws. While the EU has introduced significantly greater protections through their General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Australia is currently lagging behind. There needs to be a quantum leap in the transparency and control of consumer data in Australia.”

**GLOBAL SHIFTS IN DATA REGULATION**

The GDPR will take effect in the EU on 25 May 2018, a development that CHOICE welcomes.

“The GDPR makes some great changes to the way privacy policies have to be presented,” says CHOICE head of campaigns and policy Sarah Agar.

“Policies need to be user-friendly and informative, and can be coupled with short ‘privacy notices’ that state in clear language exactly why certain personal information is being collected. Any steps to make terms and conditions clearer, shorter and more useful for people is positive.”

CHOICE has long supported the principle that consumers should be able to access their own data, including data around credit card use and how data affects insurance premiums. Knowing how businesses use this data would be even better.

“While the GDPR establishes some new rules that will benefit consumers, it overlooks some things that are important in today’s data-driven marketplaces,” Agar says.

“Enabling consumers to know what data companies hold about them and why they have collected it is important, but more important than this is knowing what they are doing with the data, and how that affects you.”

**DATA REGULATION IN AUSTRALIA**

There have been some recent moves towards regulation of digital data collection in Australia, especially in the wake of reports that Google has been secretly harvesting the personal data of about 10 million Australian Android mobile device users and selling it to advertisers. The downloads are the equivalent to a gigabyte of data a month, costing the users a combined $580 million or so each year in data costs.

According to the US software giant Oracle, Google has been collecting location and other personal data from Australian devices even when location services were deactivated and no SIM cards or apps were in use.

In addition to this latest development, the ACCC is looking into whether Google, Facebook and Apple News are unlawfully undermining competition in the Australian media market.

In 2014 Google accounted for 40% and Facebook for 12% of referrals to major news and entertainment sites. In 2016 they accounted for a combined 75% of referrals (Facebook 40%, Google 35%).

With this kind of market dominance, less than a quarter of internet users in Australia go directly to a website or app.

In addition, Australia’s privacy commissioner is looking into whether Facebook violated the Privacy Act by making Australian Facebook user data available to Cambridge Analytica, inadvertently or otherwise.

Solomon acknowledges that big data can have benefits, but argues its collection and use needs to be better regulated to protect consumers.

“Data can be used to improve consumer experience, reduce complexity and drive better service delivery,” she says. “However, what is also clear is that where these amalgamation and profiling practices result in
consumers potentially being excluded from certain products or targeted with inappropriate products for their needs, this can come with significant consumer backlash.”

“There are great benefits to be derived from data sharing, but it needs to happen with the right protections and with consumers ultimately in the driver’s seat.”

PEOPLE WANT PRIVACY TO BE EASIER

Our research suggests many Facebook and Google users (including Google Search, Chrome, Gmail, Maps and YouTube) don’t know about, let alone use, privacy settings that let them limit what they share on the platforms.

In a recent survey of CHOICE members, about 90% of both Facebook and Google users were aware that the platforms collect their personal data. The number of respondents who are worried about this was almost as high (79% for Facebook and 71% for Google).

But only 51% of respondents said they had changed their Facebook privacy settings to limit access to personal information; for Google the figure was 35%.

That’s probably because privacy settings can be so hard to find. An overwhelming majority of our survey takers (98% for Facebook, 96% for Google) believe the platforms should make it easier for consumers to understand how their data is being collected and used.

The CPRC tracked the digital habits of 1001 Australians over a year and found a similar level of disengagement with privacy options. The research, conducted by Roy Morgan, found that only six per cent had read all the privacy policy terms and conditions for all the products they signed up to, and 73% said they accepted the terms and conditions because it was required to access the product.

Ninety-five per cent of the Australians surveyed said they wanted platforms to allow them to opt out of data collection, and 85% objected to personal information such as phone contacts and messages being shared.

GETTING AROUND LOCAL PRIVACY LAWS

Professor Jackson of RMIT says neither Facebook nor Google makes much of an effort to help users control what they’re sharing.

“Facebook does allow you to restrict the number of people who can read your posts by using a privacy setting, but that doesn’t stop Facebook from collecting this data,” says Jackson.

“Google doesn’t offer a private setting, though it does allow you to delete your browsing history, as well as clear cookies and site data.”

And while both Google and Facebook have features that let users see the data that’s been collected about them, the features only go so far.

“What is still difficult, if not impossible, is to access this information to correct it or to have it deleted,” Jackson says.

“Generally, requests to amend data and to obtain further information about what data is held are denied.”

Jackson also says that Google and Facebook claim that privacy laws in individual countries do not apply to their operations.

For instance, the New Zealand Privacy Commissioner recently determined that Facebook is non-compliant with its Privacy Act, “but Facebook denies the Act applies to it, although it collects data from NZ users,” Jackson says.
“Both claim that they have obtained users’ consent to collect, store, use and disclose their data. They also rely on the argument that the personal data has been ‘shared’ with them which implies consent. Consent means that the privacy principles do not apply.”

Jackson says Facebook can expect increasing scrutiny from regulators around the world following the Cambridge Analytica breach and previous transgressions.

“Facebook was aware of the unauthorised access to its users’ and users’ friends’ data in 2015 but failed to comply with the obligations to notify government representatives and individuals of a data breach. This will be an area of future litigation.”

**HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT INFORMATION YOU’RE SHARING**

You can get better acquainted with your digital self by having a look at the “my activity” function in your Google account or similar functions on Facebook (see below).

One avid Facebook user who recently unearthed her data and shared it with CHOICE was stunned at the size of the file. “They know everything,” she says. The list of her ad engagement history alone reads like a point-by-point profile of her enduring interests and concerns.

**The information Google collects about you**

- Things you search for
- Websites you visit
- Videos you watch
- Ads you click on or tap
- Your location
- The type of device you’re using
- Your IP address and cookie data
- Emails you send and receive on Gmail
- Contacts you add
- Calendar events
- Photos and videos you upload
- All of your Docs, Sheets and Slides on Google Drive
- Your name
- Your email address and password
- Your birthday
- Your gender
- Your phone number
- The country you live in.

**And here’s what Google says they use it for:**

- Customised Google maps experience
- Auto-complete search and tailored results based on previous searches
- Auto-filled forms
- YouTube suggestions.

**The data Facebook collects about you**

- Content and information you create and share
- Location and date of photos you post
- The type of content you view or engage with, and the frequency and duration of such engagement
- Information other Facebook users provide about you or send to you, including photos, messages and contact information
- The people and groups you’re connected to and how you interact with them, including address books you upload, sync or import
- Information about Facebook-based financial transactions, including credit or debit card numbers and security identifications and billing, shipping and contact details
- The types of devices you use and their locations, the types of browsers you use, the name of your mobile operator or ISP, your mobile phone number and email address
- Information on the websites and apps you visit that use Facebook services (such as ‘like’ buttons or Facebook logs)
- Information about how you respond to ads on Facebook
- Information from other companies that are owned and operated by Facebook (such as Instagram and WhatsApp).

**And here’s what Facebook says they use it for:**

- Personalised features and content, including news and Instagram feeds and ads
- Suggestions on who to connect with
- Auto-filling registration details on different Facebook products
- Location information (if enabled) for geographically targeted ads and other content
- Research to develop and improve products
- Face recognition (if enabled) in photos and videos
- Helping advertisers measure the effectiveness of ads
- “To conduct and support research and innovation on topics of general social welfare, technological advancement, public interest and health and wellbeing.”

**GIVING IT AWAY FOR FREE**

It’s no secret that Google and Facebook’s business model is selling your data to advertisers. The question is whether we’re giving away more than we get in return.

According to one prominent US Big Data expert, Nathan Newman, the answer is a resounding yes.

“Users undervalue the personal data they provide and most users don’t even know their data is being shared with third parties,” Newman wrote in a 2014 research paper, adding that the “economic value of content and data flows largely for free to the big data

**WHAT’S FACEBOOK DATA WORTH?**

$US 6.08 per user

(Over 4th quarter 2017 worldwide. Source: Facebook earnings report)
platforms” and users “are largely disempowered from demanding protection for their privacy”.

DATA GONE BAD: BEHAVIOUR PROFILING
One of the primary ways data is being used by third-party advertisers to the detriment of consumers is through behaviour profiling, Newman argues.

A couple of examples:

• Price discrimination: Advertisers offer goods at different prices depending on your data profile (where you live, what kind of car you drive, who your friends are, whether you have a university degree, the online content you consume, etc.), in an effort to extract maximum revenue from each customer.

• Targeted scams and dodgy products: Unethical companies use data to identify people who may be vulnerable to financial scams and dodgy financial offerings like payday loans or debt consolidation.

PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY ON FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE
If you want to be as private as possible on Facebook or Google, or learn which data is stored about you, here’s a guide to some of the platforms’ key privacy features along with a few tips.

Facebook

• To limit what Facebook collects about you, you can choose not to log onto other sites and providers with your Facebook password and consider whether you want the information you are about to post to be collected by Facebook.

• Facebook lets you access information about your activity on the site, but it will only show the data you’ve provided rather than exactly what’s been collected, how it’s used, and who it’s been shared with.

• You can also request a file that will show more of the data Facebook has on you, including a list of ad topics that have been based on your likes and behaviours, a list of Ads History showing every ad you’ve clicked on, and a list of advertisers with contact information.

• You can edit the privacy settings for Facebook-based apps and games, though this may affect whether you can still use the app or game.

• But be forewarned: if you delete your Facebook data you won’t be able to log into services that you have previously accessed with your Facebook login.

• If you’re not a Facebook user, you may be surprised to know that Facebook also collects data on you. The company claims people who don’t have a Facebook account can access the data it holds about you by downloading and submitting a data access form.

Google

• Google Chrome privacy controls let you delete your browsing history and clear cookies and site data, and Google account settings let you see which apps have access to your account and check your privacy status (such as location services).

• You can delete your Google activity history by going to myactivity.google.com when you’re logged in.

• You can also reject Google’s offer to store your passwords on other sites and decline to provide your location when asked.

• You can decline to allow Google to access the photos you take on your smartphone and alter settings on apps to reduce what Google can access.

• But if your employer uses Gmail, all of your sent and received emails, including attachments, as well as your calendar and contacts, are accessible by Google whether or not you’ve given consent.

• Google Dashboard and Google Takeout let you view and manage the information Google has collected on you.

CHOICE MEMBERS WEIGH IN
We received comments across the spectrum in our survey of 2,698 CHOICE members, ranging from very worried to ‘what’s the big deal?” Many respondents have taken steps to protect their privacy.

Worried

“How can anyone be certain of the trustworthiness of any site? I am deeply concerned over the astounding power held by these companies.”

“Both Google and Facebook are very arrogant companies, and they are so big and powerful and greedy for money to satisfy shareholders that they will stop at nothing and continue data mining.”

“I’m very worried about them tracking me.”

“I’m feeling quite pleased that I decided many years ago that Facebook was way too scary to use.”

THE EU’S NEW GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Some experts argue that Australia is behind the times when it comes to data privacy and protection. Meanwhile, protections for consumers in the EU will include the following from 25 May 2018:

- Companies are required to improve transparency around consent to data collection and use so that the policy is easy to understand, specific to purpose, easily accessible, and allows for consent to be easily withdrawn.

- Consumers have expanded rights to access their data, have their data deleted, and to transmit their data.

- Consumers have the right to be notified of any data breaches.

- Projects and products must have privacy compliance built in from the start (privacy by design).

- Companies can be fined up to 4% of annual turnover or 20 million (whichever is greater) for contravening the GDPR.

- Jurisdiction applies to all companies (including overseas companies) processing the personal data of people in the EU.
“My friends and family laughed at me when I set up an alias account with a fake birthday, etc. Now they understand!”

Not so worried
“I don’t care about privacy at all. Happy to be public about almost everything.”

“Let’s get government sorted out first. They are far worse than Google or Facebook because you can opt not to use them or use VPN, blocking and security tools to stop them.”

“People are obsessed with their boring personal data. How important do they seriously think they are in a world of eight billion?”

Really I am not too worried about the data Google has on me. I have nothing to hide.”

“I think Facebook does a good job at giving you tools to protect your privacy from other users, and I am confident in Google to protect my data from being hacked.”

Have taken steps
“I always use a VPN with maximum anonymity when browsing. Google apps on your phone can also track your movements. The only way to stop tracking of any nature on your phone is to remove the battery.”

“I have felt uncomfortable for some time using Google Chrome. I no longer use Chrome for banking, Facebook or any shopping including eBay/Amazon/Gumtree, etc.”

“It is essential that consumers learn how to play Facebook at their own game. The best way to do this is to create multiple accounts for different purposes. I use one Facebook account, created using my main pen name (I have many), for logging easily into websites and commenting.”

“I have modified my Google account to remove collected data and prevent further collection. I assume that Google has actually complied with the setting changes.”

“I use various pieces of software to limit Facebook and Google’s power such as adblocks, script blocks, etc.”

Source: n = 2698, Voice Your Choice survey conducted March 27-April 9, 2018, unweighted.

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EXPLAINER: WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM?

Public interest reporting is often equated with watchdog or investigative reporting. But it can include other factual stories that serve the public interest, explains Andrea Carson

Public interest journalism could be considered the antithesis of media’s darker side, which includes fake news, propaganda, censorship and voyeurism. The outcomes of public interest reporting can expose corruption, launch Royal Commissions, remove improper politicians from office, and jail wrongdoers.

Think of recent stories like ABC Four Corners’ exposure of the treatment of young people at Don Dale Detention Centre; The Sydney Morning Herald’s revelatory stories on now-convicted MP Eddie Obeid; or The Newcastle Herald’s exposure of child sex abuse by priests. All of these led to public hearings. Then there was last week’s collaboration between Fairfax Media and the ABC, revealing the extent of Chinese money and influence in Australian politics.

For these reasons, this form of reporting headlines the Senate select committee’s Future of Public Interest Journalism inquiry. (See inset box next page for subsequent recommendations by the Australian Government to the final report.)

Yet, public interest journalism is not universally defined. One common understanding among media practitioners and academics is that it refers to a journalist pursuing information that the public has a right to know.

Often implied in this definition is that, if it were not for the reporter, undisclosed information affecting the public that governments, companies and other powerful interests hold would remain hidden.

In this way, public interest reporting is often equated with watchdog or investigative reporting. But it can include other factual stories that serve the public interest, whether by providing a platform for debate or informing the electorate.

This is not stories that are simply “interesting to the public” (e.g. stories about the Kardashians) – that is, entertaining, but with no civic value. These profit-oriented stories have filled certain tabloids and glossy magazines for years. Today they serve as clickbait to attract eyeballs and advertisers in the digital space, and are often found under traditional media banners.

The former editor of Britain’s Guardian newspaper, Alan Rusbridger, uses the analogy of a public figure such as a cricketer to make the point that not all revelations or “truths” are worth pursuing, and particularly not in the name of the “public interest”. Rusbridger suggests the “quality” of the target and its relationship to the public interest differentiate a story from mere smear or exposure journalism.

He says:

What’s the public interest in a cricketer having a love romp in a hotel room … But if elected representatives are arguing a case in Parliament but not revealing that they are being paid to do so, then that strikes at the heart of democracy. That’s public interest; this is an easy distinction.
From this example, it is clear that context matters. As author of *Understanding Journalism*, Lynette Sheridan Burns reminds us that other social concerns might need to be weighed up alongside public interest storytelling. These might include an individual’s right to privacy, legal considerations, and the potential for other harms such as national security risks.

Through the liberal democratic lens of understanding the role of news media, diverse and plural voices are generally seen as enriching public discourse. This provides a range of perspectives to contest ideas and inform citizens. Ultimately, it informs their electoral choices.

Herein lies a key motivation for calling the 2017 inquiry hearings. With thousands of editorial jobs cut in the past five years at Australia’s major news media outlets – Fairfax Media, ABC, News Corp, Channel Ten – and the closure of many regional bureaus and mastheads, there is real concern about the state of public interest journalism.

Put simply, are there enough trained journalists to provide independent journalism that matters? Are Australia’s regions as well served with diverse and independent reporting as the major cities? These questions speak to the first and fourth of the inquiry’s six terms of reference.

The other questions for the committee broadly relate to the viral spread of misinformation, and to safeguards against market power in the media landscape in the name of public interest journalism.

Interestingly, rather than directly tackle what the government’s proposed removal of media competition safeguards might mean for Australian audiences’ interests, the committee is directed to examine the market impacts of new players. That is, what impact

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**Future of public interest journalism – government recommendations**

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSE TO SENATE REPORT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT**

1. ABC and SBS should be funded adequately, in order to deliver on their charter obligations, support rural and regional service provision and have a strong fact-checking capacity.

2. The Commonwealth should provide additional certainty in future funding for the community broadcasting sector, in particular what component is to be set aside for training and education; and ensure the sector is fully consulted in the national rollout of digital services.

3. The Commonwealth should work with the states and territories via the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to determine how the Australian Curriculum can be improved in relation to digital media awareness and media literacy.

4. The Commonwealth should develop and implement a framework for extending deductible gift recipient status to Australian not-for-profit news media organisations that adhere to appropriate standards of practice for public interest journalism.

5. Treasury should undertake cost-benefit modelling on extending the tax deductible status of news media subscriptions to all Australians for subscriptions to news media organisations in Australia that adhere to appropriate standards of practice for public interest journalism.

6. The Australian Law Reform Commission should conduct an audit of current laws that impact on journalists reporting on matters that relate to national security and border protection, to identify and analyse unjustifiably harsh or draconian laws, inconsistencies in the law and any lack of clarity in the law regulating the work of journalists in this context, and to consider whether further reform is needed to achieve an appropriate balance between the need to preserve national security and the need for journalists to be able to carry out their work in the public interest.

7. The Commonwealth should work with state and territory jurisdictions via COAG to complete a review of Australian defamation laws; and subsequently develop and implement any recommendations for harmonisation and reform in order to promote appropriate balance between public interest journalism and protection of individuals from reputational harm.

8. The Commonwealth should look at ways to expand whistleblower and shield law protections, and to harmonise those laws between the Commonwealth and state and territory jurisdictions.

Source: Australian Government response to the Senate Select Committee on Public Interest Journalism report Future of Public Interest Journalism, August 2018.

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social media and search engines have on the "Australian media landscape".

The complete absence of “audience” and an emphasis on “markets” in the terms of reference could be seen as a win for the persistent lobbying of Australia’s most powerful commercial media companies.

In a rare display of unified power, 25 heads of Australia’s major commercial media outlets met the prime minister in Canberra last month to urge the parliament to pass media reforms. To improve their commercial viability, media companies are seeking to scrap the 75% reach provision (preventing 100% market share) and two-out-of-three ownership rule.

Notwithstanding new international entrants into Australian markets such as Buzzfeed, The Guardian and Daily Mail, such law changes, I have previously argued, would likely result in concentrating proprietorial power of the biggest media operators in Australia’s most dominant news media markets: radio, television and print.

The committee’s inquiries into “fake news, propaganda, and public disinformation” are important issues to consider, but we should remember that these concerns have existed alongside public interest journalism for more than a century.

From the sensationalist, fear-mongering ‘yellow journalism’ of the penny press in the late 1800s, to the media propaganda arising out of the world wars of the 20th century, there is nothing new about fake news and disinformation. What is unprecedented, however, is its speed and global spread in the digital sphere.

Inaccurate reporting, whether deliberately fake or just sloppy, has consequences for news media’s capacity to serve a well-informed citizenry that underpins a healthy democracy. For example, a recent US Pew Research study found 88% of Americans believe fake news confuses the public about basic facts.

These are problems for all to tackle – search engines, internet service providers, commercial media outlets, public broadcasters and social media. As is occurring overseas, this might involve media outlets and others working together to provide news literacy tools to help the public recognize fact from fiction. Any successful approach must address sources, messengers and audiences of fake news, not just target Facebook and Google.

The committee’s inquiries into “fake news, propaganda, and public disinformation” are important issues to consider, but we should remember that these concerns have existed alongside public interest journalism for more than a century.

When the committee reports in December, let’s hope it offers ways to strengthen public interest journalism by placing Australian audiences’ interests ahead of all others.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
Andrea Carson was previously a journalist at the ABC and Fairfax Media.

Andrea Carson is Lecturer, Media and Politics, School of Social and Political Sciences; Honorary Research Fellow, Centre for Advancing Journalism, University of Melbourne.
EXPLORING ISSUES

WORKSHEETS AND ACTIVITIES

The Exploring Issues section comprises a range of ready-to-use worksheets featuring activities which relate to facts and views raised in this book.

The exercises presented in these worksheets are suitable for use by students at middle secondary school level and beyond. Some of the activities may be explored either individually or as a group.

As the information in this book is compiled from a number of different sources, readers are prompted to consider the origin of the text and to critically evaluate the questions presented.

Is the information cited from a primary or secondary source? Are you being presented with facts or opinions?

Is there any evidence of a particular bias or agenda? What are your own views after having explored the issues?

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RESEARCH ACTIVITIES  53
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Brainstorm, individually or as a group, to find out what you know about media literacy in the digital age.

1. What is ‘media literacy’, and why is it important?

2. What are the various impacts of digital platforms on the traditional news media landscape?

3. What is ‘fake news’? (Provide some specific examples)

4. What is ‘public interest journalism’? What is its significance in relation to the media’s darker side, which includes ‘fake news’, propaganda, censorship and voyeurism?
Complete the following activity on a separate sheet of paper if more space is required.

**News consumers now have ready access to an almost infinite range of choices of news content and can access news across multiple sources.**


Consider the above statement, and in the space below explain how Australians are now accessing their news. Provide examples of the major sources of both traditional and digital news media and quote statistics from the latest available surveys.

---

The internet distribution of news has raised some challenges for traditional business models. However, it has also created significant benefits for publishers and journalists.


Consider the above statement, and in the space below explain how the news media landscape has changed in Australia. Provide examples of both the challenges and benefits of producing and selling digital news for publishers and journalists.

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While poor journalism, such as factual mistakes and misleading headlines, is the most commonly experienced type of fake news, news consumers are most worried about politically and commercially fabricated stories. Those who experience fake news also have lower trust in news generally.

Amanda Jones/University of Canberra, *Digital news report: fake news has Aussies concerned.*

Consider the above statement, and in the space below provide two (2) recent examples in the Australian media of ‘fake news’ reports and explain how they might impact on the trust levels of news consumers.

---
Complete the following activity on a separate sheet of paper if more space is required.

Divide your class into three (3) groups of two or more people and choose one of the following topics. In the space below, list the key points for your group to present before your class. After each of the three groups has presented their unique topic, discuss your ideas with the other groups.

**Australians are very concerned about fake news and feel it is the job of news organisations, rather than Google or Facebook, to fix it.**

*Digital News Report: Australia 2018*

Consider the above quotation and discuss the following issues in relation to news online: trust, quality of journalism, paying for news, and political misinformation. How can ‘fake news’ be dealt with by news media producers, online platforms (such as Google and Facebook) and consumers?

**False news spread “farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly” than true news on Twitter between 2006 and 2017, a team of US scientists has found.**

Ariel Bogle/ABC Science, ‘Fake news’ spreads faster online than the truth, finds biggest-ever study

How and why are false news and rumours spread so easily? What are the roles and motivations of bots, malicious actors and novelty sharers?

**Young people are consuming lots of news online. However, many are not critiquing this news or they don’t know how to. The implications of this are not necessarily self-evident or immediate, but they may be very wide-reaching by influencing young people’s capacity to participate in society as well-informed citizens.**

Tanya Notley and Michael Dezuanni, Most young Australians can’t identify fake news online.

What are the main types of ‘fake news’? What strategies can young people use to detect ‘fake news’? In your discussion, refer to established techniques such as the CRAAP Test for verifying sources and fact checking tools for veracity.
Complete the following activity on a separate sheet of paper if more space is required.

"Mainstream news does not deal or focus on issues that affect young people or [it’s] portrayed in a way that is not easily understood or accessible to kids my age.” – Boy, 16, NSW

Tanya Notley, Michael Dezuanni, Hua Flora Zhong and Saffron Howden, *News and Australian Children: How Young People Access, Perceive and are Affected by the News*

1. How are young Australians (children and adolescents) currently accessing, perceiving and being affected by the news? How can they be assisted in navigating and understanding news and information online?

Australians are feeling more disillusioned about the role of the media than almost any other country, according to an annual global survey.

Josh Gordon/RMIT ABC Fact Check, *Australians are losing their trust in ‘the media’, but not in journalism*

2. Australians are losing their trust in ‘the media’ but not in journalism. What can be done to restore trust in news media?

“Data that might be shared with one party for a perceived particular purpose can very quickly end up being used in another sector for an entirely different purpose.”

Andy Kollmorgen/CHOICE, *Facebook, Google and your personal data*

3. The businesses that use our personal data have not put a high enough priority on preventing its misuse or giving us control of it. Research and discuss.
Complete the following activity on a separate sheet of paper if more space is required.

The internet is full of misinformation, designed to look like credible news and to encourage viral spreading online. Seemingly credible news items, upon closer examination, may turn out to be deliberate misinformation, contain false headlines, be solely intended to stimulate social media sharing, or is actually satirical or comedy news.

Refer to the criteria and evaluation techniques columns of the Source Checker Activity Guide (pp. 34-35). Choose a recent report from an online news source which you believe to be dubious or fake. Design an A4-sized table (or larger) based on the criteria of the CRAAP Test to check the sources and factual details of the news item. Present your findings to the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Currency</strong></td>
<td>Date of publication</td>
<td>The article was published on 2023-01-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>The topic is relevant to current events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authority</strong></td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>The source is a known news outlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>The facts are verifiable and true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>The intent is to inform, not to persuade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Complete the following multiple choice questionnaire by circling or matching your preferred responses. The answers are at the end of the next page.

1. **Which of the following are traditional forms of news media?** (Circle all that apply)
   a. Blogs
   b. Print newspapers
   c. Broadcast television
   d. Websites
   e. Broadcast radio
   f. Social media
   g. Print magazines

2. **The CRAAP Test is an acronym for which of the following criteria?**
   a. Creativity, Reaction, Advertising, Author, Posting
   b. Currency, Reaction, Authorship, Adwords, Plan
   c. Currency, Relevance, Accuracy, Authority, Purpose
   d. Content, Reaction, Accuracy, Analysis, Participation
   e. Communication, Review, Author, Advertising, Participation

3. **Which of the following descriptions apply to a definition of ‘public interest journalism’?** (Circle all that apply)
   a. The antithesis of fake news, propaganda, censorship and voyeurism.
   b. Its outcomes can expose corruption, launch royal commissions, remove improper politicians from office and jail wrongdoers.
   c. Features entertaining stories that are interesting to the public, often involving celebrities.
   d. Refers to a journalist pursuing information that the public has a right to know.
   e. Is often equated with watchdog or investigative reporting.

4. **Which of the following are used to access digital news?** (Circle all that apply)
   a. Smartphones
   b. Laptops
   c. Internet-enabled television
   d. Websites
   e. Broadsheet newspapers
   f. Social networking sites
   g. Tablets
   h. Voice-activated digital assistants
   i. Podcasts

5. **Which of the following are **not** social networking sites?** (Circle all that apply)
   a. LinkedIn
   b. Facebook
   c. Twitter
   d. Google
   e. Tumblr
   f. Snapchat
   g. Bing
6. Which of the following descriptions apply to features of ‘fake news’? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Uses false or misleading headlines as clickbait.
   b. Relies on rumour and entertainment value to promote spreading by followers.
   c. Reveals information that the public has a right to know.
   d. Is used for political propaganda purposes.
   e. Reveals alternative facts which are actually true.
   f. Often equated with watchdog or investigative reporting.
   g. Targets groups of readers who want to believe it is true.

7. Respond to the following statements by circling either ‘True’ or ‘False’:
   a. Over 50% of Australian adults have subscribed to video services such as Netflix and Stan. True / False
   b. Although Australians spend a majority of their viewing time watching broadcast television, this share continues to decrease due to growing demand by younger people for online content. True / False
   c. In Australia, access to online news has overtaken traditional offline sources such as newspapers, radio and television. True / False
   d. There has been a steady increase in Australians accessing online news behind paywalls, resulting in the majority of Australians paying for news. True / False
   e. In Australia, trust in media organisations is high and perceptions of bias are low. True / False
   f. Most young Australians are currently able to identify ‘fake news’. True / False

MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS
1 = b, c, e, g ; 2 = c ; 3 = a, b, d, e ; 4 = a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i ; 5 = d, g ; 6 = a, b, d, g ; 7 = a = T, b = T, c = T, d = F, e = F.
Although Australians spend a majority of their viewing time watching broadcast television, this share continues to decrease, driven by younger Australians’ demand for online content, including online subscriptions and user-generated content (ACMA, Latest communications report findings). (p.2)

Most Australian adults (89%) accessed the internet in the six months to May 2018 – 74% went online three or more times a day. The majority (90%) of Australian adults are using more than one device to go online – with four in 10 using five or more services. Use of the internet via a mobile phone was the most common, while access via a home internet connection remained steady (ibid). (p.3)

Age is a strong predictor of technology use, with older Australians (aged 65 and over) more likely to use traditional communication services, while younger age groups increasingly use over-the-top services (OTT). Messaging and calling apps were used by the majority of Australians aged 18-24 (63%), compared to 29% of those aged 45 and over (ibid). (p.3)

There are clear generational differences in engagement with online video content. Time spent viewing online content (catch-up TV, subscription and free video content) decreased proportionally to age – increasingly, younger Australians aged 18-24 are spending most of their total viewing time watching online content (ibid). (p.4)

60% of Australians use the internet more than 5 times a day. The average number of internet-enabled devices owned is 3.5. Smartphone penetration is 87% which compares with 76% for laptops, 55% for tablets and 52% for desktop computers (Sensis, Yellow Social Media Report 2018). (p.9)

Internet distribution has provided new opportunities for domestic and international players to compete with the long-established oligopoly in Australian news media markets, and to compete alongside more traditional formats (e.g. print, television and radio) (Queensland University of Technology, Digital Platforms and Australian News Media: Report). (p.13)

While poor journalism, such as factual mistakes and misleading headlines, is the most commonly experienced type of fake news (40%), news consumers are most worried about politically and commercially fabricated stories (67%). Those who experience fake news also have lower trust in news generally (University of Canberra, Digital news report: fake news has Aussies concerned). (p.14)

There has been a steady increase in paying for online news, from 10% in 2016 to 20% in 2018. However, the majority of Australians still don’t and won’t pay for news (ibid). (p.14)

For the first time, Australians’ use of online news has surpassed traditional offline news sources. At the same time, the majority of Australians still rely on television news, which is the most trusted source of news. Australians are also accessing more news more often. The number of people accessing it more than once a day has risen 15% since 2016 (News & Media Research Centre, Digital news in Australia). (p.15)

Media literacy is about having the skills to access, understand, question, critically analyse, evaluate and create media, like television, DVDs, apps, photographs, print and online content (Raising Children Network, Media literacy: making sense of media messages). (p.18)

Children and teenagers who are media literate are more aware of the way media content is made, where it comes from and what its purpose is. They’re more confident about voicing their opinions about media. They’re also safer online and less likely to be manipulated by the media (ibid). (p.18)

Social media is popular for getting news. But young people are not confident about spotting fake news online (Crinkling News, Western Sydney University and Queensland University of Technology, News and Australian Children: How Young People Access, Perceive and are Affected by the News). (p.20)

False news spreads “farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly” than true news on Twitter between 2006 and 2017, a team of US scientists has found (ABC News, Fake news spreads faster online than the truth, finds biggest-ever study). (p.23)

If you go to the fake news site, malware downloads onto the computer or device you’re using. It then searches for sensitive information such as your bank login details and passwords, or it might exploit your device for other malicious purposes, such as a botnet attack (Stay Smart Online, Fake news spreads more than just lies). (p.25)

Types of fake news include: deliberate misinformation; false headlines; social media sharing; and satire (The Spinney Press, How to detect fake news). (p.33)

Overall, the public continues to trust traditional news media sources more than online and alternative news sources; globally, TV remains the most trusted news source, followed by newspapers, radio, newspaper websites and social media (Centre for Media Transition, Public Trust in Journalism: key trends). (p.39)

It’s no secret that Google and Facebook’s business model is selling your data to advertisers. The question is whether we’re giving away more than we get in return (CHOICE, Facebook, Google and your personal data). (p.43)

From the sensationalist, fear-mongering ‘yellow journalism’ of the penny press in the late 1800s, to the media propaganda arising out of the world wars of the 20th century, there is nothing new about fake news and disinformation. What is unprecedented, however, is its speed and global spread in the digital sphere (Carson, A, The Conversation, ‘Explainer: what is public interest journalism?’). (p.48)

Inaccurate reporting, whether deliberately fake or just sloppy, has consequences for news media’s capacity to serve a well-informed citizenry that underpins a healthy democracy (ibid). (p.48)
Advertorial
A word combining the terms ‘advertisement’ and ‘editorial’. Advertorials are ads that have been written to look like articles; sometimes published alongside real articles but should be labelled as advertising.

Alternative facts
A phrase used by counsellor to US President Donald Trump Kellyanne Conway during a press interview, in which she defended White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer’s false statement about the inflated attendance numbers of Trump’s presidential inauguration.

Angle
The approach a journalist takes to a news story; the central point of the story, around which the journalist organises the information and research.

Analysis
Examination and interpretation of information gathered by a reporter; generally done by correspondents who are very experienced in reporting on a specific topic. Analysis in reporting is different to opinion.

Attribution
When a journalist states the sources of information in a story, e.g. quotes from interviews, statistics or reports.

Balance
Fair and objective representation of all perspectives of an issue, so the audience can make up their own mind.

Beat-up
When a news story’s importance is exaggerated and blown out of proportion, and sometimes inaccurate; sometimes done intentionally to make a story more attractive.

Bias
Lack of balance in the selection of events and stories that are reported and how they are covered.

Clickbait
Web-based content using sensational headlines/images to get people to click on the link and generate traffic. Often, the news story is false, or does not match the headline.

CRAAP Test
A test used to check the reliability of sources across academic disciplines. CRAAP is an acronym for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose.

Fact
The basic building block of journalism. A fact in news stories is something that can be proven to be true by objective journalistic methods. Fact is different to opinion.

Fake news
When incorrect or false information is deliberately sent out, disguised as credible news; rampant on social media, can be difficult to spot, and shared by those who believe the often sensationalist headline.

Five Ws (+ H)
The six questions that a journalist should answer when reporting on a story. What happened? Who was involved?
Where did it happen? When did it happen? Why did it happen? And how? Often, not all six can be answered at once, leading to ongoing coverage of an event or issue.

Hard news
Factual reporting on important events/story developments; does not include opinion, analysis, human interest stories or areas of reporting such as reviews, lifestyle or humour.

Hoax image
Digitally altered photograph presented as an authentic image, usually accompanying a ‘fake news’ article; often broadly spread on news sites and via social media due to novelty and/or comic or satirical appeal.

Media literacy
The ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

Opinion
In the context of news, opinion refers to an individual’s own thoughts about an event or issue, which can’t be proven to be objectively true like a fact. Many journalists and public figures write opinion pieces stating their point of view on an issue; not the same as analysis, which is based on a person’s expertise in a factual area.

Propaganda
Information presented in a way that tries to influence public opinion about an issue. Propaganda is not balanced, as it tries to convince people to agree with its point of view, e.g. totalitarian governments use state media to spread propaganda about the good work they claim to have done for their citizens.

Public interest journalism
When journalists cover issues that they feel the public has a right to know about. These kinds of stories are often published by public media organisations.

Reporting
Gathering and communicating information for news stories. Reporting is done by journalists.

Retraction
When a news site unpublishes a story, or a newspaper prints a statement taking back a story; usually due to mistakes in the original story or a challenge to the facts reported.

Satire
Use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise people’s stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

Source
The origin of a journalist’s information, e.g. a person, document, report or social media post. A journalist will usually attribute a source’s information.

Sponsored content
Story which is explicitly sponsored by a company in order to advertise; differs to an advertorial, as the story may not be about the company’s products – instead, the company benefits from being named at the top of a popular story.
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