

AUSTRALIAN MEDIA LITERACY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



AUSTRALIAN MEDIA LITERACY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

11:00AM—15:30PM
TUESDAY APRIL 13 2021 (AEST)

REGISTER HERE FOR
[Sydney](#) • [Canberra](#) • [Brisbane](#)

Our lives are now so saturated with information and media that the ability to use media effectively is a pre-requisite for full participation in society.

Media literacy refers to people's ability to critically engage with information and media in all aspects of their life. At the heart of this critical engagement is the ability to critique media and information as well as media technologies and business models. This includes knowing the way these produce, challenge and subvert relationships, representations and power.

We conducted the first national media literacy survey of adult Australians and found that although most people believe that media literacy is critical to many aspects of their life, many have no access to support when they need it.

This symposium includes synchronous events in Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane. Each event features a panel discussion with researchers and practitioners about the state of media literacy in Australia. Key findings from our research will follow the panel discussion.

We hope that these events will help to build momentum and support collaboration to ensure that media literacy research can inform policy and practice at a time when media literacy is now on the Australia policy agenda.

The event speakers will discuss how media literacy research can help to address key challenges we face in Australian society including the widespread online circulation of misinformation, social and racial inequality, and a lack of trust in our democratic systems.

SYMPOSIUM ORGANISERS



Dr Tanya Notley, School of Humanities and Communication Arts and Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University



Professor Michael Dezuanni, Digital Media Research Center (DMRC), Queensland University of Technology



Professor Sora Park, News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

10.40 – 10.55	Guests arrive to be seated.
11.00 – 12.00	International Keynote Speaker, Associate Professor Paul Mihailidis (Live streamed in Sydney/Canberra/Brisbane) 'Civic Media Literacies: Pursuing equitable and just civic futures in a time of rampant media cynicism'
12.00 – 12.30	LUNCH (to be provided at each site)
12.30 – 2.00	Panel events in Sydney/Canberra/Brisbane Sydney: 'Using media literacy to confront the impact of disinformation on our democracy' Canberra: 'News, misinformation and media literacy' Brisbane: 'Media Literacy's many tasks – promoting critical engagement with digital platforms'
2:00 – 2.30	AFTERNOON TEA
2:30 – 3.30	'Media Literacy in Australia' Report Launch Sydney: Opening remarks by Dr Andy Marks, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Western Sydney University Canberra: Opening remarks by Professor Leigh Sullivan, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research & Innovation, University of Canberra Brisbane: Opening remarks by Professor Patrik Wikstrom, Director of the Digital Media Research Centre, QUT

PROGRAM DETAIL

11.00 – 12.00

INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE:

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PAUL MIHAILIDIS,
EMERSON COLLEGE, UNITED STATES

CIVIC MEDIA LITERACIES:

PURSUING EQUITABLE AND JUST CIVIC FUTURES IN A TIME
OF RAMPANT MEDIA CYNICISM

Around the world today, societies are increasingly navigating fractured media ecosystems. As we increasingly rely on information and communication from platforms that conflate fact with fiction, and prioritise sensational information over that which is credible and complex, we struggle with increased distrust of and cynicism towards our public institutions, not least of all media institutions. As media technologies continue to develop at ever rapid paces, providing people with the skills and dispositions to navigate these environments is a civic and democratic necessity. It is also a public health priority. This keynote talk will introduce civic media literacies as a pathway forward to help people better navigate abundant information ecosystems and advocate for community priorities. Civic media literacies, I argue, also provide a frame within which to prioritise equity and social justice initiatives with and through media infrastructures.

Paul Mihailidis is an associate professor of civic media and journalism and assistant dean in the school of communication at Emerson College in Boston, MA, where he teaches media literacy, civic media, and community activism. He is founding program director of the *MA in Media Design*, Senior Fellow of the Emerson Engagement Lab, and faculty chair and director of the Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change. His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *the Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *CNN*, and others. Paul has published 7 books and over 50 articles on the intersection of media literacy, civic media and participation in digital culture. His most recent book, *Civic Media Literacies: Re-Imagining Human Connection in an Age of Digital Abundance* (Routledge 2018) explores the ways in which media literacy interventions can prioritise civic impact. Paul has won numerous faculty awards at Emerson College and the Researcher of the Year award by the National Association of Media Literacy Education. He sits on numerous Editorial Boards, and the advisory board for *iCivics* and the *Engagement Lab*.

12.30 – 2.00

Panel events in Sydney/Canberra/Brisbane

SYDNEY EVENT:

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY PARAMATTA CITY CAMPUS

PANEL:

USING MEDIA LITERACY TO CONFRONT THE IMPACT OF
DISINFORMATION ON OUR DEMOCRACY

In Australia, the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated that mis- and disinformation contribute to racist actions and behaviours, illegal and dangerous activities and to poor health decisions. More broadly, mis- and disinformation diminish the ability of citizens to make timely and informed decisions, while exacerbating mistrust in news media and public institutions. Around the world a range of strategic responses have been proposed to address the problem of mis- and disinformation and one of these responses focuses on increasing people's media literacy. However, too little is known about how effective media literacy is in preparing people to recognise, avoid and counter mis- and disinformation across a range of topics, contexts, and sociotechnical environments. This panel will share their own research and experiences to inform a public discussion about the role media literacy interventions can play in confronting the problem of mis- and disinformation.

Facilitator: Professor James Avanatarkis

- The online ecosystem that supports misinformation ([Ariel Bogle](#), The Australian Strategic Policy Institute's Cyber Center)
- Understanding misinformation and deconstructing racism around COVID-19 in Australian opinion media (Deliana Iacoban, [All Together Now](#))
- Digital threats to democracy (Chris Cooper, [Reset Australia](#))
- Is Wikipedia the antidote to disinformation? ([Heather Ford](#), University of Technology Sydney)

PROGRAM DETAIL

12.30 – 2.00

Panel events in Sydney/Canberra/Brisbane

CANBERRA EVENT:
THEATRETTE, NATIONAL FILM & SOUND ARCHIVE

PANEL:
NEWS, MISINFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY

Much of the attention in relation to media literacy education in Australia has been focused on school-aged children. The media literacy needs of adults and disadvantaged sections of the community have only just started to generate interest in academia and policy discourse. However, educating the general public is not an easy task. This panel will discuss their experiences in media literacy education and research to consider the role of social infrastructures in educating the public in media literacy, focusing primarily on interventions in misinformation. The panel will explore how a networked approach can tackle the issue of media literacy among adults, where collaboration is encouraged, and existing networks are utilised to deliver successful community-based programs.

Opening address: Nancy Evers, Acting CEO National Film and Sound Archives

Facilitator: Professor Kerry McCalum, Director, News & Media Research Centre

- Pulling Together – The need for an Australian Media & Information Literacy Network (Caroline Fisher, University of Canberra)
- How teaching journalism skills can boost media literacy (Saffron Howden)
- AAP FactCheck – Fighting fakes and misinformation (Peter Bodkin, Australian Associated Press)
- Fact and fiction – trust us, we know the difference (Sue McKerracher, Australian Library and Information Association)

12.30 – 2.00

Panel events in Sydney/Canberra/Brisbane

BRISBANE EVENT:
QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY – KELVIN GROVE CAMPUS

PANEL:
MEDIA LITERACY'S MANY TASKS – PROMOTING CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH DIGITAL PLATFORMS.

In recent times, media literacy education has been called upon to respond to a range of complex social and cultural problems. In the aftermath of the storming of the United States Capitol, some media literacy advocates called for an expansion of media literacy in schools and in the community, while others cautioned that media literacy cannot operate in isolation from digital platforms and policy reform. In Australia, disinformation has been prolific in response to disasters like COVID-19, and the Summer 2019/2020 bushfires. Meanwhile, the availability of an ever increasing number of digital platforms continually seems to expand media literacy's focus and the need for educators to expand their knowledge and skill set – whether this be about new platforms like Tik Tok, or dominant visual platforms like Instagram. This panel will canvass Media Literacy education's many tasks and the panellists will provide insights about their own research and experiences to inform a public discussion about the role of media literacy interventions in these complex times.

Facilitator: Professor Michael Dezuanni, Program Leader, Digital Inclusion and Participation, Digital Media Research Centre, QUT.

- Media literacy after dark: how hyperpartisans pervert critical engagement (Axel Bruns, Queensland University of Technology)
- The state of play of media literacy education in Australian Schools (Moneth Montemayor, Australians Teachers of Media)
- Using critical frameworks for thinking about Tik Tok (Aleesha Rodriguez)
- First Draft's vaccine misinformation Hub and Dashboard for media literacy (Anne Kruger, First Draft News)

PROGRAM DETAIL

2.30 – 3.30

'MEDIA LITERACY IN AUSTRALIA' REPORT LAUNCH

In November and December 2020 we surveyed a sample of 3,510 adult Australians to understand the different types of media they use, the value they place on different media activities, their confidence in their own media abilities and their access to media literacy support. The findings show that most Australians use several different types of media each day, they believe a diverse range of media activities are important in their life, but their confidence in their own media abilities is unexpectedly low. We also find that far too many Australians don't have access to any media literacy support when they need it. The findings demonstrate that if we accept that media is integral to all aspects of our lives, far more needs to be done to address the needs of groups who are the least confident about their media abilities and who have access to the least support. The findings also show that increasing media literacy can yield direct benefits for increasing people's civic engagement. This presentation of our key findings will be delivered by Professor Sora Park in Canberra, Dr Tanya Notley in Sydney and Professor Michael Dezuanni in Brisbane.

THE SPEAKERS



James Avnatarkis, Pro Vice Chancellor
(Research and Graduate Studies) at
Western Sydney University

James Arvanitakis is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Graduate Studies) at Western Sydney University. James is internationally recognised for his innovative teaching style and was the recipient of the Prime Minister's University Teacher of the Year Award in 2012 and an Eminent Researcher Award from the Australia India Education Council in 2015. His research areas include citizenship, resilience, piracy and the future of universities. James has authored over 100 articles in his latest book is an edited collection titled *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in India and Australia* (2019) published by Routledge.



Peter Bodkin, editor of AAP FactCheck,
Australian Associated Press

Peter Bodkin is an editor and journalist specialising in misinformation and disinformation. As editor of AAP FactCheck, which is part of Australia's national newswire, he oversees the fact-checking of claims made on social media and by public figures. Peter previously worked with social media news agency Storyful and in Ireland as investigations editor at TheJournal.ie among other roles.

THE SPEAKERS



Ariel Bogle, journalist and analyst at [The Australian Strategic Policy Institute's Cyber Center](#)

Ariel Bogle is an analyst with ASPI's International Cyber Policy Centre. Most recently, she was a technology reporter with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), where she covered online disinformation, surveillance and internet culture. She was also technology editor at The Conversation and associate editor with Future Tense, a partnership of Slate, New America and Arizona State University. Throughout 2020, [Ariel Bogle](#) reported on COVID-19-related misinformation for the ABC, examining how this content was affecting Australians, how and why it was being spread and how the social media platforms were responding.



Chris Cooper, Executive Director of [Reset Australia](#)

Chris Cooper is the Executive Director of Reset Australia, a policy think and advocacy organisation working to counter digital threats to democracy. Part of a global initiative, Reset Australia builds support within parliament, civil society and the public for better regulation of harms caused by the big tech business model. Trained as a cultural anthropologist Chris leverages culture and storytelling to shape awareness and behaviour to enable systems change and drive progress. Over the past ten years, he has co-designed, built and implemented issue-driven programs and campaigns across numerous continents and issue areas.



Axel Bruns, Professor, [Digital Media Research Centre](#), QUT

Axel Bruns is a Professor in the Digital Media Research Centre, and a Chief Investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society. His books include *Are Filter Bubbles Real?* (2019) and *Gatewatching and News Curation: Journalism, Social Media, and the Public Sphere* (2018).



Nancy Eyers, Acting CEO at the National Film and Sound Archive

Nancy Eyers is Acting CEO at the National Film and Sound Archive. Nancy has over 20 years experience working in Executive, Finance, Change and Risk Management positions, operating at Director level for 12 years. Nancy's experience spans a number of different industries, geographies and skillsets. During her most recent roles, which include the Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff role at the NFSA, leading the Business Improvement Functions at the NFSA and the Australian National University and working with PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting, Nancy has focussed on organisation transformation (cultural change and restructure). Her passion is for people; to lead them effectively through organisational restructures and transformational change programs.

THE SPEAKERS



Caroline Fisher, Deputy Director of the [News and Media Research Centre](#), [University of Canberra](#)

Dr Caroline Fisher is an Associate Professor of Communication, and Deputy Director of the News and Media Research Centre, in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra. Caroline is co-author of the Digital News Report: Australia, the discipline leader of journalism, and her project leader of a report commissioned by the Department of Communication and the Arts in 2019 about the state of media literacy for adult Australians.



Saffron Howden, author, journalist and media literacy advocate

Saffron Howden is an author, journalist and media literacy advocate. She co-wrote *Kid Reporter: The Secret to Breaking News* (2021) and was founder and editor of *Crinkling News*, the national newspaper for young Australians. Saffron was Google News Initiative's first Teaching Fellow for Australia & NZ and worked with Facebook Asia Pacific to develop a digital citizenship curriculum. She has worked as a reporter for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Northern Star* and Australian Associated Press (AAP).



Heather Ford, Head of Discipline for [Digital and Social Media](#) in the School of Communications at the University of Technology, University of Technology Sydney

Heather Ford is an Associate Professor and Head of Discipline for [Digital and Social Media](#) in the School of Communications at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). She is an academic writing, teaching and researching issues relating to digital politics and governance. With a background as an activist for internet rights and intellectual property reform, she now focuses on implications for the increasing deployment of algorithms and automation to organise and construct knowledge about events, people, places and things.



Deliana Iacaban, Project Manager, [All Together Now](#)

Deliana Iacaban is the Project Manager for All Together Now's Media Monitoring Program. She oversees the research into racialised opinion media, co-designing solutions with communities impacted by racism and the publishing of yearly research reports. Deliana is interested in intersectional work that leads to social inclusion and equity. All Together Now's 2020 report "[Social Commentary, Racism and COVID-19](#)" deconstructs the techniques used in racist rhetoric to provide opportunities for media audiences, workers and representatives to understand racism at a deeper level.

THE SPEAKERS



Anne Kruger, Director,
[First Draft - APAC](#)

Anne Kruger is First Draft APAC Director. She launched First Draft in Sydney in 2019 and soon expanded operations into the Asia Pacific (APAC) region. The team's work is published daily in First Draft's newly launched [Vaccine Insights Hub](#) as well as in First Draft's daily newsletters. Anne is co-chief investigator for DIGI's draft Disinformation Code at the Centre for Media Transition at UTS. She has a PhD in social media verification education. Anne previously worked as a news anchor, editor and journalist with news organisations including CNN and ABC Australia.



Sue McKerracher, CEO of the [Australian Library and Information Association \(ALIA\)](#)

Sue McKerracher has been a media, marketing and advocacy professional for 35 years, working in the UK and Australia. Trained as a journalist, Sue has worked with libraries for more than 15 years and has been CEO of the Australian Library and Information Association for eight. In her current role, Sue works with other stakeholders to pursue a broad range of interests, including freedom of access to information, digital inclusion and media literacy.



Kerry McCallum, Director of the News & Media
Research Centre, University of Canberra

Kerry McCallum is Director of the News & Media Research Centre at the University of Canberra. Her research specialises in the relationships between changing media and Australian social policy. Kerry is co-author of 'The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia' (Intellect, 2017) and currently leads the ARC-funded project 'Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission'. She previously worked in federal parliament in political and media advisory roles.



Paul Mihailidis, Associate Professor,
[Emerson College](#)

Paul Mihailidis is an associate professor of civic media and journalism and assistant dean in the school of communication at Emerson College in Boston, MA, where he teaches media literacy, civic media, and community activism. Paul has published 7 books and over 50 articles on the intersection of media literacy, civic media and participation in digital culture. His most recent book, *Civic Media Literacies: Re-Imagining Human Connection in an Age of Digital Abundance* (Routledge 2018) explores the ways in which media literacy interventions can prioritise civic impact.

THE SPEAKERS



Moneth Montemayor, [Australian Teachers of Media, Queensland](#)

Moneth Montemayor is the President of Queensland chapter of Australian Teachers of Media. She is currently co-chair of the Australian Teachers of Media and serves as a board member of the National Advocates for Arts Education, representing Media Education. Moneth is an experienced Media Literacy educator and has collaborated with SBS Learn, Australian Children's Television Foundation and Matchbox Pictures on several education projects. She is passionate about how media literacy and content creation can enable minority groups to celebrate and share their stories and advocate for their rights to a broad audience.



Aleesha Rodriguez, PhD student, [Digital Media Research Centre, QUT](#)

Aleesha Rodriguez is a PhD candidate in the Digital Media Research Centre at Queensland University of Technology. Her PhD explores how Tesla's (big) battery (what was, the world's biggest lithium-ion battery) mediates new kinds of sociotechnical relations about Australia's energy future. Aleesha's broader research agenda examines public communication on digital platforms to explore how people and technology mutually and dynamically, shape each other.

EVENT ORGANISERS



Dr Tanya Notley, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University

Tanya Notley is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and a member of the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. Tanya is currently a researcher on a number of media literacy and digital inclusion projects and she has published widely on these topics. She has extensive industry experience working in the areas of media literacy, human rights and social justice and she continues to collaborate with organisations working to address these needs. Tanya is a co-founder and the Deputy Chair of the [Australian Media Literacy Alliance \(AMLA\)](#).

EVENT ORGANISERS



Professor Michael Dezuanni, Digital Media
Research Center (DMRC), Queensland
University of Technology

Michael Dezuanni is Professor in the School of Communication and a Program Leader in the Digital Media Research Centre at Queensland University of Technology. He is a Chief Investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child. Michael undertakes research about digital media, literacies and learning in home, school and community contexts. He has been a chief investigator on six ARC Linkage projects with a focus on digital literacy and learning at school, the use of digital games in the classroom, digital inclusion in low income families and in regional and rural Australia, and the use of screen content in formal and informal learning.



Professor Sora Park, News and Media
Research Centre, University of Canberra

Sora Park is a Professor of Communication and Associate Dean of Research at the Faculty of Arts & Design, University of Canberra. She was former Director of the News & Media Research Centre. She is the project leader of the *Digital News Report Australia*, and author of *Digital Capital* (2017, Palgrave). She has published widely on the impact of digital technology on audiences, with a special focus on digital and social exclusion and the distribution of opportunities and privileges in society. She has extensive international experience in policy research and consultancy.

EVENT LOCATIONS

SYDNEY

Level 9,
Parramatta City Campus
Western Sydney University
169 Macquarie St, Parramatta
NSW 2150

CANBERRA

Theatrette,
National Film & Sound Archive
McCoy Cct,
Acton ACT 2601

BRISBANE

Level 5, X Block
Queensland University of
Technology
88 Musk Avenue
Kelvin Grove, 4059

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

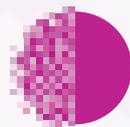
*This event is part of the Media Literacy in Australia research project, which is administered by Western Sydney University.
Initial support for this research project was made possible through a grant from Facebook received by the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), a partner on the project.*

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



**Digital Media
Research Centre**

**NEWS & MEDIA
RESEARCH CENTRE**



AMLA

AUSTRALIAN
MEDIA
LITERACY
ALLIANCE

NAMLE National
Association
for Media
Literacy
Education

