

# Centre for Media Transition



Hi there

## Creating a generation of media savvy users



On 24 July, the Alannah & Madeline Foundation (AMF) launched a first of its kind Media Literacy Lab for school students aged 12-16. First Draft's Australia bureau is thrilled to have provided the lab with definitions and resources so this vital work can be conducted in Australian schools.

Our digital natives are savvy, but we still need to teach them the critical thinking skills required for technology. And in an age of information disorder, these skills have never been more urgent.

The AMF wrote this special summary of the innovative lab for our CMT newsletter subscribers:

*A ground-breaking education program will teach young Australians essential media literacy concepts so they learn to recognise online harm, manipulation, misinformation, and the many faces of fear and hate speech and how to stand up to it.*

*[Recent research](#) shows that although many teens regularly consume news, they don't trust news media outlets and don't challenge misinformation.*

*The research also reveals that two-thirds of teens aged 13–16 use social media to get news and close to half of young people pay very little attention — or no attention — to the source of news stories they find online.*

National children's charity, the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, supported by a \$US1 million investment from [Google.org](#), has worked with industry experts, academics and schools to develop Media Literacy Lab, a first-of-its-kind resource for school students aged 12–16 to equip them with the critical thinking skills they need to effectively navigate their online environment.

Read on [here](#).



**Anne Kruger**  
First Draft APAC Director

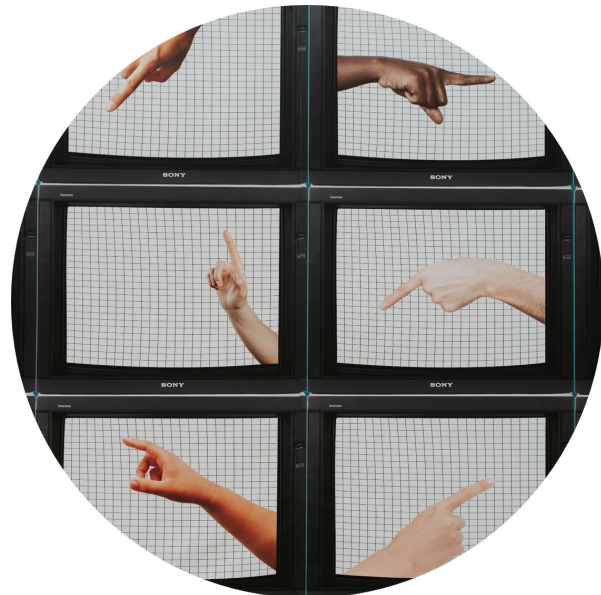
## Defamation reform — Attorneys-General deliver

This week saw the end of Stage 1 of much needed reform to defamation laws.

The Council of Attorneys-General [announced](#) it had reached national agreement on a series of amendments to the Model Defamation Provisions.

(Defamation is a bit like classification and censorship where there's an agreement to implement largely uniform laws, only with defamation there's no federal legislation, just state and territory Acts).

The law has long been subject to serious criticisms, including its impact on public interest journalism.



Among the most significant changes are:

- a 'serious harm' test that must be satisfied at the outset
- a 'single publication rule' that means the one-year limitation period within which a defamation action can be brought starts from the date that material is first uploaded, instead of each time it is downloaded
- an effective cap on general damages for non-economic loss, with aggravated damages to be awarded separately
- a new 'public interest' defence designed for journalism.

These [amendments](#) bring Australia into line with comparable overseas jurisdictions. An interesting late stage development was the switch in the public interest defence from the New Zealand approach, based on ‘responsible publication’ to the UK approach, so the defendant must show they ‘reasonably believed that the publication of the matter was in the public interest’.

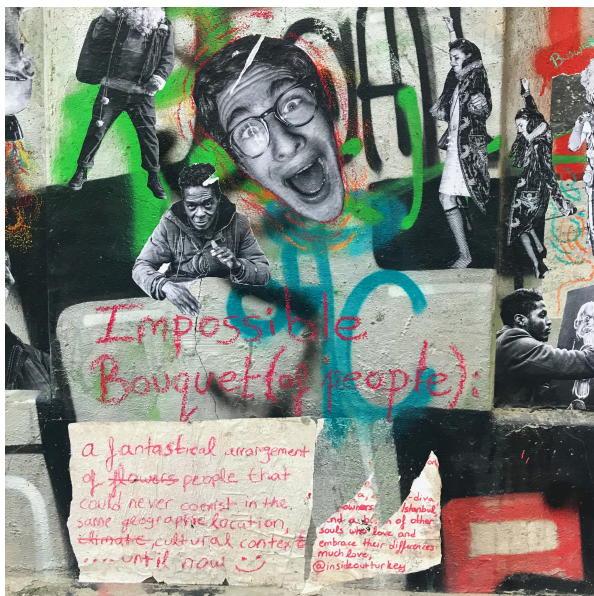
We’re hoping the introduction of the single publication rule has some impact of the problems we described in our [Trends in Digital Defamation report](#), where the incidence of public figures bringing defamation actions against media defendants is being overshadowed by local disputes between neighbours, co-workers and others within the community.

We’re now working on an update to the 2018 report. We’ll also contribute to Stage 2 of the defamation review, when CAG moves on to consider the responsibilities and liabilities of digital platforms. Not an easy task!



**Derek Wilding**  
CMT Co-Director

## Chat or channel? What role do our comments play?



Love them or hate them, comments at the bottom of our news stories have become a familiar sight when reading online news. In Australia, these comments are only on select stories on select sites and remain at the periphery of our news and discourse. However, could these open forums fill some growing gaps in our media ecosystem?

Discussion threads beneath our stories can indeed yield diverse media, expanding the people and views represented while also

diversifying the ideas and interpretations we see through our news media – but this doesn’t happen by accident. The government, and the news organisations themselves have crucial influence over whether news commenting can achieve these goals.

In South Korea popular news websites elevate the visibility of comments and organise

them to surface diverse content while sidelining the worst offenders. By doing so comments have become a force to be reckoned with politically, and simultaneously the businesses have leveraged the resulting reader engagement to increase their sustainability and the subject of significant [discussion](#).

Is this a model Australia could and should replicate? Australia has stricter media laws and has even ruled that news organisations can be [liable](#) for the defamation, which adds a clear disincentive for news organisations thinking about hosting comments. However, as we watch our newspapers increasingly closing shop and the journalism we use to deliberate in our democracy get further and further marginalised, it may be time to look outside the box (or over the sea).

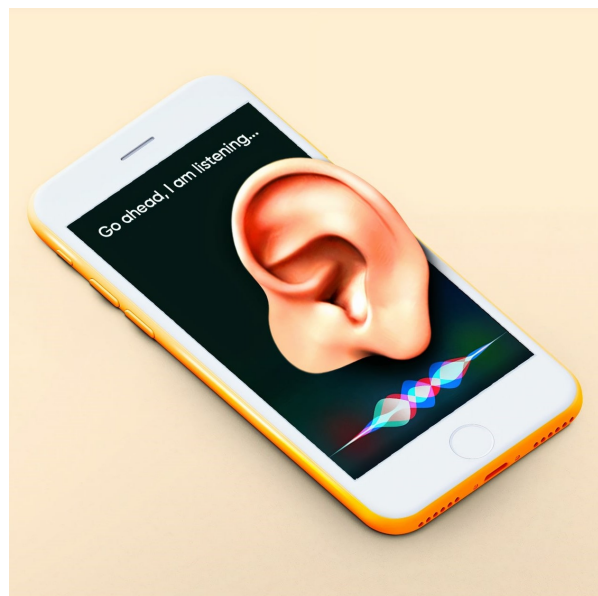
For more on this discussion, read on [here](#) and if you have a comment, please drop me a line: [Timothy.B.Koskie@student.uts.edu.au](mailto:Timothy.B.Koskie@student.uts.edu.au)



**Tim Koskie**  
CMT HDR Student

## The ACCC Googles 'consent'

On Monday, my colleagues and I were holding a focus group on Zoom when one of the participants posted a message in the chat. It said simply, 'interesting article I found', and was followed by a second message with a link to a [news story](#) in the *Coffs Coast Advocate*. Titled, 'Google sued for misleading Aussie users', the story detailed how the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (the ACCC) is taking legal action against Google for allegedly misleading Aussies by collecting their data without consent. It was a big story, and it turned out to be widely reported (as discussed in this week's 2SER [Fourth estate show](#)).



The funny thing is, the focus group was all about consent and privacy. With RMIT media scholar James Meese, I was talking to people about their experience of consenting to how their data is used, particularly on their smartphones. We were asking about pop-ups, about terms and conditions, and about the role of the law. And suddenly we had a breaking story to add into the discussion. What did the participants think? Did they feel

they'd been misled by Google, in line with the ACCC's claims? Did they think they were misled on other occasions when it came to data?

The participants gave various answers. Almost uniformly, however, they said that consent in its current form has serious problems. And yet they want it to work. And they also want the law and government bodies such as the ACCC to play a key role in enforcing their rights and ensuring fairness. What was particularly exciting is that they also gave various inventive suggestions about how consent could be improved in this context.

As several participants said, many companies could easily improve their consent processes to make them fairer. It's almost as if they don't want to. The research findings will be published soon.



**Sacha Molitorisz**  
Postdoctoral Fellow

## Fostering progress through a pandemic



The Centre for Media Transition together with the [Australian Baha'i Community](#) is proud to be presenting the second in a series of conversations which seeks to examine the relationship between social cohesion and the role of the media.

The 'Reimagining the Australian Media Landscape' series launched on the eve of the first anniversary of the Christchurch attacks. The shock impelled by these attacks heightened our consciousness and offered an opening to examine the agency





and social responsibility of the media, particularly in how it can help to forge divides or fuel prejudice. A key insight generated from our first round table was how instructive times of crisis can be when examining the role of media in society.

Focusing on media responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, the second dialogue will seek to draw out practical insights on the positive values, principles and narratives arising from the media during the pandemic.

Journalists, media executives and those who work closely with the media are invited to join this ongoing learning space which seeks to facilitate a sincere dialogue about the role

of the media in society, its agency and civic responsibility, as a public good in light of the current pandemic.

## Event Details

-  Date: Wednesday 19 August 2020
-  Time: 12Noon - 1pm
-  Where: Online via Zoom
-  RSVP: CMT@uts.edu.au



**Chrisanthi Giotis**  
Postdoctoral Fellow

## STOP PRESS — Draft mandatory bargaining code for digital platforms released

The much anticipated draft of the mandatory bargaining code between news businesses and Google and Facebook was announced by the ACCC this morning.



The draft of the code, which is intended to address bargaining power imbalance, and ensure news business are being paid fairly for the value of their journalism, includes options for businesses to bargain directly with the platforms or to bargain collectively, with the idea that this latter option could be taken up by regional or community mastheads.

The draft proposes that there would be a formal three month negotiation and mediation process and if agreement can not be reached by the end of that time then an independent arbitrator would choose which of the two parties' final offer is the most reasonable.

More information is available on the ACCC [website](#). Written submissions are due by 5pm on 28 August 2020.

The CMT will be commenting further in future newsletter editions.



## Have a great weekend!

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*The Centre for Media Transition and UTS acknowledges the Gadigal and Guring-gai people of the Eora Nation upon whose ancestral lands our university now stands. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these places.*



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