

Centre for Media Transition



Hi there

Trust me?



Trust, reliability and responsibility are key themes this week. Monica kicks off with a timely interview with Laura Tingle. The Chief Political Correspondent for the ABC's 7.30 expands on her recent [description](#) of 'the too-comfortable bipartisan consensus around AUKUS' and her comments on [Insiders](#) about the 'Red Alert' [series](#) in the SMH/Age and ensuing debate, including responses to former PM Paul Keating's appearance at the National Press Club.

Here at CMT we too have been discussing the reporting by the SMH and the Age, including the choices made by reporters Peter Hartcher and Matthew Knot on the contributors to the series, and Nine's decisions around the series title and graphics that accompany the text. We acknowledge the expertise of the writers and the public interest in the policy issues underpinning the reports. But we find it hard to accept the [claims](#) by SMH editor Bevan Shields that *Media Watch* was out of line in its [critique](#) of the reports and that it should apologise to Nine. Nine has a massive platform for launching its own take on the risks of complacency when it comes to Australia's position in our region and beyond. The critique from *Media Watch* was informed, relevant and timely. And it used a civil tone, not the 'savage mouth' that Tingle ascribes to Keating and that Shields rightly objects to.

The importance of exposure to a range of views is also highlighted in Chris Hall's piece on what he characterises as '[platform journalism](#)' and how youtubers are offering alternative sources of journalism on the war in Ukraine.

Platform journalism is the subject of Chris's PhD and – shifting back from Ukraine to Australia – a couple of weeks ago he noticed a very interesting Friendlyjordies video. The

video features a leaked recording of comments by John Barrilaro where the former NSW Deputy Premier himself deploys the 'Pork Barilaro' nickname. His complaint about the use of this name in Friendlyjordies videos posted on YouTube formed part of his successful defamation action. As [Media Watch](#) noted this week, news outlets have almost completely bypassed the story on account of legal obstacles. These include the prohibition on recording a 'private conversation' and – at least in New South Wales, where there is no equivalent of the public interest defence in Victoria – the additional prohibition on the communication or publication of the private conversation.

While still on the topic of reliable sources of news and comment, Sacha looks into the launch of NewsGuard in Australia, which aims to provide users with guidance on authoritative news sources. And finally, Ayesha rounds out our discussion of trust when she relates the observations of Indonesian journalists who spoke of the problems with 'hoax' news and the highjacking of original journalism in Indonesia.



Derek Wilding
CMT Co-Director

LaTingle in a Tango



It's a strange circumstance when it's a former Prime Minister who needs to lead the news media to do its job - critically analyse the most significant change in Australia's defence policy in decades and the expenditure of some \$370b on new and used submarines. Before Paul Keating appeared at the National Press Club (he was in Sydney and the journalist victims of his wrath were largely in Canberra), the Australian news media was high fiving the Albanese government for bedding down Scott Morrison's AUKUS deal.

The [glow](#) of an appearance in San Diego with the US President Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak didn't last too long for Prime Minister Albanese. Paul Keating saw to that, with his scathing assessment of AUKUS as the worst deal in Australian history - one that showed aggression towards our biggest trading partner and was dumping Australia back into the belly of its colonial past, with a reliance on UK technology.

As political reporter after political reporter bowled up to the microphone to question the former PM about his assessment of AUKUS and his very unflattering scorecard on the foreign minister and the defence minister, Paul Keating knocked them down as though he were in a bowling alley and the journalists were the pinballs.

As the ABC's chief political reporter Laura Tingle, who chaired the Press Club appearance, says Mr Keating's attacks on individual journalists might come as a surprise for some of the younger members of the Canberra gallery, but not those who've been around for a few decades. And his invective might have been offensive, but he has managed to do what journalists had failed to do – critically discuss AUKUS.



Monica Attard
CMT Co-Director

Turning to YouTube on Ukraine



The war in Ukraine has been widely reported in media and endlessly discussed on social media. [Fake news](#) has spread, and an [information war](#) is being waged. News media organisations should be a natural place to go for timely, reliable, fact-based reporting on the war. However, interest in traditional news content is [in decline](#). Over two thirds of Australians actively [avoid news](#) to some extent, and only 41% [trust news media](#). In contrast, YouTube is increasingly [used for news](#), especially for younger people. On YouTube,

[Denys Davydov](#), [Artur Rehi](#), and [The Russian Dude](#), have amassed large followings from their almost daily reports of the war, producing [platform journalism](#). Reports are factual with sources given for fact claims. Sources include statements from Ukrainian and Russian officials, reports from [government](#) and [open-source analysts](#), as well as [geo-located](#)

images and footage uploaded by Russian and Ukrainian combatants, often shared on [Telegram](#) or [TikTok](#).

Support for Ukraine is clear with these citizen journalism youtubers which mainly appears in things such as framing Russian military success as bad, and Ukrainian success as good. They also occasionally mobilise their audiences to raise funds for Ukrainian charitable causes. They don't try and hide it from their audience. Arguably this openness builds trust; evidence for this is in the comment sections of their videos. Every now and then they speculate on future military actions and next stages of the war, though this is not unlike what is produced from more mainstream journalists where [speculations on how the war will end](#) are common, and [claims are made about which side is winning](#).

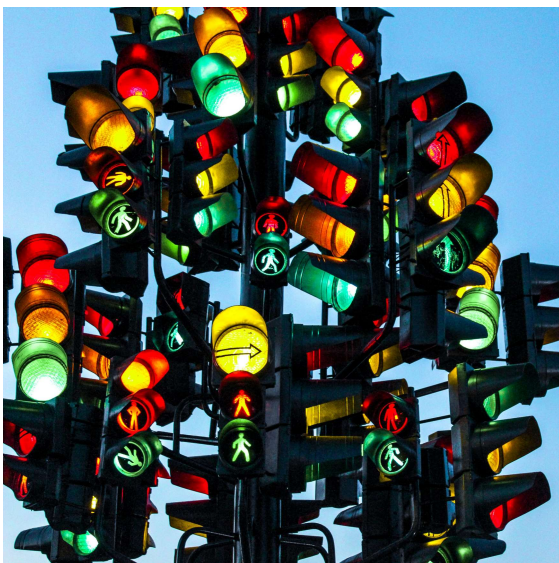
Youtubers are adaptable and have great creative control to adjust and keep their audiences engaged. This can include becoming more journalistic. Artur Rehi recently made such an adaptation, producing a [feature story](#) in which he accompanied an aid convoy from Estonia to Ukraine, where he also interviewed several Ukrainian soldiers who'd recently seen action at the front. While [mainstream](#) news media may be unpopular for large sections of society, people still want to be informed. Many see citizen journalists on YouTube as their trusted sources of news.

For a more in-depth discussion of this topic [click here](#).



Chris Hall
UTS HDR Student

The news ratings are in



In a digital age, as the bounds between fact and fiction blur, it's hard to know which news you can trust. If only we had an independent, impartial body to assess the trustworthiness of news outlets. But wait, we do! It's called NewsGuard, and [it arrived in Australia last week](#).

NewsGuard rates news sites based on credibility and transparency. It delivers these ratings through a browser extension you can buy for \$7 per month – although Microsoft Edge users will get it for free.

Here at the CMT, we first noted NewsGuard in our report, [Trust and News Media in Australia](#). That was in 2018, the year the service launched in the US. As we wrote, NewsGuard 'is building a database of news sources whose trustworthiness has been assessed with a traffic light rating system: green means trustworthy; red means

untrustworthy; amber means mixed.’ Since then, the method has been refined. Instead of traffic light colours, it uses human experts to dole out ‘Reliability Ratings’ to mastheads and networks in the shape of a score out of 100. Results can range from the ringing endorsement of a perfect hundred to the public shaming of a complete zero. Following its US launch, NewsGuard has expanded to the UK, Italy, France and Germany, then Austria and Canada. And now Australia and New Zealand.

‘Since 2018, NewsGuard has protected internet users, brands, and democracies from the evolving threats of misinformation,’ said NewsGuard co-CEO Gordon Crovitz. ‘Now, our team has expanded to Australia and New Zealand ... to support quality journalism and systemically defund sources of harmful misinformation.’

Still, there has been controversy. In 2018, NewsGuard awarded the Daily Mail a red (bad) rating. As [The Guardian gleefully reported](#), NewsGuard’s browser extension warned users: ‘Proceed with caution: this website generally fails to maintain basic standards of accuracy and accountability.’ But in early 2019 NewsGuard [changed its assessment of the Daily Mail](#) to a green (good) rating, distancing itself from earlier claims about deceptive headlines and false content. And just this month, US Republican [Matt Gaetz called for](#) a Congress investigation, given that NewsGuard’s ratings can drive ad revenue from one news company to another.

In Australia, the only three major publications [to receive a perfect score](#) are the ABC, the Guardian and News Corp’s The Australian. NewsGuard found the Oz, for example, refrained from repeatedly publishing false content, clearly labelled advertising, and declared who was in charge at the paper, including names and contact information. SBS scored 95, Crikey scored 87.5, The Sydney Morning Herald scored 80 and The Saturday Paper scored a meagre 75. For some, these scores will surprise. Is this an exercise in identifying trustworthiness? Or in process and box-ticking?

The short-lived news ranking system Nuzzelrank is a cautionary tale. Also launched in 2018, it ranked TechCrunch above CNN and The New Yorker for credibility. This raised alarms, particularly since it was [TechCrunch that had published](#) the ‘exclusive’ about Nuzzelrank’s launch. As [Will Oremus wrote](#) in early 2019, ‘The trust industry is quietly taking shape. Should we trust it?’ What we need now, clearly, is a ratings system to assess the credibility of ratings systems.



Sacha Molitorisz
Senior Lecturer, UTS Law

Indonesian journalists at CMT



The Centre hosted a delegation of Indonesian journalists last week, which was facilitated by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The visit focused on discussing the growing problem of disinformation in Indonesia, and how media organisations are tackling it.

During the meeting, the delegates expressed concern that many people were falling for fake news, which is commonly referred to as 'hoax' in Indonesia. Some journalists shared how various media organisations in Indonesia were attempting to fight disinformation, such as by publishing a comic-style booklet, to increase media literacy among younger Indonesians. These small initiatives, they said, were helping to an extent in educating the public about how to identify and avoid hoax aka fake news.

Another issue discussed was the trend among local online content creators, who stole news and other content from Indonesian news sites and republished them on their sites and social media platforms using logos of various media organisations, which made it difficult for the public to differentiate it from legitimate sources of news. The journalists also pointed out that most of them were concerned that big tech companies and search engines, such as Google, were not doing enough to catch these fake content creators.

Finally, the Indonesian journalists expressed interest in learning how media organisations in Australia were countering mis- and disinformation, and the rise in the number of citizen journalists calling themselves journalists, when they are not.

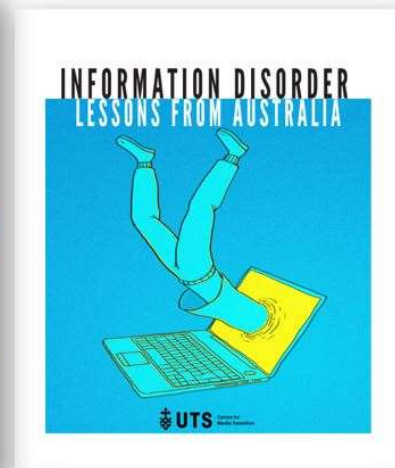
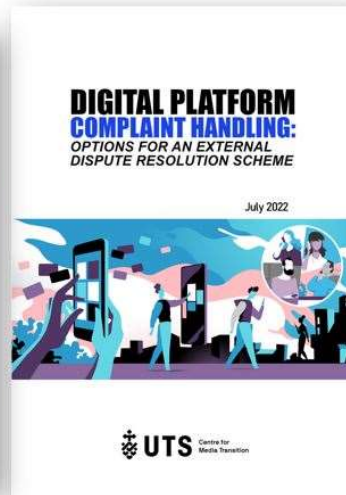
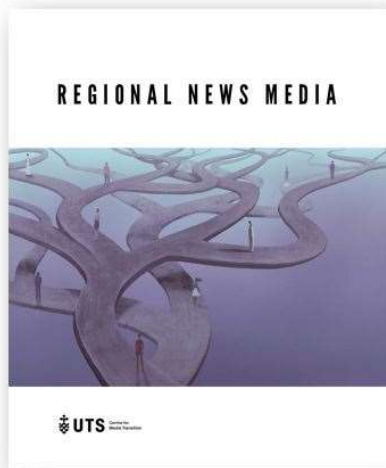
After recent visits by Malaysian and Filipino journalists, this was the third visit by an international journalists' delegation at the CMT over the last month.

Ayesha Jehangir



CMT Postdoctoral Fellow

Please visit our [website](#) for more information about the Centre .



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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