



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Institute for Culture
and Society

Cultivating digital capacities

The project

Phase One: The Digital Capacity of Australian Families

Digital connectivity has become critical to living well in contemporary society. Mobile and networked technologies are becoming more common, enabling individuals and communities to maximise digital benefits – but accessing these benefits depends on how well individuals' and communities' digital capacities are fostered. These new capacities are central to the economic, political and cultural life of Australians and must be nurtured from early childhood. They encompass the opportunities, skills, attitudes and infrastructures to participate fully, to identify and respond to risks, and to develop resilience in digital life.

'Internationally, key decision makers are grappling with the challenge of measuring individuals' and communities' capacities to leverage digital media to positive effect', Associate Professor Third says. 'By providing a holistic measure of digital capacity, the tool we are developing will enable better informed decisions about future digital infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, research, and strategies for enhancing digital capacity and support across communities'.

The project aims to measure digital capacity across four domains: economic, ecological, political, and cultural. It will identify enabling practices that help people connect using digital means, as well as barriers to participation in the digital world. The development of the Index will draw upon qualitative case studies of Australian families from diverse backgrounds, along with a quantitative survey with 2,000 participants. The data collected will be used to identify areas for improvement and to guide future intervention strategies, as well as inform a second phase of the Cultivating Digital Capacities initiative which will build upon the first phase to develop a Digital Capacities Index so that it can be applied in the global context.

A Digital Capacities Index will be a valuable tool for policy makers and key community stakeholders in enhancing Australia's adaptability for a rapidly changing and diverse digital future, and in enhancing how we align and diverge with comparable regions globally.

FUNDING

Set at \$75,804

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The Institute for Culture and Society researches transformations in culture and society in the context of contemporary global change.

It champions collaborative engaged research in the humanities and social sciences for a globalising digital age, and is the largest dedicated research concentration of its kind in Australia.

The Institute encourages collaboration from Australian and international institutions, and students interested in postgraduate studies.

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