



Measuring the digital capacities of everyday Australians

In collaboration with Google Australia, a research team* led by Associate Professor Amanda Third from the Institute for Culture and Society has been awarded a Partnerships Program grant to create a Digital Capacities Index. The tool will be piloted with Australian families to measure their ability to maximise the benefits of connectivity.

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. 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.

Project Title: Digital Capacity Index: Measuring the Digital Capacity of Australian Families

Funding has been set at: \$75,804

Contact Details: a.third@westernsydney.edu.au;
<http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics>

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***Research team:**

Associate Professor Amanda Third, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Professor Paul James, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Dr Philippa Collin, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Dr Liam Magee, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Dr Tanya Notley, **School of Humanities and Communication Arts**

Dr Justine Humphry, **School of Humanities and Communication Arts, and the Institute for Culture and Society**

Dr Louise Crabtree, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Dr Emma Kearney, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Ms Delphine Bellerose, **Institute for Culture and Society**

Ms Samantha Yorke, **Google Australia**

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