



Addressing Misinformation with Media Literacy through Cultural Institutions

Misinformation can harm democratic processes, social cohesion and public health outcomes. This project contributes to international efforts to address this change, by creating new knowledge about the role media literacy can play. This knowledge will be used by partner organisations to produce high-quality and diverse opportunities to improve adult media literacy in Australia.

Until now, there has been limited research into how Australian citizens respond to potentially harmful misinformation encountered online, or how media literacy interventions can be designed to assist them.

Media literacy is the ability to apply critical thinking to digital and non-digital media through analysis, evaluation and reflection.

Increasing people's capacity for critical thinking in relation to their media use increases their ability to detect and avoid misinformation.

However, Australian research shows that most adult Australians don't believe they can identify misinformation online and there is an uneven distribution of media abilities across different sociodemographic groups.

While a range of approaches are needed to address misinformation, media literacy is recognised as an essential approach to any comprehensive national strategy for combatting misinformation.

This project brings together leading Australian media literacy researchers with four national public cultural institutions to address this research gap and respond to the growing challenge to Australian civic society.

MIXED-METHOD ACTIVITIES

- **National Survey.** The project will investigate the ability of adults to identify and respond to misinformation online using a large activity-based survey, simulating real-life examples. Analysis of respondents socioeconomic and cultural data will help identify the needs and practices of different population groups.
- **Diary Study.** To further uncover the diverse experiences adults have with misinformation online, the project will invite selected survey respondents to participate in a week-long qualitative diary study using a mobile app. Data will be analysed using an innovative thematic combined text and visual analysis coding approach.
- **Collaborative Model & Toolkit.** The project will establish an evidence-based, consistent approach to the production of adult media literacy initiatives, using survey and diary study findings, and addressing previously identified barriers to success. Partners will be supported to develop media literacy interventions using shared goals, processes, practices, agreements and evaluation frameworks.
- **Learning Design Events.** Bi-annual immersive partner workshops will be held to aid research advancement and integration and bolster the collaborative planning, implementation and evaluation of media literacy initiatives. Events will uniquely combine Evidence-Informed and Connected Learning Design Approaches.
- **Digital Handbook.** 'Using Media Literacy to Combat Misinformation in Australia' will be developed to share project research and adaptable resources to help government agencies, civil society organisations, community groups and broader public cultural institutions address the problem of misinformation.

RESEARCHERS



Associate Professor Tanya Notley
Western Sydney University



Professor Michael Dezuanni
Queensland University of
Technology



Professor Sora Park
University of Canberra



Dr T.J. Thomson
RMIT University

PARTNERS



**Australian Broadcasting
Corporation (ABC Education)**



**Museum of Australian
Democracy (MoAD)**



**National Film and Sound Archive
of Australia (NFSA)**



**Australian Library and
Information Association (ALIA)**

FUNDING

This research project is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme (project LP220100208).

PERIOD

2023 - 2026

CONTACT

Associate Professor Tanya Notley
E: t.notley@westernsydney.edu.au

CONNECT WITH US

Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

P: +61 2 9685 9600
E: ics@westernsydney.edu.au
W: westernsydney.edu.au/ics
F: facebook.com/westsyduics
X: twitter.com/westsyduics