

I believe that granting ACMA extensive powers to decide what information may be published may have serious implications for freedom of speech, media independence, and democratic values

Misinformation and disinformation are immense challenges in today's digital age. However, it is crucial to approach these issues in a manner that upholds the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability. Granting ACMA excessive powers without adequate checks and balances could potentially lead to overreach and the stifling of legitimate expression, diverse opinions, and public discourse.

Empowering ACMA with the authority to determine what qualifies as misinformation and disinformation raises concerns about potential biases and subjectivity. The interpretation of these terms can be subjective and vary depending on individual perspectives, cultural contexts, and political ideologies. ACMA's expanded powers might inadvertently lead to the suppression of certain viewpoints or the propagation of an official narrative, undermining the pluralistic nature of our democracy.

An increase in regulatory powers for ACMA could create a dampening effect on media freedom and investigative journalism. Journalists and media organisations play a crucial role in exposing truths, holding power to account, and providing necessary scrutiny. Granting ACMA broad powers to combat misinformation and disinformation could discourage critical reporting and investigative journalism out of fear of potential regulatory action, thereby compromising the media's ability to fulfill its democratic function.

The expansion of ACMA's powers raises concerns about the potential for excessive censorship. The line between misinformation and disinformation on one side and legitimate dissent or alternative narratives on the other can be blurry. The risk of inadvertently suppressing valid information and dissenting voices is a real possibility when regulatory bodies possess unchecked powers. It is essential to strike a balance between combating misinformation and preserving the right to freedom of expression.

It would be more appropriate to focus on promoting media literacy, critical thinking, and digital literacy education. By investing in public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives, individuals can be empowered to navigate the digital landscape, identify misinformation, and make informed decisions. Encouraging media outlets to adhere to robust journalistic standards and facilitating independent fact-checking organizations can also contribute to addressing the issue at its root.