

21/07/23

Submission regarding proposed New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation

To whom it may concern ,

It is my opinion that freedom of expression is crucial for the pursuit of truth and understanding. By allowing diverse viewpoints and ideas to be expressed, societies can engage in open debates, critical thinking, and the exchange of knowledge, leading to progress and enlightenment.

Many religious and spiritual traditions uphold the concept of free will, wherein humans are granted the ability to make choices and decisions independently. Freedom of expression is seen as an extension of this free will, allowing individuals to communicate and share their thoughts and beliefs openly.

I believe that every human being possesses inherent dignity and worth, being created in the image of a higher power. As a result, I argue that individuals should have the right to freely express their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs without undue interference from others, including governments.

My view is that freedom of expression is a safeguard against governments pushing through Laws and acts that may not be in the best interest of its citizens. Allowing citizens to express dissent and criticize those in power can help prevent the concentration of authority and protect against abuse of power.

It's essential to recognize that the idea of freedom of expression as a "God-given right" may not be universally accepted, as different cultures, religions, and philosophical perspectives may interpret the concept differently. In secular societies, the justification for freedom of expression is often based on principles of human rights, democratic values, and the pursuit of a just and open society. Regardless of the rationale, many modern societies consider freedom of expression as a fundamental and essential right for promoting individual flourishing and societal progress.

Privacy and Individual Rights: Privacy is a fundamental human right recognized by various international conventions and declarations. The right to privacy ensures that individuals have control over their personal information, including their social media data. Overreaching government access to such data can infringe upon individuals' privacy rights, leading to potential misuse of personal information.

Knowing that their social media activity is being monitored by the government may lead individuals to self-censor their opinions and thoughts, limiting their freedom of expression. This chilling effect can hinder open and honest discussions, which are essential for a free and democratic society.

Surveillance Abuse: Extensive access to social media data by the government can create opportunities for abuse of power. Surveillance tools and information could be used for political purposes, discrimination, or to target individuals based on their beliefs, race, religion, or other characteristics.

Innovation and Creativity: A free and open internet, where individuals feel secure to explore and express themselves, fosters innovation and creativity. If people fear government intrusion, they might refrain from experimenting with new ideas or using social media platforms as a means of creative expression.

Misinterpretation and Context Collapse: Social media data can be easily taken out of context, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of individuals' intentions and actions. When governments access and interpret personal data without proper context, it can lead to unfair consequences and unwarranted suspicion.

Erosion of Trust: Overreaching government surveillance erodes the trust between citizens and their government. When people feel that their private communications are constantly monitored, it undermines the mutual trust necessary for a healthy and functioning society.

Protection Against Cybersecurity Threats: Paradoxically, governments collecting and storing massive amounts of social media data can create a potential target for hackers and cybercriminals. Centralized data repositories can be vulnerable to security breaches, exposing citizens to greater risks of identity theft and privacy violations.

In summary I am opposed to any new amendments to the Communications Legislation.

Your sincerely ,

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