

Submission from M.Scott on draft 'Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill'.

I've attempted to read through all this and admit I didn't understand it all. However I'll comment on what struck me particularly.

I understand there are serious concerns around the use of bots and AI. I welcome restrictions and deterrents for their use.

I am not happy about restrictions on misinformation and even disinformation, which is more deliberately deceptive. I realize these cause major headaches, and in some cases harm. However, do we not already have sufficient laws to cover deliberate deception, inciting violence, and undermining our democratic processes?? From what I understand, Australia, and NSW in particular, is one of the most over legislated places in the world.

The thing is, who decides what is misinformation? It sounds like determining what is truth, which is tricky. And someone will always disagree.

Ok, so Trump told people to kill corona virus by drinking or injecting bleach. People died and it was very sad. But you'll always have fools and gullible idiots. They think they know better than the experts.

Yes, people believed Trump, and stormed Capitol Hill. But they were angry already and looking for any excuse to express that anger violently. These people are determined not to trust democratically elected governance, or evidence- based science. You'll never change that. It's fear-based thinking, a deeply emotional response that will not cede to reason. All you're doing is placing more restrictions on the rest of us, for no good reason.

What you need to do something about is the algorithms these companies use that push bad information to the top of all the search platforms. I don't understand the inner workings, but even I notice that bad information sites show up first and it can be hard to find the sites with good sources (those with research data and scientific explanation, or from government sources).

I'd like to see sources of information made mandatory for any posts regarding health information or information about what the government is doing, or legal issues. That way, it's clear where the person posting got their info. We can make up our own minds from there.

In the end, though,we're adults. We are responsible for our choices and actions, not some website or TikTok post. We need to teach everyone how to think critically and evaluate sources of information. And government needs to stop trying to control what we think.

I am against this bill as I think it leans too far towards Big Brother, Chinese Communist Party style monitoring of opinion and freedom to choose your sources of information, and your consequences. Freedom to think what you like. There are some things we just have to live with if we value freedom. This is one of them.

Michelle Scott