

New ACMA powers to combat misinformation and disinformation

A very bad idea

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The proposal to give ACMA - an un-elected bureaucracy - power to “combat” misinformation and disinformation is an affront to the representative government we “claim” to have in Australia. It is a very bad idea based on the following principles.

1. Who claims what is Information (known actionable truth), Disinformation, Misinformation, and if I may add the newly coined term Malinformation (which is information that may be factually correct, but counter to the desired narrative)?
 - a. Is it “We, the people”? - that would imply that there is no role for ACMA to play in “policing” the factual correctness of information
 - b. Is it “the government”? - if the government is a representation of the people, then would such a government not equally have a correct/incorrect interpretation of the same fact as the people?
 - c. Is it “the science”? - while we are all expected to pray at the altar of scientism, isn't it the primary task of each scientist to *disprove* current accepted theories, and devise new theories that better fit the observed data?
 - d. Is it an “independent fact-checker”? - Independent of whom or what? And what makes these “fact-checkers” better qualified to determine something to be factually correct or false?
 - e. Is it an NGO, or a United Nations appointed organisation (global ministry of truth perhaps)? - Australia would sign up to a “consensus reality” that is not in the interest of Australia and its people, which one could and should argue, is treasonous
2. For Australia to be or remain competitive on the global scale, innovation is essential. A free marketplace of ideas is required to foster innovation
 - a. Innovation is a novel interpretation of data-points, uncovering a new insight, and as such breaking with the orthodoxy. The greatest inventors were called “wrong”, “dillusional”, or “heretics at their time of invention. Until, of course, they were proven right
 - i. Einstein’s theory of General Relativity was ridiculed by many, until

- the light-bending qualities of gravity could be measured
- ii. The “heliocentric” solar-system was a theory lost during the “dark ages”, until Copernicus provided the mathematical model for a heliocentric solar system based on circular orbits of the planets around the sun. This obviously was misinformation - as Kepler calculated - the orbits are elliptical. The at the time all powerful Roman Inquisition had the powers that the ACMA is seeking - and they declared it Heresy. Galileo found out the hard way for spreading such disinformation about the nature of his observations, which were inline with the heliocentric solar system as mathematically described by Kepler
- b. In order to find the right answer, we must be allowed to explore all avenues, including those leading to a dead-end
 - i. Edison did not fail to invent a working light bulb for 1000 times, it was an invention in 1000 steps
 - ii. The 3M post-it note was the result of a failed invention of a super-adhesive
3. We the people have a right to be wrong
- a. When we are wrong, we suffer the consequences. In cases where common sense was not entirely eliminated, it is not fatal to be wrong. But there are consequences, and these consequences are the corrective factor on misinformation
 - b. When an un-elected body serving as the arbiter of truth is wrong, there are consequences for the people, but not for the un-elected body, and therefore the corrective measure does not function
 - c. When an un-elected body as arbiter of truth is so wrong (this is very likely to occur - we need not go further into the past than “safe and effective”) that it causes grave injury or death, what is to stop such body from declaring the data supporting their “mistake” as misinformation? What is true today, may be deemed false tomorrow. Welcome to totalitarian utopia

The question is not how to combat misinformation and disinformation - the questions are:

1. Is it possible to combat misinformation and disinformation? - this would assume that all data is known, all facts are uncovered, and new theories cannot emerge unless those sanctioned to do so have cleared these theories with a body like, or

contracted by, the ACMA. The answer is clearly “no, we cannot - because we cannot not know all facts”

2. Is it desirable to combat misinformation and disinformation? - yes. The only weapon against misinformation and disinformation is more information. Unfettered access to all relevant data, where people can freely publish their theories, which in turn other people are free to debate, debunk, improve, or accept

As a second reference to George Orwell - “Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present, controls the past”. By handing over the power to ACMA to act on perceived misinformation and disinformation, we would cede power over the past. The only logical conclusion I can take in this matter is that it is not so much about “protecting the public from falsehoods” but “protecting the truth from reaching the public”. This must not be done, and we will never consent to this.

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