

## How are you teaching students about the changing news media landscape in Australia?

Recent research tells us that many young Australians regularly consume news and care about its future, half of young Australians pay little or no attention to the source of news stories found online and only one-third agree that they can tell 'fake news' from real news.

The separation of local and international news content in Australia, from familiar search and newsfeed locations to *Google News Showcase* and *Facebook News*, will impact most Australian students.

Now is an ideal time to teach students where they can find credible news content, and the underlying core media literacy concepts of how digital platforms and news media outlets operate and how their actions with media influences our democracy.

Media literacy education is pivotal to supporting students understand the changing face of digital news media consumption. Media literacy needs to be taught across all subject areas - from the sciences, to English, to humanities - so teachers can help develop students' abilities to better navigate and thrive in the current media environment, especially amid an 'infodemic' of mis- and disinformation.

### Unpacking the issue with eSmart Media Literacy Lab

Fundamental to our democracy is the right to access information, including credible news media content. Why not consider facilitating a gamified module lesson from Media Literacy Lab:

#### Module 5 – Media and Democracy

Join MLL characters, Kate, Pop & Steve, in a learning journey where they combat their nemesis Politician Daniel Jenkins as he tries to use all the media at his disposal to increase the voting age to 21 and deny young people a voice in their democracy.

Students will learn:

- To examine the power interplay between media organisations, government, and associated impact on our democracy
- To see beyond social media snippets and delve deeper into understanding and informing themselves on political issues
- To identify where bias exists across traditional and news media and consider the impact of decisions like the recent weeklong #FacebookNewsBan.

**To register for Media Literacy Lab, go to [medialiteracylab.org.au](https://medialiteracylab.org.au)  
To find out more email [medialitlab@amf.org.au](mailto:medialitlab@amf.org.au) or call 03 9697 0666**

### Bonus Material:

The following teaching content can be used to help **guide student discussion** or use as a **lesson starter**, on the topic of our **changing news media landscape**. This is brought to you by the eSmart Media Literacy Lab team.

## eSmart Media Literacy Lab – on a changing news media landscape



Consider the weeklong #FacebookNewsBan in February 2021:

- Local and international news content was **removed using AI technology**, which also detected Facebook pages such as the Bureau of Meteorology and Emergency Management Australia as news websites, causing them to appear wiped.
- This was Facebook's response to the Australian Government's News Media Bargaining Code ('*News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code*') which was passed by the House of Representatives the day before.
- The Code was developed in early 2020, in response to the ACCC (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission) Digital Platforms Inquiry 2019.
- This Inquiry found an **imbalance of bargaining power between Australian news media outlets and digital platforms**, particularly in advertising revenue.
- The ACCC consulted with digital platforms and news media outlets and decided the Code should be mandatory in law – **targeting Facebook and Google to pay media outlets for their publications**.
- There **were many public disagreements about legislation and the Code's content** from both digital platforms and news media outlets.
- Facebook argued Australian media outlets profit from use of their digital platform use, but the commercial value to Facebook "is virtually zero".

Ask, adapting where necessary, the following questions to your secondary students:

- Governments worldwide have watched Australia's changing digital media landscape, and shown concerns about 'big tech's' size, autonomy, and ability to control the flow of news media via algorithms. Is it the role of democracies to hold Facebook and Google to account (financially and ethically)?
- How was the #FacebookNewsBan resolved between the Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg MP and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg?
- Why should young Australians care about Google and Facebook decision to move news content away from their search product and newsfeed feature. respectively?
- Does the change in where and how we source credible news content have implications for Article 17 of the UN Convention of Rights of the Child – our **Right to Information**? If so, how?
- How has access to official public health information about the global pandemic and COVID-19 vaccine information changed in Australia, if at all?
- How significant is the News Media Bargaining Code's arbitration process, for commercial deals made between Facebook, Google and News Media Organisations?
- Will the News Media Bargaining Code or commercial deals struck going to help fund journalism? If so, how? [See complementary resource: [The Australian Newsroom Mapping Project](#)]
- What does the Code mean for media industry diversity in Australia? Is there a news organisation power imbalance and, if so, what does it mean for our democratic rights to fairly speak up and voice our opinions?

