

Data Science in the News

Webinar: What can we learn from George Floyd's death, and what role can data and data science play in this?

*Friday 2 October 2020
12pm - 1pm*

Moderator

- **Emeritus Professor Fred D'Agostino** - Vice-President (People and Culture), Queensland Academy of Arts and Science

Our panelists

- [Professor Peter Grete](#) - UNESCO Professor of Journalism, The University of Queensland
- [Associate Professor Margaret Simons](#) - award-winning freelance journalist and Honorary Principal Fellow at the Centre for Advancing Journalism, University of Melbourne
- [Professor Axel Bruns](#) - Professor, Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology
- **Sam Koslowski** - Founder of [The Daily Aus](#)

Panel topics

Associate Professor Margaret Simons: What is the future for the conventional media companies? Are they dinosaurs headed for extinction? Is there a role for traditional 'journalism' as we currently understand it? Or should we be radically re-thinking what we need and expect from journalists and the companies that hire them?

In this session, Margaret will talk about what remains valuable in traditional journalistic practice, and what needs to evolve and change, and what are the significant features of the digital news environment for quality journalism.

Professor Axel Bruns: Journalism and the pandemic.

In the context of the global and continuing COVID-19 pandemic, and of what the WHO has called the related infodemic of misinformation and disinformation that exploits the uncertainties associated with this worldwide crisis, quality journalism is more important than ever before. Yet it continues to struggle on a number of fronts: except for a handful of industry leaders, its financial situation remains precarious; in a multi-platform environment, quality news reporting is swamped by biased and sensationalist coverage; and traditional journalistic formats fail to cut through as a growing majority of users receive their news from online and social media. The pandemic has highlighted the limits of old models especially sharply: much of the time, policy responses are cast in party-political frames rather than with a focus on the science; conspiracy theories are reported (and amplified) as curiosities rather than debunked as threats to public health; other matters of societal importance all but disappeared from the news for the best part of 2020. The present crisis calls for both disinterested, objective coverage and partisan, advocacy journalism, but too often journalists have been

partisan when they should have been objective (thus undermining lockdowns and other public health measures), and disinterested when they should have engaged in advocacy (thereby lending material support to the dissemination of damaging conspiracy theories). But of course these decisions are not the journalists' alone: corporate imperatives and the need to maintain a symbiotic relationship with political and other sources also influence them.

Sam Koslowski: Is social-first news the shift needed to keep young people informed?

Sam is leading a journalistic experiment that provides a real-world example of the shape and character of a new brand of news. The Daily Aus was started in March 2017 by Sam, 25 and Zara, 23 in an attempt to get more of their friends to read the news. They knew that if they couldn't get them to download a news app, they would have to put the news in their way while they scrolled through social media. Their philosophy to news is very simple: the news is like a soap opera, so it means nothing if you don't understand the key players and events. TDA provides access to the objective, factual presentation of news – with the intention to arm millennials with the tools and information to begin their own deep dive into the news. Now read by over 37,000 millennials a day, TDA has tripled its audience in 2020.