

Hi there

A fretful wait



As we head into a long weekend, we wish you and your family a Happy Easter if you celebrate it, and a restful break if you don't.

Sadly, one family that won't be resting easy this week is that of Wall Street Journal Moscow correspondent, Evan Gershkovich. The 31-year-old American (born to Soviet parents) was in Yekaterinburg reporting on the Wagner Group, the paramilitary unit that appears to be competing with the Russian military for power and Putin's attention. Hours after he arrived in the city,

he disappeared. The next morning, news came that Gershkovich had been arrested by the Federal Security Bureau, the successor to the KGB, and was to be charged with espionage – spying on behalf of the United States.

It's a deeply chilling development. This is the first time Russia has brought a spy case against a foreign correspondent since the early days of the Cold War. And it's done so in circumstances where media freedom has been extinguished and independent Russian news media operates entirely in exile. There are a few foreign correspondents who remain in the Russian capital. Gershkovich's arrest would, no doubt, be making them feel very unsafe.

Of course, it's easy in circumstances such as this to take to social media with hashtags such as #JournalismIsNotACrime, which was born on Twitter when Peter Greste, then working for Al Jazeera International, was arrested and jailed in Egypt. But the intention to harm the US is far greater in this case. Russia believes it's at war with the US in Ukraine,

and it's anxious about the amount of weaponry flowing into Ukraine from the US and NATO. Taking a hostage serves many purposes. We'll be watching anxiously.

Also, in this week's newsletter, Hamish Boland-Rudder from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which calls CMT home in Sydney, has been looking at the cultural impact the Panama Papers has had since the investigation was first published 7 years ago. If you want to refresh your memory about this extraordinary cross-border journalism that left political and business leaders scurrying for lawyers and PR consultants, you can read the piece [here](#).

Derek updates you on the policy submissions CMT has been working on. We've contributed to discussions opened by the ACMA which is developing a new News Measurement Framework, and the ongoing and vital review of the Privacy Act.

Michael and Sacha have been burning the midnight oil at an international conference on Platform Governance Research where they talked about the News Media Bargaining Code, being replicated or adapted in other jurisdictions around the world. And finally, Sacha wants your [VOTE!](#)

Enjoy!



Monica Attard
CMT Co-Director

Journalism's lasting impact



This week marks seven years since the Panama Papers were first published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and more than 100 media partners all around the world.

For those of us who were in the thick of it, often it's a time when we remember the frantic initial aftermath — mass protests, high-profile resignations, dramatic police raids and more... or when we take stock of the changed laws or revenue recouped that would eventually follow.

But this year, we stumbled across a very different measure of the impact of the investigation — the cultural impact.

An ICIJ colleague of mine, perusing Spotify, went down a rabbit hole and discovered dozens of songs, and multiple albums and bands named in honour of the Panama Papers. And it's not just music; the Panama Papers have wound their way into books, films, cartoons, cocktail recipes, and even the name of a prize-winning racehorse here in Australia.

While it all seemed a bit of a novelty, when we reached out to a few of these Panama Papers-inspired bands, we realised that we had underestimated the more pervasive and abiding effect that these stories had on people... Two young musicians described the investigation as “formative” for them as highschoolers, and said it opened their minds to the “way the world works”. Other artists told us that they wanted their music to tap into audiences’ simmering discontent about widening inequality and unfairness in the world, as embodied and immediately understood by invoking the spectre of the Panama Papers.

Filmmaker Alex Winter — who made a documentary about the Panama Papers — told us that this infiltration into popular culture was not to be dismissed. “You don’t change ongoing, systemic corruption overnight with a handful of arrests, or even a lot of arrests,” he said. Instead, by seizing the imagination of ordinary people, citizens can be equipped with the patience and determination to fight the long fight for lasting change.



Hamish Boland-Rudder
ICIJ Online Editor

New journalism, new rules



In our last newsletter we mentioned the Friendlyjordies YouTube video covering a leaked recording of the former Deputy Premier of NSW, John Barilaro – also covered by [Media Watch](#). We also mentioned how Chris Hall, in his [PhD research](#), characterises this as ‘platform journalism’. In the past fortnight, we’ve made two policy submissions that deal with the treatment of these evolving forms of journalism.

CMT with our colleague Tim Dwyer from the University of Sydney made a submission to ACMA on its proposed [News Measurement Framework](#), drawing on our work in the [Media Pluralism Project](#). We commended ACMA for its forward-thinking approach in developing a framework that takes

account of both media diversity and localism. While we're strongly supportive of ACMA's approach, we noted it could be adapted to better recognise newer sources of journalism that make a meaningful contribution to the news ecology. This could include journalism found on YouTube channels. That said, these sources of original journalism need to be considered as part of a separate measure that takes account of the way YouTube and other platforms contribute more generally to the news environment.

We suggested a similar, expanded approach to recognising 'journalism' in our submission to the [Review of the Privacy Act](#). This concerns the journalism exemption under the Privacy Act that allows media organisations to avoid the application of the Australian Privacy Principles for their journalism work, providing they commit to alternative privacy standards. In our view, the provision should incorporate a definition of journalism that extends to non-traditional forms of journalism, but the exemption should only be available to those who can demonstrate they are part of a recognised industry standards scheme. A perfunctory 'commitment' to follow someone else's principles should not be enough.

There's a valid and important public interest justification for the exemption and for the application of alternative principles that better account for the work of journalism. But extending the benefit of the exemption to those who can't be held to account under a recognised industry standard, with an independent complaints scheme, undermines the rationale for treating news differently to other industries.

You can find our discussion of these aspects and others covered in the two submissions on the [policy page](#) of the CMT website.



Derek Wilding
CMT Co-Director

Late night observations

This week Sacha and I participated in the second Platform Governance Research Network conference – an online get-together for scholars working on digital platform governance and regulation all over the globe. Our paper – part of a panel on bridging media and platform policy – was on the News Media Bargaining Code, and reflected the approach we took in [our submission](#) to the 12-month review of the code, as well as a recently released [book chapter](#) by Sacha, Derek and CMT research associate Chrisanthi Giotis. We looked in particular at news quality, an issue considered at some length in the final report of the ACCC's Digital Platforms Inquiry but which seems to have fallen between the cracks of the various regulatory initiatives flowing from that report.

The scheduling of this international conference made it difficult to see many of the other of presentations, but I did manage to catch a great session on Day 2, switching between two



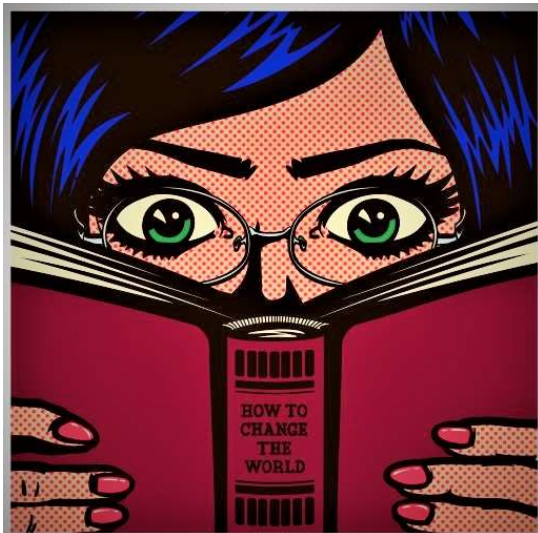
concurrent panels on legal and theoretical issues in platform governance. These papers looked at the problems of free speech, content moderation and intermediary liability, with perspectives from India, the UK and the US, as well as a [recent turn](#) in thinking about transparency towards the more-robust notion of observability. In practical terms this might see a move, for example, from bare reporting on moderation actions or plain-language explanations of recommender algorithms towards greater use of public

APIs and databases of advertising and moderated content. It will be interesting to see if that notion gains traction in regulatory approaches as well.



Michael Davis
CMT Research Fellow

Apps to save the world



Law students can be a disagreeable lot. Not in the sense that they're unlikeable. Rather, law students are disagreeable in the sense that they're contrary. Trained to mount arguments and play devil's advocate, they contend and conjecture at every opportunity.

But there is one point on which I've encountered unanimity. And that is the [Allens Neota UTS Law Tech Challenge](#), which teams up students, not-for-profits, a law firm (Allens) and a

software company (Neota Logic). Over the course of about six months, four teams work together using no-code software to create an app for their assigned not-for-profit. Simply, students use tech to advance social justice. And every single past participant I've spoken to has declared it among the best experiences they had at university.

The Law Tech Challenge culminates with a grand final in August, where the apps are showcased. In 2022, Team CheckProtect showcased an app for the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience to counter the confusion surrounding mandatory Working With

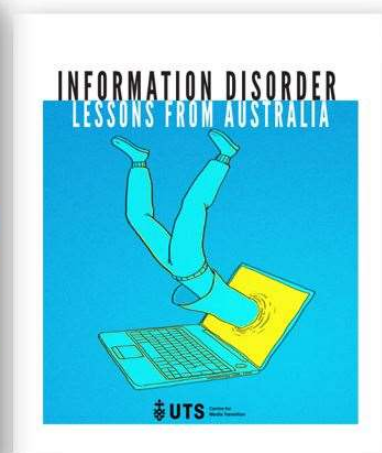
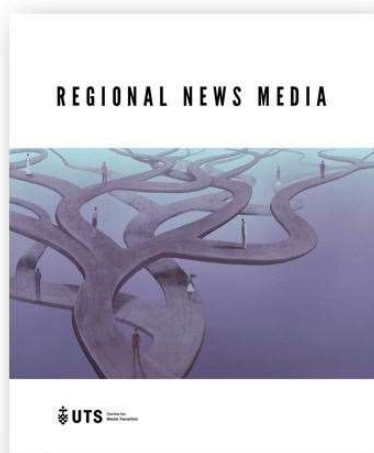
Children Checks, to get volunteers on the job faster. In 2018, the Dear Landlord team developed an app that enabled Justice Connect to provide information and services to Victorian tenants facing eviction.

I took over the Law Tech Challenge this year, and it's been inspiring. So much so that we've pitched a panel session about it for this year's SXSW Festival. In October, as you may know, the [famous SXSW festival](#) will leave Texas for the first time, and [UTS will co-host](#). In all, 1400 sessions have been proposed; to decide what to include, the organisers will rely on a popular vote. So if you're interested to hear more about a challenge dedicated to law, tech and social justice, please [vote for our panel](#).



Sacha Molitorisz
Senior Lecturer, UTS Law

Please visit our [website](#) for more information about the Centre .



The Centre for Media Transition and UTS acknowledges the Gadigal and Guring-gai people of the Eora Nation upon whose ancestral lands our university now stands. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these places.



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