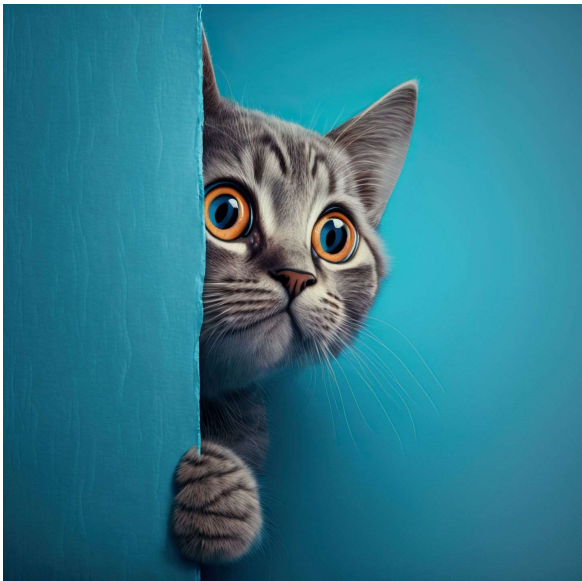


Hi there

## Exit pandemic; enter AI



Welcome to the first Centre for Media Transition newsletter for 2023.

It promises to be a big year. One word: ChatGPT. After fires, floods and pestilence, we now have to co-exist with AI that can 'write' [a rap about plagiarism](#), lyrics in [the style of Nick Cave](#), and even some convincing proposals for [how AI such as itself ought to be regulated](#). Personally, I've found it all rather confronting. Just how are we meant to react?

I reacted by giving ChatGPT the prompt, 'write an introduction for the centre for media transition newsletter'.

'Welcome to the latest edition of the Centre for Media Transition newsletter!' it responded, instantly making me regret not including an exclamation mark in my own welcome. The AI continued, 'In this issue, we will be discussing the latest developments in the media industry and the impact they have on society. The world of media is constantly evolving, and it is our goal to provide you with the most current and relevant information.'

Not bad. And there was more - although it did leave out some important specifics. In this issue, Tim Koskie reveals what Australians think of media diversity, Derek Wilding talks streaming and siphoning and I ask ChatGPT if it has any predictions for media in 2023.

Finally, Tim gives his poetic and very human take on the AI that seems to score pretty well on [the Turing Test](#).

‘We hope that you will find this edition informative and engaging,’ ChatGPT continued when prompted to write this newsletter’s introduction. ‘We welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues. Thank you for your continued support of the Centre for Media Transition.’

Or, as I would put it ... thank you for your continued support of the Centre for Media Transition!



**Sacha Molitorisz**  
Senior Lecturer, UTS Law

## The citizens' view of media diversity



The [Media Diversity Inquiry](#) has been [painted](#) as a battle between former prime ministers and a media oligarch, though it actually has a wide purview that touches on many areas of risk beyond issues of concentration of media ownership. It also attracted an extraordinary body of public submissions from beyond the typical bevy of experts, community groups and industry bodies. Fully 5068 [submissions](#) were received, not accounting for supplementary materials, consisting almost entirely of personal submissions from the general public.

These submissions open the door to a kind of self-inflicted déjà vu: sentiments are consistently repeated and bleed from one page to the next. There is a great deal of concern for the state of Australia’s media, support for (as well as much rarer attacks on) the ABC, and considerable antipathy for Murdoch and News Corp, but these statements are generally prefaced with ‘I think’, ‘In my opinion’, and ‘I believe’ rather than sources and data. In many cases, these submissions are not grounded on the salient data to which experts and professionals have access.

Ignoring these submissions would be a mistake, however, as they are often based on the sort of highly practical insights that industry analytics and assertions of professional standards are not able to capture. Within these thousands of submissions, hundreds of people describe the signs they see, the newspapers on the café tables, the news that goes unreported, and the communities that go unsupported. These recounts of real-life experience with the media ecosystem mark a crucial opportunity. Given the dearth of investigations of the impacts of media diversity risks on people and communities, these submissions are an untapped resource that can not only test assumptions about media diversity impacts but also raise new challenges that may have gone unexplored in past research.

Here at the CMT, I am currently researching these contributions, exploring the ways that the public are capable of providing us with important cues on what kinds of media diversity are most important to their lives. With a clearer sense of both the size and nature of this vital issue, researchers and policymakers will be able to make a more informed and motivated push to engaging with and engendering a more diverse media ecosystem.



**Tim Koskie**  
Researcher, CMT

## Break point for anti-siphoning laws



It's tennis season – thank you, Monica – and it's also consultation season. One we missed (submissions closed in December) was a thorough and thoughtful [paper on anti-siphoning](#) issued by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. It asked a series of questions ultimately directed at one of the regulatory challenges presented by the rapid take-up of streaming services.

To take a step back, the [anti-siphoning list](#) is designed to ensure that some popular televised sports events are available for the public to access free of charge. Subscription broadcasters (pay TV, ie Foxtel) are prevented from acquiring rights to listed events until a free-to-air broadcaster has acquired the rights or until the event is delisted. There have long been differing views on the merits

of the scheme, both its objective and its impact on one sector of the broadcasting industry. The consultation paper, appropriately, starts by asking whether the regulatory objective is still relevant and appropriate. Assuming the review finds it is, the government then needs to move on to address a pressing problem.

Because the scheme is designed so narrowly around pay TV – it uses a licence condition on subscription broadcasters to restrict the acquisition of these rights – the policy objective can be undermined by other service providers, notably SVODs (Subscription Video On Demand services), acquiring the rights without being in breach of the Broadcasting Services Act. Even if you support the legislative objective, the penalisation of pay TV alone is increasingly hard to justify. To add to the complexity of the policy issue, subscription services have suggested that the policy intent could be addressed if they agree to make listed events available free of charge, even if other content is behind a paywall.

There are various other questions for the government to consider, one of which could see the scheme shift the regulatory impact from those who televise events to those who sell the rights (eg, sports bodies). Requirements to show events live, and the composition of the list itself, are also under review.

None of this is to say, necessarily, that the networks should not continue to receive some support via broadcasting regulation, including in relation to premium sports events. But if the policy objective behind the anti-siphoning list is still supported, the scheme needs to be expanded in scope to ensure the objective is not subverted by services that were not anticipated at the time the scheme was enshrined in the Act. And if that's the case, it's also worth taking a holistic view of the benefits the commercial networks receive under various legislative protections and the adequacy of the public interest measures we expect of them in return.



**Derek Wilding**  
CMT Co-Director

## AI reveals media trends for 2023!

Developed somewhere between Silicon Valley and [uncanny valley](#), ChatGPT is a chatbot that relies on the GPT-3.5 deep learning model. It answers questions, admits mistakes and challenges incorrect premises. And it causes concern. As Australian philosopher [David Chalmers wrote](#) in 2020, GPT-3 (a previous iteration) arguably has intelligence and





consciousness, if not understanding: 'Intellectually and practically, we need to handle it with care.' More recently, [others have argued](#) that ChatGPT is highly unethical, because it generates responses by drawing on content without acknowledging or paying creators and authors, and because workers were exploited to train it.

Momentarily putting aside issues of ethics and consciousness, I asked both ChatGPT and GPT-3 if they had any predictions for

media in 2023.

'I'm sorry, I am not able to make predictions about media trends for 2023,' responded ChatGPT. 'My training data only goes up to 2021 and I do not have the ability to predict future events. However, I can provide you with general trends and current happenings ...'

Ok, based on your training data, what are media trends for 2023?

'Based on my training data, a few trends that could continue to shape the media landscape in 2023 include:

1. The continued growth of streaming services and the decline of traditional cable television.
2. The increasing importance of social media and user-generated content in shaping public opinion and driving news coverage.
3. The ongoing shift towards digital content consumption, with more and more people getting their news and entertainment online.
4. The growing use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in media production and distribution, including the use of AI to create personalized content and recommendations.
5. The rise of podcasts and audio-based content, driven by the popularity of smart speakers and other audio-enabled devices.
6. The continued importance of mobile devices as a primary means of accessing media, with more and more people using smartphones and tablets to consume content on-the-go.
7. The ongoing debate over the role of technology companies in moderating and regulating online content.

Keep in mind, these are general trends and does not guarantee the future outcome.'

That seems a fairly sensible list of trends, though some could be challenged. To be

honest, I preferred GPT-3's response to the prompt, 'write a prediction for media in 2023'.

'In 2023, the media landscape will be drastically different than it is today,' responded GPT-3, blissfully unaware what year this is. 'With the rise of digital media, traditional media outlets will continue to struggle to keep up. As a result, there will be a large number of mergers and acquisitions, and many newspapers and magazines will go out of business. Social media will continue to grow in popularity, and more people will get their news from websites and blogs than from traditional sources.'

And what about 2030? 'In 2030, the media landscape will be drastically different than it is today. With the rise of virtual reality and augmented reality, most people will get their news and entertainment from interactive experiences that immerse them in other worlds. Newspapers and magazines will be all but extinct, and most people will get their news from websites, social media, and apps.'

But that's nothing. In 2050, according to GPT-3, 'the media landscape will be *drastically different* than it is today'. Italics mine.



**Sacha Molitorisz**  
Senior Lecturer, UTS Law

## Last known human-authored text



If you work in education, media, or the arts, [ChatGPT](#) and [DALL-E 2](#) are likely to have superseded Covid-19 or even real estate prices as the conversation topic of the day. It is a [revolution](#) in the applications of artificial intelligence that has potentially severe ramifications for teachers and artists in particular, but their digital tendrils could reach much further – for better or worse. Before we print our '[Welcome/Buzz off] To Our New Digital Overlords' banners to decorate the halls, it is important that we deconstruct what we are seeing beyond the

marketing and hype so we can consider where these fit in the Scheme of Things.

Firstly, we need to understand what these things do. Each of these programs

fundamentally consists of two core components: a database of the freely available content from the internet (and sundry other sources as part of the development process) and an algorithm that remixes the information of that database into content using your request. In this, the internet is analogous to a starry night sky while the algorithm is connecting those stars together to make a constellation that you requested. Crucially, the algorithm makes neither the starry sky nor the request. It is not a tool of creation in the classic sense; it is an evolution of remix culture rather than the fine arts.

This reduction shows that we need to be extremely careful with our next steps, because the freely available content of the internet is a particular kind of content. What the programs produce is remarkable because we are remarkable, the things we have produced are remarkable and beautiful and creepy and exotic. Often, what it produces is [unreasonably similar](#) to a specific artist's or author's work. It cannot provide 'a way forward', because it can only crystallise variously remixed versions of what we have already done (and often have not requested payment for). If a particular brushstroke is nice, then it can make for nice pictures in new ways, but no new brushstrokes are being created. The algorithm sees no picture or text at all, just arrangements of binary code tied together based on their sorting and patterns.

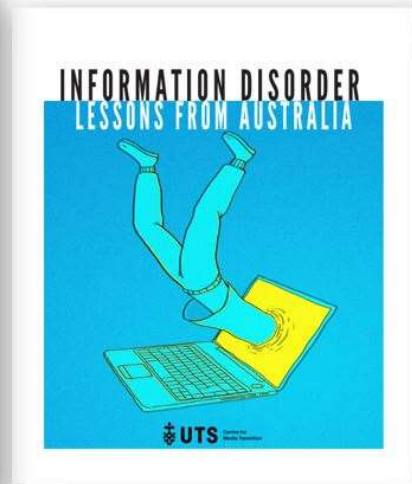
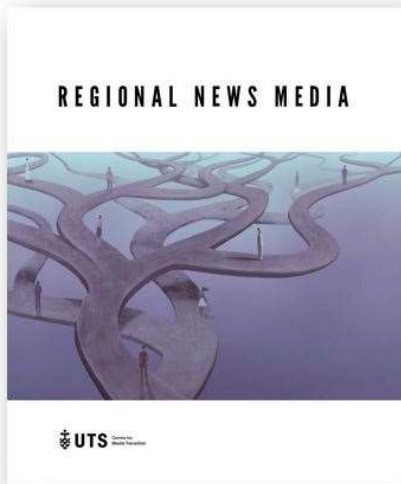
Consequently, the other end is potentially the more crucial segment, where the requests are made and translated. After all, a database of what was freely available on the internet already existed – it was called 'the Internet'. Our words are not binary code for the machine to read, so the people that translate words into binary code are in a position to instil, [intentionally or not](#), a particular sensibility in the way that translation happens, an inscription. Before that point, even our words can be a poor translation for our visions and desires, where a similar vision would translate, and be received, differently in English to how it would be seen in Korean. [However, populations' words do not carry equal weight](#), and the codes of request and translation will have higher fidelity to English visions than, for instance, Australia's 217 other languages. That is what is being used to train the algorithm, offering an opportunity for yet another frontier for imperialism, as though there were some shortage.

These tools are amazing, objectively cool and wildly complex processes that tickle the imagination. It is for this reason, not despite it, that they require careful attention for how they can be widely seen. Yet their impacts, and the factors of their creation, remain poorly considered and obscured. It's time to set the marketing aside and look at where this new tool is going to go.



**Tim Koskie**  
CMT Researcher

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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